

Embodied Cultural Mobility of Religiosity: The Growth of Shiite Culture in Beirut via Rural to
Urban Migration

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Abstract

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Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences

Muslim immigrants' adaptation to the Western values has been a concern by different US governments. Their religious culture and the relationship of their country of origin with the United States have racialized them as a flux of un-assimilating underclass who are resistant to the Western culture. The studies that argue against such stereotypes, often portray Muslim immigrants as a minoritized community with little or no socio-cultural agency. However, the cultural mobility has a reciprocal relationship with urban spaces of the enclaves in which they settle. As most of the mass migrations of the Middle Eastern Muslims are internal due to the displacements caused by wars and unrests, this study focuses on the immigration process through which minority religious ethnic groups claim their identity right to the city and reproduce their culture. This research studied the process of spatial reproduction of rural Shiite culture in South Suburb Beirut practiced by minority Shiite immigrants from rural areas of South Lebanon. Applying a spatial relational approach via comparative archival analysis of urban pictures, the study concludes that the communal culture of rural Shiism collectively embodied by the immigrants made the spatialized reproduction of their culture impactful within and outside their South Beirut enclave.

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To the memory of my father, Vahid.

who was never given a chance to see me graduate before he passed

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Prelude: My Positionality from Iran's Zafaranieh-Ahwaz to Lebanon's Dahieh: Sent To Tacoma With Resistance

On July 28th, 2021, Arab minorities on the Southwest of Iran started a new uprising against the racially discriminating neoliberal policies of the Iranian government in their district. They occupied the streets with demands for water, job, and an immediate stop to the industrial developments that have resulted in excessively destructive famine, draught, environmental hazards, unemployment, systematic displacement, and poverty. Their uprising soon sparked a nationwide movement under the Arab's demanding slogan “أنا عطشان”, meaning “I'm thirsty”. Other suppressed ethnic groups such as Lurs and Turks joined the protests and made up a set of solidarity chain of protests in different provinces and escalated the demands to more radical changes as of toppling the Islamic State of Iran. The uprisings were amid the nationwide strikes of Oil and Petroleum Contract Workers that had involved more than 100 000 workers, most of whom were Arab and Lor. The uprisings were severely attacked by the government forces and the anti-riot police. The suppression left many Arab protesting workers dead and hundreds of Arab families arrested. The arrests followed a systematic pattern of ethnic cleansing; most members of each Arab family from children as young as 12 years old and even the elderly women were arrested at their homes. The workers' strike, however, did not end and continued for several more months.

As a freelance journalist I was reporting daily on the event and as an exiled social activist I was moderating the Clubhouse room of “[Iran's] Labor Movement” in which activists from Iran and exile would join to discuss and share their thoughts on the strike and the uprising. One day, Meytham Al-Mahdi, a well-known Arab labor activist from Zafaranieh-Ahwaz (Arab minority district in Ahwaz and the center of the unrest) shared a photo of the district. I was shocked to see

a familiar image: it looked like Dahieh of Beirut during the Lebanese Civil War, the unpaved neighborhood with decaying village-type houses that are detached from an economically developing neighborhood of non-Arab residents with a long wall (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Zafaranieh, Ahwaz, Iran, 2016.

My activism had found a bond with my research. My constant 4-year attempt to reflect on my positionality in my thesis had once again reached a point of concern. I am a non-Muslim, non-Arab, journalist, researcher and activist against Iran's atrocious Islamic state who was forced to flee. As a political refugee from the Middle East, I faced concerning lack of social capital in the United States. While in Iran I was not considered as an under-privileged because I could hide my political and religious beliefs behind my middle-class urban life in Tehran, Iran's Capital City, I was easily identified by my skin, name, accent, and culture as a Middle Eastern immigrant in the US. To many Americans, being Iranian did not have any distinguishable difference from being Iraqi, Syrian, or Lebanese. Stereotypically all are considered to be Muslims who are

culturally resistant to American values. My early days of residence in the Pacific Northwest were spent on tirelessly explaining the diversity of nations, histories, social classes, cultures, and religions of the Middle East. At one point, I just gave up explaining, not due to my exhaustion but figuring out the common social status we have in the US, regardless of our country and ethnicity of origin. We, the Middle Easterners, are racialized.

I live in a working-class community of color in West End, Tacoma, the city that was built by immigrants. A few blocks away are the increasing number of Middle Eastern residents of University Place and Lakewood. Some older immigrants are from higher class, but the new immigrating populations are either war or political refugees who automatically fall into the working class regardless of their social status in their countries of origin. Some new local small businesses run by the Middle Eastern immigrants are gaining more popularity. However, they have not claimed any part of these districts. When I first moved to the area in 2016, there were only 21 Iranian families in Tacoma. Today, I assume there are more Iranians, but my assumption is not based on any urban realization of their national culture. Some Muslims from the Middle East may join the Islamic Center in University Place. But how about non-Muslim Middle Easterners? Indeed, regardless of how the Americans categorize us as one nation, we see and recognize our differences, not only in our languages and cultures, but also in our social relationships. When my husband and I first went to the local Gyro restaurant run by an Egyptian family, we were warmly welcomed, because the owner and the staff figured out that my husband is Kurdish, and I come from a Chaldean origin. They had no doubt that we must be Iraqi. But we are not. As we became regular customers, I could no longer hide behind my Arabic competence while talking to my husband in Persian. So, they found out we are from Iran. It was hard for them to keep on their sincere smile. In fact, we were from a country ruled by a Shiite theocratic

