AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

SYRIAN REFUGEES AS 'AGENTS' OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION
THE CASE OF OUZAII

by
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to the Department of Architecture and Design
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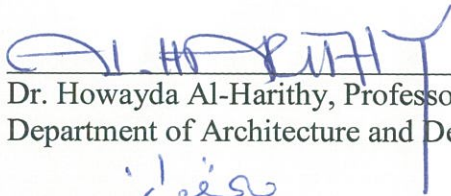at the American University of Beirut

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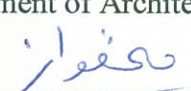# SYRIAN REFUGEES AS 'AGENTS' OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION: THE CASE OF OUZAII

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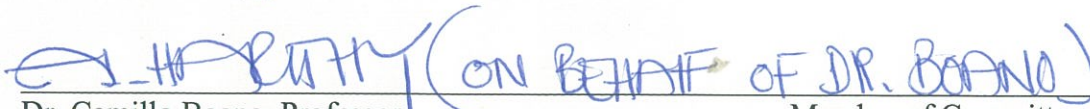
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Batoul Hamza Yassine   for   Master of Urban Design
                                     Major: Urban Design

Title: Syrian Refugees as 'Agents' of Urban Transformation: the case of Ouzaii

This research investigates how the Syrian displacement operates as an agency of urban transformation within the informal settlement of Ouzaii. Ouzaii is known for its strong political affiliation with Hezbollah and the tribal social ties of *ashae'r*. It has been a destination for multiple displaced groups over time and is currently hosting 10,000 Syrian refugees. I argue that the Syrian refugees have been 'active agents' in the urban transformation of Ouzaii—their socio-spatial practices are positively re-enforcing 'practicing the public' and contributing to the economic vitality of Ouzaii. The research adopts qualitative and quantitative methods and mainly relies on primary sources. It extensively relies on mapping, data visualization, and statistical information as analytical tools. The research uses the concept of 'refugees hosting refugees' by Qasmiyeh (2016a) and 'people as infrastructures' by Simone (2004), the economic construct of 'mixed embeddedness' by Kloosterman and Rath (2001), and Bayat's (2010) notion of 'the quiet encroachment'. It ends by learning from the tactical practices of the Syrian refugees to propose a set of 'tactical' interventions that consolidate these socio-spatial practices. This is intended to promote a more inclusive use of the public seashore in Ouzaii and contribute to the conversation around the public reclaim of the coastal areas of Beirut.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The scale of protracted urban displacement is large and continues to grow. Its root causes are manifold, complex, and often overlapping. The number of displaced people in the world was estimated by nearly 70.8 million people by the end of 2018, including internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees, and asylum-seekers (UNHCR, 2019). While it is commonly understood that half of the world's refugees and IDPs reside in urban settings, the number is likely to be higher (Haysom, 2013; Desai and Anzellini, 2018). The numbers of the displaced in highly congested informal settlements are high as well. Estimates suggest that slums and informal settlements house almost one billion people or one-third of the world's urban dwellers (Un-habitat, 2008). Informal settlements are highly affected by displacement, which plays a major role in their spatial configuration. Most of the literature presents displacement as an increasing pressure on host communities, primarily on informal settlements already suffering dire living conditions. Since 2011, Lebanon became a destination for mass displacement of Syrians. According to the 2014 statistics by the United Nations, an approximate 1.2 million Syrian refugees were registered in Lebanon. As many scholars argue, a high percentage of refugees usually settle in major cities, suburbs, and peri-urban areas. These are called 'urban refugees' (Fabos and Kibreab, 2007). The total number of registered Syrian refugees in the governorate of Mount Lebanon, where the study area of this thesis falls, was 235,859

with the majority settling in informal areas (UNHCR, 2018). The UN-Habitat report titled *Housing, Land & Property Issues in Lebanon: Implications of the Syrian Refugee Crisis* explains that informality dominates many facets of the lives of Syrian refugees such as their access to housing, work opportunities, and leisure (Un-Habitat/UNHCR 2014).

A. Thesis Argument

This research focuses on Ouzaii as one of the major informal settlements in the governorate of Mount Lebanon and in the southern suburbs of Beirut that hosted displaced Syrians. As a matter of fact, Ouzaii has been subjected to various waves of displacement throughout the past 60 years, including the forced displacement of Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians and others in 1976, 1982, and 2011(Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009). It currently hosts an approximate 10,000 Syrian refugees (Arch Consulting Surveying Department Supervisor, 2018) and is a locally unique model known for its strong political affiliation with Hezbollah and the tribal social ties of *ashae'r* (عشائر) that closely control activities in the area. The large influx of Syrian refugees into Ouzaii has transformed the area in several ways. On the one hand, the sudden increase in population density has saturated the housing supply and compromised the living conditions in the area. On the other hand, the socio-economic and spatial practices that were brought along by Syrian refugees have considerably intensified the economic activities in Ouzaii and activated its dormant public spaces, particularly the seashore.

B. Research Question and Hypothesis

Accordingly, this research investigates the principal question of how does the Syrian displacement operate as an agency of urban transformation within the informal settlements of Ouzaii? It focuses on the economic and leisurely aspects of life in Ouzaii. The research further addresses the following three sub-questions:

- How are Syrian refugees settling in Ouzaii given its political and social structure?

- How have the socio-economic spatial practices transformed since 2011 till 2018? What role did the Syrian refugees have in this transformation?

- What lessons can be learned from the socio-economic spatial practices of the Syrian refugees in the public realm of Ouzaii? Hence, what type of urban design intervention can promote the inclusivity of leisure practices in a sustainable way?

I argue that the socio-spatial practices of the displaced Syrians are positively re-enforcing the notion of 'practicing the public' and contributing to the economic vitality of Ouzaii. Syrian refugees have been 'active agents' in the urban transformation of Ouzaii. Thus, the research builds on the impact of the Syrian refugees and proposes a set of tactical urban design interventions that consolidates these socio-spatial practices. This is intended to promote a more inclusive use of the public seashore in Ouzaii and further contribute to the conversation around the public reclaim of the coastal areas of the city of Beirut.

C. Research Objectives

The research aims to:

- Formulate a comprehensive understanding of Ouzaii post the influx of Syrian refugees since 2011 and identify what urban transformation took place due to the socio-spatial practices of the Syrian refugees;
- Challenge the dominant negative views that have been associated with Syrian refugees in Lebanon and elsewhere in the region, understood as a burden on their host communities;
- Document, build on, and learn from the socio-economic and public spatial practices of the Syrians, particularly along the Ouzaii seashore.;
- Re-enforce the positive spatial practices in a more sustainable and inclusive framework;
- Build on the ripple effect of tactical interventions by strategically locating punctual insertions in specific locations: the redefined corridors by the displaced Syrians, the active inner spaces, and the seashore. These interventions can further vitalize, reclaim and reconnect its seashore to the rest of the city.

D. Methodology

1. Data collection

This research adopts a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods within a single case study approach. It primarily covers the period from 2011 to 2018, hence, incidents after 2018 were not considered. However, the research acknowledges the nature of displacement as evolving and dynamic. The data collection process was complicated and

required pre-planning. The main challenge was securing access to the area and collecting data on this politically sensitive site. The four main target sources of information were: the political party of Hezbollah and its executive agencies, the tribal families of ashae'r in Ouzaii, Bourj Al-Barajneh, and Ghobeiry municipalities, and the Syrian refugees in Ouzaii.

• **Trust Building**

Perhaps the single most important factor affecting the process of gaining access was the presence or absence of trust. Building on the definition of 'trust' by Heimer (1976), trust is a way in which partners can cope with the uncertainties and vulnerabilities in relationships. Zaltman and Mooran (1988) define trust as an interpersonal or interorganizational state that reflects the extent to which the involved actors "have faith that the other will continue to act in a responsive manner despite an uncertain future" (1988: 17). This definition is built on the concept of embeddedness that ties trust building to the embeddedness of the researcher within the context he/she is studying. The embeddedness of me as a researcher in the context of Ouzaii and the southern suburbs in general facilitated trust building with the above-mentioned sources.

• **Network building**

Social capital plays a major role in constructing and empowering a network that is intended to ease the researcher's way to gain access to the site. Social capital is the "sum of the resources, […] to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of […] mutual acquaintance and recognition." (Bourdieu, in Bourdieu and Wacquant,

1992: 119) My network was constituted of more than twenty people who are friends and relatives of each other and were key to getting in touch with political, social, and municipal sources. This network allowed me to tap into to unpublished raw data, get an oral permission from the political and municipal parties to conduct my field work in Ouzaii, and establish direct connections with the residents of Ouzaii who helped me throughout this research to reach out to key interviewees and safely navigate the area. Constructing the network was crucial to maintaining connections with the community and potential sources. This will sustain an on-going dialogue even when the research is officially done.

Since my research analyzes three aspects of livelihoods in Ouzaii —the social, the economic, and the spatial— it mainly relies on primary sources to study the socio-economic practices of the Syrian refugees and identify the spatial changes associated with these practices. Primary sources include raw data, field mapping, recorded observations, informal conversations, and over 70 qualitative semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted with Syrian and Lebanese residents, shop owners, and employees in Ouzaii, Hezbollah's officers, and municipality agents. Interviews are conducted and transcribed in Arabic and are translated to the English Language. It should be noted that some of the meanings behind key terminologies used by the interviewees may have been slightly altered in translation to fit standard English academic writing. Names of the interviews are anonymized. The content of the interviews are discussed in each chapter separately. In addition, secondary sources are used to study the historical evolution of Ouzaii, buildings and land uses, political dynamics, and for comparative analysis before

and after 2011. The process of data collection extended over 8 months starting August 2018.

2. *Data Analysis*

Since most of the research is based on primary sources, the data analysis process is iterative and inductive. It locates and spatializes the socio-spatial and economic practices, thus, it extensively relies on mapping and data visualization as an analytical tool rather than an illustrative tool using mapping software and hand sketches. As quantitative data is significant for measuring the impact of the Syrian refugees on the economic and leisure spaces, generating statistical data is important as well.

3. *Thesis Structure*

The structure of this thesis is atypical. Its core is constituted of three thematic chapters, each with its own literature and theoretical background, methods, analysis, findings and conclusions that respond to the main thesis argument.

The thesis begins with introducing the site of Ouzaii, focusing on its history that evolved from being a leisure site to one of the largest informal settlements of the southern Suburbs of Beirut. It also describes its urban morphology and explores the capacities of public and institutional facilities, economic activities that encompass both commerce and light industries, and political and social dynamics that highly control decision-making in Ouzaii.

Chapter three builds on the concept of 'refugees hosting other refugees' by Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2016a) and 'people as infrastructures' by Simone (2004). It elaborates on how through underlying social 'infrastructures of care' formed through informal institutions and social capital, Syrian refugees in Ouzaii actively provide other Syrians with support to 'tactically' overcome some of the political and social constraints. This chapter further discusses how through these infrastructures of care, Syrian refugees form their own spatial clusters and create new opportunities for shelter and work.

Chapter four brings up the concept of 'entrepreneurial systems' by Syrian refugees to debut the idea that Syrian refugees are a 'burden' on the local economy of hosting communities. This chapter explores how these systems are formed in light of the socio-political complexities using the construct of 'mixed embeddedness' by Kloosterman and Rath (2001). It further discusses how 'innovation' in the income-generating activities of Syrian refugees often creates opportunities for the refugees and their host community. Throughout the chapter, I locate these entrepreneurial systems within the spatial networks and identify the change in their distribution patterns.

Chapter five focuses on Syrian refugees as agents involved in inscribing new layers of leisure practices and interpreting the public and shared spaces differently. This chapter focuses on three identified spatial entities that were reactivated: the commercial strip as the first edge, the sea as the second edge, and the inner spaces in between. It also distinguishes the users of these spaces according to nationality, gender, age, class, and religious sect. The chapter builds on Bayat's (2010) notion of 'the quiet encroachment of the ordinary' that explains how refugees, through their quiet tactics, encroach over the

political and social exclusivity of spaces. I do not limit the notion of encroachment to survival as Bayat argues but go beyond this definition to argue that their encroachment allows them to produce and activate spaces of leisure.

Chapter six discusses the design intervention that aims to meet two main objectives. Firstly, it intends to enhance the socio-spatial practices of the Syrian refugees by learning and adopting some of their tactics in appropriating public spaces. Secondly, the intervention explores potentials of strengthening the identity of the public beach towards a more inclusive and sustainable space. It is further calling for a wider reclaim of the city's public coast as a public beach beyond this research. The design intervention addresses connectivity and accessibility issues and enforces socio-spatial activities in strategic locations. It encompasses a set of tactical interventions that involves the community in building these spaces that are already defined and used by them.

CHAPTER II
THE CASE OF OUZAII

A. Location and population

Figure 1 Location Map of the studied area
Source: Author

Figure 2 Birds-eye view of Ouzaii shows its commercial spine, the residential blocks, and its proximity to the coast.
Source: Joelle Haddad-
https://www.touristtube.com/best-travel-images/Ouzai-in-South-Lebanon-Road?id=1N2ZwzNk

Ouzaii is located on the southern coastline of the suburbs of Beirut between the Rafiq Hariri International Airport and south of Beirut (Figure 1Figure 2). It falls within three municipal administrative boundaries: Ghobeiry, Bourj Al Barajneh, and Tahwitat Al

Ghadir. Ouzaii, along with the adjacent districts of Jnah, Hay Al Zahra, and Maramel, create a dense belt of informal settlements around the green golf course club. The Beirut-Saida Highway operates as the main street of Ouzaii. It constitutes a prominent spine of commercial and artisanal activities with substantial economic value and is particularly known for its furniture and mechanics shops (Charafeddine, 1986; Halabi, 1988; Fawaz and Peillen, 2003; Clerc-Huybrechts, 2008). This commercial route served for years as the sole connector between municipal Beirut and the airport before the construction of the Hafez Al-Assad highway. The area is also well-known for its fishermen activities in the Ouzaii Al-Hadi port (Figure 2) (Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009). The informal character of Ouzaii eases access for the displaced to housing and job opportunities away from the gaze of the government.

A recent survey commissioned by Arch Consulting in 2017 found that the total population of Ouzaii is estimated at 43,000 people from more than five nationalities. The majority are Lebanese Shiites from the Beqaa valley and the south, comprising 70 per cent of the total population. Syrians constitute the second greater population count in Ouzaii, estimated at around 21 per cent (9,798 people). 41 per cent of the Syrians are from Aleppo. Other common nationalities are Palestinian, Ethiopian, and Bengali, each comprising 1 per cent of the total population (Figure 3,Figure 4). (Arch Consulting, 2017)

Al-Qonaytara 10
Tartoos 40
Al-sowada'a 60
Rif Damascus 70
Ladikiya 245
Homs 175
Hama 175
Idlib 644
AL-Raqqa 664
Damascus 669
Dara'a 759
Al-Hasaka 898
Der al Zoor 1193
Aleppo 3943

lebanese
Syrian
unknown
no answer
other
palestenian

70%
21%
4%
3...
1% 1%
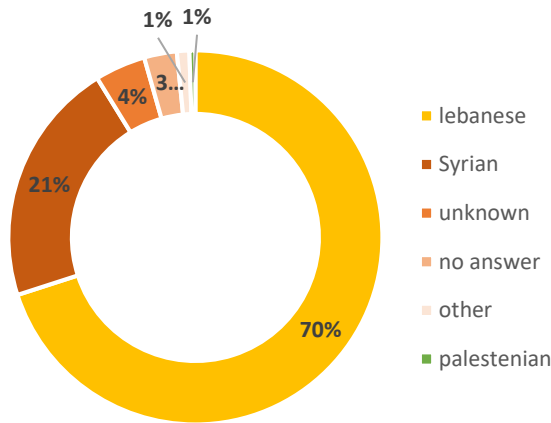
Figure 3 Population distribution per nationality
Source: Author, based on Data from Arch Consulting 2018
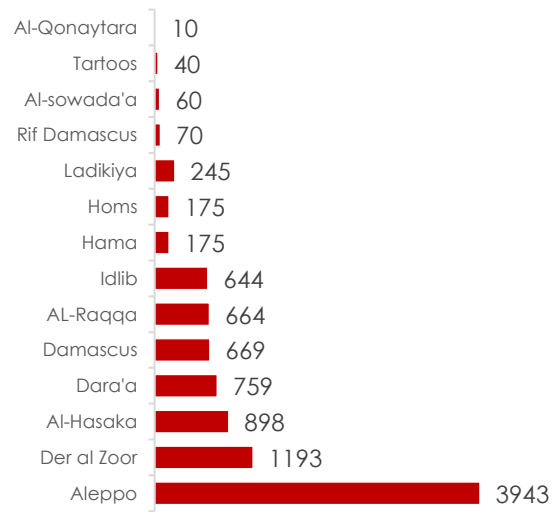
Figure 4 Syrians distribution per governorate origin
Source: Author, based on Data from Arch Consulting 2018

B. Historical background: *From a leisure to a refuge destination*

Early traces of settlements (Figure 5,Figure 6)

Initially, the Ouzaii plain used to be covered with sand dunes and forest vegetation. The

first traces of settlements emerged in 1924 when the elites of Beirut built private villas

and create leisure spaces on the coastline i.e. *the Araqji castle on the coast*. In the 1930s

the first beach resorts were planned and constructed. After the establishment of the airport

in 1936, more attention was drawn towards the South. As a consequence, first questions

of land-property arose. Amid these changes, the only connection between Beirut and the

South of Lebanon was the road to Saida now known as the old-Saida road. The coastal

road that passes through Ouzaii wasn't built until the early 50s. (Burckhardt and Heyck,

2009)

Figure 6 Ouzaii Beach 1950 with the bungalows and
al imam Ouzaii shrine
Source: Beirut Heritage Facebook page

Figure 5 Ouzaii Beach 1960
Source: Pinterest

Early traces of informality

The squatting and informal settlements in Ouzaii started in the 1950s. (Halabi, 1988; Clerc-Huybrechts, 2008; Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009) Several factors contributed to their development from conflicts over the establishment of land registries during the French mandate, rising land prices, to different political rivalries. During the French Mandate, the concept of communal land that existed in the Ottoman registries (*musha'a*) was abolished. Its further transformation into public land, and later into private ownership, was appropriated by some Beiruti elites who were aware of further development plans for the area (As-Safir, 1983; Clerc-Huybrechts, 2008; Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009)

Ouzaii grew into multiple neighborhoods according to family and village patterns, squatting and other forms of appropriation such as purchasing shares in large lots, or directly renting land from the municipalities. Land property rights disputes arose between

the municipalities of Bourj Al Barajneh and Chiyah over the Modawara area, lying in the south of Ouzaii, the Municipality of Bourj Al Barajneh. The issue culminated between 1953 and 1955, between Bourj al Barajneh municipality and the private owners of the land after the issuance of a verdict stating that the land belongs to the private owners. As a counter reaction, the municipality encouraged squatting and informal settlements around the core of the Ouzaii village, in the time when the upper-middle class leisure establishments were covering the coastline of Jnah. (As-Safir, 1983; Halabi, 1988; Fawaz and Peillen, 2003; Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009) Foreign workers (Syrian) and rural-urban immigrants (Lebanese) started settling in the area.

Ouzaii witnessed three waves of displacement which intensified the progression of squatting in the area. The first documented wave of displacement was in 1975-76 when Kurds, Syrians, and Palestinians escaped massacres in th e Quarantina, Tell-el Zaatar, and Nabaa camps during the start of the Lebanese civil war (1975-90). This wave of displacement also included Lebanese Shiites from downtown Beirut and its north-eastern suburbs (Halabi, 1988; Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009). The second wave was in 1982 after the Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon, causing the displacement of almost a million Lebanese from the South and the Beqaa valley (Halabi, 1988; Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009). The third wave was after the Syrian crisis in 2011 when over one million forcibly displaced Syrians reached Lebanese territories many of which settled in Ouzaii. (Figure 7)

Figure 7 Displacement waves after the civil war
Source: Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009

Planning attempts (Figure 8)

In parallel with the urbanization evolution of the area, the attention to the seafront of the southern area was accompanied by several planning attempts for this area. The first attempt was Echochard's vision in 1953. The plan divided the southern suburbs into five different zones with regard to lot sizes and exploitation ratios that ranged between 20 to 55%. Only a small part of this plan was realized with some traces are visible in the Bir Hasan district parcellation pattern, in addition to the gradual execution of the main transportation system (Burckhardt & Heyck, 2009).

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In 1963, Echochard along with the planners in Beirut worked on the 'Plan General D'Amenagement' which called for a polynuclear network of Beirut and its suburbs. The proposal established two regional centers located in the sandy dunes of Bourj Al Barajneh. This proposal was never implemented due to the spreading of the informal settlements along the roads and the beaches (Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009; Halabi, 1988). In 1995, a governmental master plan was developed to plan the southern suburbs and lead to the creation of a public agency- Elyssar- whose main role was to ensure the proper implementation of the project (Fawaz and Peillen, 2003; Harb, 2001). The major aim of the project was to transfer the squatters of Ouzaii to new low-cost housing, in addition to developing touristic/residential neighborhoods along the currently squatted beaches. It also included new policies for upgrading infrastructure and services, including a number of highways that would connect the city to the south of Lebanon (Fawaz & Peillen, 2003). The project has been mired in delays for decades and exemplified the blurry line between political will, private interests, and socio-spatial issues.
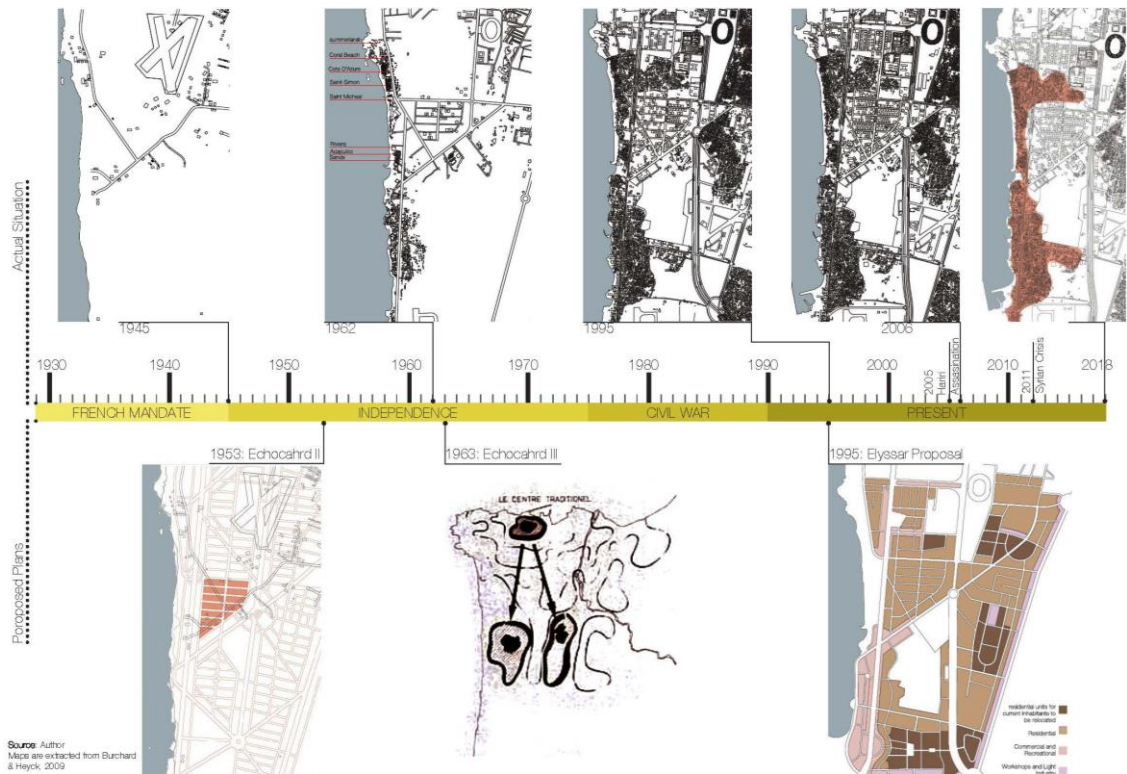
Figure 8 Evolution of the Ouzaii area along with the planning attempts
Source: Author- based on Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009

C. Urban Morphology

Street pattern (Figure 9,Figure 10)

The area undergoes a prompt progression from a highly active neighborhood to a silent one leading to the airport. The coastal street converges directly into one of the prominent commercial axes of Ouzaii, the Ouzaii Boulevard. The boulevard intersects with Abass Al Moussawi Avenue which is an important axis connecting Ouzaii to Borj al-Barajneh and Chatila. Maramel-Ouzaii Street is another commercially important street that connects Ouzaii to Raml, two important core-villages from where a great part of the illegal settlements started. The Hafez Al Asad airport highway - connects the airport to

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the city. The old airport road doesn't really allow deep insights into the settlements, but it's less concealing (Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009; google maps).

The inner street pattern is a complex web of narrow streets accessible by car and back-

Figure 10 Inner streets are paved and tidy in Ouzaii
Source:https://www.lebanoninapicture.com/pictures/ouzville
-ouzai-color-graffiti-wallart-street-walk-vinta
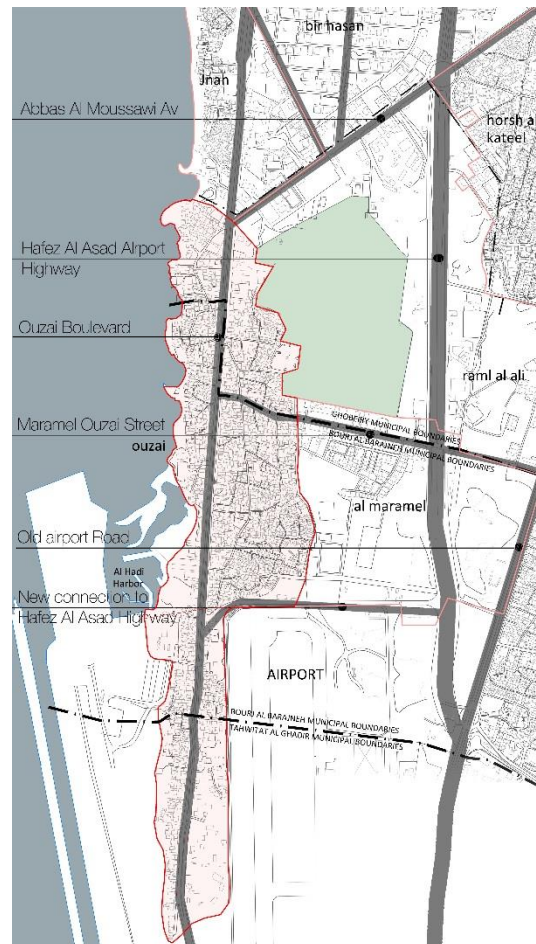
Figure 9 Street Network
Source: Author

allies or stairs. Even the smallest lanes are covered with tiles or asphalt. They are mostly kept tidy while garbage is dropped at the beach or in overstuffed containers. (Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009)

Buildings

Buildings in Ouzaii form a homogeneous unity. They are dense and sometimes it's hard to distinguish where a building starts and ends. According to a survey conducted in 1992, 2.6 per cent of the structures in Ouzaii are built of tin and other non-permanent materials (Figure 11), and around 30 per cent of the structures, houses or apartments were listed as being in poor conditions (Fawaz & Peillen, 2003). Currently, some buildings aren't plastered or painted, and incomplete floors are often encountered (Figure 12). Some apartments' windows are covered with plastic shields or wooden boards. Recently, Ouzaii is witnessing a wave of new constructions and finalizing incomplete floors after the Syrian refugees' settlements in the area.

Figure 11 Bad state of buildings in the area- tin roofs
Source: http://sites.psu.edu/andrewheibeck/lebanon/

Figure 12 Incomplete and recently built structures
Source: Author

D. Dynamics and Interactions

1. *Services and facilities - Institutional (Figure 13)*

Given its disposition as a center for Shiites, the surrounding formal district has acquired an important institutional role for the informal settlers.

Religious

Several mosques are found within and around Ouzaii. As the majority of the area's inhabitants are Shiites, most of the mosques serve their religious daily practices and needs i.e. Al-Mahdi mosque and Al-Imam Al Sader Mosque. The most representative mosque however is part of the Sunni representation; the Imam Al- Ouzaii Sanctuary which was a key element around which Ouzaii rural core was formed.

Hospitals & Educational Buildings

While schools are scattered all over Ouzaii- mostly private schools, hospitals and other care facilities are based in one single location in the formal settlements zone. The largest one is the Rafik Hariri University Hospital that opened its gates in 2002, causing the demolition of several informal buildings (Burckhardt and Heyck, 2009). In addition, Al-Zahraa Hospital, established after an initiative by the higher Shiite council in Lebanon- المجلس الاسلامي الشيعي الأعلى, is the major healthcare facility used by the people of Ouzaii.