state which has left almost no Arabic nation of the region unimpacted by its militancy, colonial economic investments, ideological sectarianism and forced policies of instability, war, and poverty. No more did we look like friends to them but foes. Therefore, we opened our heart and mind explaining that we are activists against the theocratic state of Iran. So, their smile reappeared. While studying Lebanon, I came across some similar concerns about my positionality regarding the subject of my study. Would I be regarded as a friend or a foe, an insider or an outsider, a positivist scholar, or an under-privileged ally? Do they know that many ethnic groups in Iran are fighting the same struggle as they are involved against the status quo? Do they know about Fallahieh, Khafajieh, Hay Thoura, Zafaranih-Ahwaz and other ethnically deprived and oppressed regions in Iran and their resistance against the system? Do they know that even in the United States we the Middle Easterners have been subjects to a common pattern of racist policies? How about my ethics and biases as an activist?

As a researcher, I cannot and do not intend to ignore my positionality to look as though non-biased. Actually, who can? Thus, I stepped into the process of this study being fully aware and unresentfully acknowledging it as a journey through which my position exists and is going to be a subject of transformation throughout the historical footprints of commonality as well as exclusivity of the societies in the Middle East, from Tehran to Beirut, and from Zafaranih to Dahieh.

The connections between my positionality towards Shiites in Dahieh and my country of origin as well as the community of residence in Tacoma were more tightly bonded during the 4-year period of doing my research by the uprising movements in all these three locations and the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide. While Iran experienced three nationwide uprisings, Lebanon has been through constant political instability, government shuffles and collapses every few

months, economic crises, blasts, assassinations, unrests, and non-stop protests. It has also harshly suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic and months of lockdowns. Meanwhile, the United States has been suffering from the pandemic too. The country also recorded a nationwide protest of African Americans and BIPOC led by the movement of Black Lives Matter. Conducting research in such extraordinary circumstances was not an easy task.

My prior knowledge of the situation in Lebanon had made me prepared to expect unpredictable challenges and daily new circumstances which limit or sometimes change the entire research plan. The country of war, sectarianism, terrorist attacks, militia's authority, and constant unrest, Lebanon is a challenging location to be studied, especially from a far distance.

Since I started gathering data in January 2021, the country has gone through several forms of turmoil and Lebanese people have been enduring an ongoing crisis of food shortage, political instability, assassinations, COVID-19 full lockdowns, infrastructural sufferings such as electricity cut and blackouts, internet outage, regional union strikes and violently suppressed protests in Beirut and Tripoli. Regardless of my several attempts, only 3 of the 6 Lebanese university archive libraries responded to my request for a special access to their archives. It was not until August 2021, 8 months after my first attempt to contact UMAM Documentation and Research, when I received a response from this institute to my request to gain access old photos of villages in Dahieh. Their eminently acknowledged founder and chairman, Lokman Slim, was assassinated by Hezbollah on February 4th, 2021. His assassination became a national concern in Lebanon and is still under investigation.

Besides these obstacles that appeared every few days, my personal and occupational bonds to the subject of the research facilitated the continuum of my research beyond the circumstances. Thus, did I not only keep being cautious about my positionality but also embraced my bonds to the

lives of the people whose resistance, lifestyle, culture and history would appear in my research. I have to confess that my axiology changed my approach to the subject of my study and also kept examining the reflections I have been having throughout my research process. I, as the researcher, have changed, and I hope those who will read this thesis will experience changes in their point of view and stance towards the understanding of the truth illustrated by those who experience and spatialize it.

Chapter One: Introduction and Literature Review

1.1 Introduction: Immigration, Beirut's Urbanization and The Raised Questions

The number of Muslim immigrants from the Middle East who flee from wars, sectarianism, and terrorism has increased in the past decade (Refugees and Displaced People | Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2019). These immigrants carry the religious culture which is supposed as minority in Christian countries where they enter. Their socio-cultural adaptation to the Western culture has been mainly studied through two lenses: either as a flux of un-assimilating underclass who are resistant to the Western culture or a minority community with little or no socio-cultural agency (Selod, 2015). However, cultural mobility has a reciprocal relationship with urban spaces (Mitchell, 2000). The cultural mobility of migrating Muslim minorities can be historically observed through the process of urbanization that massively progressed during the decolonization of the Middle East in the mid-20th century. As a result, the new polynuclear settings of urban spaces became places of cultural identities that did not necessarily correspond with neither the culture of their rural origin nor the established urban culture (Turok and Bailey,

2004). Lebanon is a good instance for the cultural divisions and inclusions. As the most religiously diverse country in the Middle East, Lebanon has mainly experienced the urbanization process during its decolonization era (DeJesus, 2009). As formerly a significant part of Ottoman Empire due to its ports on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, Lebanon was formed by ethnically displaced fluxes of immigrants who sought refuge from the Ottoman's religiously inspired ethnic cleansings. Thus, today's Lebanon is divided into districts which are identified by ethnic groups of specific religions. As the process of urbanization continued and grew in scale after Lebanon's independence from the French mandate in 1943, the religiously ethnic divisions became the basis of both political and urban structures (Salami, 2014; Attié, 2004). Today, sectarianism despite the ruling politics of pluralism has transformed Lebanon's Capital, Beirut, into a place of ethnic conflicts and has raised worries for a new era of civil war. Shiite minorities who were the last ethnic group that took the urbanization process to make their enclave in southern suburb of Beirut, have recently gained socio-political hegemony. Both ethnically and religiously racialized by the Christian majority, Shiites have not given up their rural culture and have used it as a means to claim their right to the city.