Governmental and Institutional

North to Ouzaii, there is a cluster of embassies. They are all located in proximity to the UN-headquarters. Further away, right next to the Golf Club, a military base is located. Hence, most of the institutional facilities are located within the outskirts of the informal districts, while some of the educational and religious facilities are concentrated within the informal settlements.

LEGEND
1. Summerland Hotel
2. Al Imam Al Sader Mosque
3. AL Zahraa Hospital
4. Rafic Al Hariri Hosptital
5. Bir Hasan Educational Complex
6. Camile Chamoun Sports Complex
7. Henri Chehab Barracks
8. Al Imam Al Ouzai Mosque
9. Golf Club
10. Al Imam Al Mahdi Mosque
11. Riba Café
12. Al Nafea'a' – النافعة
13. Al Ahed Football Court
14. Al Hadi Harbor
15. Rafic Hariri Airport
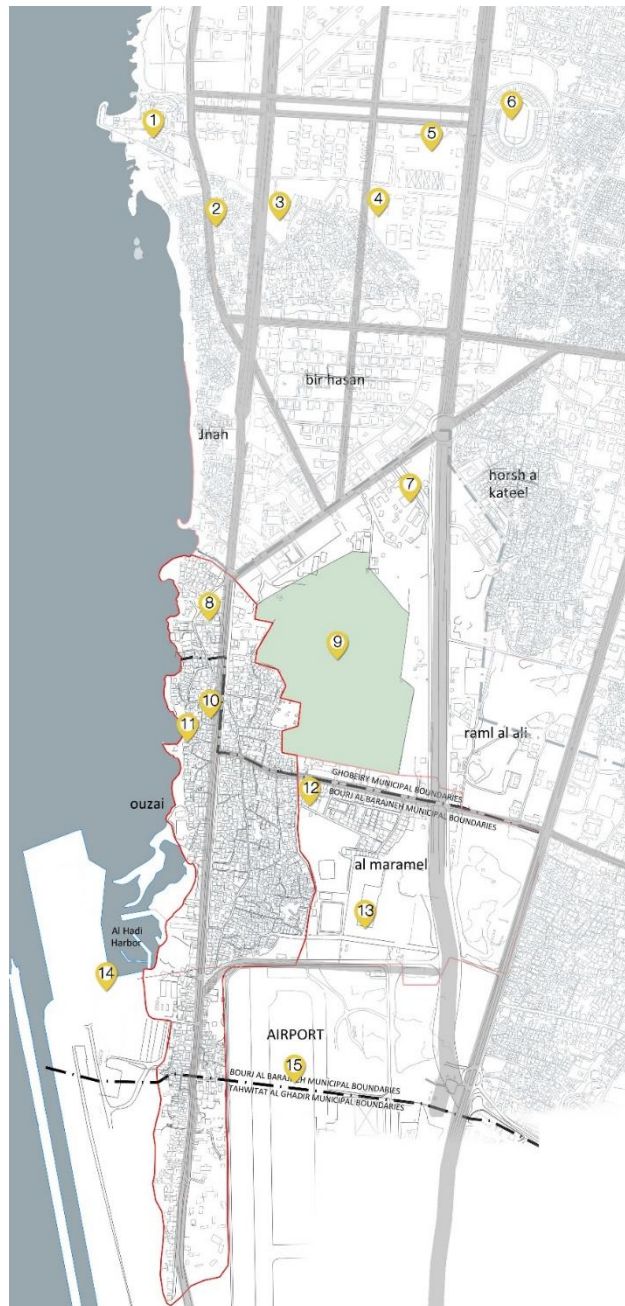
Figure 13 Navigation Map
Source: Author

2. *Economic Activity*

The area is vastly equipped by commercial activities in addition to plenty of workshops

and light industry (Figure 14).

Commerce & Services

Commercial facilities are mostly located along the main roads. They array along the streets as a strip retail business street. Shops include car parts sales and car repairs, office and house furniture, bathroom and kitchen fitters, chairs and further include everyday grocers, fruit and vegetable sales along the street as well as hairdressers. Furthermore, there are some restaurants and cafes in the area. These businesses mostly offer fast and take away food, and in some cases provide sitting accommodation that extends on sidewalks.

Workshops & Light Industry

Most of the workshops belong to car-business. They rent and mount auto parts for the official inspections[1], so that customers can avoid the repair of their insufficient vehicles. Many of the used spare parts come from foreign second-hand cars. These vehicles arrive in halves, so that no import tax must be paid. Some of these vehicles are even reunited and brought back on the street in Ouzaii.

Figure 14 a. furniture shops and workshops **b.** auto parts workshops **c.** use of building structures to display auto parts
Source: Author

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[1] The site of car official registry and driving licenses issuer and examining area is located in Ouzaii - commonly known as *'Al nafea'a'* - النافعة

3. *Socio-political control (Figure 15, Figure* 16*)*

Figure 16 Political Iconography
Source: Author

Figure 15 Social 'asha'er'
representation in shop clustering
Source: Author

The area is known to be politically controlled by *Hezbollah* which is the major Shiite political party in Lebanon along with *harakat Amal*. They are responsible for decision making in Ouzaii. Furthermore, some middle-eastern countries such as Syria and Iran hold strongholds in the area because of its political affiliation to Hezbollah. Portraits of, Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general, Nabih Berri, Amal secretary general, Bashar Al Asad and Al-Khaminaie, are found all through the Ouzaii streets. Flags are found on roof tops and balconies.

Additionally, certain families have power and a say in the decision-making process in Ouzaii. Such predominance is a strong recap of the head families also known as '*a'ashaer*'- عشائر- that used to be in charge of same rural villages in the Beqaa region, Baalbeck, these people originally came from i.e. the Safwan and Assaf Families.

E. Socio-spatial conditions

Living

Figure 17 Ouzaii after a storm in 2010
Source: https://lynnsoubra.wordpress.com/2012/12/16/the-muted-screams-of-ouzai/

Living conditions in the area are dire. People living directly on the sea edge suffer heavily from the weather consequence (Figure 17). Due to their low level and proximity to water, houses get flooded regularly in the winter season as soon as it rains, and the sea gets tougher. The beach isn't invested in leisure or recreational activities but serves as the backyard for sewage and garbage. Regularly, people find everything they need in the area.

Figure 18 Openings covered with plastic sheets and tinned roofs for space extension by Syrians
Source: Author

Figure 19 Space reproduction: from commercial to residential
Source: Author

After 2011, the huge number of Syrian refugees in Ouzaii increased the demand for housing units. Some settled in unfinished apartments. Others rented apartments in groups and shared the rent expenses. While others tended to live in un-serviced or commercial spaces unplanned for residential purposes. They modified and reproduced some spaces according to their needs. (Figure 18, Figure 19)

Work (Figure 20)

The commercial streets are highly active on weekdays since Ouzaii is a main destination for people seeking to fix their cars. The streets are also active on weekends since the passersby coming from and to the south buy some groceries and other items. The major business lines are furniture workshops, grocery stores, and garages. Since 2011, many Syrians have opened businesses in the area.

Figure 20 a. furniture shops b. mechanics and auto parts shops c. street vendors
Source: Author

*Recreation (*Figure 21,Figure 22*)*

Usually, People stay within a close radius of their houses. Women stay at home where they cook, raise the children and smoke narjeleh. Kids play under canopies, in the streets with little traffic and on nearby football- grounds. Youth and men gather in coffeeshops

mainly on the main street to play cards and smoke narjeleh. Recently, Syrian families come to the beach that they consider a major free leisure space for them in Ouzaii.

Figure 22 Fisherman on the Ouzaii beach
Source: http://www.middleeasteye.net/in-depth/features/ouzville-brings-street-art-and-controversy-beirut-ghetto-2015729743

Figure 21 The beach is neglected as a recreational space
Source: https://www.mashallahnews.com/saint-simon-ouzai/

Syrian and Lebanese kids play in alleys where they form groups and play games like leading a war with fake weapons and sticks, bicycle race, racing, etc. Meeting boys in these alleys is more common than meeting girls. (fig.23)

Figure 23 Kids Playing in the Alleys in Ouzaii
Source: Author

CHAPTER III

REFUGEES HOSTING OTHER REFUGEES: ENDURANCE AND MAINTENANCE OF CARE[2]

A. Introduction

Most of the refugees in informal settlements have tried to secure shelter, employment, and livelihoods in these areas (Fabos and Kibreab, 2007; Campbell, 2006; Jacobsen, 2006). They preferred independence from humanitarian agencies and opportunities offered in these areas by building on previous networks of migration and employment (Fawaz, 2016; Grabska, 2006). Due to their massive influx, apartments in informal areas have been re-subdivided between multiple families, with temporary rooms added to existing buildings and abandoned shops or unfinished structures adapted into dwelling units. (Fawaz, 2016)

Hence, studying the conditions of the displaced in these areas highlights the widespread phenomenon of 'overlapping displacements' where space is constituted through overlapping, simultaneous, and incremental encounters between different displaced populations and the social networks they develop. In the process, the newly displaced encounter and share the spaces of 'established' or 'former' displaced communities of similar or different nationalities and ethnicities (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2015; 2016a; 2016b).

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[2] This chapter builds on a presentation delivered at the Symposium of Infrastructures of Care: Spaces of Refuge and Displacement held at UCL on 01 February 2019. It was developed into a paper co-authored with Prof. Howayda Al Harithy and Prof. Camillo Boano that is published in the Journal of Refugee Studies, https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fez098

This chapter builds on Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's (2016a) discussion on actively exploring the "potential to support the development, and maintenance, of welcoming communities, whether […] composed of citizens, new refugees, or established refugees" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016a, p. 27). It investigates an underlying social infrastructure of care formed through informal institutions and the accumulation of social capital. The infrastructure of care thus impacts the choice of destinations by the refugees and their modes of survival. It argues that when 'refugees host other refugees', they actively provide them with support rather than merely being aid recipients themselves. As a result, they form their own spatial clusters and create new opportunities for shelter and work. By identifying, dissecting, and spatializing such infrastructure of care, this chapter engages with the agency of refugees and their diverse hosts. The hosts provide support as active partners in the processes of 'unfinished endurance' to mitigate marginalization and precariousness of their dwellings (Boano, 2018).

With the idea of unfinished endurance, this chapter aims to foreground the malleable, mutable, imperfect, and contingent human interactions, suggesting ways in which social forms, multiple systems, and networks with a variable degree of agency produce urban spaces. It builds on the manifold concept of 'care' to explore ways of creating, holding together, and sustaining the diversity of life (Bellacasa, 2017). Care includes "everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair 'our world' […] which we seek to interweave in a complex, life sustaining web" (Tronto, 1993: 103). Building on this definition, this chapter ties what Tronto (1993) terms as 'life sustaining webs' to Simone's (2004) notion of 'people as infrastructure'. Simone foregrounds the social dimensions of the term

'infrastructure' and asserts that it is "capable of facilitating the intersection of socialities so that expanded spaces of economic and cultural operation become available to residents of limited means" (Simone, 2004, p. 407). He suggests that life emerges in places that are capable of holding an intensity and heterogeneity of lives and the many ways of doing things just enough to enable mutual support (Simone, 2004). This takes place through a network of relations and actors that utilize a repertoire of 'practices' and 'tactics' to sustain a terrain of relations and resist marginalization (Bayat, 2010; Cresswell, 1992). These networks form what is termed in this chapter as 'infrastructure of care' through which the displaced host and support one another to sustain a meaningful life in an urban setting.

The research leading to this chapter identified networks of social interactions and ties that operate this infrastructure of care by conducting a thorough analytical interpretation of raw surveyed data by Arch Consulting from 2017 and 2018. The research mapped the distribution of the Syrian refugees according to their governorate of origin and years of settlement in Ouzaii to conceive of a cartography of overlapping displacements. It also tracked family relations from the available data[3]. Using ArcGIS, the data was georeferenced to identify social clusters. This data was substantiated by four semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with displaced Syrian refugees identified either from the previously generated maps or through a snowballing technique. The names of the interviewees were replaced by their initials to avoid identity disclosure. The interviews

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[3] We sorted out the names of Syrian refugees and were able to identify relatives and family members by looking into the second and third names of each of the refugees as well as identifying their geographical location.

were conducted in Arabic and the questions revolved around the operations, the practices, and the tactics of different social agents who facilitated the arrival of the refugees and their settlement in Ouzaii in order to formulate an overview of how this infrastructure of care operates[4].

B. Syrians in Ouzaii
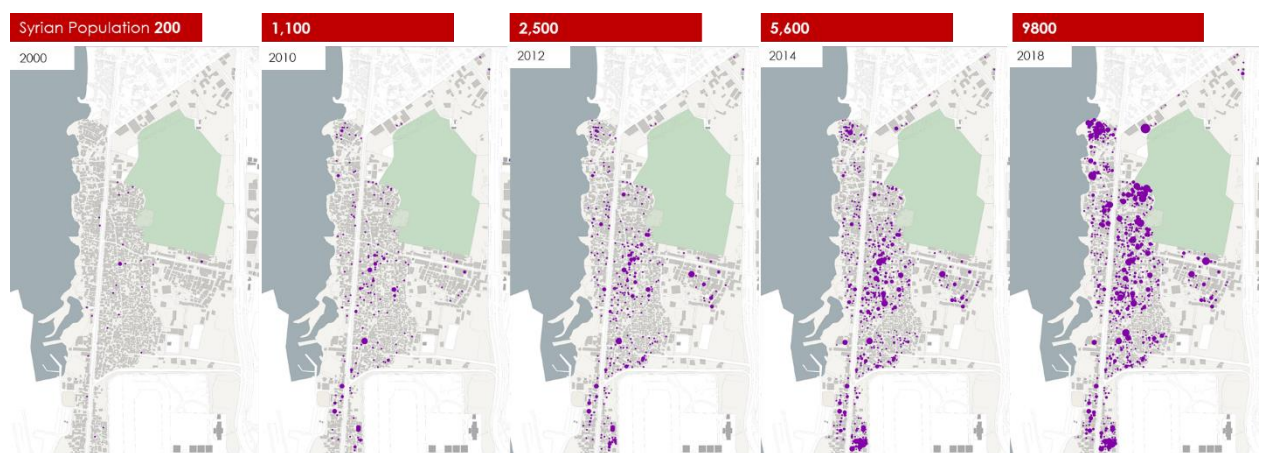
Figure 24 The evolution of the Syrian population's distribution
Source: Batoul Yassine, based on raw data from Arch Consulting 2017-2018

Changes in the Syrian demographic in Ouzaii (Figure 24) were influenced by successive incidents in Lebanon: Syrians arrived in Ouzaii as early as the 1990s. The number of Syrians in Ouzaii was however small and was estimated at less than 200 until the year 2000. Most of these Syrians at the time were construction workers involved in the reconstruction of downtown Beirut after the Lebanese civil war (CLDH, 2013). The number increased in the following decade (2000-10) to reach a total of 1,100. After the

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[4] It should be noted that some of the meanings behind key terminologies used by the interviewees may have been slightly altered in translation to fit standard English academic writing.

liberation of the south of Lebanon in 2000 from the Israeli occupation, rising economic opportunities attracted many Syrians to migrate to Lebanon in search for work opportunities. In 2005 after the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, some of the Syrians living in low to middle income neighborhoods in Beirut that are in political opposition with the Syrian regime had to relocate to the Southern Suburbs of Beirut, considered politically aligned with the Syrian regime. After the 2006 war with Israel, the number of Syrians in Ouzaii increased again. According to Arch Consulting officer (2018), many Syrian workers in the Suburbs of Beirut took part in the reconstruction projects of heavily bombarded areas.

After the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011, the number of Syrians in Ouzaii further increased drastically. In 2012, 2,500 Syrian refugees were recorded. The number reached 5,600 in 2014. 2,000 Syrian refugees out of the 5,600 came to Ouzaii in 2014 which marked the maximum increase in incoming Syrian refugees per year. Between 2015 and 2018, the Syrian population increased by 4,200 to reach a total of 9,800.

The population counts from the last three years (2016-18) show that the number of displaced Syrians in Ouzaii is still increasing (Figure 26) (Arch Consulting Surveying Department Supervisor, 2018). However, the number of individuals per household has decreased. As the Arch Consulting officer explains, paterfamiliases are still coming to Ouzaii without their families in search for work opportunities given the unstable conditions in Syria even after the war is coming to an end. This indicates the emergence of an infrastructure of care that is easing and paving the way for the new comers to settle in Ouzaii. The distribution map of the Syrian refugees in Ouzaii (Figure 25) shows that

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there are life sustaining webs that support the meaningful emergence of life in the urban

setting. Such webs are clustering either at the level of the building or the neighborhood.
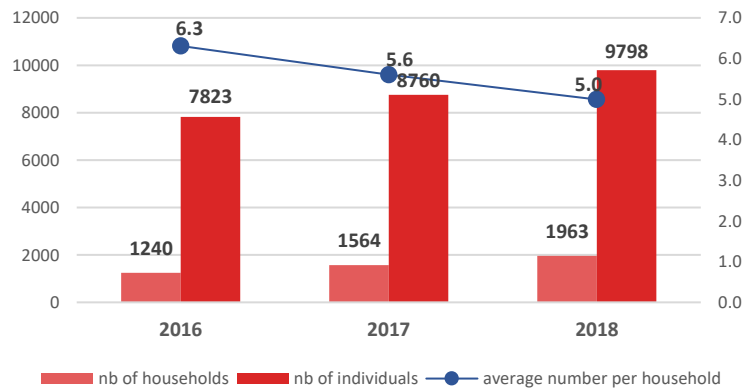
Figure 26 Syrian population in Ouzaii for the past three years
Source: Batoul Yassine, based on raw data from Arch Consulting 2018
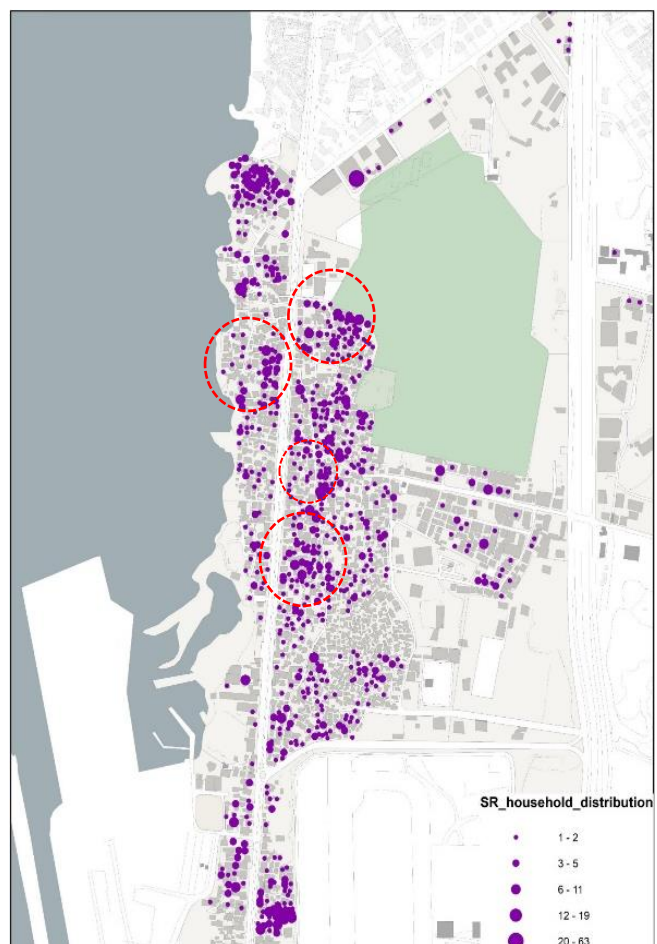
Figure 25 Current Syrian distribution in Ouzaii
Source: Batoul Yassine, based on raw data from Arch Consulting 2017-2018

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Syrians were able to secure jobs and open their own shops in an exclusive market of Lebanese businesses in Ouzaii until 2011 to sustain their livelihoods, this will be discussed in chapter four. 141 businesses in Ouzaii are managed by displaced Syrians and are recorded in this research out of 1550 in total[5].

This concentration of 141 businesses has created a solid base for a network that offers opportunities for Syrian refugees to self-sustain the livelihoods. Based on preliminary interviews with Syrian shop managers, these businesses have generated numerous work opportunities for Syrian refugees who they consider as a priority for employment. The following numbers by Arch Consulting from 2018 validate the above findings: the low unemployment rate of Syrians in Ouzaii at 4.1 per cent is an indicator that Syrians are able to secure jobs with more than 40 per cent employed within the boundaries of Ouzaii. These percentages are an indicator of a well-organized web of social support for working Syrians based on family and neighborly relations within Ouzaii.

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[5] We relied on data extracted from survey conducted by Arch Consulting in 2017, complemented by field mapping conducted by Batoul Yassine in 2018. The economic activation is further discussed in chapter four.

C. Refugees Hosting other Refugees

1. *Clustering according to places of origin and family ties*

Figure 27 Syrians clustering according to place of origin
Source: Batoul Yassine, based on raw data from Arch Consulting

In order to foreground the malleable interactions between Syrians in Ouzaii within the networks of care, Syrians were mapped according to their governorate in Syria (Figure 27). These maps show that the Syrian refugees create geographic clusters based on their origin. They indicate the process of spatial settlement of refugees from the same origin. In addition, some Syrians displaced from coastal cities preferred to live adjacent to the northern seaside of Ouzaii where they formed large clusters. The large clusters are named 'the place of gypsies' 'الغجر النوَر' after the Syrians from Banyas who settled there (Figure 28).

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Figure 28 Syrians from Banyas- neighborhood of the gypsies
Source: Batoul Yassine 2019

Syrians coming from Aleppo constitute the highest percentage of refugee population in Ouzaii recorded at 41 per cent in 2018. Thus, this research sought to analyze in depth the spatial settlements of the Syrians coming from Aleppo to Ouzaii. Conceptualized in this chapter as 'social agents' (Bourdieu, 1986), Syrians from Aleppo who came to live in Ouzaii before 2011 (Figure 30) are identified and georeferenced. It is assumed that these agents have catalyzed or eased the way for further clustering after the crisis. Each cluster is formed around one or more of these social agents. The same mechanism applies to Syrians in Ouzaii from other governorates. This geo-analysis explains that the growing of the clusters indicates the accumulated knowledge and familiarity of these agents with Ouzaii and the extent to which they can intervene or help others. Most probably, these agents have constituted the first entry point for many of the refugees and tended to recommend the area for its assets and what it offers in terms of housing and work opportunities. As discussed further in this paper, these agents mostly fall within the categories of friends and relatives.

Tracing and analyzing the family names of the surveyed Syrian refugees shows concentrations of nuclear and extended family ties. Around 40 cases are identified and highlighted in this research (Figure 29). The identified families either cluster in one building or within the same neighborhood to form an infrastructure of care where multiple practices are studied and mapped.
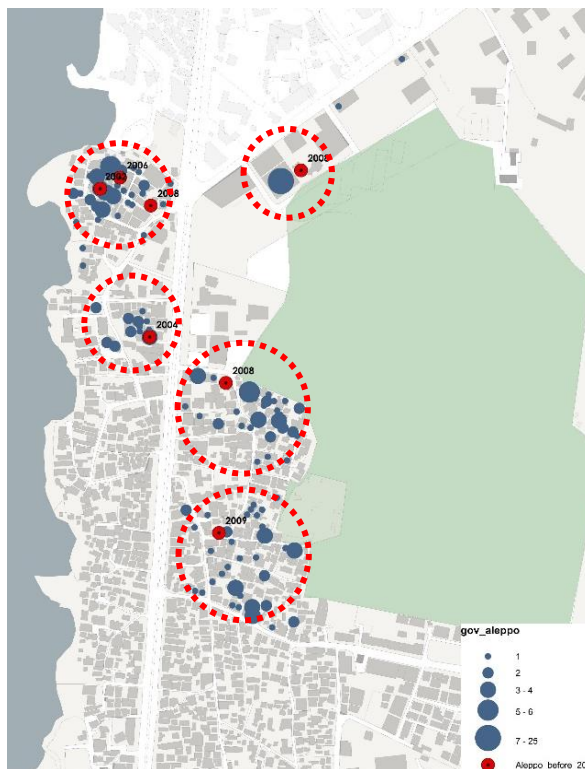
Figure 30 Syrian refugees originating from Aleppo
Source: Batoul Yassine, based on raw data from Arch Consulting 2017

Figure 29 Clustering according to family ties
Source: Batoul Yassine, based on raw data from Arch Consulting 2017

The analysis of recorded narratives by the interviewees showed that the emergent infrastructure of care operates at multiple scales from Syrian families to larger Syrian refugee communities and meets different needs for housing, work, and leisure.

This chapter reflects on four of the narratives to illustrate the notion of refugees hosting other refugees through the infrastructure of care to secure housing and work opportunities.

2. *Refugees Hosting other Refugees: Strategies to Secure Shelter*

The need to house refugees was studied by many scholars. Refugees, as other low-income groups in the city, rely on existing informal pathways for housing provision, mainly social networks which proved to be effective. (Fawaz, 2009a; Smith, 2003) As a priority for the newly displaced, the process of finding shelter for Syrian refugees in Ouzaii happens at several stages with different hosts. The story of R.G., a woman in her mid-forties from eastern Ghouta, illustrates this process (Figure 32,Figure 31). R.G. was internally displaced in Syria more than four times before coming to Ouzaii in 2016[6]. This research recorded her journey and identified the different sequential hosts involved in her settlement in Ouzaii. Her journey is exemplary of a Syrian refugee who was previously hosted several times and is currently hosting newcomers. During the interview, she stated with profound compassion: 'Here we all help each other, we embrace each other to survive. I was helped to settle here, and I am now open to helping others.'

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[6] R.G. fled from eastern Ghouta to western Ghouta after the outbreak of the war in Syria. She stayed with her four kids and husband who is besieged in western Ghouta for four years. In 2015, she got in contact with her niece in Shmestar, Lebanon, who helped her settle and work in Shmestar through her connections with a Syrian family from Hasaka that works in harvesting green tobacco. She could not tolerate the work environment with her girls and, as a result, returned to Ghouta after five months. In 2016, R.G. traveled to Lebanon after her sister and her nieces who paved the way for her settlement and work in Ouzaii.
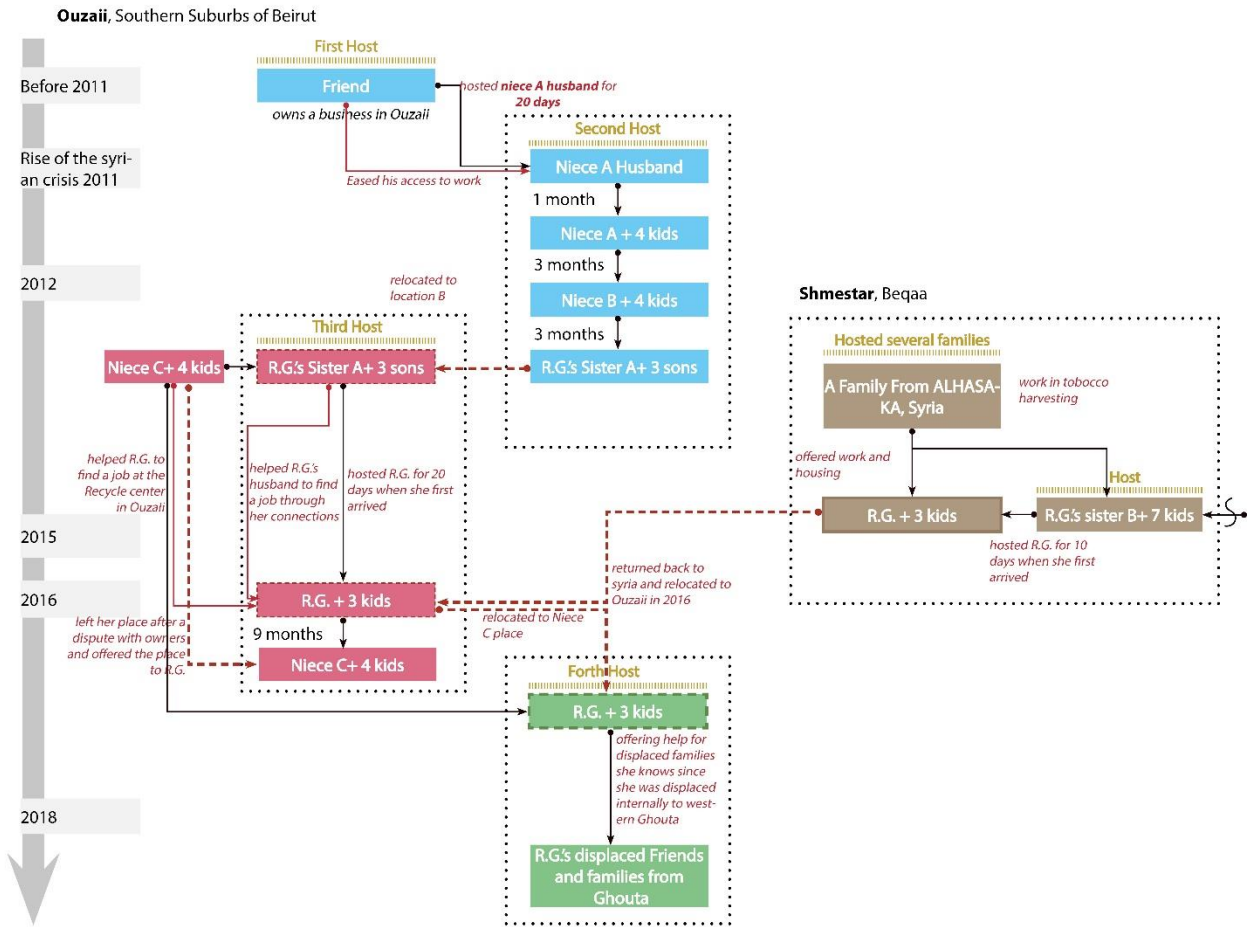
Figure 32 A diagram illustrating the story of R.G. and her family settling in Ouzaii
Source: Batoul Yassine

Figure 31 Changing configuration of R.G.'s dwelling spaces
Source: Batoul Yassine

• The first host: the 'social agent' as facilitator

In 2011, the husband of R.G.'s niece (dubbed Niece A) contacted one of his friends who owns a furniture workshop in Ouzaii. The friend, the social agent in this case, lived in Ouzaii long before 2011. He temporarily hosted the husband of Niece A and shared with him his connections until he secured a job at one of the local furniture workshops and rented a two-room apartment with a newly added kitchenette and bathroom. Niece A and her children joined him at a later stage.

• The second host: from previously hosted to a host

In 2012, Niece A shifted from being hosted to hosting 1) her sister (Niece B) with three kids and 2) her mother (R.G.'s sister) and three brothers after the war had intensified in Ghouta. Her two-room apartment accommodated the three families for more than three months until they were able to secure shelter elsewhere in Ouzaii.

It is clear from this story that Syrian refugees who live close to each other and share socio-spatial practices create a unified structure for support. R.G.'s sister had to relocate in 2012 after the apartment was no longer enough to accommodate three families. She moved to a room that her other daughter (dubbed Niece C) found next to hers. As a result, the status of R.G.'s sister changed from a hosted refugee to a refugee ready to host others in need.

• The third host: further support

When the network of hosts and hosted refugees expands, more opportunities for support beyond access to shelter become available to include work opportunities. In 2016, R.G.

found the conditions in Ghouta intolerable and reached out to her sister in Ouzaii for help. R.G.'s sister hosted her for 20 days before she moved to an adjacent apartment. R.G. then moved again to the apartment of Niece C[7] who wanted her to improve her living conditions.

At the time, Niece C was one of the first people to work at Beirut Recycle[8] where she helped many other refugees secure work, including her aunt R.G.. R.G.'s husband found a job at a furniture workshop managed by an acquaintance of R.G.'s sister in Ouzaii.

• **The forth host: from suffering to empathy**

It was clear in the research that recurrent displacement creates empathy among refugees, as evident in R.G.'s quote at the beginning of this section: "we care about each other." R.G. is in close contact with her friends and relatives in Ghouta. She is always ready to offer help whenever anyone seeks refuge in Ouzaii. This is how the intricate web of connections sustains existing refugees and newcomers. As R.G. mentioned: "we cannot survive and sustain our livelihoods without this network."

3. *Maintenance and Endurance of Care at Work*

Maintaining the livelihoods of the displaced is not limited to finding shelter but includes securing work opportunities. While some scholars argue that refugees face various hardships in accessing labor or establishing a business (Wauters and Lambrecht, 2006)

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[7] The apartment of Niece C was in a good condition after it was renovated by Recycle Beirut.

[8] Beirut Recycle is a private initiative that is supported by UNHCR. The initiative works in waste classification in Ouzaii and offers job opportunities to Syrian women.

due to their limited access to 'ethnic resources' (Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward, 1990) and 'social networks' (Gold, 1992), few shed light on successful examples of refugees increasing their opportunities to find work or open their own businesses based on their social networks and strong group ties (Harb, Kassem, and Najdi, 2018). In Ouzaii, the infrastructure of care helps secure, facilitate, and support displaced Syrians. This section builds on three stories that demonstrate the operative role of this infrastructure in locating work opportunities through acquired trust in host communities, innovative tactics to work around municipal checks, and knowledge-building and technical skills.

• **Inherited trust in host communities**

Securing and sustaining work in a politically-controlled area like Ouzaii is not easy. It requires building trust in the displaced as business owners. A.N. is a Syrian refugee from Dara'a who came to Ouzaii in 2012 to work for his cousin B.N. who arrived in Lebanon in 1995 and opened his own convenience shop in 2011[9]. A.N. was internally displaced in Syria more than five times[10] and faced many hardships in sustaining work.

B.N. reflects on his experience in building a long-term professional network with people in Ouzaii. A.N elaborates further: "we have been here for 24 years, so we are almost Lebanese." The 'we' reference in this quote extends beyond A.N.'s limited experience in Ouzaii to encompass 24 years of accumulated trust between B.N. and people in Ouzaii.

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[9] People from Dara'a are known for working in mini markets and convenience shops.

[10] On the onset of the Syrian crisis, A.N., along with his family and parents, escaped the harsh strikes on his hometown Dara'a to Jdaideh on the borders between Lebanon and Syria. They were unable to reach Ouzaii because A.N.'s parents suffered from physical disabilities, so they opted for refuge to Jdaideh (Syria) where some of their relatives hosted them for a couple of months. They had to move for more than five times between Jdeideh and a small town called Rawdah depending on the level of peace and stability. At that time, A.N. was working informally in the free market on the borders between Syria and Lebanon. He claims that his financial state was detrimental.

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This trust was transferred to A.N., creating a more flexible and healthy relationship with the shop costumers and facilitating the process of establishing for himself a stable life in Ouzaii. A.N. states: "here, we are financially stable. We are almost a part of this neighborhood. It is hard to predict if we want to return. We are not sure about this."

• **Devising innovative tactics to work around municipal checks**

Syrian refugee workers are among the most vulnerable groups in Ouzaii to adopt innovative tactics to escape political and municipal control. For example, N.J. is a Syrian refugee from Edleb who was displaced to Ouzai in 2011. Since 2011, N.J. has been working as an informal street vendor. In 2018, he started renting a small coffee shop on the main commercial street in Ouzaii. N.J. mentioned that it is not easy to work as a street vendor in Ouzaii without strong support from political parties and local tribes (العشائر). He had to devise ways to protect himself and his Syrian refugee friends who also work as informal street vendors from frequent checks by the municipal police. Running his coffee shop helped him increase his income and shadow his work as a street vendor. He mentioned: "my friends gather with me in this coffee shop, hide the goods in one of the cupboards, and wait until noon to start work as street vendors. This way we escape the morning checks by the municipal police." In addition, N.J. has secured a space in front of the coffee shop to park his cart and occasionally sell goods. N.J. said that the Lebanese owner of the coffee shop is one of the common tribes (عشائر) members who acts as a strong support for him in case he is stopped by the municipal police or teased by people.

He also mentioned that this support extends to other street vendors who use his coffee shop as a waiting station.

• **Acquiring knowledge and technical skills**

Many of the Syrian refugees left their original professions after they settled in Ouzaii, which does not always offer work opportunities that match their existing skills. After 2011, they were able to gain access to work opportunities at Al-Hadi port[11] in the coastal district of Ouzaii. Before 2011, there were only two Syrian fishermen who worked under the supervision of Lebanese managers. They came from Aleppo and have been at Al-Hadi port for 20 years. After 2011, they offered Syrian refugees extensive training to become fishermen as well. As a result, the port's capacity increased and the number of Syrian fishermen at the port increased as well to constitute 41 per cent of the total number of fishermen.

D. Conclusion: Infrastructure of Care: A Means of Maintaining Existence

The settlement of Syrian refugees in Ouzaii was possible through the accumulation of multiple efforts whereby local social agents share their different capacities and resources (Fawaz, 2008). These practices are manifested in an underlying infrastructural model whereby the concept of 'care' operates at different aspects of life to sustain livelihoods in Ouzaii. As Simone (2004) argues:

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[11] Al-Hadi port case is discussed in detail in chapter four

"unless we reconceptualize the notion of belonging in terms other than those of a logic of group or territorial representation. These infrastructures display people's needs to generate concrete acts and contexts of social collaboration […] by making the most of the city's limited means." (Simone, 2004, p. 419)

As such, the infrastructure of care in Ouzaii provides the base for a space of solidarity for Syrian refugees.

The infrastructure of care operates at three levels, each with its own social agents: nuclear family, extended family, and friends. They usually recommend settling in Ouzaii for what it has to offer in terms of housing and work opportunities, as well as its strategic location between Beirut, the airport, and south of Lebanon. Usually the social agent temporarily hosts newcomers until they are able to secure work and shelter. In the process, newcomers acquire the capacity to host their family members and other refugees. This constitutes the core of the social network whereby the settlement of one family facilitates the process for others and whereby the practice of refugees hosting other refugees is manifested. The infrastructure of care expands to include extended family members and friends who are either the first hosts to the newly displaced or are temporarily hosted by others. The social networks that emerge within the infrastructure of care represent points of reference for tracking and disseminating information on vacant apartments and work opportunities to newly displaced Syrian refugees. As a result, refugees are engaged in the production of a

flexible housing stock between owners and former Syrian refugees and the refugees themselves.

We can deduce that the infrastructure of care allows the Syrian refugees to build trust with other communities in Ouzaii and connect to a network of support that exposes them to training opportunities in order to acquire technical skills. It further explains why Syrian refugees cluster in certain places according to their social ties. It is sustained by concentrations of Syrian businesses that create multiple work opportunities for the newly displaced. Its scope extends beyond the practice of 'refugees hosting other refugees' to utilize the concept of care at multiple scales. Firstly, nuclear and extended family units display 'care' by hosting each other. This was illustrated in the story of R.G. who changed from being hosted several times by her family members to a current host for newly displaced refugees. Secondly, the Syrian refugee community in Ouzaii displays 'care' as a bond that connects between several social networks and establishes internal solidarity. This was illustrated by the stories of the fishermen from Aleppo who were trained at Al-Hadi port by other Syrians and N.J. who allows other Syrian street vendors to use his coffee shop as a hideaway from municipal checks. Thirdly, Lebanese hosts display 'care' by offering Syrian refugees work opportunities and apartments for rent and supporting Syrian businesses to flourish. This was illustrated in the stories of A.N. and B.N. who capitalized on their social and professional networks with people in Ouzaii throughout the past 20 years.

In conclusion, it is evident that urban informality in Ouzaii offered Syrian refugees an alternative mode of access to the city, allowing them to escape the gaze of the humanitarian aid apparatus that reduces them to a statistic and further contributes to their vulnerability. The resultant infrastructure of care guards the refugees from possible social discrimination or political threats and allows them to maneuver quietly around the city.

CHAPTER IV

SYRIAN REFUGEES' ENTREPRENEURIAL SYSTEMS AS STIMULATORS OF OUZAII'S ECONOMY

A. Introduction

The impact of Syrian refugees on the labor market of host communities has been widely debated and researched in the past years. On one side, data shows that refugees place a burden on hosting economies by increasing competition for jobs and downward pressure on wages. Conversely, other data demonstrates the influx of Syrian refugees has stimulated host economies by providing labor and purchasing power. (IRC, 2016; Miller, 2018) This chapter investigates the intersection between Syrian displacement and the spatial impact of their economic practices on the economic transformation in Ouzaii. I explore the potential of 'entrepreneurial systems' that emerge when Syrian refugees become part of the host community and its economy. Building on the concept of Betts et al (2016) on 'refugee economies', I explore how 'innovation' in the Syrian refugees' income-generating activities often create opportunities for themselves and the hosting community. 'Innovation' thus frames the discussed 'entrepreneurial systems' which encompass the Syrian refugees as either part of the lower labor force, business-owners, or entrepreneurs in their own right. I further locate these entrepreneurial systems within the spatial networks and investigate how Syrian refugees are involved in these 'systems' by employing their resources and taking advantage of the market opportunities mediated by the political parties and subject to legal setups. This chapter uses the construct of

'mixed embeddedness' put forward by Kloosterman and Rath (2001) to understand how the Syrian refugees infiltrate into the hosting economy of an informal settlement that is characterized by its complex socio-political structure and consequently be part and parcel of the entrepreneurial systems that stimulate the economic cycle in Ouzaii.

B. Refugees' 'entrepreneurial systems' in literature

1. *From the logic of dependency towards development*

Refugees have vulnerabilities as well as capacities, skills, and aspirations. Although they are perceived in most cases as a 'burden' whether security, economic or environmental on host states, yet they have potential to contribute economically and socio-culturally (Betts, Bloom, Kaplan, & Omata, 2016; Jacobsen, 2006).

Thus, this makes it crucial to acknowledge 'refugee economies' as a distinctive economy which Betts et al (2016) define as "the resource allocation system relating to refugee populations". Despite their vulnerable status, refugees can support their own self-reliance through their own skills and capacities (De Vriese , 2006; Jacobsen, 2005). Karen Jacobsen, in her book, The Economic Lives of Refugees (2005), explores the refugees' potentials through what she terms as "refugees' income generating activities". The latter encompasses activities of production, consumption, and financing mechanisms, in addition to elucidating their interactions with hosting communities. Practically, refugees engage at significant levels of market activity. Not ignoring the constraints of acclimating to new regulatory environments and market dynamics, building new social networks and

overcoming socio-political tensions, refugees are for a fact consumers, producers, buyers, sellers, employers, employees, and entrepreneurs (Betts, Bloom, Kaplan, & Omata, 2016). The comprehensive understanding of the economic lives of refugees triggers a rethinking of refugees beyond a dependent agency on humanitarian aid and an increasing pressure on hosting economies, but rather a model of development and an opportunity for sustainability. Refugees as a 'development agency' was discussed since the 1980s. Gorman (1987) and Stein (1987) explored the economic potentials of refugees and argued that development assistance when applied on refugees, would promote their support and integration in host communities, and would benefit the refugees themselves and their hosting communities as well. Accordingly, this would reduce the long-term cost of the humanitarian assistance.

2.   *The 'mixed-embeddedness' of Refugees in the informal market*

The concept of refugees as an agency of development brings to the table the context in which refugees often engage economically. As discussed in literature, the economic lives of refugees almost inexorably bestride the formal and informal sectors. In practice, the right to work is rarely granted to refugees, particularly in host countries of the Global South. This is due to a set of restrictions, including expensive work permits or the non-recognition and valuation of foreign qualifications, impeding them to work in the formal sector.

As a result, refugees often seek work within the informal sector. They become embedded in the informal market and one group of the market's actors. According to the economic sociologist Weber (2013), these actors are conceptualized as social actors; they are 'constituted by their context' and are 'embedded cultures' that influence the performance of both communities- hosting and hosted- and shape structural constraints into opportunities. The social capital and networks of these refugees allow them to surpass the emerging economic challenges (Buscher, 2013; Palmgren, 2013; Grabska, 2005).

In this regard, Kloosterman and Rath (2001) don't limit the success of the refugees' engagement in the economic life and their ability to transform structural constraints into opportunities to solely their social capital but extends to acknowledging the socio-economic make-up of the new environment. Thus, Kloosterman and Rath's brought up a bi-fold concept that included the role of social capital and networks of the refugees in negotiating their economic lives; termed as 'concrete embeddedness', and their 'abstract embeddedness' into the local socioeconomic and political localities (Kloosterman & Rath, 2001, p. 190). As a form of embeddedness in hosting economies, it is assumed that refugees adopt 'innovative' tactics and strategies to maneuver and infiltrate the socio-political complexities and exclusionary actions in their hosting communities.

3. *The role of innovation and the entrepreneurial systems*

Innovation within refugee communities is not limited to these tactics, it can be conceptualized as any means of creative adaptation that transforms "market distortions

into opportunities" (Betts, Bloom, Kaplan, & Omata, 2016, p. 55). These ways, not necessarily transformative, simply include 'incremental adaptation' to a specific context (Tidd & Bessant, 2009). Thus, innovation is not solely bounded to entrepreneurship, it involves any means capable of stimulating markets and increasing productivity by ensuring the ability of oneself to navigate the market, spot opportunities, and mitigate constraints. For refugees, Betts et al (2016) define innovation as ways in which refugees are able to "apply their agency—their skills, talents, and aspirations—in order to transform their structural situation into new sets of opportunities, which create value for themselves and for others" (p. 168). Building on this, I argue that refugees as innovators can be workforces, business owners, and further entrepreneurs, forming what I term in this chapter as 'entrepreneurial systems' that operate along with hosting communities through their 'mixed embeddedness' and thus stimulate hosting economies.

4. *Syrian refugees in the Lebanese labor market*

Zooming in to Lebanon, most of the literature on labor market dynamics and Syrian refugees discusses their precariousness and vulnerability, their limited livelihood resources, the increasing competition among Lebanese and Syrian labor, and the emerging economic pressures as a result of the crisis in 2011. According to the ILO (2014), the majority of the economically active Syrians are informally engaged in low skill work in agriculture, domestic services, and construction. Other reports highlight the emerging pressure that exacerbates the economic life of the hosts on the macro and the

sectoral scales of Lebanon (David, Marouni, Nahas, & Björn, 2018; Cherri, González, & Delgado, 2016). Scant literature tackles the Syrian-owned businesses in Lebanon and their impact on the local economy. Almost 1,200 unlicensed Syrian businesses in Lebanon were reported by the Lebanese Economy and Trade Ministry as of 2013, where the number is definitely higher considering that many of these businesses operate in informal settings. The ILO mentions in their report of 2014 that a number of micro and small informal Syrian-owned business opened in some areas, including restaurants, retail shops, bakeries, mechanical repairs, woodwork and others, have been established mostly in the Bekaa region and the North since the beginning of the crisis. The report further explains that Syrians often open their businesses at the same place of their residence and almost exclusively employ Syrians. As a result, competition has increased between self-employed Lebanese and Syrians especially in handicraft and semi-skilled jobs, knowing that Syrians provide cheaper services than the Lebanese. (ILO, 2014, p. 38) As a response to the informal Syrian involvement in the Lebanese labor market, some Lebanese business owners consider that these informal businesses will solely expand the informal market and implicate additional costs on the socio-economic development, while others contemplate them as a positive contribution to the development of local economy and activation of the business cycle (ILO, 2014).

Before 2011, Ouzaii's economy was struggling. According to interviewed shop owners and residents, many shops were either closing or making no profit. A Lebanese shop owner states that: "the market was not doing well. An adjacent shop to me has closed and

opened several times, each time trying a different business, but nothing worked well, and so were many of the other shops in Ouzaii". Although Ouzaii was historically known for its highly active economic activity that entails both commercial and light industrial businesses, mainly furniture, car industry, and many other shops serving daily goods and everything related to construction, it didn't survive the economic recession that Lebanon was passing through.

After 2011, Ouzaii received a huge number of Syrian refugees. The hosting process was influenced by the socio-political specificities of Ouzaii. Placing Ouzaii within the wider political context, the area falls under the control of Hezbollah, and thus, was influenced by the political decision of Hezbollah regarding the Syrian crisis and refugees in specific. A member of Hezbollah's municipal committee states in this regard: "Syrians have hosted us during the 33-day war with Israel, so, we hold our self-responsible for hosting and supporting them during these tough moments" (Hezbollah's officer, 2018). Syrians were allowed to work and reside in Ouzaii, whether formally or informally, but certainly under the supervision of Hezbollah. Despite this form of support, Syrians have to cope or overcome certain social tensions in Ouzaii of the tribal families, asha'er, in addition to the extreme monitory practices of Hezbollah in the area as well. Noting these realities, the area witnesses an economic transformation and an increased economic activity.

To understand the economic transformation that takes place in Ouzaii and the Syrian impact on the local economy, my analysis is not limited to studying Syrian businesses

only but extends to studying non-Syrian businesses mainly Lebanese. I adopt a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative research focusing on business profiles, spatial arrangement, tactics and business strategies to measure the 'mixed embeddedness' of the Syrian refugees within the context of Ouzaii. I analyze raw information of a survey conducted by ARCH consulting 2017, complemented by field work to validate and update the later raw data as of 2018. Building on these data sources, I produce statistical data and undergo a spatial analysis using ArcGIS. Furthermore, as the transformation is not limited to numbers only, but also to the type and occupation of businesses and old/new spatial business patterns, I compare the produced mapping with a previous mapping done by Burkchard and Heyk in 2009. I am complementing and supporting my analysis by narratives of Lebanese and Syrian shop owners and residents of Ouzaii through informal conversations. I also build on my own observations which extended over several months in 2018-2019 to study how spaces change between day/night and weekdays/weekends in addition to creating a sufficient understanding of exclusionary and inclusionary practices.

C. Syrian refugees as 'innovative' business owners: a catalyst for the activation of Ouzaii's economy

"Syrians generally confirm their reputation of having a strong entrepreneurial spirit and 'appetite for business'" (Racchetta, 2016). In Ouzaii, their strong appetite for business was translated into almost 140 businesses in a market that was constituted of mostly Lebanese owners until 2011. Through their 'innovative' tactics and entrepreneurial spirit, they started and sustained their own businesses, increased the appetite for business for

Lebanese entrepreneurs, and as a result induced the market's activity. This is evident in the study and analysis of Ouzaii's market focusing on new opening businesses before and after 2011.

1. Profiling the businesses

Based on surveyed data by ARCH consulting, almost a total of 1500 businesses are counted within the boundaries of Ouzaii. The majority of the business owners are Lebanese (85%). Syrian businesses come second after the Lebanese businesses and constitute 9.6%. Palestinian businesses constitute 1% with 0.5% Egyptian, Iranian, and Kurdish. (Figure 33)
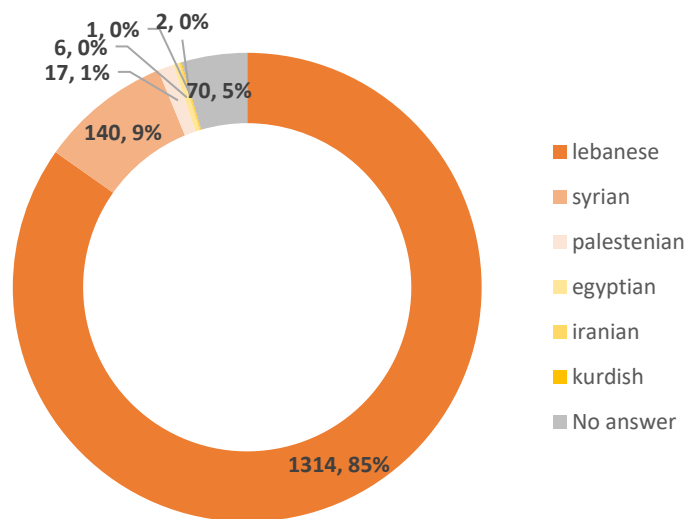
Figure 33 Economic units distribution per nationality
Source: Author, based on raw data from Arch Consulting 2017 and field work in 2018 by Author

• Mapping of Syrian businesses throughout the years

The market had always been influenced by political and economic incidents that took place in Lebanon, and this is demonstrated in (Figure 34) displaying the number of Lebanese and Syrian opening businesses from 1940s till present. The graph shows a notable increase in 1980, during the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) when many Lebanese Shiites were displaced to Ouzaii from Beirut. In 1990, the political stability in Lebanon after the end of the civil war promoted opening new Lebanese businesses. After the Liberation of Southern Lebanon in 2000, the Lebanese local economy was enhanced and thus the economic activity in Ouzaii was influenced as well. Until 2011, the graph shows a dominance of Lebanese owners. During the years following 2011 marking the Syrian crisis, more Syrian and Lebanese businesses were likely to open after 2011. Out of the 1500 businesses, 677 are Lebanese, 25 Syrian, 9 Palestinian, 2 Egyptian, and one Iranian that opened before 2011. Numbers of 2018 show that 536 new Lebanese businesses, 116 Syrian, 8 Palestinian, 4 Egyptian and one Iranian business opened after 2011. Analysis of opening units per year for both Lebanese and Syrian businesses shows a simultaneous considerable increase after 2011 with 2014 marking the maximum for both; counting 99 Lebanese businesses and 27 Syrian businesses.
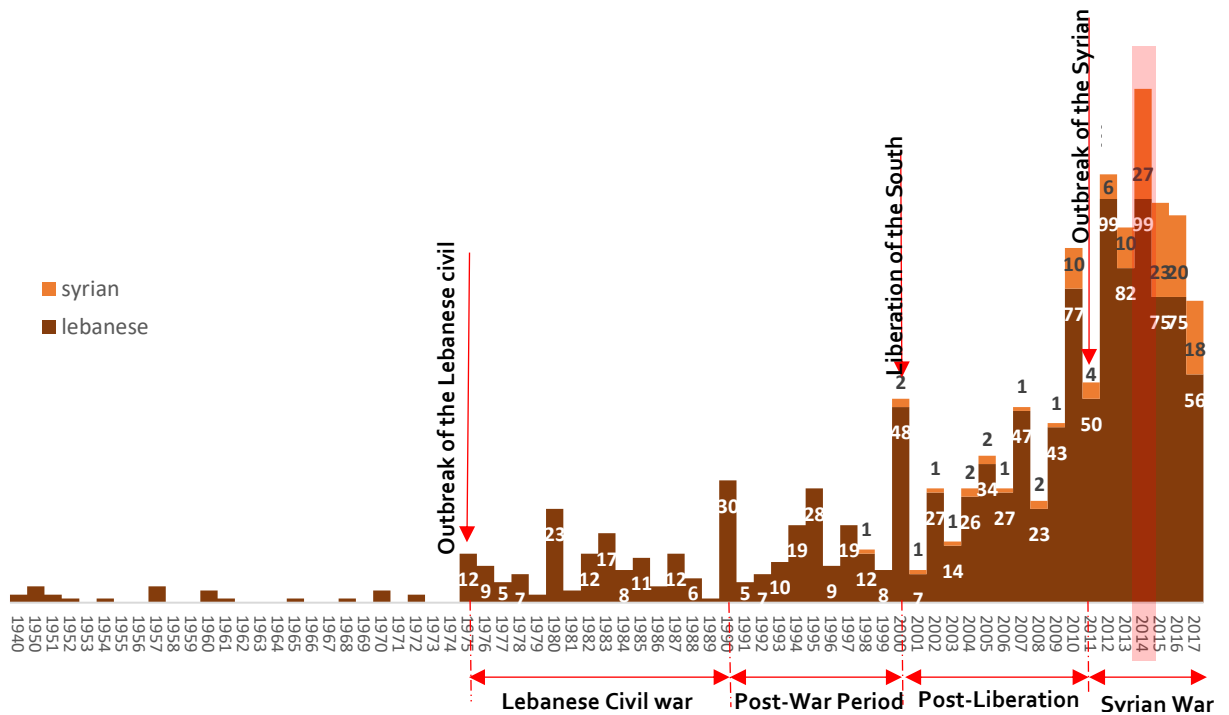
Figure 34 Syrian and Lebanese Economic units' evolution
Source: Author

The notable increase in the number of Syrian opening businesses happened between 2013-2014 (Figure 35), followed by a constant increase between 2014-2017. Building on the narratives of the interviewed shop owners, Syrian refugees in Ouzaii were subjected to a sequential job upgrade. Syrians in Ouzaii gradually gained financial independency that allowed them to open their businesses starting 2013; two years after their first settlement in Ouzaii. This illustrates the process that applies to some of the Syrian business owners of transforming from aid-recipients at the beginning of their displacement, to workers with daily, weekly, or monthly salaries, to self-employed and independent business owners and entrepreneurs.
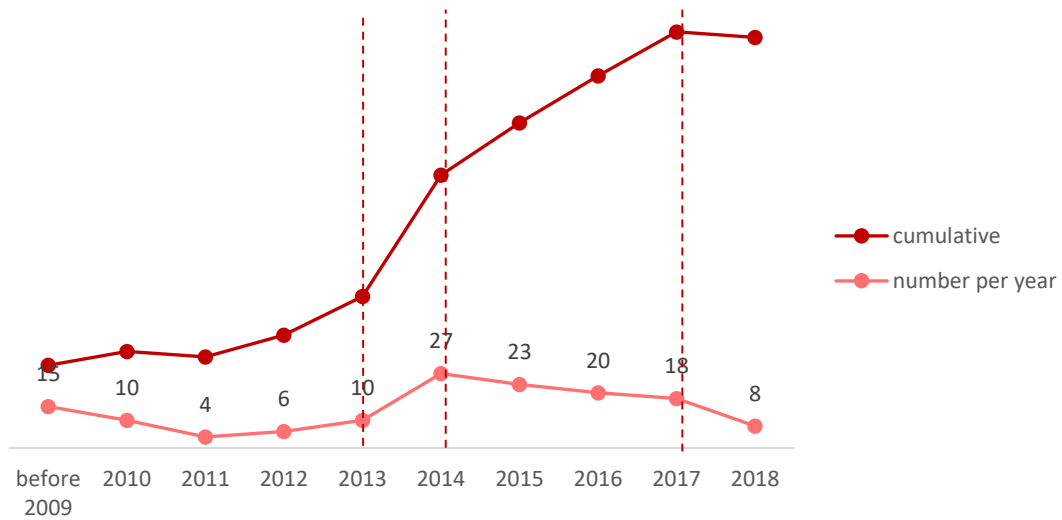
Figure 35 Syrian opening businesses per year
Source: Author

In this regard, Mohammad, one of the Syrian refugees in Ouzaii since 2012, explains that when he first came to Ouzaii, he was hosted by his relative for a short period of time and then started working for a Lebanese grocery shop owner for one year. In 2013, he opened his own grocery shop first outside Ouzaii with one of his Syrian friends in Chouf-mount of Lebanon. The shop was closed after a year because Mohammad found it hard to daily commute to Chouf in the first place, and the market there wasn't welcoming to Syrian businesses. He then, in 2014 opened his grocery shop in Ouzaii. This is one example out of many which collectively constitute a sturdy business base for Syrians in Ouzaii building on their individual initiatives and social networks that started taking shape after 2014.