The way Dahieh's (the southern suburb of Beirut) Shiites have been building their enclave as a distinct district of religious culture and lifestyle raises questions about the theories by which immigrant's adaptation to the new urban spaces are described. Many cultural scholars have contributed to theories of cultural assimilation and urbanization. Geographers, anthropologists and sociologists have paid particular attention to the 'processes' of cultural reproduction. Earlier approaches defined culture as a shared experience of an exclusive social/ethnic group and found assimilation of the immigrants with the hegemonic norms of the social space inevitable and regarded space as mere locations where the cultural rituals are practiced (Wirth, 1938; Alba &

Nee, 2003). In later studies, however, as the geographers start to redefine space as “a place of action” and post-colonial theorists applied a wider lens to observe spatiality at more global and transnational scales, new definitions of culture, its mobility and the relationship of immigrants and the power dynamic of place were born (Gupa & Ferguson, 1997; Ngai, 2003; Golash-Boza 2016; Melamed, 2015; Bhabha, 2004). The theoretical debates have continued as immigration has remained the matter of concern. In order to study the religious minority’s reproduction of spatialized culture in the urban spaces to which they move, the researcher needs to find a theoretical framework and the methodology by which clear interconnection of these elements are defined.

Thus, this research raises a broad question of what the process of spatial reproduction of culture of minority religious immigrants is that results in the growth of their hegemony in the new urban districts to which they claim their identity. The current study answers the above question by examining the process of immigration of rural Shiite minorities from the villages of South Lebanon to Dahieh, the southern suburb of Beirut, how their embodied religious culture is reproduced in their new urban enclave via urban spatialization, and how such a process impacts the districts that are formed in relationality to Dahieh.

The thesis is divided into five chapters: Chapter One focuses on the history of urbanism in Beirut, its sectarian division, and the available literature with different approaches towards describing the sectarianism of urbanized Beirut and its Shiite population. Chapter Two brings in theoretical conversations on the concepts of culture, space, urbanization, migration, and their connectedness to frame an interdisciplinary approach to find the answer to the research question that appears in the second part of the chapter. By the end of the chapter, I argue that an interdisciplinary approach based on a new theoretical framework consisting of post-Marxist and

post-colonial theories is required and describe why and how I used spatial relational approach suggested by Don Mitchell (2017) to analyze the data I gathered by applying comparative spatial analysis of archived images of landscapes and landmarks. I also go through the details of the method and the process of data collection and analysis at the end of this chapter. Chapter Three focuses on the analysis of the data gathered. It is divided into six subsections, based on the scale (the cultural spatialization of rural Shiism inside Dahieh, the villages in South Lebanon from where Shiites moved, other districts of Beirut and its neighboring religious districts) in different epochs of decolonization and pre-Civil War, during the fifteen years of the Civil War (from 1975 to 1990) and post-war neoliberal era. The detailed analysis of Chapter Three leads to the conclusion in Chapter Four. The study concludes the reciprocal impact of embodied and mobilized rural religious culture of immigrants and the pre-existing social structure of the urban space and concludes that the communal social system practiced and embodied as a collective belief by rural Shiites provides a not only the power of urban resistance but also an ability of inclusivity and influence beyond the borders of their enclave. Chapter Five ends the research with mentioning the urban elements that are likely to be effective and deserve focus in further studies, although they were not included in this study due to its limitations.

1.2 Literature Review:

1.2.1 Shiism As the Culture of Rural Minorities and Its Growth in Urban Beirut

In the past forty years, a great number of theorists did research on the growth of Shiism in the Middle East. Some foresaw the conflict between Sunni and Shiites as early as the formation of the Shiite state in Iran in 1979. It is noteworthy to mention that Shiism as a culture had thrived centuries in Iraq and decades in Lebanon before it formed movements that seek a political status

and force in these countries. As DeJesus (2009) emphasized in his research, Amili Shiites in Lebanon who reside in South Lebanon, today the home of Hezbollah, despite their long history of settlement in the region did not fully establish their identity until after 1943. However, the rural communitarian Shiites expanded their pluralist integration with the middle class and elites through urbanization and transformed its pacifism and “political quietism” to an active Lebanese movement by the early 1980s (DeJesus, 2009).

Although the formation of first Lebanese Shiite movement started in the early 1950s by the Iranian born clergy, Imam Musa Sadr, the leader of AMAL Movement and became known as the first step Lebanese Shiites took to elevate from rural communal pacifism toward a national secular and pluralist movement under the motto of The Movement of the Deprived, it gradually lost its socio-political effectiveness as Iran stopped its support for the movement in 1982 (Byman, 2005). In that year, a more seriously political Shiite movement started to grow. Lebanon’s Hezbollah joined the Lebanese Civil War as a Shiite militia group. Directly theorized by Iran’s Islamic leader, Ruhollah Khomeini, Hezbollah grounded its main headquarters in the dominantly Shiite valley of Beqaa. According to the empirical research done by Harik (1996), Hezbollah gained a tremendous amount of popularity in its first decade of activity in Lebanon. The study showed that Hezbollah’s popularity at the time was growing and entered the party into the race with more traditionally popular parties, such as the secular Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP). The Shiite party also gained 41% of the popular vote and stood higher in the rankings than the most popular Islamic-Shiite party of the time, AMAL. The Iranian leader, Khomeini, also was the most preferred non-Lebanese leader. Iran’s strong coercive stance against Israel has brought a widespread popularity of its Shiite state among the Lebanese.