Until 2014, most of the Syrians opened their shops in the inner spaces with very few openings on the Ouzaii Boulevard. From 2014 onwards, Syrians started opening their shops on the two main commercial streets, the Ouzaii Boulevard and the Maramel-Ouzaii

Streets. Most of the shops on the Ouzaii Boulevard were occupied which decreased the availability for opening new businesses there. Syrians were more likely to open their new shops in the inner spaces which had more vacant shops (Figure 36).

After 2014, the struggling economic units on the main street were shut down and reopened mostly by Syrians. Many of the interviewed Lebanese shop owners explain that they found in handing their businesses to others or renting their shops out a more profitable investment than running them themselves. This is how Syrians become 'abstractly embedded' in the local community by acknowledging the unique contextuality of Ouzaii and create opportunities out of existing constraints and struggles, by 'tactically' making the best of the few available opportunities to sustain their livelihoods.
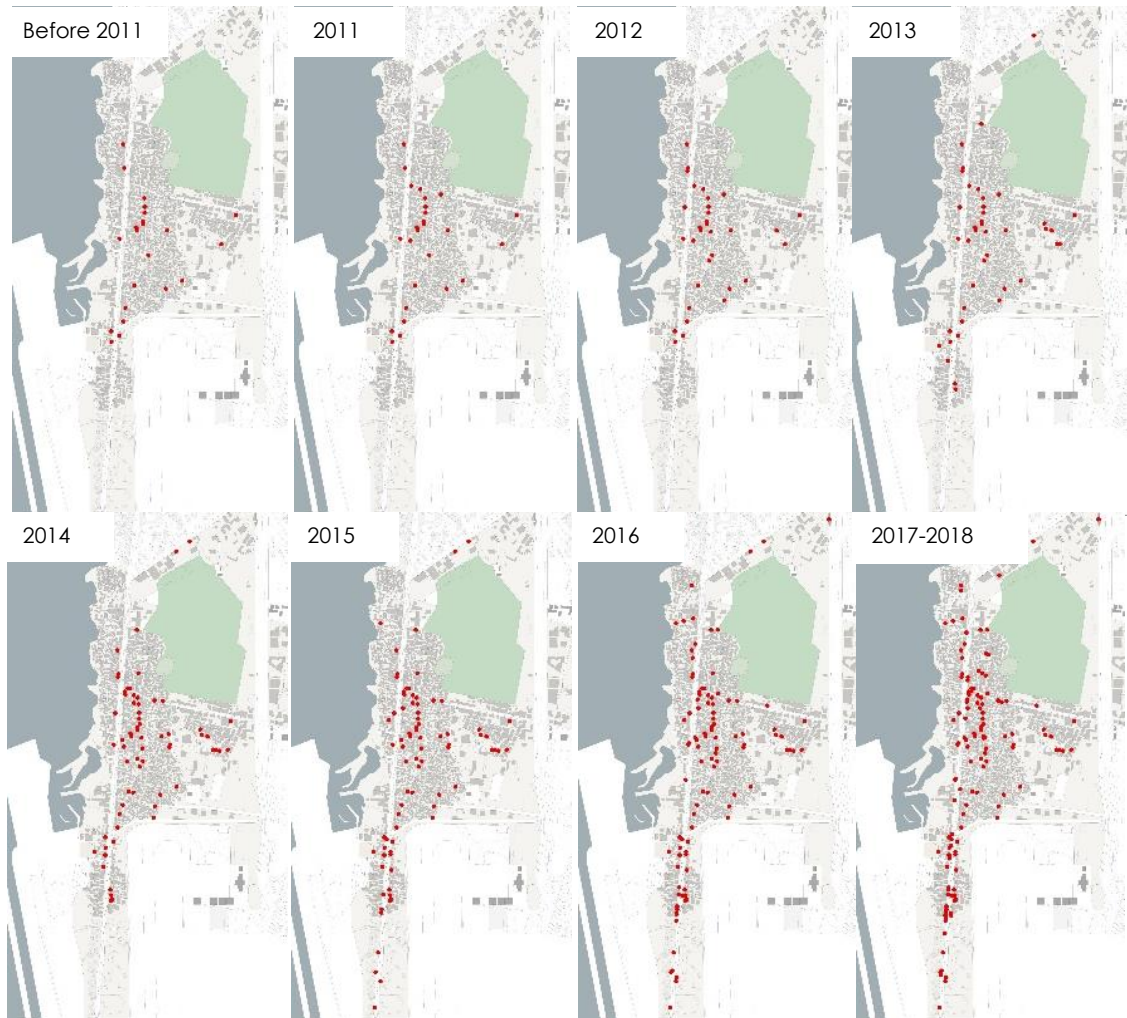
Figure 36 Syrian Businesses' Distribution throughout the years
Source: Author

• **Businesses' legal and occupancy status**

Given the informal character of Ouzaii, Syrians seek working there as many haven't issued the required working permits and legal documents. Numbers show that Syrians who open businesses in Ouzaii are not registering their businesses. This is explained by

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either the illegal status of the former owners of the operated shops or the illegal status of the Syrians themselves.
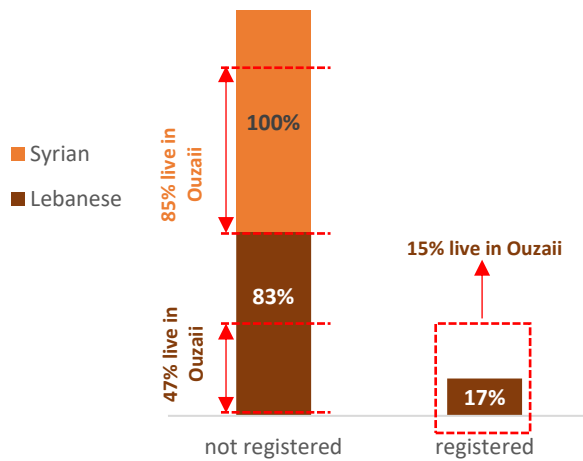
Figure 38 Business Registration
Source: Author
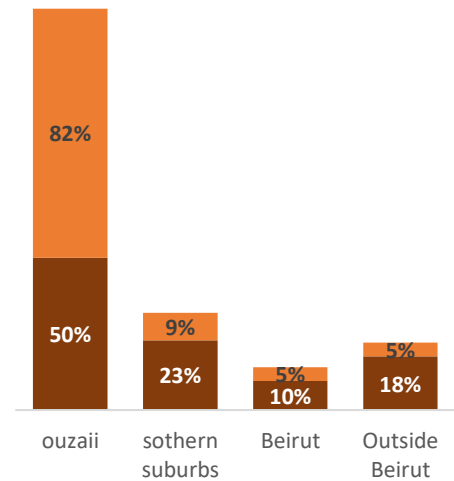
Figure 37 Shop owners' place of residence
Source: Author

85% of the non-registered Syrian business owners live in Ouzaii. This signifies the capacity of Ouzaii as a site for 'living' and 'working' at a time. Compared to the Lebanese businesses, 17% only are registered with the majority of the owners living outside Ouzaii. While out of the 83% non-registered Lebanese businesses, 47% only live in Ouzaii compared to the 85% of Syrian business owners living in Ouzaii. (Figure 38)

The majority of Syrian business owners live in Ouzaii compared to 50% of the Lebanese business owners. The percentages of Syrian business owners living outside Ouzaii is negligible compared to the Lebanese (Figure 37). This is explained by a common trend that prevailed after 2014 when some of the Lebanese shop owners who lived in Ouzaii

rented out their apartments to Syrian families. In this regard, Somayya, a Lebanese shop owner who lived in Ouzaii for more than 20 years, explains why she left her apartment in 2013 and rented it to Syrians. She states:

"renting my apartment in Ouzaii for 500$ to Syrians made it possible for me to rent another apartment in Aramoun- outside Beirut- with better services and location. Thus, I was able to keep my business and upgrade my accommodation."

Syrian businesses are mostly rented spaces with only 2% are owned spaces that opened between 2002 and 2003. At that time, these shops were informally sold by their former owners to Syrian men. 2% are invested spaces over a specific period of time. Compared to the Lebanese, owned spaces constitute 40% of the total Lebanese businesses, with 59% are rented spaces. Thus, Syrians prefer to rent spaces with no legal binding documents between the renter and the owner as most of them don't have the required working permit documents.

• **Business occupation**

As discussed in the case profile chapter, Ouzaii is vastly equipped by commercial activities in addition to plenty of workshops and light industry. The major business sectors include cars, furniture, and everyday goods. The emergence of Syrian businesses in Ouzaii contributed to the activation of the streets of Ouzaii, particularly the Ouzaii Boulevard, as a public space which was in decline before 2011. (Figure 39Figure 40Figure 41)

The opening of Syrian businesses in Ouzaii demonstrates the ability of Syrians to penetrate through a mostly Lebanese market, especially for the two prevailing business sectors; furniture and mechanics. The furniture shops are mostly located on the Ouzaii Boulevard with few located on the Maramel-Ouzaii street and on the peripheries of the inner neighborhoods. Syrian furniture shops are located mostly on the northern part of the Ouzaii Boulevard creating multiple clusters close to each other.
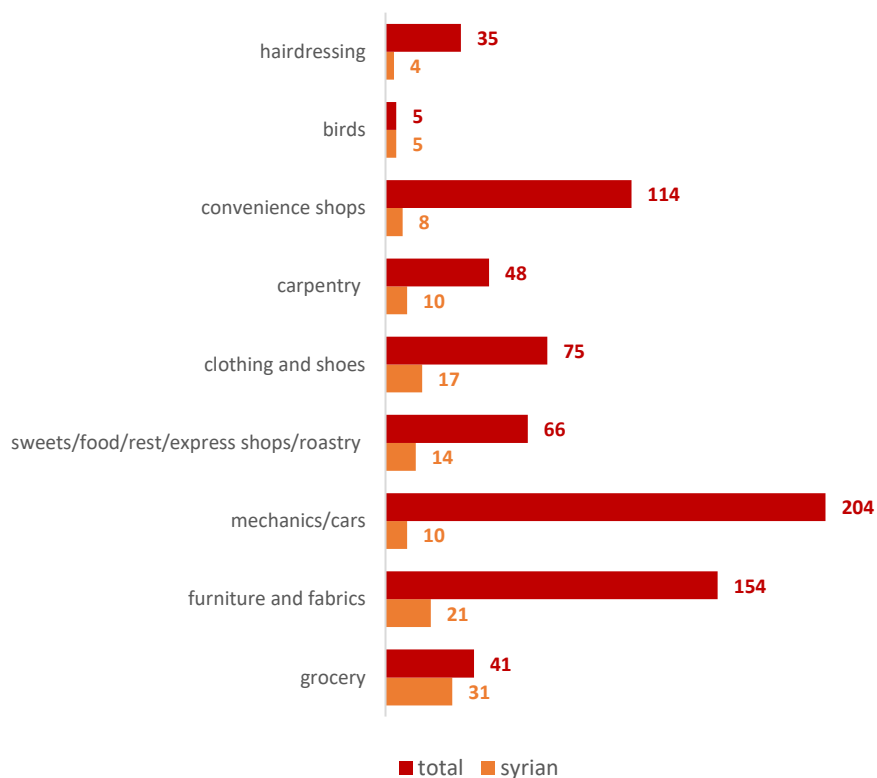
Figure 39 Business sectors' distribution
Source: Author

Out of 154 furniture and fabrics shops, 21 are Syrian shops. The Syrian nationality can be identified from the names of these shops that refer to names of Syrian cities and traditional Syrian furniture they display on the sidewalks i.e. Al-Sharq furniture, Al Cham

furniture and Al-Turas Al-Arabi antiques which is specialized in *musaddaf* furniture; very common in the Syrian culture.

Out of 204 mechanics, garages, and auto parts shops, 10 are Syrian businesses that opened after 2011. The new Syrian garages that opened after 2011 are located at the southern part of Ouzaii, which is the least active. Based on interviews with different shop owners, the concentration of Syrian mechanics shops in this location has three explanations. Firstly, shops in this area are more affordable than shops on the Maramel- Ouzaii street that is known for accommodating most of the car garages and auto parts shop. Secondly, the vacancy rates and the number of struggling businesses on the Maramel- Ouzaii street were so minimal which decreased possibilities for Syrians to open on that street. Thirdly, mechanics shop owners in Ouzaii have created an internal lobby among each other backed up by the social families. This hinders Syrians from opening their garages on the Maramel-Ouzaii street and prefer to operate their shops outside this lobby.

Grocery shops are particularly appealing in Ouzaii. The way the shopfront displays are meticulously organized is influenced by what Syrians call the Grocery Salon (صالون خضار), in a manner that appeals to both the local and Syrian clientele. Out of 41 total grocery shops in Ouzaii, 31 are Syrian shops. Unlike most of the other uses, Syrian grocery shops, as they constitute the majority of grocery shops in Ouzaii, are strongly present on the Ouzaii Boulevard. They are as well strategically located to suffice the local

needs of each of the inner neighborhoods. Most of the Syrian grocery shop owners originate from Edleb who are known for mastering selling groceries in Syria.

The area is highly equipped by daily goods shops and are located within every and each neighborhood. 8 out of 114 convenience stores are Syrian shops. Despite their small number, Syrian convenience stores are strategically located in the dense neighborhoods where Syrian clusters are mostly located. Furthermore, Syrians operate many of the Lebanese owned stores. Most of the stores are managed by Syrians coming from Dara'a who are known for opening convenience stores in Syria.

Food shops and roasteries are common also in the Syrian culture and this is evident in the number of new opening restaurants, cafes, and roasteries managed by Syrians counting 14 out of 75 in total. Most of these shops are either opening in the inner neighborhoods or to the southern part of Ouzaii. The Syrian identity of these shops is identified from their names and the food they serve i.e. Amir halab restaurant, Zahrat Halab juice, etc. Bird shops are common in Ouzaii and are managed by the Syrians; 5 shops are counted on the main street. The bird shops reflect the old practice commonly known in the Syrian culture as "alhememati-الحميماتي " or the 'breeder of birds.' After 2011, Syrians brought back practicing 'kash al hamam' to Ouzaii although it is an illegal practice since the area falls within the Air Aviation restriction zone. Birds shops are located at the southern part of Ouzaii, close to each other, and creating a birds' specialty zone.

Carpentry is also common in Ouzaii. Few shops are located on the main streets and the majority are located in the inner neighborhoods. After 2011, Syrians opened wood workshops in vacant shops of the inner neighborhoods which had no commercial activity. 10 out of 48 in total wood workshops have opened after 2011 by Syrians who were carpenters in their home country.

Clothing and shoes shops have played a role in activating tertiary streets. They are mostly located at the end of Maramel-Ouzaii street. Syrian shops extend to one of the tertiary streets that used to have many un-operated shops. Zahraa, a 28-year-old Lebanese woman who lives in Ouzaii, asserts that the Syrians have activated the clothing and shoes market drastically. She states that: "Syrians have created a fashion trend in the area by spreading the same clothing (from Syria and turkey) and shoes fashion all over Ouzaii. Interestingly, these shops have Syrian and Lebanese customers.
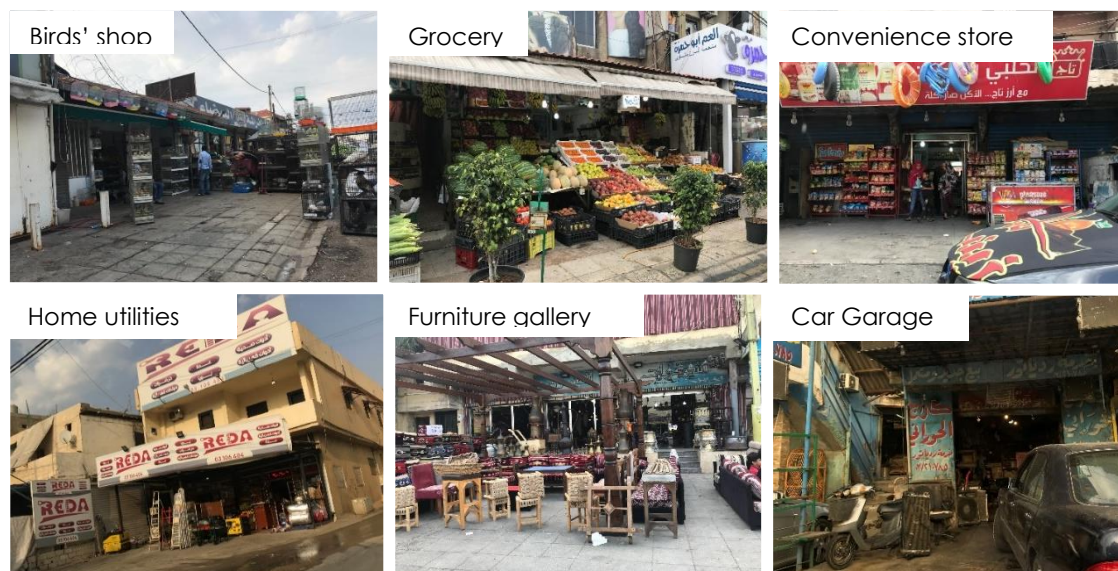
Figure 40 Some of the Syrian owned businesses in Ouzaii
Source: Author

Furniture

Garages, Autoparts

○ Syrian business

Grocery

Convenience Shops

67
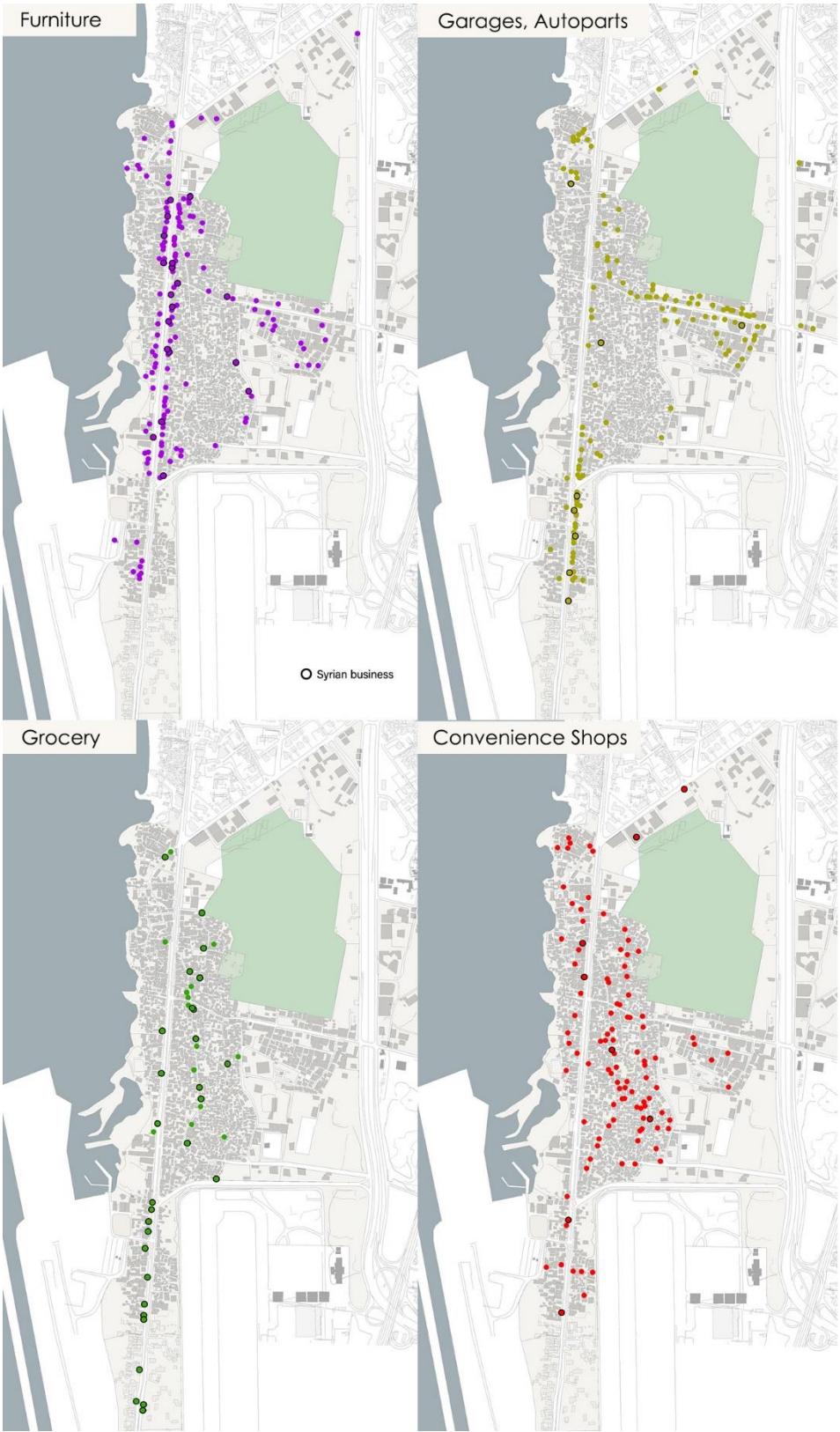
Figure 41 Mapping of economic units per function
Source: Author

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2. *Syrian businesses: a catalyst for market activation*

• Syrian businesses enforcing the commercial activity of Ouzaii

The comparative analysis of the spatial arrangement of the Syrian businesses and the non-Syrian businesses in Ouzaii signifies how the first influenced the spatial arrangement of the other after 2011. This section focuses on the units that opened after 2011.

The previous occupation of these units shows that the Syrian businesses composition was constituted of 21% light industry units/ workshops, 45% commercial units, and 34% vacant units. The current occupation of these units shows that the previously vacant units percentage was divided between the commercial and the industrial sector leading to 30% industry units/workshops of which 6% had same previous occupation (garages and furniture workshops) and 70% commercial units (mostly grocery, furniture, and convenience shops) (Figure 42). Syrian refugees, during the first years of their displacement to Ouzaii, tended to open shops more than workshops. They explain this by referring to 'network building'. They argue that commercial activities required direct connections with the communities in Ouzaii whereas industrial and workshop activities required more external connections outside Ouzaii which took them time to build. This has led to immensely enforce the commercial character while was slightly promoting the industrial character (Figure 43).

Correspondingly, this interpretation applies to non-Syrian businesses. The research shows that out of the non-Syrian businesses that opened after 2011, 14% were originally light industry units/workshops, 42% were commercial units, 44% were vacant shops. The current occupation of the non-Syrian businesses is constituted of 21% workshops of which 5% has the same previous occupation mostly garages (20 workshops), 79% commercial units of which 18% has the same previous occupation, mostly car auto-parts, furniture, and convenience shops (Figure 45Figure 44).
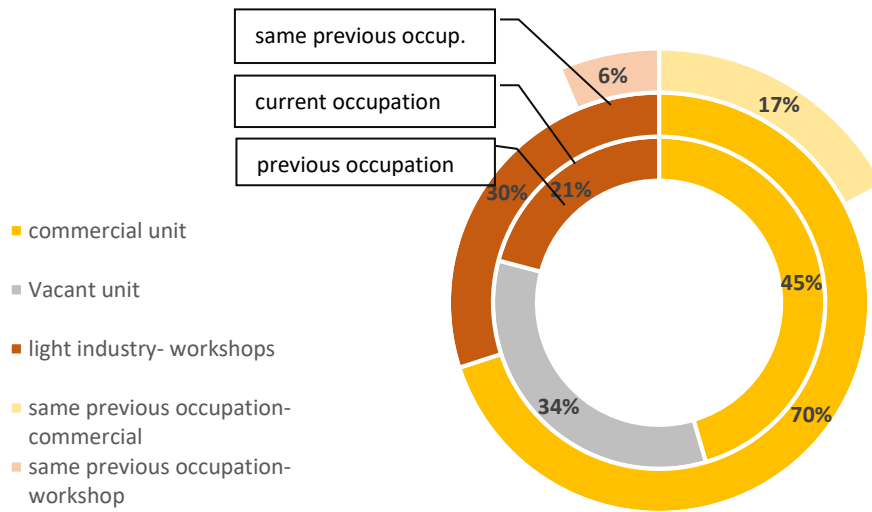
Figure 42 Percentage distribution of Syrian economic units per occupation
Source: Author
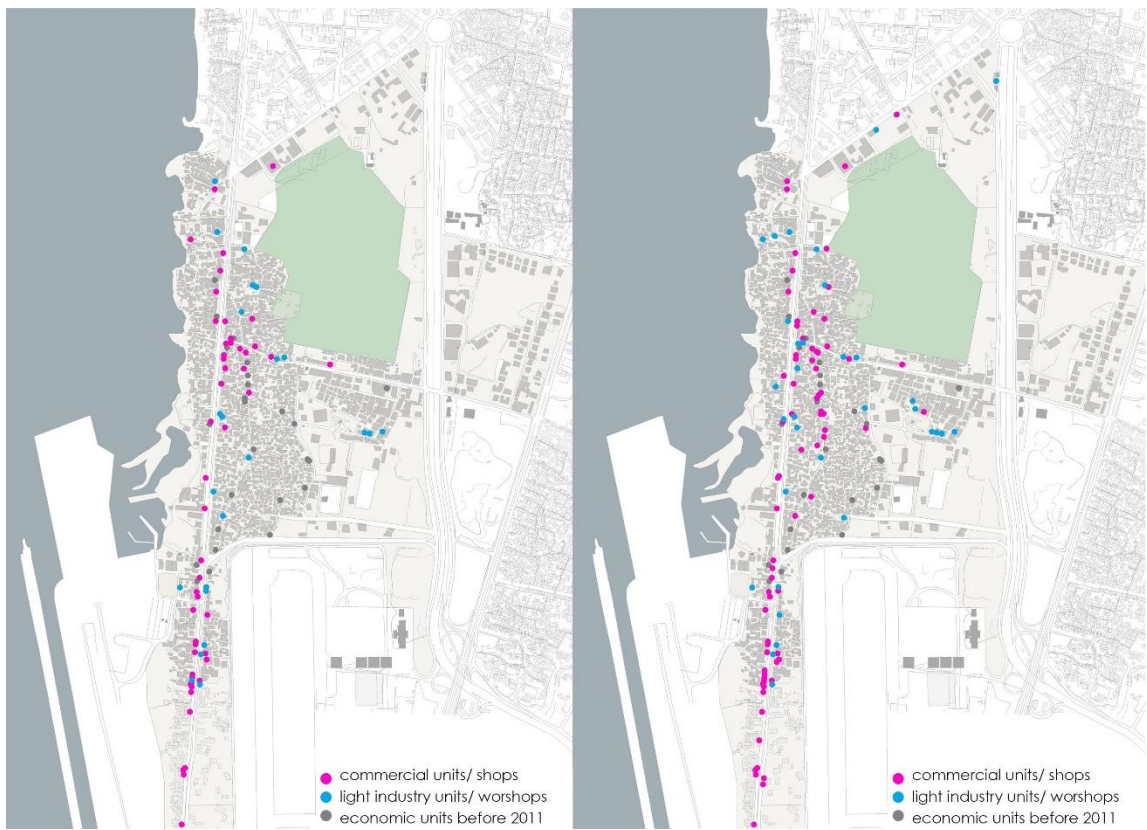
Figure 43 Distribution map of previous and current occupation of Syrian economic units
Source: Author

same previous occup.

current occupation

previous occupation

- commercial unit
- Vacant unit
- light industry- workshops
- same previous occupation-commercial
- same previous occupation-workshop

5%

18%

21%

14%

42%

44%

79%
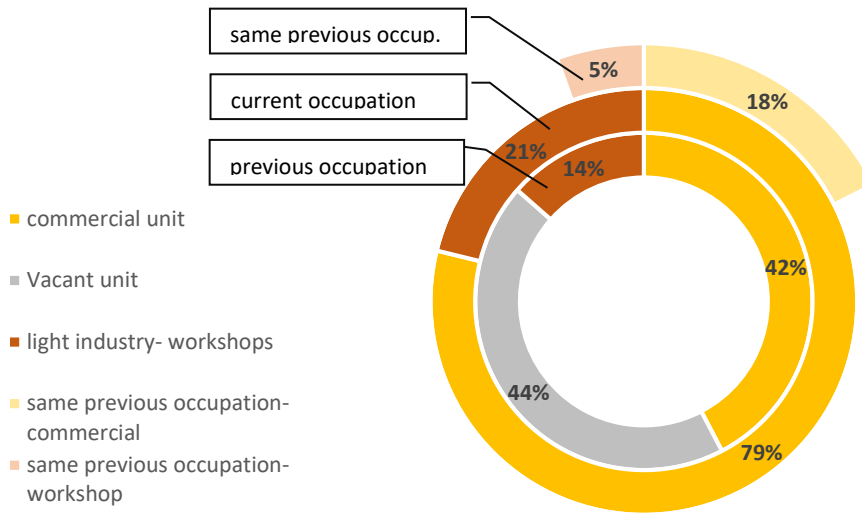
Figure 45 Percentage distribution of non-Syrian economic units per occupation
Source: Author

The gypsies neighborhood

AL-Maqbara neighborhood

Industrial zone

Ouzaii-al Ghadir

- commercial units/ shops
- light industry units/ worshops
- economic units before 2011

- commercial units/ shops
- light industry units/ worshops
- economic units before 2011
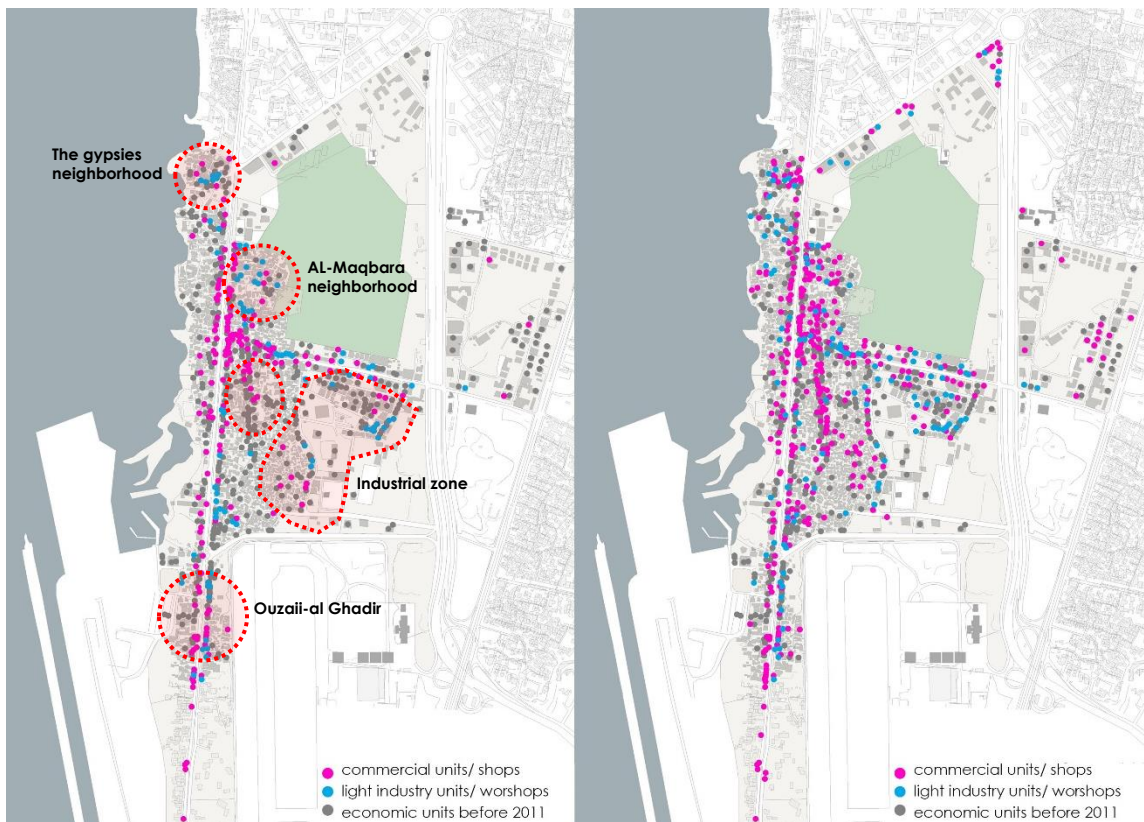
Figure 44 Distribution map of previous and current occupation of non-Syrian economic units
Source: Author

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The economic identity of some neighborhoods have been transformed, enforced, or further promoted considerably. Maps show that Syrian businesses enhanced the commercial aspect of the market especially on the main streets (Ouzaii Boulevard and Ouzaii-Maramel street). They have slightly promoted the industrial aspect of the inner neighborhoods. The non-Syrian businesses (mostly Lebanese) have entirely transformed specific neighborhoods from light industry to commercial i.e. Al Maqbara neighborhood and the Gypsies (Alghajar) neighborhood. However, the economic light industrial/workshop activity of other zones was further promoted and enforced i.e. the industrial area, Ouzaii- Al Ghadir area (Figure 44).

• **Syrians reviving 'struggling businesses' and decreasing shops' vacancy rates**

As asserted by many of the interviewed shop owners, many shops and workshops were closing during the economic recession until 2014. These were struggling businesses (Figure 47) of which many re-opened under the same function by either new managers or the same owners after undergoing some improvements to their businesses. They are mainly located on the main streets and mostly include car, furniture, and everyday shops. The re-opened Syrian businesses are mostly located on the main Ouzaii street. This is evident in the narrative by Abu Karim, a former Lebanese furniture gallery owner in Ouzaii. Abu Karim rented his gallery to a group of Syrian refugees who settled in Ouzaii in 2014. He states:

"I never imagined that this shop will operate well. When I took the decision to rent it out, I was thinking of the amount of money I will get out of the rent.

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Today, the gallery is doing really good, those people are really genius. They

were able to create a special furniture gallery that sells traditional Syrian

furniture."

Most of the previously vacant shops (Figure 46) are located in the inner neighborhoods,

especially those which are opened by the Syrians mostly lie to the east of the Ouzaii

Boulevard. The few previously vacant shops on the main streets include furniture shops

and garages. Most of the previously vacant units in the inner neighborhoods opened as

everyday stores, convenience stores, grocery shops, and pastry shops to suffice the

emerging daily needs of the neighborhoods becoming denser after the Syrian refugees

settlements in Ouzaii. Syrians were involved in this process either as business owners or

as employees. The main drive for the Syrians to open vacant shops in the inner

neighborhoods was that shops in these areas were much more affordable and the few

vacant shops on the main streets were so expensive. A Syrian shop owner explains during

an informal conversation in this regard that

"it was safer, more concealing, and definitely more affordable to open and

operate a shop in the inner spaces than on the main streets."

 'Safety' corresponds to hiding from the municipal police checks after the illegal opening

businesses and escaping the political and social tensions that are more present on the main

streets. 'Affordability' is explained by the fact that inner shops are much cheaper as most

of them were vacant/unoperated spaces. the increasing demands encouraged many

Lebanese to open shops in these spaces and employed Syrians to run these spaces for their

low-cost labor. A Lebanese mini market owner further explains in this regard:

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"Syrians have good retailing skills. As a Lebanese shop owner employing a

Syrian to operate my shop, I am bringing in Lebanese and Syrian customers

to my market. This is how I kill two birds with one stone!"
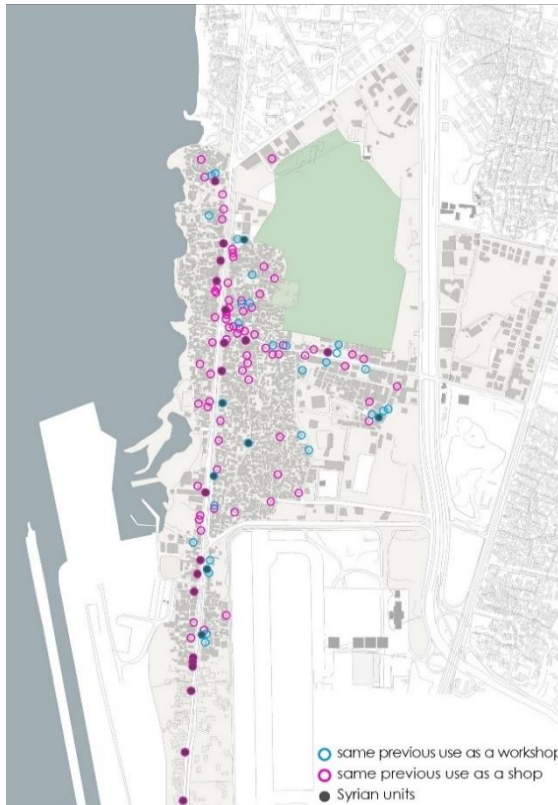
Figure 47 Distribution map of economic units having
same previous use
Source: Author

Figure 46 Distribution map of previously vacant
economic units
Source: Author

3. *Syrian refugees 'mixed embeddedness' a way to combat exclusionary practices*

Syrian refugees in Ouzaii devise their own 'innovative' tactics and strategies to overcome

the political and social constraints and exclusionary practices to become 'embedded' in

Ouzaii economy.

• **Existing Socio-Political Constraints**

Firstly, one of the major constraints Syrian refugees face in Ouzaii is the social power. This is illustrated in the story of Mohammad, a Syrian refugee who owns a mini-market on the Ouzaii Boulevard. Mohammad was bothered by one of the well-known asha'er members who opened an express on the storefront of Mohammad's store as a way of disturbing and restricting his businesses. The Syrian shop owner stated:

> "the owner of the express opened it as a form of control and exposure هو
> فتحها وجاهة وسيطرة. They are renting the sidewalk that is public owned by
> هيدا الرصيف يلي هو ملك الدولة هني مأجرينا اياه بـ450-ألف $300 the state to us for
> .... they bring whoever they want to sit in the express and I can do nothing
> ...بجيبو زعران لهون وما فيني قول شي."

Secondly, political parties play a role in feeding and soothing these constraints. On one hand, Hezbollah is trying to keep the area under surveillance for security purposes. Although their members in Ouzaii comply by the decision of the high command which allows Syrians to work and operate shops in the area, they make sure to 'keep an eye' on them by assigning agents to monitor the streets. On the other hand, Hezbollah has completely restrained the act of collecting tributes (خِوّة- *khowwa*) by force from Syrian shop owners by some of the asha'er members.

• Syrian 'Tactics' as a means of increasing their 'embeddedness'

Syrians adopt tactical practices to maneuver around the constraints in Ouzaii. They devise innovative techniques that sustain their businesses and enhance their collective presence in the market of Ouzaii. Syrian refugees have developed special relationships with the communities in Ouzaii manifested in the infrastructures of care, discussed in chapter three, which extends beyond the refugee community to the Lebanese hosts. This is explained by the high social spirit Syrians have and their intention to tactically become embedded in these localities. The concept of embeddedness encompasses both its concrete (social networks) and abstract (referring to the context) meanings of the concept. Firstly, Syrian shop owners use special communication language and hospitality practices with the customers. They have strong verbal techniques that encourage and convince customers to buy from their shops and benefit from the services they provide. They usually stand outside their shops inviting customers to come in. Common inviting phrases Syrians use: تفضلوا زورونا وشفوا البضاعة يلي عنا *come and visit us to see the high-quality goods we sell,* ما بتكونو إلا راضيين *you will definitely be satisfied with our services,* بأمرك أنا – *I put myself at your request.* In some food shops, they give free juice or drink if it's the first visit as a form of hospitality حسن الضيافة.

Secondly, Syrians have further created informal 'specialty collectives' through which each group of shop owners buy their raw materials and goods together from primary sources at cheaper prices. This is very common among grocery, birds, and wood shops. Thirdly, Syrian business owners have developed a solid professional capital among each other. They have set meeting spaces in cafes or in front of Syrian shops where they discuss

their work and life issues and notify Syrians in need about job opportunities. They recommend each other's work to people especially in the construction field; i.e. if one is renovating an apartment for example, he/she can get a full contact-list of painters, tile workers, carpenters, etc. from a single contact person.

Consequently, Syrian refugees as business owners have contributed to the activation of the market in Ouzaii, enforced its commercial identity and promoted its industrial character, transformed some neighborhoods, and operated spaces that were vacant for years.

D. Syrian refugees as 'innovative' labor force: Lebanese/Syrian partnerships at Al-Hadi port[12]

In the previous section, the research sheds light on Syrians as business owners being part of the so-called 'entrepreneurial systems' that is contributing to the local economy of Ouzaii. This section presents an example of how Syrian refugees as labor force are being involved in these entrepreneurial systems and the economic cycle in Ouzaii. It argues that the informal socio-economic and spatial practices of the Syrian refugees at Al-Hadi Port in Ouzaii, backed up by the presence of local political parties, contribute to the activation of the port as a social, economic, and leisurely space. The section uses Asef Bayat's (2010) notion of the 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary' as a means of increasing the 'mixed embeddedness' of the Syrian refugees into the context of Ouzaii in general and

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[12] This section is published in the edited edition of Refugees as City Makers, AUB, co-authored with Prof. Howayda Al Harithy

the port in specific. It further demonstrates how the tactical practices provoked the 'mixed embeddedness' of the Syrian refugees with the socio-political complexities of the area, created an economic cycle at the port.

As discussed in chapter three, Syrians in Ouzaii host and support each other in finding shelter and work by sharing their skill sets and social networks. They are able to face marginalization, sustain their livelihoods, and as a result, directly impact the development of their host environment through tactics that Asef Bayat describes as 'quite encroachment.' According to Bayat (2010), the urban disenfranchised, ''through their quiet and unassuming daily struggles, refigure new life and communities for 'themselves' […] not through formal institutional channels, from which they are largely excluded, but through direct actions in the very zones of exclusion'' (2010, p. 5). These tactical practices enforce the embeddedness of the Syrian refugees into the dynamics taking place in Ouzaii. This is evident in the study and analysis of the informal practices around Al-Hadi fishermen port in Ouzaii. Furthermore, the quiet encroachment of the Syrian refugees at the port goes beyond the intention of survival to a subsequent economic boost and leverage in the area.

1. Al-Hadi Fishermen Port[13]

Figure 48 Evolution of the port area- a. 1998 (Army Directorate) b. 2004 (google earth) c. 2017 (google earth)

Al-Hadi port was built in 2002 and reconstructed in 2006 after the severe destruction caused by Israeli strikes on Ouzaii during the 33-day war with Hezbollah. The port was designed to accommodate 75 boats, and coffee and repair shops were added during the reconstruction process (Figure 48). Three parties control the activity of the port: Hezbollah which exerts political influence to facilitate informal practices, the fishermen cooperative which oversees logistical matters, and the Lebanese army which monitors entry to the port. According to Mr. Jamal Alameh, Head of the fishermen cooperative in Ouzaii, foreigners are not allowed to work at the port independently from Lebanese managers and without a work permit and a fisherman ticket (تذكرة صياد بحري)[14]. However, he mentions the limitations of the cooperative's authority in enforcing these requirements due to the political influences.

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[13] This section is based on three semi-structured interviews conducted by Batoul Yassine in Arabic. The interviewees included: Mr. Jamal Alameh, Head of the fishermen cooperative in Ouzaii, a Syrian fisherman, and Al-Mina Café owner.

[14] Only Lebanese and Palestinian fishermen are granted the fishermen ticket.

Before 2011, there were only two Syrian fishermen working under the supervision of Lebanese managers but without the required legal documentation. They came to Ouzaii from Aleppo and have been at the port for 20 years. After 2011, some of the Syrian refugees who settled in Ouzaii had to leave their professions. As a form of 'quiet encroachment,' the two Syrian fishermen offered them extensive training in fishing skills. Out of the total 120 fishermen, Al-Hadi port currently has 50 Syrians mostly from Aleppo working informally. One of these fishermen recounts his story in an interview:

> *I have been here since 2011. My brothers eased my way into the port, trained me, and secured work for me with one of the Lebanese fishermen. I acquired fishing skills almost in a week.* (Syrian Fisherman, 2019)

The activities of the port after the Syrian settlements attracted Lebanese investors from outside the profession. After 2011, many retired teachers and military personnel were encouraged, due to the increasing activity of the port after the Syrians, to purchase new boats for mostly Syrian fishermen to manage, given that only Lebanese and Palestinians (with up to 51% shares) can legally own boats in the port. They found that investment in

Figure 49 People gather to buy fish at the auction market
Source: REUTERS/Mohamed Azakir April 29, 2015

this sector is profitable and as result, generates new opportunities and additional money to the port. These complementary partnerships between Lebanese owners, who are legally deemed to ownership and Syrian managers who are bound to labor enhanced the capacity of the port that increased from 75 to 336 boats and the fishing volume more than doubled compared to pre-2011 (Figure 49).

The interviewed Syrian fisherman explains how they tactically grasp opportunities to manage the new boats:

> *Whenever I know that someone is willing to invest in buying a new boat, I inform my friends in need of a job to contact him. We help each other this way.* (Syrian Fisherman, 2019)

The Lebanese owner of Al-Mina Café, the only coffee shop within the boundaries of the port since 2011, also asserts that:

> *The Syrian is very smart 'محنك و حربوء'. He learns fast, grasps any work opportunity, and knows how to maneuver quietly.* (Owner of Al-Mina Café, 2019)

Another form of the quiet encroachment by the Syrians is their tendency to work two shifts[15], which encouraged many Lebanese fishermen to increase their work load as well. Mr. Alameh mentions that this practice contributed to further increasing the port's capital to reach $180,000, the highest in Lebanon.

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[15] There are two work shifts in the port, one in the morning (3 am-9 am) and another in the afternoon (3 pm-9 pm). Usually, fishermen work for one of the shifts.

Furthermore, the activation of the port enhanced the productivity of Al-Mina Café; as the owner mentions:

I have benefitted from the activity in the port. I rely on Syrian fishermen as customers, as well as the visitors of the port. (Owner of Al-Mina Café, 2019)

Many coffee shops opened next to the port after 2011 (Figure 51)[16], some of which are managed and operated by Syrians and open for 24 hours a day for the fishermen to rest (Figure 50). This commercial activity increased the exposure of Al-Hadi port to the public. Leisurely sea tours are regularly organized to allow visitors to learn about the port in relation to the sea edge. The tours are limited to boats operated by Lebanese fishermen.

Figure 50 The upper cafe which opens 24 hours a day
Source: Author
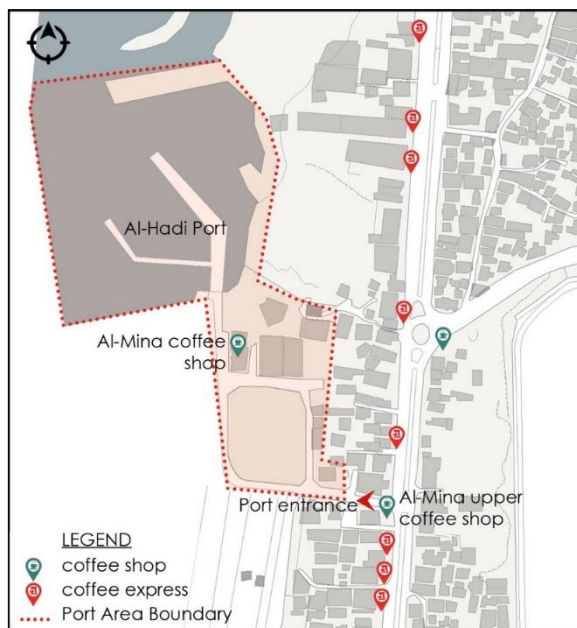
Figure 51 Express and coffee shops opening after 2011 in the port's vicinity
Source: Author

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[16] Mapping based on field work by Batoul Yassine

Consequently, through the 'quiet encroachment' of the Syrian refugees into Al-Hadi port to survive and improve their livelihoods, they devised ways to secure work and master new professions. In turn, through their 'quiet' tactics, they transformed the area and contributed to the activation of its economy after years of recession before 2011. In the case of the port, Bayat's notion of 'quiet encroachment' is uniquely grounded in an economic cycle that relies on the support between Syrian refugees to meet livelihood requirements in partnership with Lebanese boat owners. These partnerships have promoted the 'embeddedness' of the Syrian refugees into the port. Thus, the port expanded beyond its use as a site of mobility and work to become a sturdy infrastructure that boosts the economy by attracting investments and enhancing leisurely activities that connect Ouzaii to its vicinity. Through the example of the port, the chapter illustrated how informality is practiced and protected through the dynamic coupling between Syrian refugees and the Lebanese political party of Hezbollah towards the activation of what was otherwise a state governed space.

E. Conclusion

In conclusion, Syrian refugees in Ouzaii enforced their 'mixed embeddedness' into the informal context of Ouzaii through a set of tactical practices and business strategies. These tactics allowed them to overcome, infiltrate, and adapt to the socio-political constraints of the site. They formed un-intentionally 'entrepreneurial systems' that involved not just the Syrians as business owners and labor force but the Lebanese as well.

These systems contributed positively to the economic cycle in Ouzaii that should acknowledge the political decision of Hezbollah in allowing Syrian to work in Ouzaii and mediate the emerging tensions that arise as a result.

CHAPTER V

AN EMERGING LAYER OF LEISURE PRACTICES

A. Introduction

While there is a substantial volume of research devoted to the unique leisure behavior of ethnic minorities and immigrants (Hutchison, 1987; Irwin, Gartner, & Phelps, 1990; Floyd, Gramann, & Saenz, 1993; Stodolska, 2000), the leisure life of 'refugees' remains an almost unexplored subject.

The existing immigrant and leisure literature focuses on immigration-induced changes in leisure, including patterns of participation in leisure activities and the behavioral changes of immigrants (Rublee & Shaw, 1991; Tirone & Shaw, 1997). It further stresses the role of constraints that prevent immigrants from participation in desired new leisure activities (Yu & Berryman, 1996; Stodolska, 1998). Studies suggest that leisure activities are rich opportunities for immigrants to socially connect with host individuals, develop their cultural understanding and knowledge, and thus enhance their integration into hosting communities (Stodolska & Alexandris, 2004; Li & Stodolska, 2006). As these studies typically restrict leisure activities to modes of 'adaptation' in host communities which facilitate the inclusion of the 'new comers', none of them addresses the impact of leisure practices of immigrants or the displaced on the hosting communities and how they spatially define, produce, or activate leisure spaces despite the socio-political challenges they face. On the other side, refugees' social lives in literature focuses on the everyday

practices of the disenfranchised, their quiet, silent, and 'tactical' advancement to '*survive*' and '*improve*' their lives (Bayat, 2010).

In this chapter, I go beyond these terms of 'adaptation' and 'survival' to argue that the displaced are transforming the spaces of leisure in Ouzaii. I argue that the Syrian refugees are inscribing new layers of leisure and are interpreting the public and shared spaces differently. Despite the monitoring practices of Hezbollah and some exclusionary practices by the asha'er members, Syrian refugees, through tactical practices, are producers of leisure activities and activators of once dormant shared spaces. The chapter builds on Bayat's (2010) notion of 'the quiet encroachment of the ordinary' that explains how refugees, through their quiet tactics, encroach over the socio-political constraints of spaces in Ouzaii. I argue that their encroachment allows them to produce and activate spaces of leisure rather than just improve their own quality of life.

This chapter focuses on two forms of social interactions that correspond to two different spatialities: (1) places of intersection between leisure and work where activities are influenced by the commercial activity on the main strip, and (2) spaces of free leisure that are detached from commercial activities where free time practices take place. Since this chapter records the urban transformation, I intend to map and analyze spaces that have emerged after 2011, the date when the Syrian crisis began. I look at existing spaces that were re-activated by Syrians as well as newly opened spaces. I adopt a combined method of quantitative and qualitative research methods mainly based on spatial analysis that encompasses application of ethnographic studies.

- For studying the work/leisure practices, I consider cafés, café express shops, restaurants, and sports facilities as places of recreation and socializing. I have mapped 71 spaces that constitute all the work/leisure spaces. 55 spaces were selected to be studied constituting 77% of the total count of the mapped spaces. The business owners of these 55 spaces were those who agreed to be interviewed. The 55 spaces were distributed as follows: 21 express café, 19 café, 12 restaurants, 3 sports facilities. The analysis is based on 55 semi-structured face to face interviews conducted with shop owners/managers of the previously identified spaces. Since the analysis is intended to track the transformations that took place and to measure the influence of Syrian newcomers on the leisure life in Ouzaii, questions of the interviews included: year of opening, nationality of the business owner, current and previous occupation, percentage of Syrian customers, if there are any forbidden practices, what has changed after the Syrians settled in Ouzaii, what makes this space a destination for the Syrians, what type of ties have arisen between Syrian and Lebanese users. The analysis is further complemented by chats and discussions with users of these spaces, whenever encountered, to document how users perceive these spaces and act in them.

- For studying the free leisure spaces, I have recorded my observations that extended over several months to first identify these spaces and then further identify and analyze the socio-spatial practices in the highly active spaces spotted by conducting informal chats with the users. Chats were conducted with passersby, sea users, children playing, women and men sitting outside…

Three main spatial entities are identified: the commercial strip as the first edge, the sea as the second edge, and the inner spaces in between. I further distinguish the users of these spaces according to nationality, gender, age, class, and sect and interpret a multitude of practices as inclusion/exclusion and tactics of transgression to access exclusive spaces.