The rise of Hezbollah's popularity made an extreme change in Lebanon's politics, described by Di Peri (2014) as the "champion" of war against Israel to not only Shiites but also by the Maronite Christian community after the 34-day war, also known as Tammuz War (in Arabic حرب تموز) in 2006 (Daily Star, 2006). Today, Shiites, who were historically known as minorities in The Middle East, have gained enough popularity to be regarded as a "leading" force of transformation in the politics of the region (Nakkash, 2011).

1.2.2 Shared knowledge, Cultural Spirit, and Common Discourse Among Shiites in Urban Beirut

Shiism in Lebanon is not a very old cultural movement. However, the growth of Shiite hegemony among the majority of non-Shiite population during the past decades is significant. In order to figure out how the socio-cultural mobility of Shiism is facilitated, we need to bring the foundational factors of that society into consideration and take a look at the geographically distribution of Shiite population, their cultural enclaves, their social identity formation, and the economic structure of their communities. Unlike the general assumptions of a pluralist state, there is little cultural integration between the enclaves in Lebanon. Based on the statistics published in 2010 by the US Department of State, there are 18 officially recognized religious sects and groups residing in an area as small as four thousand square miles of Lebanon that is divided into 26 regions. Twelver Shiites who make up to 27 percent of the entire population are dominantly residing in three regions of Lebanon: Northern region of Baalbek, Southern region of Jabal Amil in Nabatieh Province, and South Beirut (Figure 2).

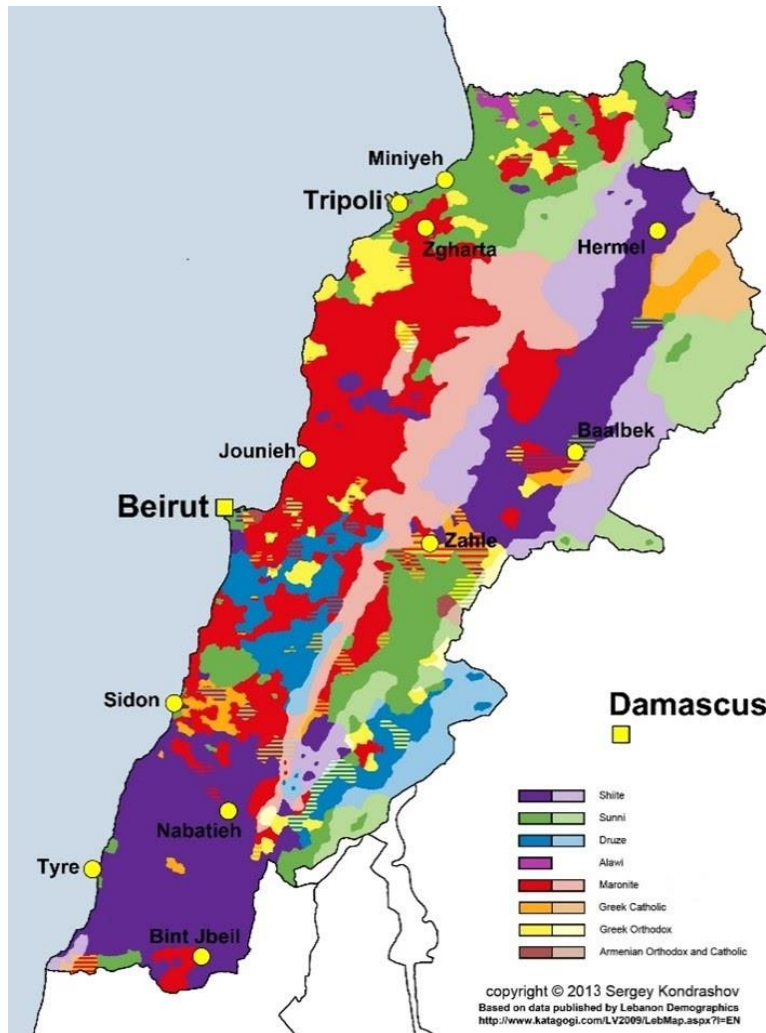


Figure 2: Geographical Distribution of Religious Groups in Lebanon, Source: Wikimedia Commons (Kodrashov, 2013)

As the map shows, the integration of the three main religious sects, i.e., Maronite Christians, Sunnis, and Shiites, is not strong enough to obscure their vivid geographical divisions. The confessionalism which was first officially recognized as Lebanon's post-colonial state policy in the 1943 National Pact, confirms the rigid religiously-tribally social structure of the country (Collelo, et al. 1989; Department of State, 2003). However, Amili Shiites of the South with older settlement and history of their identity formation than Shiites of Baalbek have adopted more

plurality with Maronite neighbors. DeJesus (2009) indicates three reasons for such a difference between the two Shiite regions. One, is the historical path Baalbeki Shiites have taken, i.e., they are newer in Lebanon, mostly immigrated from other regions of the Middle East and have more recently converted to Shiism. Second, is the tribal social structure in Baalbek which is quite absent in South Lebanon and among Amilis. Third, Amilis of the South have accomplished adopting a distinct identity as Shiites, which is due to their “limited” level of integration with Arab nationalism – the dominant Lebanese national narrative.