B. The Ouzaii main commercial street as the first edge

The Ouzaii boulevard which is known for its high economic activity, has witnessed after 2011 opening of several leisure spaces. Most of the coffeeshop, express shops, and restaurants in Ouzaii are located on this main street. Three spaces are located close to the sea edge of which one is located inside the Al-Hadi port. The inner neighborhoods accommodate only four coffeeshops. (Figure 52)

GOLF COURSE

MARAMEL--OUZAH---STREET

OUZAII BOULEVARD

port

AIRPORT

LEGEND

- coffee shop
- coffee express
- resto-food
- sports' facility
fishermen port

- opened after 2011
- activated after 2011
- opening soon

Figure 52 Mapping of Leisure
Facilities in Ouzaii
Source: Author

1. *An increased demand for leisure spaces*

An assessment of shop openings indicates a very high correlation between, on the one hand, the pattern of shop opening and, on the other, the arrival of refugees signaling that the rise of leisure economic activities is strongly correlated with this group (Figure 53Figure 54). Thus, it is noticed that 77% of the spaces opened after 2011 with 42% marking the highest opened between 2014-2016, the period that marked the maximum number of incoming Syrian refugees into Lebanon. Out of the 77% (40 shops), 65% had no previous occupation where the majority were new independent structures, or café expresses encroaching the sidewalks. 10% were originally cafes owned by Lebanese who rented their space to either unemployed youth or Syrian new commers to run these spaces. Another trend comprising 5% of the shops opening after 2011 were subdivided from an existing shop (furniture, motorcycles…) where most of the owners of these shops complained about their struggling businesses and found in opening a café boosting of their existing business by bringing more people into their space. These findings highlight the impact of the Syrian flow to Ouzaii in establishing more spaces of leisure due to the increased demand for leisure spaces.
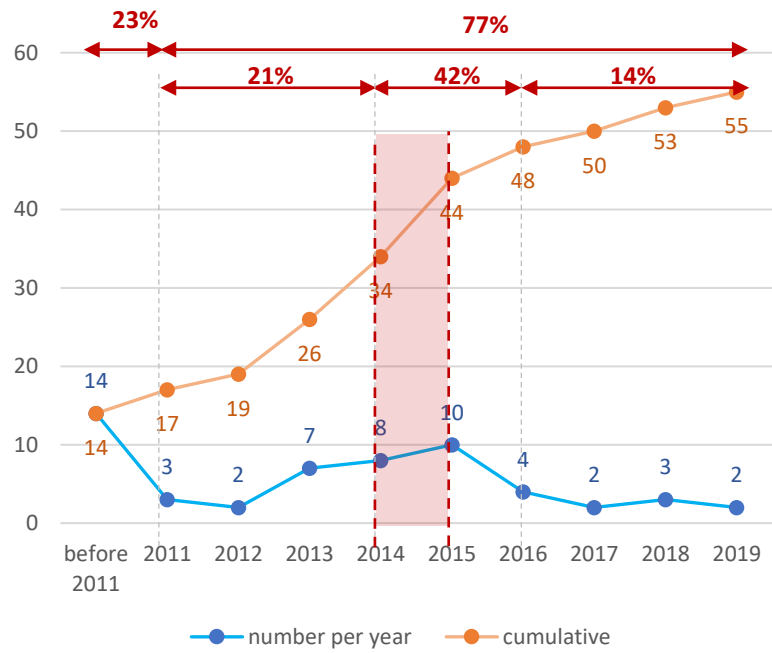
Figure 53 Graph of opening units per year
Source: Author
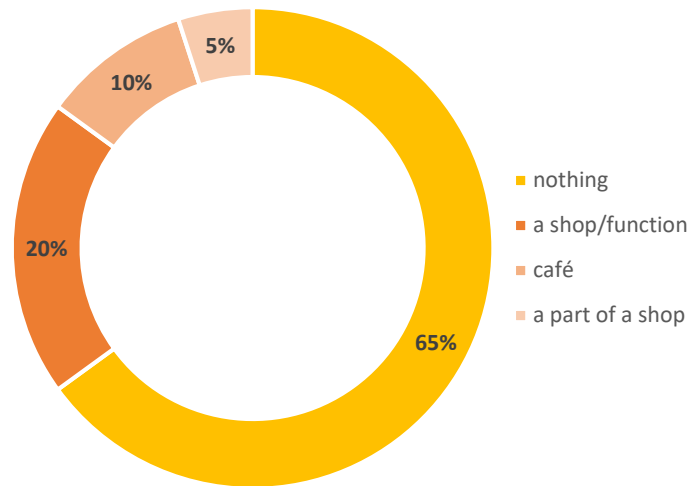
Figure 54 Previous occupation
Source: Author

2. *Syrian refugees as managers of leisurely spaces*

Due to the existing local power structure of political parties and social hierarchies, Syrians face hardships in operating a coffeeshop or any space of leisure (Figure 55). About two thirds of the stores are managed/owned by Lebanese (34 by men and one shop by a woman), with only one third of the stores are managed by Syrians and one single partnership between a Syrian and a Lebanese. Building on some of the Lebanese interviewees' narratives, Syrian managers might hardships encounter in resolving fights and confrontations that happen in the coffeeshops. One of the Lebanese Coffeeshop owners explains "It's hard for a Syrian to manage these spaces. They usually return to us for conflict resolution". By 'us' he means the two power forces in Ouzaii asha'er families and the Hezbollah. Despite this interpretation, 31% is considered a break-through the exclusivity of a territorial model of leisurely owned spaces by Lebanese and the emergence of more flexible hosting spaces for Syrians as users to act in. This is validated
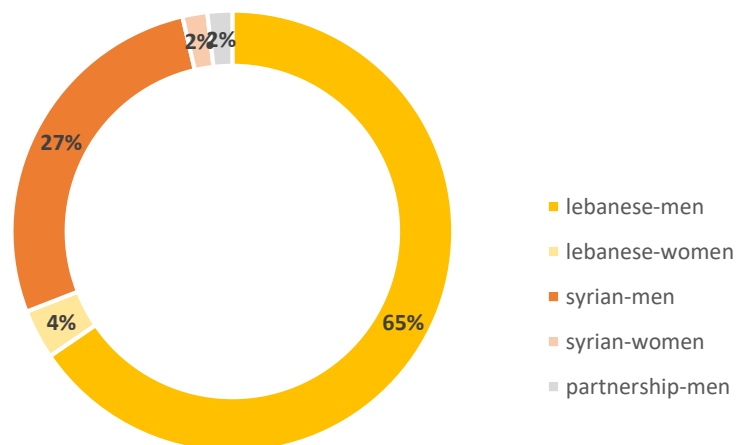
Figure 55 Unit Management per nationality and gender
Source: Author

93

by the percentages of Syrian customers in these Syrian owned-spaces where 13 out of the 15 Syrian owned leisure spaces have more than 60% of their customers Syrians.

3. *Syrian refugees as users of leisure spaces*

About two thirds of the businesses rely on Syrian costumers[17] (Figure 57), irrespective of whether the owner is Syrian or Lebanese. Among the stores that cater primarily to a Lebanese clientele are five restaurants that have been opening in Ouzaii for 30-40 years. These spaces are not concentrated in one location but dispersed all through the Ouzaii Boulevard. Syrians do not go to these spaces due to their high prices. Therefore, numbers demonstrate the impetus of Syrians resorting to affordable spaces of leisure.
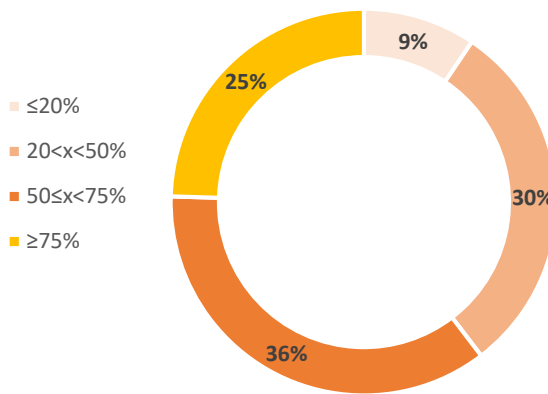
Figure 57 Percentage of Syrian customers
Source: Author
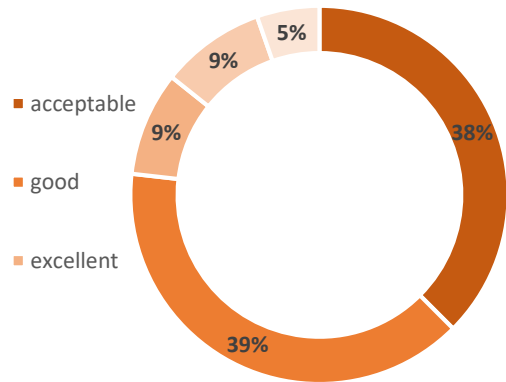
Figure 56 Business performance
Source: Author

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[17] Spaces that receive more than 50% are considered relying on Syrian customers

Further, addressing the positive attribute of Syrians seeking leisure in Ouzaii (Figure 56), 95% reported that their business is doing well after 2011. 38% rating it as acceptable, 39% as good, and 9% as excellent, with another 9% avowed that it is still acceptable, but their business was doing better in 2014-2015, pointing out to the year where it marked the climax of incoming Syrian refugees to Ouzaii.

4. *Special services contributing to high levels of activity*

Special services provided by leisure spaces in Ouzaii promote their activity and bring in more Syrian customers who mostly lack these services at their homes. Most cafes and express shops managers forbid playing cards as they believe this gives rise to fights. Only a few allow playing cards, offer free WIFI, and have gaming equipment (baby foot, billiard, badminton). These cafes target mostly Syrian customers and show the highest activity among the others mapped.

9 out of the 21 surveyed express shops offer limited seating places and mainly extend these seating at night when the adjacent shops close extending their spaces beyond their own spatial limits and extend to the adjacent sidewalks. 2 of these spaces are being managed by Syrians. This indicates that the area requires more seating spaces at night which intensifies informality in this regard.
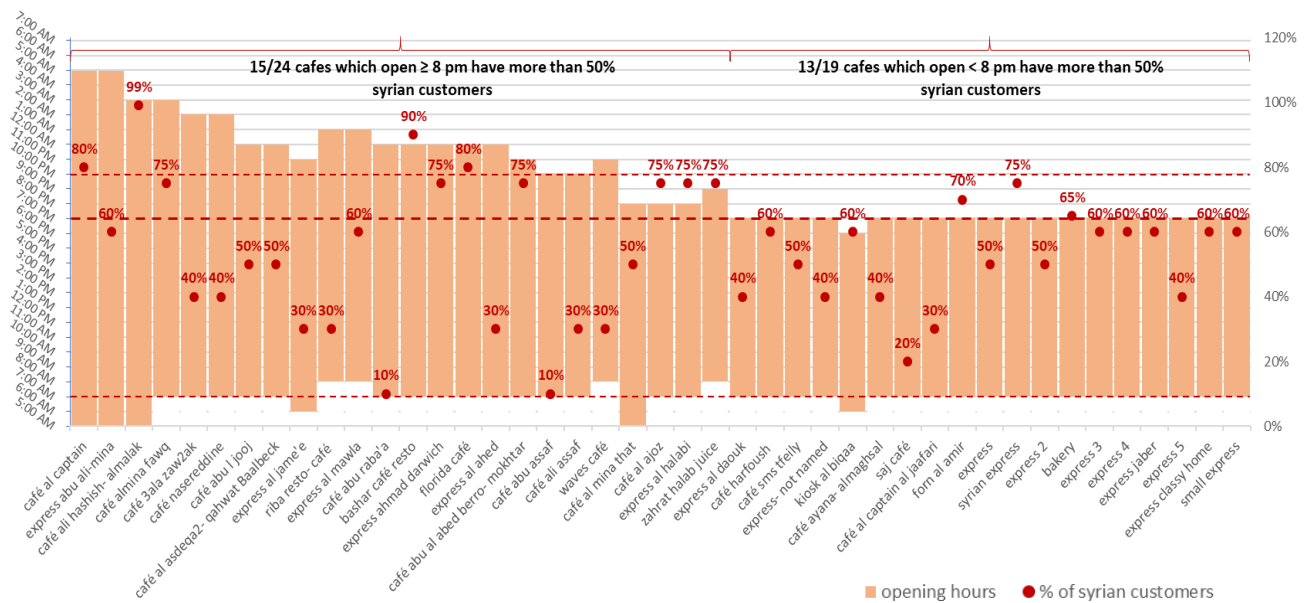
Figure 58 Percentage of Syrian customers as a function of opening hours of leisure spaces
Source: Author

In the process, Syrians have adopted special communicational 'tactics' with Lebanese shop owners that pushed these shops to trespass some of the rules imposed by Hezbollah in the area. Extending opening hours of some leisure spaces at night is one example that illustrates this trend. Half of the surveyed coffeeshops and express shops open till late night hours with 8 cafes and express shops open till early morning hours maximizing the time for people to engage in free leisure time at their spaces, especially Syrians who find it more flexible to use these spaces at night as they work mostly during the day (Figure 58). Although many of 'shabab al hay'- *the neighborhood's youth-* stated that Hezbollah has slapped a night-time curfew on the Syrians (they are not allowed to stay after 8 pm outside their homes), these cafes serve as areas of transgression to this rule. Syrian men and youth tend to use special tactics to create a sense of trust with owners of these spaces and display a high sense of abiding by the 'rules' of the cafés which have pushed many

coffeeshop owners to extend their opening hours beyond midnight and allow Syrians to stay that late.

Delving into what practices take place in these spaces and how Syrians access these spaces, I have identified a multitude of practices and interpreted these practices as forms of exclusion/inclusion, inviting/restrictive, and tactics of transgression for exclusive spaces.

5. *Tactics of exclusion/inclusion*

• **Nationality (exclusion)**

• *Territoriality/power as exclusionary/inclusionary motivation*

As it is known in Ouzaii that territoriality is what rules the social and spatial formation, in terms of residential and commercial spaces. Thus, it is common to hear the Assaf, Al Mawla, Zaiter neighborhoods, etc. To many of these families, they have created their own virtual boundaries that define their 'territory'. Regarding the leisure sector, the notion of territoriality is present as well. Some of the shop owners claim their territoriality by excluding 'foreigners'- Syrians as they call them. They perform exclusionary action or put some intolerable rules to push Syrians not to come to their place. They consider that keeping Syrians out of their territory maintains their power over the space. One stated that:

> "I ask them to lower their voices. They have intolerable loud voices, even 'shabab al hay' won't allow them to stay late. This is the Assaf's Neighborhood."

Nevertheless, this is not the rule, other cases demonstrate the opposite scenario in which political and social power offer cover and support for some of the Syrian coffeeshop owners by limiting troubles and maintaining peace. Many of the interviewed Lebanese shop owners mentioned that "Syrians build relations with asha'er members and Hezbollah to protect their back بيحمي ظهره بالأحزاب والعشائر".

• *Intimidating clusters as active surveillance*

Gatherings of 'Shabab al hay'- *the neighborhood's youth*- is one of the major tactics adopted by the Lebanese people to passively hinder the free participation of Syrians in leisurely activities (Figure 59). Mainly gatherings happen in strategic locations where activities are vigorous, i.e. intersections and well-known express shops. At these

Figure 59 Lebanese men sitting on sidewalks in front of one of the express shops
Source: Author

locations, 'Shabab al hay' can monitor the follow of outsiders and foreigners. Thus, these gathering become intimidating to Syrians specifically.

- *Service preference*

Some coffeeshop owners limit their services to specific clientele. Aref, a Lebanese coffeeshop owner and a member of one of the most powerful tribal families in Ouzaii, follows a strategy of excluding Syrians from his coffeeshop. Usually, he removes all the seating during the day and sets one or two tables for his selective customers during the night. He states that: *"if I set all the tables, they (Syrians) will come and sit for hours. I prefer to keep it so limited and set one or two tables for selective customers."*

- **Nationality (inclusion)**

- *Trust and care*

Many Syrians have acquired a relation of mutual trust and care with the Lebanese coffeeshop owners. In these specific coffeeshops (Figure 60), they meet on a daily basis, serve themselves and pay for what they are served by themselves as well. They explain that these coffeeshops provide special services for them as payment facilities and serving meals for Syrian workers. This relationship is based on trust and care and thus pushes Syrians to enjoy their leisure time at these coffeeshops and further recommend these places for others. One of the Syrian customers stated:

> "Here we are one family; it's not a relationship between an owner and a customer. It's more than this. Here, we care about each other. For instance, if we notice that the daily earnings are low, we gather our friends

هون نحن عيلة وحدة ما في علاقة زبون وصاحب محل، أهل -to make up for the loss

بين بعض، منسأل عن بعض إذا ما حد ما اجا شي يوم، منفأد إم علي إذا ما اجت شي يوم، إذا شي

يوم حسينا الغلة قليلة منجيب أصحابنا ومنيجي لنعوّض".

Figure 60 'We care about each other'- Syrians in one of the known cafes in Ouzaii
Source: Author

- *Fostering and Support*

Coffeeshops that are managed by socially known people (*mukhtar*, abaday al hay- *the strongest man in the neighborhood*…) play crucial roles in supporting Syrian refugees in Ouzaii. They serve as the connection between Syrians and employers, political parties, and institutional authorities. They practice their former role in connecting people together with Syrian refugees coming to their coffeeshops who they believe they need their support. For example, Café al mukhtar was described by one of the Syrian customers as *the trust and integrity station* محطة الأمانة والثقة.

- *Social security, support, and protection*

Some Syrian coffeeshops represent meeting stations for Syrian daily workers and street vendors (Figure 61). In some of these coffeeshops, several Syrian street vendors gather

to spend some time and wait till noon to start working. They hide their products and carts to escape the municipal police in the morning. These spaces serve as caches for Syrian informal practices. Other coffeeshops managed by Syrians serve as gathering nodes for daily workers where they communicate work opportunities among them.

Figure 61 An express shop serving as a gathering spot for daily workers
Source: Author

- *Unique service provision*

As mentioned before, there are some coffeeshops that provide exclusive services for Syrians that are not offered elsewhere in Ouzaii. These services include free Wi-Fi, and some games, billiard- baby foot, playing cards, etc. Café Hashish (Figure 62) is one of these spaces whose owner states clearly, "I rely fully on Syrian customers so I make sure to provide them with services they can't find elsewhere."

Figure 62 Hashish Cafe, unique service provision
Source: Author

Unique service provision extends to sports facilities. An important case to shed light

on is one of the football fields in Ouzaii. The owner states that it has been more active

and peaceful after the Syrians arrival. He states: "mainly the Lebanese are those who

make troubles, so I prefer Syrian customers". He organizes special tournaments for the

Syrians that he calls; "the martyrs of Syria", "Syria's Youth", etc. and has a football

academy where most of the registered players are Syrians. He further offers special

trophies and medals for the winners. (Figure 63Figure 64)
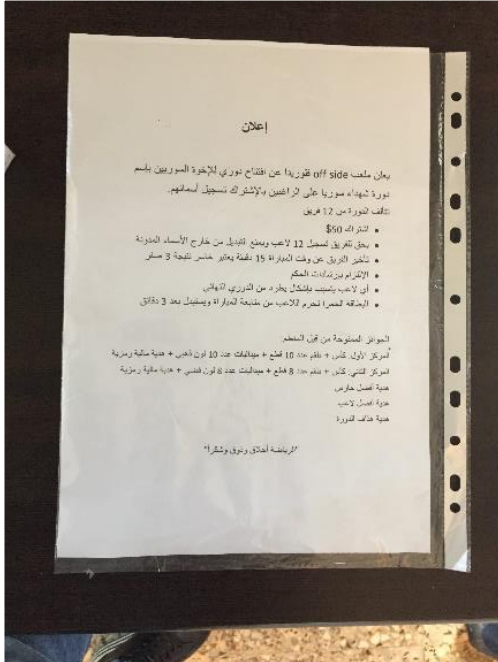
Figure 64 a new announcement for the 'Martyrs of Syria' tournament
Source: Author

Figure 63 special trophies with the names of the winners carved
Source: Author

• **Gender**

Coffeeshops and express shops on the Ouzaii boulevard are almost exclusive to men by

practice, since they are located on the main commercial street where most of the users are

men especially during the day (Figure 65). Women are more frequently encountered in

the coffeeshops close to the sea. These are more women friendly shops since they have

seating spaces that are not exposed, and they can practice their leisurely activities freely-

smoking narjile. Worth noting, Syrian women visit these coffeeshops more than Lebanese

women.

Sports facilities (Football courts) are exclusive to men as well, aging from 6 to late forties.

There are no gyms, football courts open for women in the entire area.
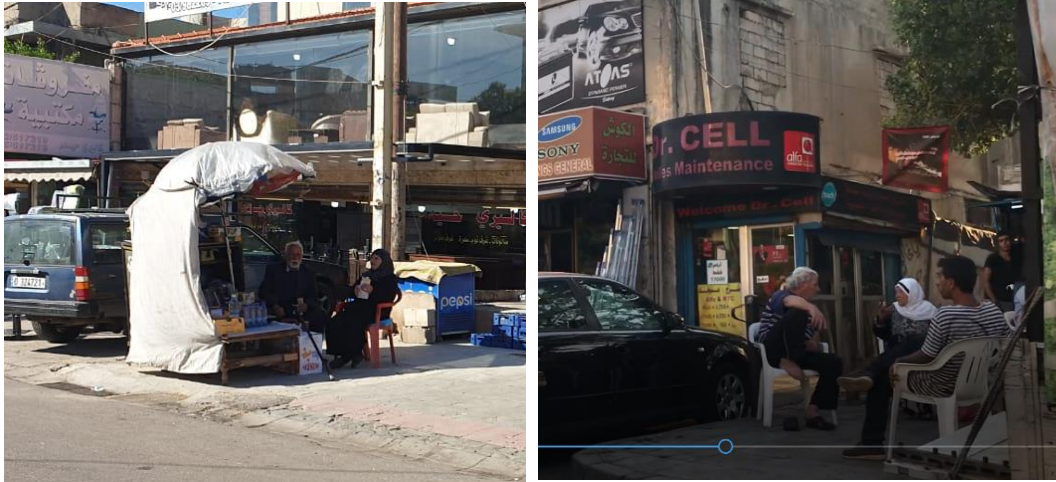
Figure 65 the only two encountered women during fieldwork on the Ouzaii boulevard are the wives of the express shop owners
Source: Author

• **Age**

There are no leisure enclosed spaces for children except for the one football academy and the football field mentioned above. One can rarely encounter a child in a café. Most cafés and express shop users age between from teen and 50s. The elderly tend to stay at home or gather in front of shops (Figure 66).

Figure 66 elderly sitting in front a grocery shop smoking nargile
Source: Author

• **Class**

The users of the mapped spaces on the commercial strip are mostly of extremely low-income groups. Coffeeshops on the sea serving people mainly from outside Ouzaii, the suburbs, and Beirut, receive low to mid-income groups. These coffeeshops are considered more expensive than the ones on the commercial strip. Another coffeeshop on the sea edge increased its prices due to a rent increase two years ago. The owner laments the decrease in the number of Syrian customers after raising the prices and explains how the work of his coffeeshop was doing when he had many Syrian customers. He states,

> "My coffeeshop used to be full most of the times, Syrian women, men, girls, boys, drinking nargile and having coffee at low prices. It was more active than nowadays."

C. The inner neighborhoods: activated and re-appropriated as shared spaces

1. Spaces morphology

Active spaces are mainly located between the commercial street and the sea whereby the upper (eastern) neighborhoods show less activity during day and night times. The upper neighborhoods are perceived by many residents as 'suspicious' spaces where youths gather and smoke weed or consume drugs including cocaine.

Seven highly active spaces were identified and mapped (Figure 67) in the western neighborhoods of which some host everyday socializing activities and others accommodate sports leisurely activities. The mapped spaces 'de facto' spaces that

105

encompass no commercial activities and have been activated mainly by children, youth, and women, especially Syrian. These spaces are either dead ends that expand spatially at their end, where many children tend to play football or hide and seek safely or are narrow streets that connect buildings to the sea.

2. *Syrian refugees reviving inner spaces*

The old residents of Ouzaii lament the old image of how the spaces between buildings used to be many years before. They used to serve as playgrounds for kids, gathering spaces for youth, men, and women where they socialize, chat, spend quality time in the morning and the afternoon. After the Syrian settlements, particularly in the inner neighborhoods that became denser, these spaces were activated again.

Figure 67 Mapped active inner spaces
Source: Author

A first interpretation of the transformation that occurred relates to the fact that the Syrian refugees in Ouzaii live as several households in one apartment. Thus, the limited indoor spaces they shelter in pushes them to extend their socio-recreational activities to the 'outside' and demonstrate active participation in shared spaces. As a result, Syrian youth and men accommodate porches and entrances as places to gather, socialize, smoke nargile, and have group seating for playing cards that is mostly forbidden in coffeeshops. While Syrian women are encountered sitting in front of their houses chatting and drinking coffee and nargile, it is less likely for Lebanese women to do so (Figure 69).

Figure 69 Syrian women smoking nargile in front of their house
Source: Author

Figure 68 Newly installed curtains to regain privacy
Source: Author

Furthermore, the settling of Syrian men in some of the neighborhoods has limited the privacy of Lebanese women who used to consider the ground floor porches and terraces as spaces of their leisure and free time. Currently, due to the wide accommodation of Syrians of the porches and the terraces, some Lebanese women had to install curtains to retain their spatial privacy (Figure 68).

Roof tops are revived as places for practicing birds breeding 'kash al hamam'. Syrians revived this legacy that is very common in the Syrian and the Lebanese culture. They re-activated rooftops which are commonly used as mechanical and technical areas after they were considered spaces for family and youth gatherings.

Lastly, the identified active inner spaces were found to be the most inclusive and engaging spaces for Lebanese and Syrians together especially children. More Syrian children were encountered especially in the morning and the noon times (as many of the Syrian kids either don't go to school or are engaged in afternoon school programs) while the afternoon times showed more of Lebanese and Syrian kids playing together in teams (Figure 70).

Figure 70 Identified active inner spaces
Source: Author

D. The sea: the other edge

In the 1950s-60s the Ouzaii beach was called the 'Golden Beach'- الشاطئ الذهبي. As discussed in the case profile, the beach was vibrant but started to gradually degrade with expansion of the informal settlements to transform into a highly polluted beach with dumps of wastes piling all through the sea edge. Today, the beach in Ouzaii is restoring back its old identity as a public active space witnessing after the Syrians settlements in 2011.

1. Sea accessibility and identified layers of the sea edge

Five layers compose the sea edge and spatially formulate the practices taking place at that beach.

a. The first layer is manifested by the buildings on the sea edge. Two to three story buildings extend over the edge with many having wide balconies overlooking the sea.

b. The wave barrier, ranging from 1m to 3 m high, poorly separates the buildings from the sea. One kiosk is built to this wall that serves drinks and nargile in summer times. This wall connects the inner spaces with the beach through several accessible and inaccessible routes. It is observed that some routes are inaccessible due to the presence of locked barriers and gates by the owners of the adjacent buildings. Other routes are open spaces and pathways open for anyone to use and reach the beach. Stairs are used as connecting routes to the beach of which some have extremely high steps that are hardly used by the elderly and the disabled (Figure 71).

c. The sandy beach hosts most of the leisure activities such as sports, kids playing, walking, picnics, and meditating, despite its detrimental condition and piles of garbage and plastics that rest on it.

d. The rocky platform that was formed after dumping piles of stone and wreck in the late 1990s where the port was first planned but not implemented. These rocky platforms host activities as fishing and chatting (Figure 72).

e. The water/sea were many come to swim, and water play albeit the huge sewage pipes that spill in the sea.

Figure 72 People gatherings on the rocky platform
Source: Author

Figure 71 An elderly gazing into the sea from above because he cannot reach the sea
Source: Author

2. *Identified set of practices*

Four sets of practices and distinguished users according to nationality, age, and gender are identified on the sea and demonstrated in (Figure 80).

• **Play**

Many youths (mainly men) gather and split in teams to play football, tennis, and volley ball. Many children, youth, and men come for swimming in one of the few least open public beaches. Syrian women are frequently encountered on the sea either swimming or chatting. Syrian and Lebanese kids come to the sea and engage in playing together (hide and seek, racing…). Syrian kids create their own floating kit using plastic bottles and gallons gathered from the wastes spread on the beach (Figure 74Figure 75Figure 76). Many Syrian
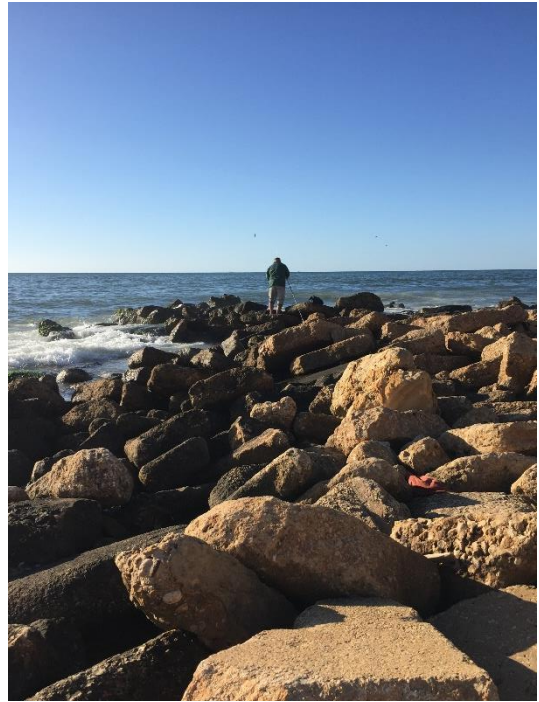
Figure 73 My Syrian neighbor made me come to this area for fishing after I stopped doing this for years
Source: Author

and Lebanese fishermen or amateurs come for fishing on the rocky platform. Sami is a Lebanese fishing amateur who stopped practicing fishing in Ouzaii for years until his Syrian neighbor encouraged him to fish again in the Ouzaii sea. He states: "I can't be more grateful for my Syrian neighbor who brought me back to this lovely sea." (Figure 73)

Figure 75 Families enjoying their weekend
Source: Author

Figure 76 Two kids, from Raqqa, Syria
creating their own swimming
equipment
Source: Author

Figure 74 Kids using their DIY swimming
equipment
Source: Author

• **Socialize**

Families, Syrians in specific, come for picnics on the beach where they bring their food with them and spend hours there. They have created spaces dedicated for this practice using thrown concrete blocks on the sea (Figure 77Figure 78). This practice is celebrated in the Syrian and Lebanese culture when families go for 'siran' – picnic, especially on weekends. Other socializing practices are chatting while drinking coffee or smoking nargile, either on the beach or from the overlooking balconies and rooftops. It is common

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to encounter beggars and fortune tellers as well, of which most are Syrians from Banyas living on the eastern northern part of Ouzaii.

Figure 78 A space built by Syrian refugees using concrete blocks
Source: Author

Figure 77 Practices of place making by Syrians using wood and tires
Source: Author

• **Relax**

Many people come to the sea for relieving stress and meditation, especially Syrians who have created their own spots of meditation re-using some of the thrown furniture on the beach (Figure 79). During several visits, Syrians were encountered sitting in the same spots as if they claimed this space as a 'meditation spot'. A Syrian

Figure 79 A Syrian kid from Aleppo meditating into the sea of Ouzaii and recalling his memories in Syria
Source: Author

man from Damascus explains: "I come to this place frequently to relief everyday stress and remember Syria. I feel that I can see Syria from here".