A closer look at the social construction of Shiite identity in both areas takes us to the economic roots and their means of production. Lebanon is historically a feudal society. Geographer Antoine Ghossain (1988) found the root of sectarianism in the “underlying feudal system” in Lebanon. In his research, he found the basis of feudalism in all sorts of societal spaces in Lebanon; urban, rural and most importantly on governmental levels. As it is supposed to be the characteristic of the feudal system to divide communities based on the ownership of lands by families, clans and tribes and distribute the power of a geographical region between each self-identified local/tribal power, so has the societal system in Lebanon been formed through its transition from ruralism towards urbanism. Sune Haugbolle (2012) reports visible sectarianism in Lebanon’s urban space. The public space in Beirut, as he observed, is dominated with distinct features of religious groups and representations of sectarian political parties. He asserts:

“[...] the sectarian political parties represent ‘the street,’ with little credible competition from secular alternatives. What the public space really illustrates, then, is the failure of the state in a fractured society to create a political system that is able to both represent the people and function as a venue of communication between the people. It also

demonstrates the limited political space for secular parties and secularism more generally” (ibid).

He also observes that all residential spaces in Beirut bear the signs which carry the ideology and “cultural representation” of the sectarian political parties. The most vivid cultural representation in the public spaces is the ones prompted by Shiite parties; for instance, the banners and murals in one of the most upscale historical districts in Beirut, Ashrafiya/ Achrafieh.

Ashrafiya/Achrafieh is a Greek Orthodox Christian neighborhood on the wealthy East of Beirut, which has been a home to Christian parties and today is both an upscale residential neighborhood and the commercial hub of the city, with modern high-rises, malls, tourist attractions, cafes and restaurants, office towers for the main Lebanese capitalists, and, most significantly, political public actions and rallies (Ehsan, 2011). Interestingly, Haugbolle (2012) observed excessive Shiite culture in residential sites in Ashrafiya; including anti-American, anti-Israeli, and anti-capitalist slogans, such as “America and Israel are one state and one people and one army and one economy” (ibid, p. 327). There are, also, texts which carry more vivid Shiite support in this area, including the one that reads “Imam of the nation and the resistance” written underneath a photo of Musa Sadr, the former leader of AMAL Movement and Nabih Berri, the AMAL’s current leader and Iran’s ally who has been the speaker of Lebanese Parliament since 1992 (ibid).

What makes such cultural representations in Ashrafiya interesting is that this Christian district with high-end structures which promote consumerism and Bourgeois class lifestyle is quite far from the heart of South Beirut-Dahieh, the home of the Shiites. There are few if any Shiites who would reside or even *go* to this district. Moreover, as many scholars including Haugbolle mention, Shiite parties, and Lebanese Shiism in general, have always kept their distance from Arab Nationalism and have avoided the use of national symbols such as the cedar sign in the flag

(Haugbolle, 2019, p.329). They have also tried to determine their identity against the Christians as well as Sunnis. Shiism in Lebanon has stereotypically been connotative of poverty, lacking class, peasantry, or “incapabl[ity] of contributing to nation-building” (DeJesus, 2009, p.5). Whereas, Lebanese Sunnis and Christians who have long identified themselves with Arab Nationalism entered the process of urbanization much earlier and have topped the pyramid of nationalist hierarchy.

In the following chapter, different theoretical frameworks are brought into conversation, in order to draw an appropriate interdisciplinary approach to study the cultural spatialization of Shiism in Beirut and its impact on other sectarian districts through the analysis of the process of Shiite’s immigration from the rural South to Beirut’s suburb of Dahieh.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Methods

In the previous chapter, I reviewed the literature on the history Beirut passed to be recognized as an ethnically and religiously divided city. I also explained the different urbanization process Shiites went through historically. Opened with general thesis questions that necessitated this research, Chapter One led to the gaps in theoretical frameworks by which the process of immigrants’ urban reproduction of culture and its impacts can be analyzed. In Chapter Two, the mainstream theoretical literature is discussed. These theoretical conversations lead to the research questions that will be addressed by the methods that are proposed and applied in this research. The last subsection of this chapter will walk the readers through the steps taken by the researcher to apply the relational approach in the analysis of the cultural urban spatialization of rural religiosity of the Shiites in Dahieh.

2.1 Theories of Culture, Spatialization, and The Relationship of Culture, Power, and Place

Since the 1950s, different disciplines and theoretical paradigms using a variety of epistemologies have been providing diverse definitions of culture. While the Frankfurt School structurally dealt with culture as a superstructure, a mere product of the socio-economic base, the Birmingham School emphasized on the reciprocal relationship between the social structure and individual agencies in generating and enhancing culture (Williams, 2017). Structuralists such as Althusser (1971) looked at culture as a social “practice” which is determined by the pre-existing economic, social and political structure (Popovitch, 2014). Althusser argues that the civil society’s hegemony is built upon and reinforced by cultural institutions which are the tools of what he calls “The Ideological State” (Althusser, 2014). Althusser’s lens could not explain the cultural resistance of the dehumanized oppressed groups have against both the status quo and other oppressed groups with recognized identity have. That is to say, based on his theory, the cultural resistance that is produced by racialized and criminalized fluxes of immigrants who are not even recognized as citizens would be only the reproduction of the socio-economic structure of their community; thus, the change in that structure would end their resistance. Whereas, it has not been true in many cases.

The culturalists of the late 1950s such as Raymond Williams had a different take away from Karl Marx’s theories. According to Williams (1958), and followed by other scholars of Birmingham School, culture is not only a social practice but also an experience “organized and lived”, dependent on not only time and historical evolution of the economic and institutional systems but also the place and the agency of the social group (Williams, 2017). This new approach to culture defined hegemony as a “reciprocal” confirmation of experience and practice, “social process” through which a “central” “set of meanings and values” form the “reality” of people’s life (ibid).

Williams, undoubtedly has had an enormous impact on the new approaches to cultural studies, introducing his cultural materialist methodology applied by neo-Marxists and post-Marxist scholars. Building upon his theories, Stuart Hall (1983) analyzes both of these structuralist and post-structuralist perspectives. His interpretation of religion as a social practice and religious institutions, specifically Islam, is a powerful force which “appropriate” and “reappropriate” themselves in the modern world and their languages “can be taken to another culture where they suddenly allow people to resist dominant structures in ways that the religious forms never conceived initially”, in other words they build a culture which is generative constantly (Hall et al., 2016). He is not denying the structural formation of culture and the role of the ideological institutions, but he also sees that cultural hegemony can be *both* enhanced consciously or unconsciously, determined by institutions and also in response and resistance against the institutions. Referring to cultural conflicts in urban enclaves, Hall suggests that “I think you really have to look exactly at the institutions and sites where those different compromises –and they weren’t all struck in exactly the same way – were forged” (Hall, 2018). His theoretical framework is highly inspired by Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and his takeaway of culture, consciousness, and civil society from Marx’s critiques on Hegelian interpretations. Unlike Althusser, Gramsci argued that social consciousness plays a significant role in forming the civil society’s hegemony and the civil society forces its institutions, including the religious institutions, to gain power by generating the hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). However, Hall pays attention to the Eurocentric lens of Gramscian scholars who neglect to encounter the impact of imperialist and colonialist systems. Edward Said, alike, explains religiosity and religious culture in the Global South, specifically the Muslim societies of the Middle East as a “hybridity of cultural practice and experience” which develops through resistance and coercion dialectically

(Said, 1993). He builds his theoretical lens on Hall's cultural approach, explaining "cultural experience or indeed every cultural form is radically, quintessentially hybrid" (ibid, p. 58). Said, however, does not give a precise answer to the question of whether such a hybridity can be synthesized in a curation of resistance as well as integration.

Gramsci's criticism of determinism within the classical Marxist's approach derives from Karl Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875), even criticizing the use of the same term of "iron law" (Hall, 1986) by the determinists just the way Marx critiqued the "iron law of wage" used by Lassalle (Marx, et al., 1938). In fact, Marx spent very little effort on the specific issue of culture; you can extract his approach to it from here-and-there appearance of it in his collection of theoretical works, mostly visible in his Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Rights, the Economic-philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, The German Ideology, and Critique of Gotha Programme. In none of these books can one find a thorough evaluation of culture. However, what can be well extracted from his critique to Lassalle's program is that Marx could recognize an interwoven relationship between labor, culture, and land (ibid, p. 6).

While structuralists and post-structuralists argue on how and ifs of applying base-superstructure formulation regarding culture, few pay attention to the element of space, land, and place at different scales. According to Lefebvre's spatialization theory, space is a "social product" and through the process of its production acts as "a tool of thought and of action", "control and hence of domination of power" (Lefebvre, 1991). Lefebvre emphasized that it is the class which gains hegemony that ultimately dominates the social and political power, and such a product is done in a materialistically known process of spatialization. He also defines ideology as a regulator of the "relationship of dominance" that makes a homogeneity of socio-political space which is both "quantifying and qualifying" (ibid). Doreen Massey, also, enters the theoretical debate on the

subject of space and representation (Massey, 2005). Emphasizing on the dynamics, fluidity and dialectical features of space, Massey's theory of space and representation is well derived from Raymond Williams's theories. To her space is not a static undialectical piece of surface or a mere location *in* which incidents happen or phenomena can be searched, but a cut through of actions inside a dialectical sequence of events that carries the stories, the "conjunctures of trajectories which have their own temporalities (ibid, p. 138, 145, 153). Nigel Thrift (1983) also sets his theories of social construction of space based on defining space as social and adherent to time and temporality. He asserts that "Space and time are always and everywhere social. Society is always and everywhere spatial and temporal" (Thrift, 1983, p.27).

Classical approaches of cultural anthropologists that defined culture as exclusive "universe of shared knowledge" in a specific geographical location have been criticized in new post-colonial theories (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997). Referring to the colonial approach of early ethnographers, the critics argue that the notion of locality of culture and its disconnection to *other* cultures is based on false assumptions and has only legitimized colonialism by announcing the necessity of entering and residing in the subject communities. In fact, these scholars defined space synonymous to location. Unlike post-colonial geographers, anthropologists look at space and place as a mere location in which cultural rituals are practiced, but not a social factor that can play a role in the formation or deformation of social practices. Gupta and Ferguson (1997), however, denounced these classical approaches and by referring to Gramscian scholars, such as Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, called for the "beginning of a new era" for experts in cultural studies to examine the dialectics of power and cultural hegemony with regards to place (ibid, p.5). In their approach, culture gains hegemony beyond "a domain of sharing and

commonality” but a transformation in “a war of position[s]” that expands its territory of influence and practice beyond locality (ibid).