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• **Control**

As heard from many people and observed, some youth or men are based on the sea or in the surrounding buildings to monitor practices and users on the sea. Most likely, they are Lebanese affiliated with the political parties (*Hezbollah*) who is perceived by the people of Ouzaii as the party responsible for maintaining decency and peace in the area.
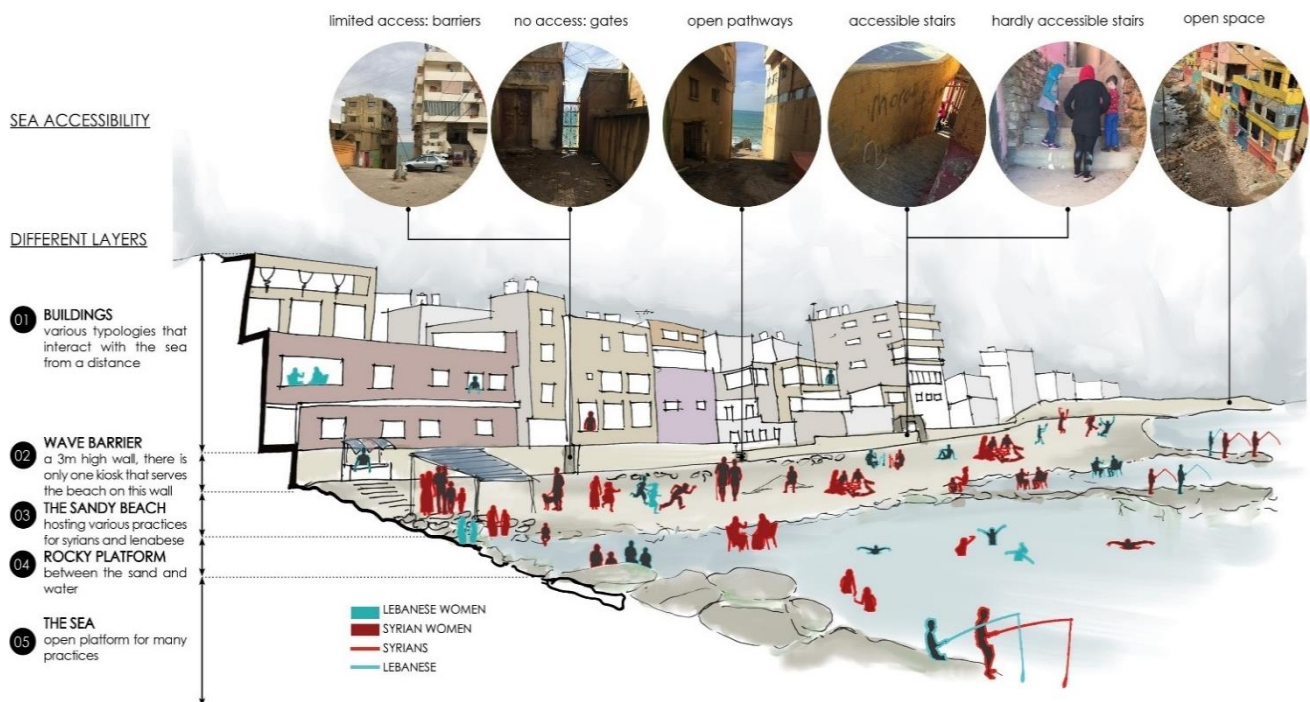
Figure 80 The socio-spatial practices taking place at the sea edge
Source: Author

3. *Space/time analysis*

Time is crucial in analyzing the spatial practices on the sea edge. Thus, I generate a space/time analysis to understand how the space changes throughout the day in terms of practices and users. The analysis is conducted during a sunny weekday knowing that

weekends and summer days have higher activity than weekdays and winter times, though the model is still representative (Figure 81Figure 82).

- Morning times show children playing. These are mostly Syrian children since many Syrian kids who are either enrolled in afternoon schools or not enrolled at all. Some Syrian youth also come upon for a walk and women are encountered on balconies doing '*sobheyyi'-morning visits*. Some Lebanese and Syrian fishermen come for fishing in the early morning as a leisure activity.

- Noon times show increased numbers of people on the seashore, mainly Syrians, with few Lebanese. More children are observed playing. More youth from both genders are observed having walks on the sea and swimming. Syrian women and their children are encountered starting noon. Syrian families come for picnics '*siran'* and stay for hours till after noon.

- Afternoon times are the peak times. More Syrians are encountered with Lebanese. Women, mostly Syrian, are seen on the sea during this time of the day chatting, smoking nargile, or having a walk. More Syrian men are observed during the afternoon with their friends or families. Youths are more likely to come over for playing and sporting. Seating in the shallow part of the sea is observed as well. More men fishing come in the afternoon to the Ouzaii beach. During this time of the day, there are high levels of control and monitoring of that extends till night.

- Night times show the least presence of Syrians with some Lebanese youth maintaining control over the sea. People are more observed to be sitting on balconies than on the beach.
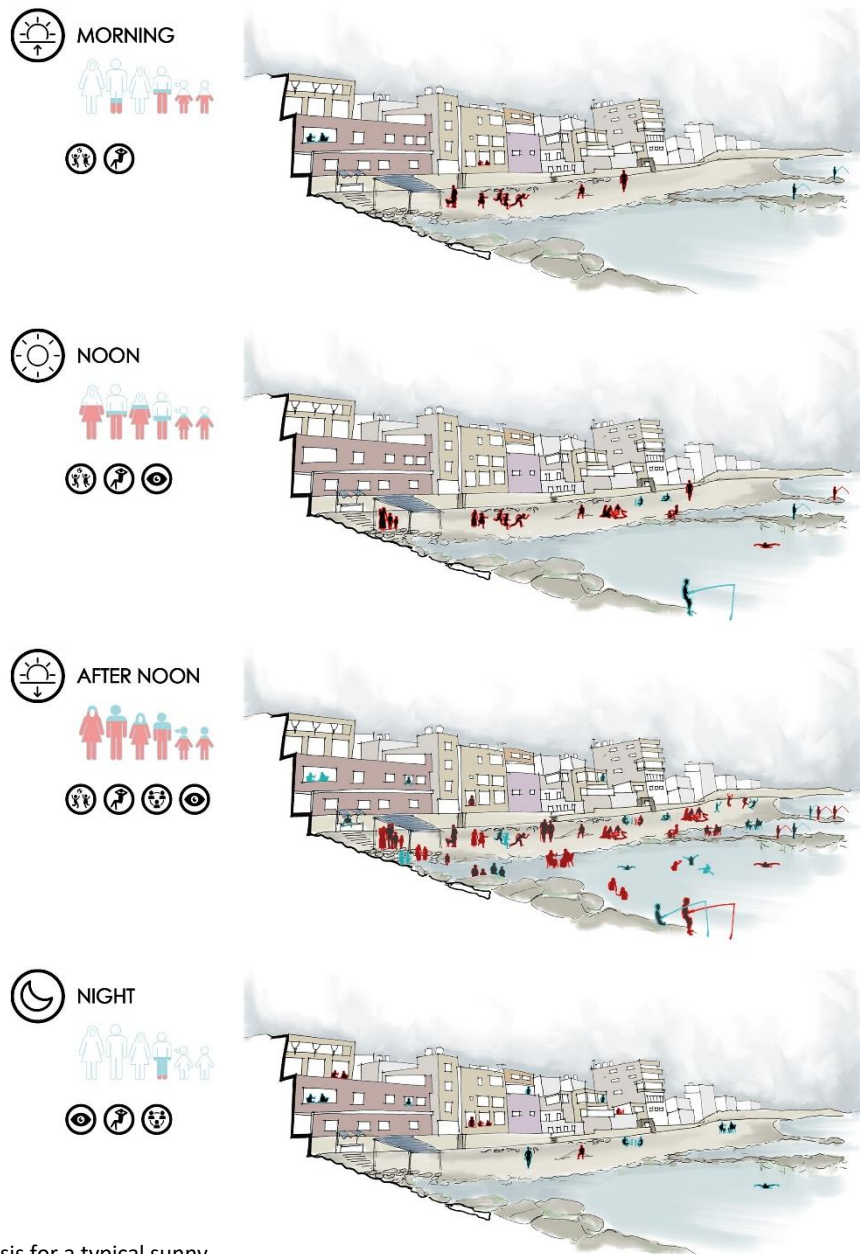
Figure 81 Space/time analysis for a typical sunny day on the Ouzaii Beach
Source: Author

This analysis identifies opportunities of meeting instances between different users. The spots where women come together and chat, where children engage in playing together, where fishermen stand together and fish. Consequently, the sea edge represents a promising opportunity for enforcing and promoting inclusivity and different users' engagement.
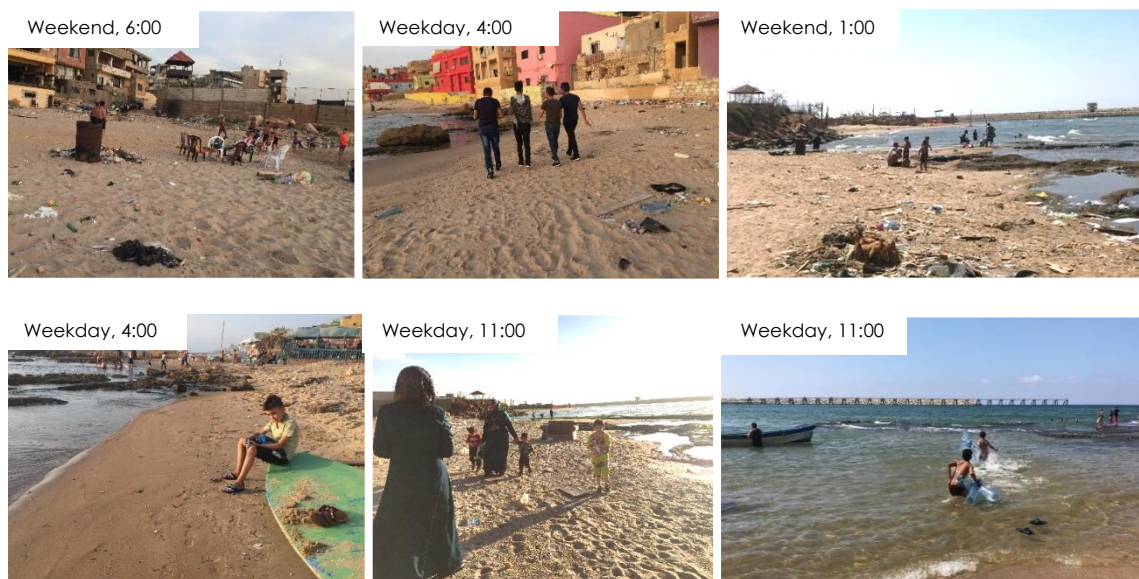
Figure 82 Activities on the sea during different times of the day
Source: Author

E. Conclusion

In conclusion, Syrian refugees in Ouzaii have enlivened the leisure activities on the Ouzaii commercial street whether as users or owners of leisurely spaces. They have further played a crucial role in restoring the active spirit of the inner spaces in between the buildings. Their major impact is illustrated in transforming the sea edge and reviving its old image as a leisurely space by re-defining active corridors that connect back the sea

edge to the neighborhoods of Ouzaii. The Syrian refugees' impact on the sea edge is strategic as the edge presents variable constraints and accessibility challenges. Stretches having blocked or privatized pathways render their impact minimal, while stretches with open pathways are the most transformed and activated (Figure 83).

The activation of the leisure life in Ouzaii is facilitated by the 'quiet encroachment' of the Syrian refugees through which they are able to overcome political and social
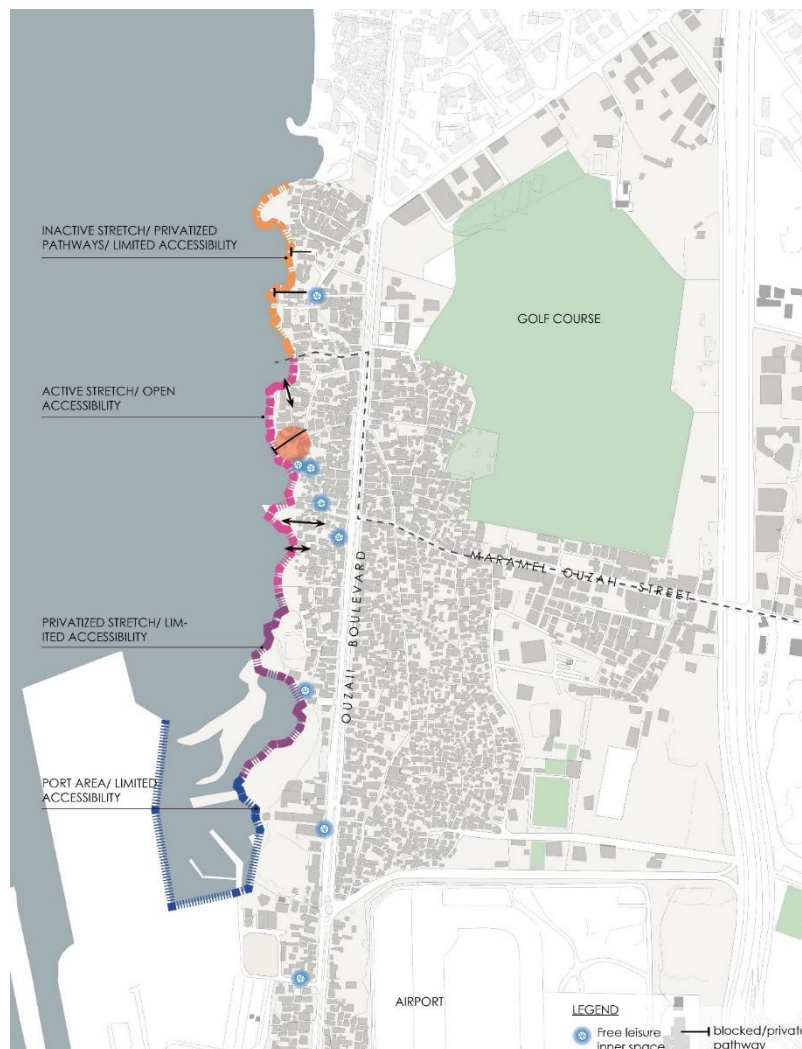
Figure 83 The sea edge: unevenly transformed stretches
Source: Author

challenges. Their tactical socio-spatial practices are further manifested in creating and redefining specific spaces on the sea edge with dedicated functions which they build themselves i.e. spaces for picnic, seating, and meditation. The findings of this chapter inform the strategic location of the intended design intervention that is discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI
DESIGN INTERVENTION AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Introduction

The socio-spatial practices brought along by the Syrian refugees to Ouzaii have activated some of the inner spaces between buildings, re-defined the sea edge as a leisure space, and enhanced the publicness of these spaces. This chapter builds on the positive impact of the practices of Syrian refugees and learns from their innovative 'tactics' in activating shared and public spaces, especially the seashore. Therefore, the design seeks to enhance and strengthen the public identity of the activated spaces and intends to achieve safety, sustainability, and inclusivity of these spaces by promoting accessibility and connectivity. The strategy proposes community based 'tactical interventions' that acknowledge the informal character of Ouzaii to further enhance the 'publicness' of the public realm that is not spatially limited to the location of the interventions. It further contributes to the conversation around the public reclamation of the coastal areas of the city of Beirut. It proposes a participatory implementation strategy that involves the different stakeholders and celebrates the engagement of the communities in constructing the defined and reactivated spaces. The proposed design does not stand alone by itself as an answer to the research questions, but rather interrogates the questions raised in the research and serve as a statement for further catalytic actions.

B. 'Tactical Urbanism'

1. Tactical Urbanism in the Literature

In many countries, people are seeking to activate neighborhoods through implementing small incremental changes rather than long-term strategic plans. These interventions, termed as '*tactical interventions',* are short-term, low-cost and scalable interventions (Lydon & Garcia, 2015). They are either sanctioned by public and local authorities (Webb, Avram, García, & Joyce, 2019) or are unsanctioned and happen in a more Do it Yourself (DIY) and informal manner by citizen groups or artists in these neighborhoods (Saitta, 2009). Tactical urbanism is associated with participatory approaches that engage communities in designing and implementing tactical interventions (Webb, Avram, García, & Joyce, 2019). This bottom-up approach to urban design is trending especially in the West. Planners, specialists and politicians are interested in learning from the DIY and tactical urbanism mechanisms and seek to incorporate them into urban planning processes (Fabian & Samson, 2015). These designs aim at re-appropriating public space by admitting real-space localities, needs, and constraints of the involved communities (Webb, Avram, García, & Joyce, 2019). They are further sought to be a tool for 'instituting organizational change' in power and control systems as Bela (2015) claims: "tacticians must push beyond the pop-up and the temporary and seek to hack the DNA of organizational structures themselves."

In this chapter, I build on the attempts by the Syrian refugee community in Ouzaii in re-activating the 'public' by proposing a set of tactical interventions that can further activate and make inclusive spaces through a participatory framework. These interventions can enforce public participation and promote community empowerment in an attempt to challenge the socio-political power structure in Ouzaii.

2. Ouzville: An Urban Intervention in Ouzaii

Only one urban intervention is recorded in Ouzaii. Ouzville is a painting project initiated by Ayad Nasser, an artist and a former resident of the neighborhood. The project consisted of one of a series of building painting projects by Nasser in Bourj Hammoud, Achrafieh, and Cola. Nasser describes the project as an attempt to "do something good for his neighborhood" (Obeid, 2017).

The locals perceived the project both negatively and positively. Ouzville was entitled as a slum beautification intervention that brought more color into their neighborhood. It engaged the owners in painting murals on their coffee shop walls. The project further induced a positive civic behavior as many residents of Ouzaii are no longer throwing rubbish on the streets to keep them clean and maintain the beauty of the area (Battah, 2019). (Figure 84)

Figure 84 Murals and painted buildings by Ouzville
Source: Author, 2019

Yet, many residents see this project as a non-community dedicated intervention. They argue that the detrimental conditions of the buildings need more than just painting. "This is just a seal that hides behind the ugly truth", explains Zahraa, a woman who lives in one of the newly painted building. Mona Harb, a professor of urban planning and policy at AUB who had extensively worked on the southern suburbs of Beirut, shares the same analysis. She explains that "people need infrastructure and jobs, not paint over their walls […] With all the money he invested, Nasser could have fixed real problems."[18] This raises the question of who is the project really servicing: the residents, tourists, or plane travelers?

Despite the positive impacts 'Ouzville' had on Ouzaii, its significance as an urban intervention that sheds light on this informal settlement and a stimulant for other interventions to happen, it is merely a temporary beautification project that may be

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[18] Welcome to Ouzville: Art project brings hope and controversy to Beirut ghetto. (n.d.). Retrieved from
http://www.middleeasteye.net/in-depth/features/ouzville-brings-street-art-and-controversy-beirut-ghetto-2015729743

forgotten and erased in the future. Interventions should adopt a bottom-up approach that addresses community needs and build on their aspirations rather than a top-down fashion that fades with time.

C. Analysis

1. *Distinct types of Sea Edge Stretches breaking the continuity of the sea edge*
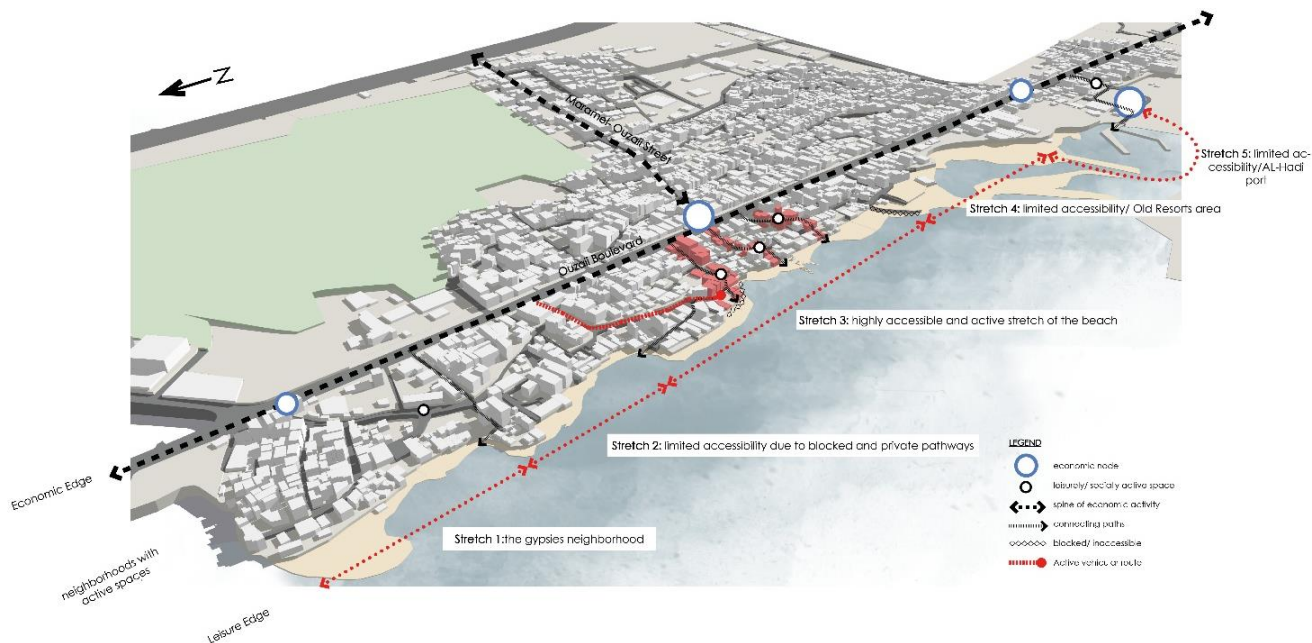
Figure 85 Different sea edge types
Source: Author

Lessons are drawn from chapter four and five and consolidate in (Figure 85). Three major economic nodes are identified along the Ouzaii Boulevard, one of which is located at the intersection between the Ouzaii Boulevard and the Maramel-Ouzaii Street. Another important economic node is located at Al-Hadi Port. These nodes are characterized by

high economic activity manifested in crowded and congested spots at high peak times. They demonstrate instances of public gatherings and communication. Active spaces of social and leisurely activities, identified according to the Syrian socio-spatial practices, are located in the western neighborhoods between the Ouzaii Boulevard and the sea edge. Three of these spaces are located in the middle neighborhoods as shown on the map. They fall on three of the major connection routes to the sea edge that were activated by the Syrian refugees to reach the beach. Other routes which connect the Ouzaii Boulevard to the sea edge are either blocked, privatized, or un-used. This has influenced the activity of the beach and formed different types of sea edges. On the northern edge of Ouzaii, the neighborhood inhabited by gypsies forms closed community routes leading to the un-used and the inactive edge of the sea. Several pathways in adjacency to this neighborhood are blocked by the owners of houses on the sea, creating an abandoned beach on this stretch. The middle stretch is the most active one as it is accessible by the three routes discussed above. To the south, private resorts have limited the access to the sea edge to their clients. Accessibility to the sea edge of Ouzaii along the port is limited to the people involved in the economic activity, mainly the fishermen. These different types render the sea edge discontinuous.

2. *Selection of the Design Perimeter*

Since the research focuses on the spaces that were reactivated by Syrian refugees and seeks to enforce their practices in a sustainable and inclusive framework, the design

perimeter is defined by the middle stretch (mainly the first two axes), the most transformed and activated spaces. The design intervention on this perimeter is an example of how tactical interventions can activate spaces to serve as a pilot project and thus enhance its application elsewhere in Ouzaii following the same design approach (observe, document, identify, learn, respond and adjust the mechanisms).

The middle stretch (Figure 86) is constituted of three main axes, two of which have direct stair access to the sea, while the third access is visually connected to the sea edge. Along each of the three axes lies an active space that hosts various leisurely and playful practices, including practices of socializing and communicating. The middle stretch accommodates high public activities as it is served by a main vehicular route that runs from the Ouzaii Boulevard to a parking lot surrounded by coffeeshops on the sea edge. These coffeeshops have many customers from outside Ouzaii. The beach along this stretch has a defined spatial program that was brought up by the Syrians.

From the north, there is an overlooking platform that fishermen consider as a strategic spot for fishing and storing their equipment. People watch the sea from a distance at this spot since the beach is inaccessible and thus is inactive and filled with waste mainly from the adjacent wood workshops.

The adjacent part of the beach is a highly active as it includes a small Lebanese kiosk with a community constructed pathway of wooden pallets and a shaded space for seating. Adjacent to this kiosk, Syrian refugees have constructed a safe seating area next to the kiosk out of tires filled with sand to absorb the sea wave shocks. At a later stage, the kiosk owner increased the height of the tire retaining wall, painted it, and supported it with

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gravel. This is one space which works really well and necessitates no direct intervention. There is a rocky platform in front of this space that extends into the sea and is called the Sansoul. Syrian and Lebanese fishermen gather on these rocks to fish, as this Sansoul brings them into the deep sea. These rocks are unsafe to walk on since they are slippery and inconsistently stacked.

The edge further extends into the picnic zone where many Syrian as well as Lebanese families practice their *'siran'*. Syrians in these areas have stacked some concrete blocks to create a seating area with multiple concrete DIY benches. A sports area is located at the end of this stretch. The youth, mainly Syrians, gather there to play beach football and handball. A common observation is that Syrians were the first to re-use and activate these spaces. They have cleaned the spaces where they gather, sorted out the wastes and

recycled it to furnish the spaces and construct swimming equipment as described in chapter five.
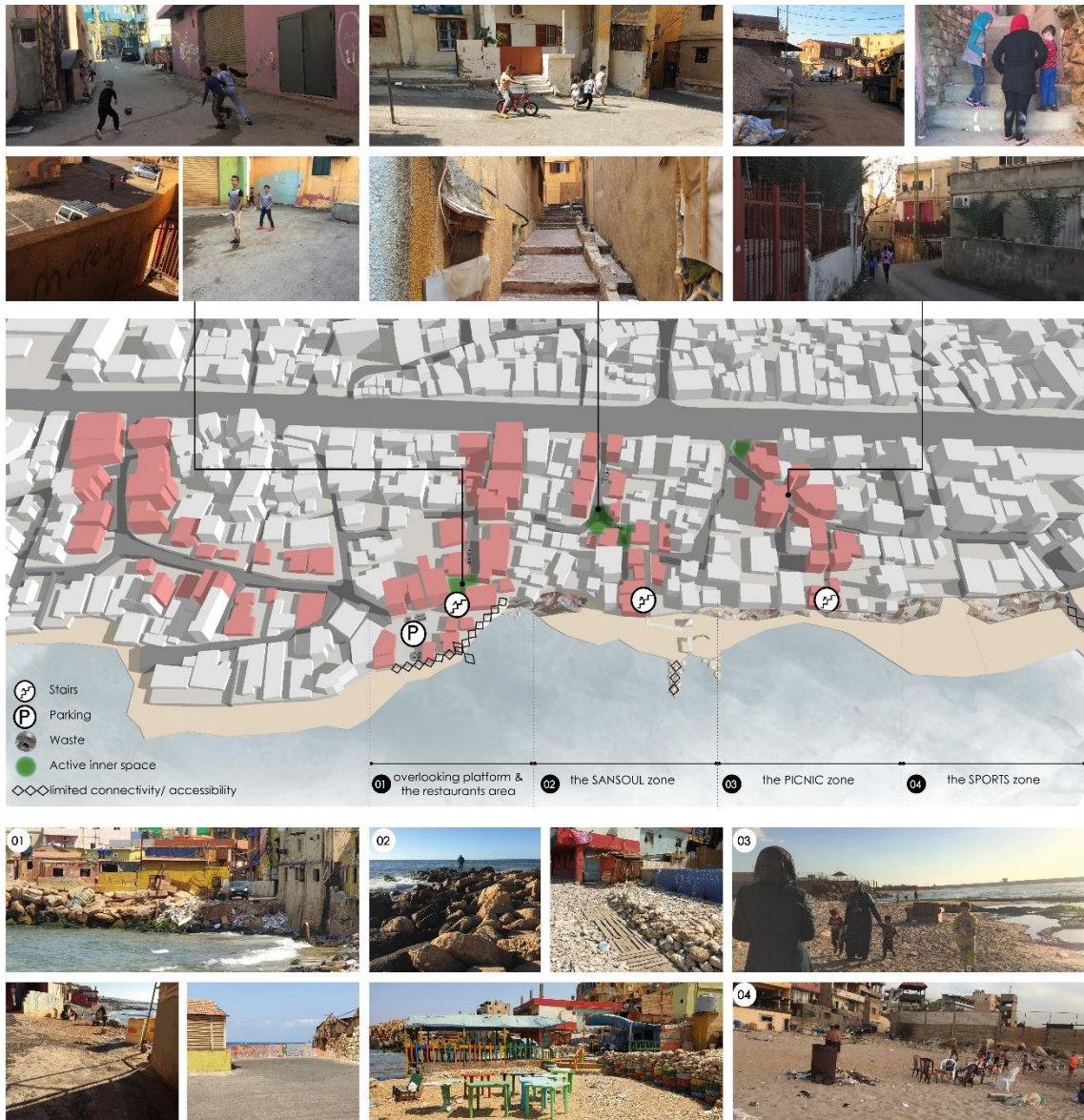
Figure 86 The middle stretch spatial analysis
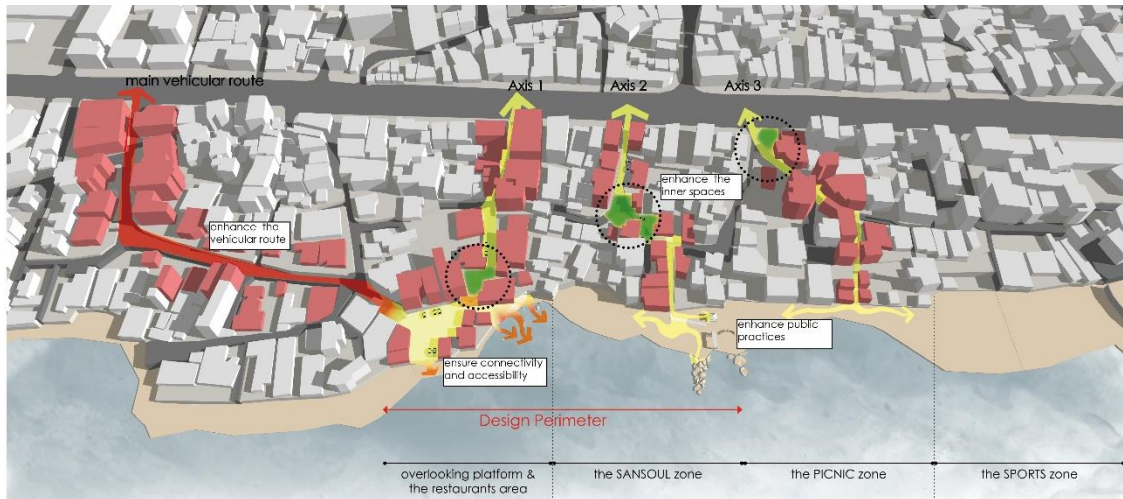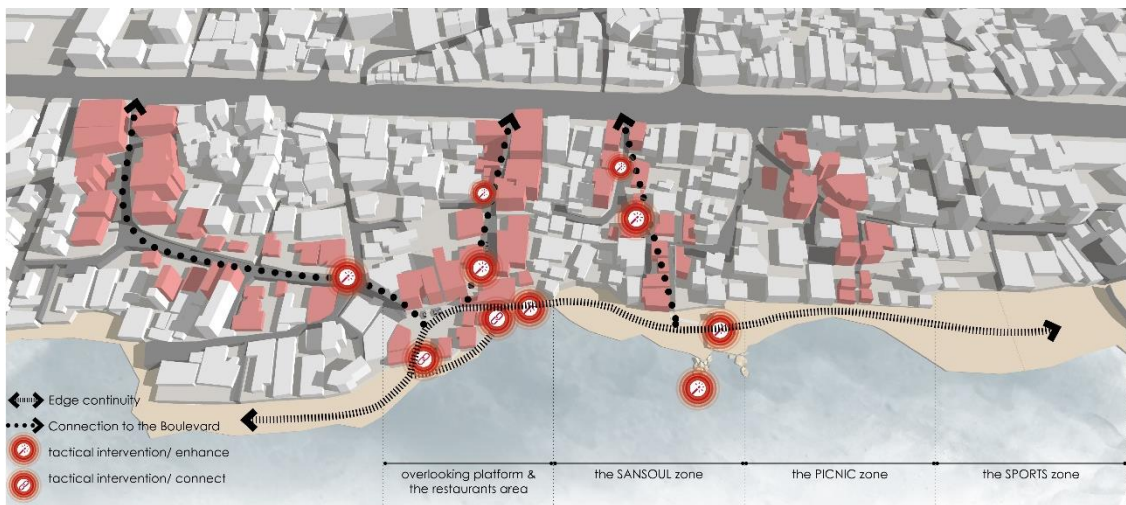**Source:** Author

D. The Intervention

1. General Framework

Figure 87 Strategy pillars
Source: Author

Figure 88 Tactical interventions and the concept of edge continuity
Source: Author

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Since the main aim of the design is to enhance the publicness of activated spaces by Syrian refugees in an inclusive and sustainable framework, the strategy builds on the existing hierarchy of 'publicness' along the selected stretch and proposes a set of tactical interventions as shown in (Figure 87Figure 88) some of which would enhance the practices while others would connect to the sea edge and promote its continuity. The inner spaces and the two axes are designed as community spaces that strengthen the community identity and social interaction. The publicness of the restaurant area and the sea edge is enhanced by improving the connectivity and accessibility to these spaces, while other spaces are kept 'untouched' as they operate well without any intervention. (Figure 89)

KIDS PLAYING SPACE
Painted playground with DIY swings and bike racks.

PLUGGED-IN COMMUNITY INSTANCES
folding benches installed in potential spots where people usually communicate.

OUTDOOR COMMUNITY SPACE
A space with seating spaces, a community garden, and few games for kids and bike racks

Re-connection
A staircase made of recycled materials connecting the restaurants area to the beach.

The Platforms area
A staircase that connects this spot to the beach and expands into a wooden multi-funcyional platform with a retairning wall of tires to treat the level difference.

Sansoul Infill
Wooden joists infilled between the stacked rocks to create a safe pathway.

Kiosk area
a community created space that already functions well. Canopies and DIY furniture are installed to further enhace the space.

Floating Deck
A floating platform that seeks to maximize the sea experience. It is inspired from the syrians floating equipment.

Figure 89 Intervention zones
Source: Author

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The design is entirely based on DIY concepts (Figure 90): flat platforms for walking and shading that shift levels and enhance walkability in an uneven terrain. These concepts build on the recycling strategies of the Syrian refugees to propose multiple ways of reusing waste in a creative manner. I intend to transfer this acquired knowledge through the set of tactical interventions in other spaces in Ouzaii.
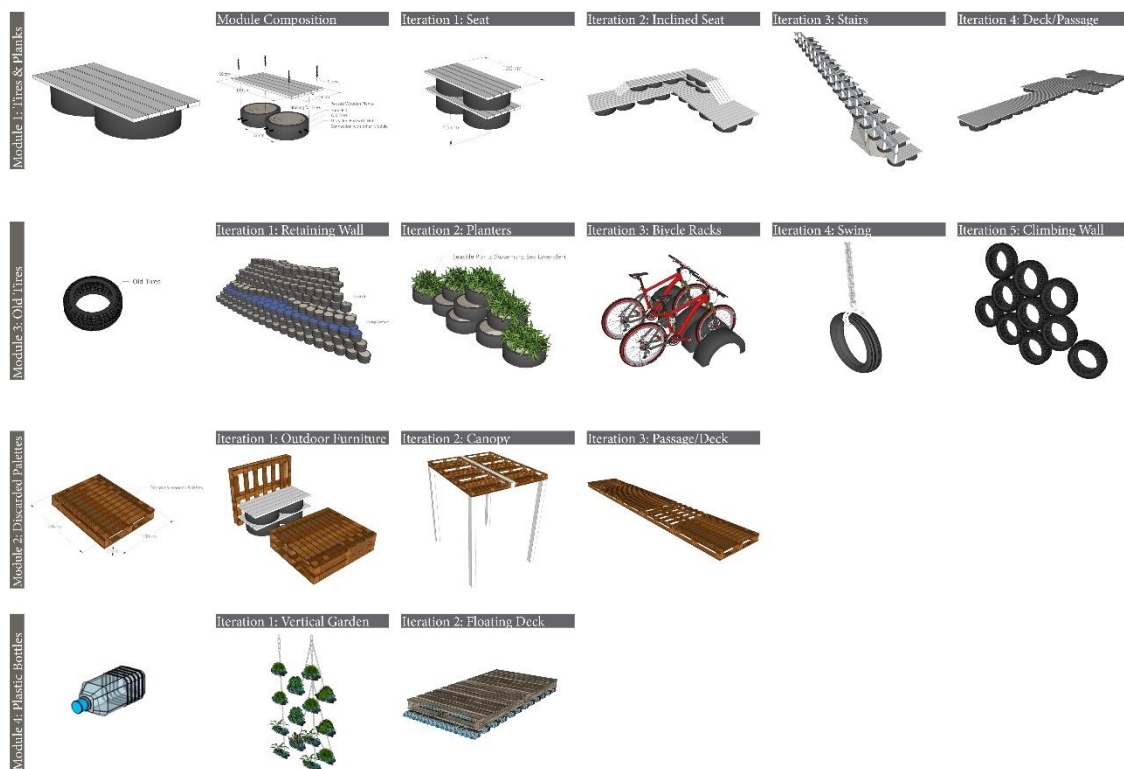
Figure 90 Design Modules
Source: Author

Waste composed of wood, tires, and plastic bottles is dumped at the sea. This is caused by the wide distribution of wood workshops and car mechanics in Ouzaii and the high daily consumption of potable water. Building on the recycling strategies of Syrian

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refugees, I propose a set of design elements constructed from recyclable materials that are plugged differently into specific locations in Ouzaii.

The major element is 'module 1' that is constituted of 2 tires and 5 wooden joists assembled together using steel bracing and connections. As the height of a tire ranges from 18 to 22 cm, the dimensions of the module are flexible to fit in as a seat if two are stacked over each other, as a staircase, and a walking deck.

Tires are used at different iterations as well. Tires filled with sand and stacked over each other are used to build a retaining wall to treat differences in topographical levels and absorb sea wave shocks. They are further used as planters and bike racks or to create playful elements like swings or climbing walls for kids.

Wooden pallets originally used for the transport of goods are reused to build outdoor furniture, pathways and decks or elevated on steel or wooden columns to create shading devices.

Plastic bottles are re-used as two iterations. They are used as planters to create a wall hanging community garden, or to create floating decks with wooden pallets.

2. *Intervention Areas*

See (Figure 89)

Kids playing space

This space is designed as a playful area for the kids. I propose that the dead end is claimed as a playground where kids usually play, by painting the ground; the purpose is to keep

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the space flexible without physical obstructions the impede the flow of the few cars that park in this spot at the end of the day. I added a DIY swing made up of a tire with chains and few bike racks for kids to enjoy further playful practices. I have plugged in a few folding benches with planters at specific locations throughout the street towards the Ouzaii Boulevard where people typically sit on plastic chairs. These folding benches will

Figure 91 Proposed design for the playful area (before and after)
Source: Author

retain the flow of both vehicles and pedestrians. (Figure 91)

Outdoor community space

This axis hosts socializing activities where people gather, and chat and kids play with their bikes. The design acknowledges these existing practices by creating seating and gathering platforms using the proposed 'modules 1 and 3', with a small community garden similar to the ones that Syrians created on their balconies. The platform is installed in a space where people already gather. A swing, painted games on the ground and bike racks are also plugged in to enhance the playful dimension of the space. (Figure 92) This area is connected to the sea edge by a staircase along which runs an open sewage channel. The staircase is almost abandoned with entrances to a number of apartments. Thus, I propose to cover this sewage channel and elevate it to fit the height of a seating surface. I am further inspired by the planters on balconies and propose a hanging community garden constituted of chains and plastic bottles used as planters. This will stimulate activity on the stairs and create an active connection to the beach. (Figure 93)

Figure 92 The outdoor community area (before and after)
Source: Author

Figure 93 The hanging garden on the abandoned stairs
Source: Author

Enhancing the connectivity of the Restaurants Area to the beach

The design aims to enhance the vehicular route that services this area by maintaining its physical quality in collaboration with the municipality. The area rests on an elevated platform that is physically disconnected from the beach. I propose to install a staircase supported by tires that connects this area to the beach. The installed staircase opens up to a small platform where people gather and enjoy the experience on the sea. The parking lot is kept untouched. It is a 'private' lot that serves the clients of the restaurants. (Figure 94Figure 95)
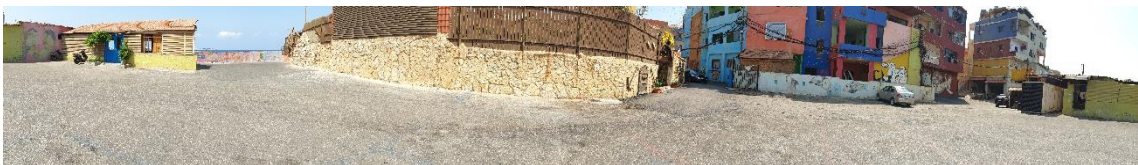
Figure 94 No connection from the parking lot to the beach
Source: Author
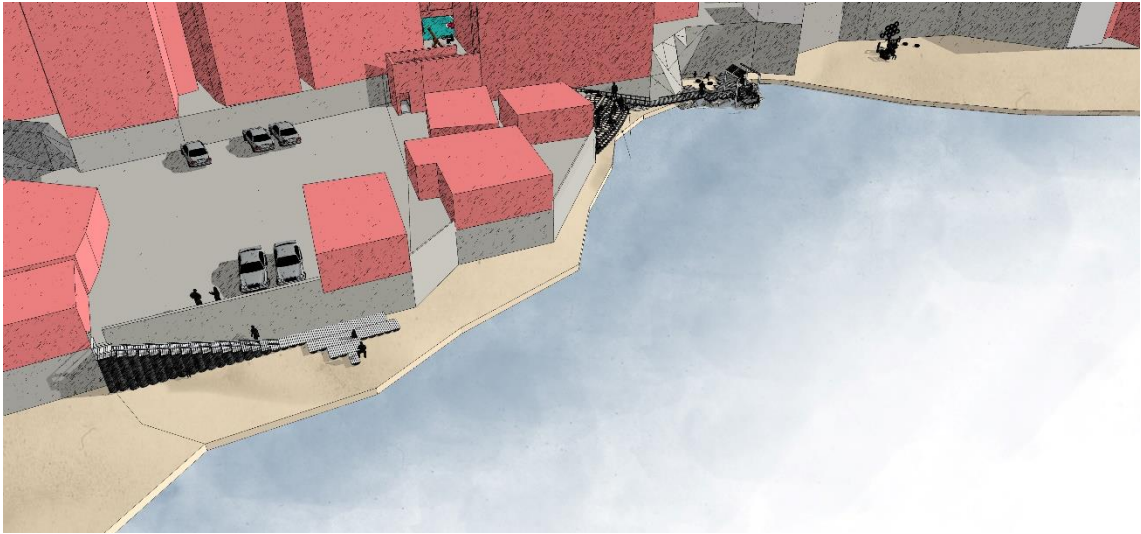
Figure 95 The restaurants area, connecting the sea edge
Source Author

Enhancing access and the continuity of the sea edge

The fishermen area is upgraded by building a retaining wall with embedded platforms for fishing. This retaining wall can accommodate other activities such as sitting and meditating to create a more friendly environment. This area is connected to the beach through a staircase of recycled materials that ends with a multi-functional platform built out of module 1. This narrow platform expands the beach front. It has shaded gathering spaces for playing, with different seating heights that either directly connect people to the sea or the beach itself. The platform is safeguarded with wooden handrails to ensure a safer experience. (Figure 96) The platforms orient the users to another space that has recycled seating with a climbing wall for kids to play on. (Figure 97)
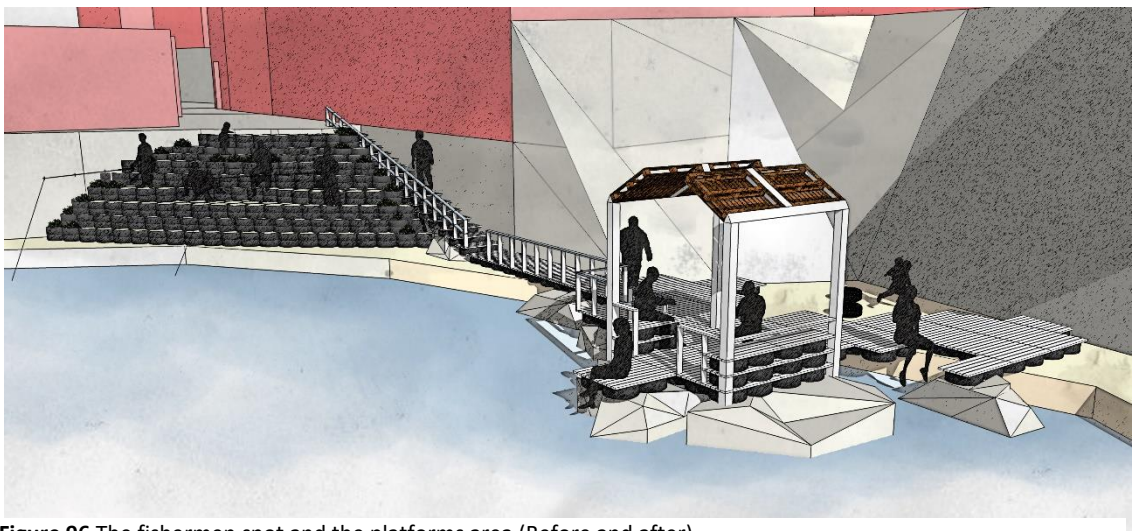
Figure 96 The fishermen spot and the platforms area (Before and after)
Source: Author
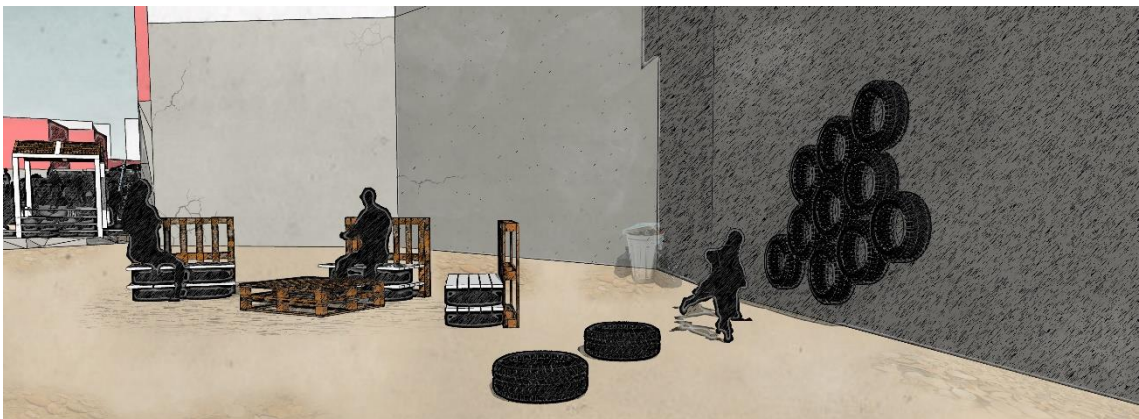
Figure 97 The climbing wall zone
Source: Author

The kiosk area is retained with minimal intervention since, as mentioned before, it functions well. I propose to add planters on the tires with canopies that create shade and recycled outdoor furniture instead of the easily broken plastic furniture. (Figure 98)
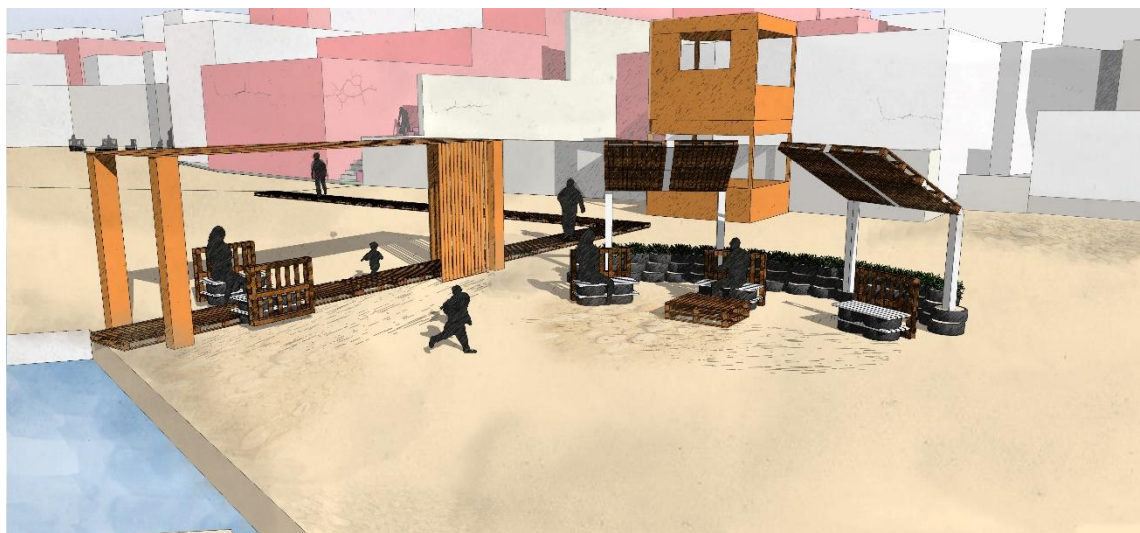
Figure 98 Minor intervention at kiosk area (before and after)
Source: Author

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I create on the Sansoul that is heavily used by fishermen a safe pathway by infilling

recycled wooden joists between the rocks. (Figure 99)
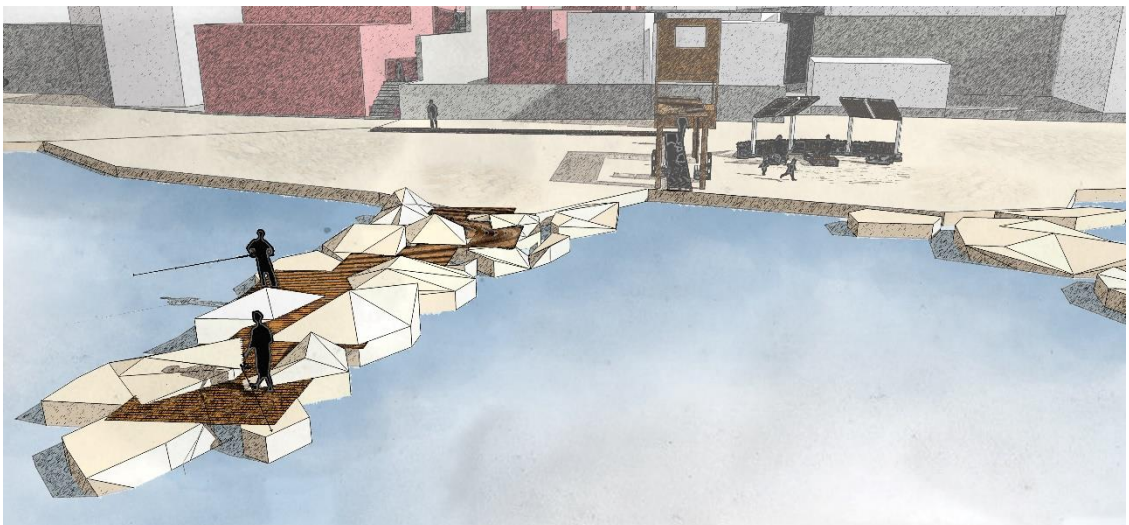
Figure 99 Wooden joists infill on the Sansoul area to create a safe pathway (before and after)
Source: Author

I further propose to create floating platforms as playful elements for kids, inspired by the Syrian boys floating equipment discussed in chapter five. (Figure 100)
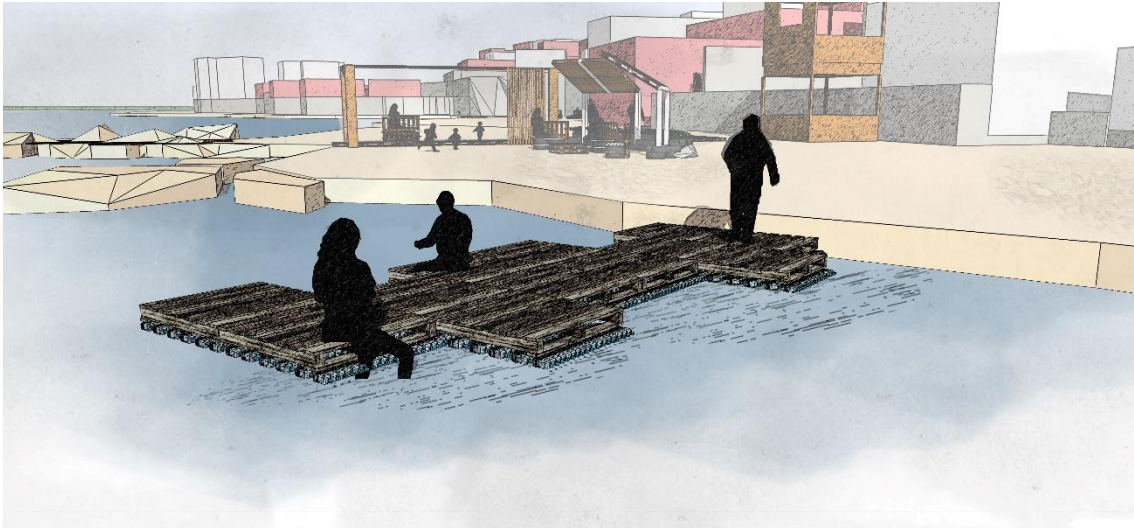
Figure 100 Floating deck proposition
Source: Author

E. A Participatory Implementation Process

The proposed intervention can stimulate inclusivity by not just physically creating public spaces for all users but also engaging different stakeholders in interpreting and implementing these interventions. The proposition is not an imposed design on the community, but it will rather guide them through the process. Hence, I propose a participatory framework that ensures the engagement of the different stakeholders to get these physical interventions implemented and maintain the sustenance of the created shared spaces. It is an experimental approach that would have to revise its strategy through the process according to the community's input.

The involved stakeholders are either part of the socio-political power that should be considered or are being directly involved in the actual implementation. Firstly, the roles of Hezbollah and its executive agencies in Ouzaii and the two municipalities of Ghobeiry and Bourj Al Barajneh are important in securing the required permits to implement the project and facilitating the process. The Lebanese community, the shop owners, and the Syrian families are involved as the active stakeholders who are being directly impacted by the intervention. Other relevant stakeholders need to be engaged to ensure financial and logistical feasibility i.e. religious parties, NGOs (Recycle Beirut referenced in chapter three) and INGOs (UNHCR).

The framework focuses on local knowledge building and co-learning processes, and the creation of crosscutting networks among the stakeholders. The tools of participation include: visioning, participatory meetings, and creating provocative samples that would allow the residents to take part in constructing their own spaces. Therefore, conversations with community stakeholders should start at an early stage before approaching the responsible authorities. This can be secured through seminars, meetings, and focus groups. These meetings aim to show people that there are possible alternatives through the proposed interventions, allow them to interpret the design, and give their feedback. This will further allow them to realize their capacities and crucial roles in shaping the public and shared spaces.

The second step is to form representative committees of involved stakeholders. Representative committees are crucial in facilitating coordination among different stakeholders and enabling the professionals/designers to reach out and mediate between

authorities, communities, and funders. Committees representing the Lebanese families, the Syrian families, and the shop owners including the major business lines in Ouzaii, are to be created. Hezbollah has already created a committee, dubbed as the Municipal Work Committee, serves as a major coordinator between Hezbollah, the municipalities, and the communities in Ouzaii. Worth noting, the network I have already built for the sake of conducting this research is important at this stage. Establishing key entries help create these committees from potential individuals who have already participated in the production of some spaces as discussed before (the mukhtar, R.G. whose story was introduced in chapter three, the Syrian and Lebanese people I interviewed on the sea…). The third step is to arrange focus groups and town hall meetings with the representative committees to build trust between stakeholders, plan for the different project phases, and set plans into action. Regular seashore cleaning campaigns will be arranged among the community and interested NGOs. Collected wastes will be sorted out on site and might be stored temporarily at 'Recycle Beirut' premise for example that is 5 mins far from Ouzaii until the materials are reused for the project. The municipalities can help in arranging and delivering the sorted wastes to 'Recycle Beirut'.

Particular capacity building workshops can be organized to work with community stakeholders especially the Syrians who were the major activators of the identified spaces and build on their strengths and capacities to promote their skills in using recycled materials. Further trainings can be directed to business owners, especially car mechanics, auto parts shops, and wood workshops, from which the major wastes are produced, to guide them how and where to discharge their wastes.

After several meetings and trainings, a sample for a 'module' can be implemented with one of the families and installed in its various compositions on site as a provocative sample. This will further push the communities to proceed in this process and learn how to maintain their shared spaces and construct a perception of a collective 'public' in which everyone in the neighborhood has a stake, a 'public' made not only for but by the community.

This suggested framework is aware of the complications, challenges, and diverse responses from the different stakeholders especially the political parties. Nonetheless, the proposal hopes to serve as a catalyst for the conversation around the use of the public and creating inclusive spaces. It seeks to trigger the discussion and interpretation among the community in Ouzaii regarding the public in general, and the sea edge in specific.

F. Conclusion

Consequently, the proposed tactical interventions inspired from that tactical practices and recycling strategies of the Syrian refugees in Ouzaii promote public practices in an inclusive and sustainable framework by enhancing a hierarchy of publicness in different locations. These interventions can become part of an operational model for design and participatory practices to learn from and apply in similar locations in Lebanon. This model will then pave the way for the ultimate goal which is reclaiming the city's seashore as a public space and regain its old image as the 'golden beach'.

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