Through their lens spatiality gains new meaning and loses its limitation to solid “fixed” locations, but a *place* where the cultural practices are “embodied” through resistances and “shape identities” (ibid, p. 6). Therefore, to figure out the extent of a cultural hegemony, one should study the dialectical hegemony of power through the “history” of one community (ibid, 9; Koptiuch, 1997). Followed by Foucauldian anthropologists, the dialectical relationality of culture and place is observed through the relationality of power, i.e., the reciprocal relationship between the cultural elements and the hegemonic norm within a particular space frames the social cultural practice (Mahmood, 2011, p. 120). In other words, “the ‘how’ of practices is explored rather than their symbolic or hermeneutical value” (ibid, p.122).

Based on this approach spatiality gains agency in the study of cultural hegemony, however, the studies on the relational power dynamism within the space propose the *antagonism* derived from the cultural resistance. The antagonist relationship of identity formation, personhood and cultural hegemony appear in many studies: for instance, Ferguson (1997) using this lens stresses “the antagonism between urban workers and rural dependents” (p. 151), Appadurai (1996) searches through an antagonist relationship between the young Lebanese Shiite militias and their parents rural/communal culture, and Mahmood’s (2011) analysis of Islamist Egyptians relies on their antagonism against Westernization and modernization.

However, this approach could not interpret the new trend of inclusivity and populism practiced by Shiites, for instance, whose minority culture is gaining hegemony in the realm of power contests, social and urban divisions, and the rise of nationalism in response to colonialism and

imperialist wars. Apparently, as Chandra Mohanty (2003) describes, a more “complex” process exists within the power relation of cultural forms and the decolonization (p. 518). The synthesis of such a dialectical relationship of power, culture, place is not always an antagonist battle won or lost by one side. As Mohanty highlights, a more “cross-cultural” approach is required to “construct a real notion of the universal and of democratization rather than colonization” which highlights the “common differences” and “solidarity across differences and unequal power relations” (ibis, p. 518). To acquire an appropriate model for this approach, Bhabha (2004) emphasized on the historical analysis of cultural traits in their differences, but not as a “fixed” outcome of traditional conflicts. He asserts that the synthesis can be “consensual” as well as conflictual thus complex (p. 3). Hence, culture must be defined in its “hybridity” through “the moments of historical transformation” (ibid). To Bhabha, space is not a fixed location at a fix time, but a place of transition. Through this spatial and temporal transition an “in-between” space is produced where a new cultural identity is formed/transformed (ibid, p.2). His post-colonial approach to culture and the active role of space in the transformation of cultural hegemony brings about non-linear dialectical questions of how spaces of departure and arrival (the colonial spaces vs. decolonized spaces, the home country vs. the recipient country for immigrants, the rural areas vs. the urban districts, etc.) can impact cultural transition and the formation of a new hegemonic identity? How is the “in-between” transitional space formed?

2.2 Theories of Urbanization, Immigration, and Cultural Mobility

Earlier theorists of urbanism, studying basically the historical process of urbanization in Europe, focused on the reproduction of Christianity in the new metropolitan cities. Louis Wirth (1938) argues a decline in conservation or expansion of rural culture in urban spaces. His theory has been widely followed by scholars who encounter urban enclaves and ethnic differentiations as a

determined outcome of individualism and suggest a process of fully detachment of the urbanized groups from their rural familial capitals and cultures (Keefe, 1979). In his significant article *Urbanism As a Way of Life* (1938), while paying attention to the dialectic dynamism in urbanism which raise cultural conflicts, Wirth asserts: “[w]hile on the one hand the traditional ties of human association are weakened, urban existence involves a much greater degree of interdependence between man and man and a more complicated, fragile, and volatile form of mutual interrelations over many phases of which the individual as such can exert scarcely any control” (1938, p. 22). His pessimism draws a paradigm in which cultural participation of the urbanites are neither collective nor related to their rural culture, but “voluntary” either as individuals or smaller groups of individuals who have new ties based on the necessities of the urban life (ibid, p. 23). He explains: “While in a primitive and in a rural society it is generally possible to predict on the basis of a few known factors who will belong to what and who will associate with whom in almost every relationship of life, in the city we can only project the general pattern of group formation and affiliation, and this pattern will display many incongruities and contradictions” (ibid, p. 22).

Wirth’s approach, although widely practiced in social sciences, was brought into question by geographers such as Zelinsky and Lee (1998) who observed a different phenomenon while studying the immigrant enclaves in urban areas. Their theory of *heterolocalism* suggested that the growth of accessibility to mobility in urban areas results in more frequent access of the urbanized ethnicities to commute to the rural areas and “maintain their identities [...] no matter where they live” (Hardwick, 2013). Based on the theory of heterolocalism, space becomes nullified as a factor in the process of cultural mobility. Major theories introduced by the sociologists who efforted to analyze the cultural mobility and the levels of assimilation have

overlooked what Doreen Massey highlights as “the dynamism of space” (Massey, 2005). For instance, in an attempt to elaborate on the segmented assimilation theory, Alba and Nee (2003) suggest that beyond the socio-economic urban barriers, the process of immigration regardless of how segmented it is will result in assimilation, *sooner or later*. To them, the process of assimilation and dissolution of culture may take generations, for instance second or third generation of certain cultural/ethnic groups preserve some or all segments of their origins, either the language, the culture, the religion, the food or the social behaviors; however, assimilation will undoubtedly be fulfilled one day.

Post-colonial immigration scholars, however, have brought about a new lens of power relationality and resistance. Criticizing the assimilation rhetoric that dominated academic theoretical and epistemological approaches, the new generation of post-colonial researchers pay special attention to the power structure from which the transformation of culture and identity emerges and the agency of the immigrants who cross the national, regional, or urban borders. Unlike the so-called Eurocentric theories that emphasized either on the inevitable assimilation or the resilience to any transformation of culture, Mae Ngai’s (2003) findings show a more complex relationship between different generations of immigrants and the adaptation process to the immigration policies. She argues that the “ethno-racial minority” immigrants produce transformed cultural “collectivities” that are neither the resilient cultural trait of their past place of residence nor the hegemonic new place of residence (p. 3). Ngai emphasizes the “mobilization of cultural citizenship” by which the minority groups enhance their cultural impact and “claim” their belonging (ibid). According to Ngai, such a transnational mobilization is “redressive” and does not always result in resilience or antagonism but often embraces inclusion and the formation of the communities of diaspora (ibid). Although the post-colonial theorists signify the

role of space at its variety of scales, they may draw a different point of departure for the studies on the cultural mobility of immigrants. For instance, Tanya Golash-Boza (2015), while emphasizing on the power relations, acknowledges the significance of the new place residence. She asserts: “I contend that we must pay attention not only to power relations, but also to the structural conditions of the urban neighborhoods into which black and Latino immigrants arrive” (p. 104). Susan Coutin (2016), on the other hand, signifies the role of place of departure and the historically formed cultural background of the immigrants (p. 5). Among the post-colonial scholars, those who wear the lenses of critical race theories observe the phenomenon of cultural identity of immigrants in its relationship with the structure of racial capitalism. They argue that the racialization and criminalization of ethnicities who immigrate is an inevitable structural nature of capitalism which may “abuse multiculturalism” to reinforce social divisions and differentiation of human values (Melamed, 2015, p. 3).

More recent studies mostly done by geographers who specifically focus on the issues of immigration have brought cultural mobility back to their focus. The older theories now seem to be revisited and revised. Richard Wright, Mark Ellis and Virginia Parks (2005) are among the first scholars who discovered the necessity of such a revision. In fact, the holistic approach in studying the immigrants’ assimilation and cultural mobility which neglected the dynamism of urban space as well as the cultural agency of the new urbanites and immigrants left gaps in the analysis of what Williams (1980) had pronounced as the “real life” of people in urban enclaves. Paying attention to religious landmarks, for instance, brought cultural geographers to the constructions which “embody meanings” and “cultural values” (Hardwick, 2013). Thus, geographers’ application of critical race theory reattached their studies to the theoretical paradigms that can see the “material realities...expressed through time and in place” (ibid, p.

173). However, the complex relationship between urban space as a dynamic factor, immigrants as cultural agents and culture as a hybrid process of experience and practice have not been simplified in one theoretical paradigm. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach which applies multiple theoretical paradigms is necessary. Don Mitchell (2000) based on his definition of culture as “a system of differentiation and a system of reproduction ...[that] is continually contested, often subverted and frequently resisted”, suggests critical cultural geography to be applied by cultural geographers (2000, p. 285). He recognizes one central characteristic in all cultural studies done by critical cultural geographers: “a geography of power” (p.287). Thus, he defines culture as “a site of struggle on many fronts [...] a process, a set of relationships that gain efficacy as they are reified” (ibid).

2.3 Mobility of Religious Culture in The Process of Urbanization

Raising a study paradigm for a specific culture from Mitchell’s grounded definition situates religiosity within a spectrum of social praxis and the power dynamism between the group of believers and socio-political structure of power. Rees (2011) is among the outspoken scholars who do not relate religion to the theological and moral beliefs of an individual. Instead, he defines religion in its practice among a social group. Referring to Scott Thomas, Rees acknowledges religion as a culture with a social existence and through the practice by a “community of believers” (Thomas, 2005, p. 24 in Rees, 2011, p. xv). In fact, when Rees visits studies done on the rituals in Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism as examples for the public existence of religion, he pronounces religion as a culture due to its active participation in “public life” (Rees, 2017). He asserts that “at the level of the social group religion becomes closely linked to cultural practice of a formal and informal nature” (ibid, xvii). Thomas (2005) also emphasizes on

the commonality of experience as a core feature of religion _ a social practice of “common human experience related to divinity or the sacred”. Moreover, he figures out that such a social praxis cannot exempt itself from the mobility of culture in and out of society. However, reviewing the European history of urbanization and modernization, he announces his skepticism in classical notions of cultural mobility in the process of urbanization that suggest this process results in weakening the religious culture through the transition from “traditional society” to “modern society” and the birth of secularism”. Similar to Clifford Geertz (1973) and his followers, Thomas emphasizes on religion as a “cultural system” and its role in “giving a sense of meaning” in both “individual and collective lives” (2005, p.50), however he challenges the idea of its passive role in the process of urbanization and announces the approaches that foresee a decline in religiosity through the completion of rural to urban mobility of a social group as Eurocentric and Westernized academic lens. Instead, he believes that religion thrives within the praxis of “an active civil society” (ibid, p. 51).

Thomas is not alone in being skeptical about the theories that claim religiosity of the rural society will dissolve through the process of urbanization. Fischer (1975) and Smith et al (1998) are among the sociologists who also argue that what urbanism creates is not the elimination of rural religious culture but a motivating space for subcultural communities with intensified desire for moral connectedness to their religious origin. They acknowledge the deformation of this culture not only in the process of urbanization but also in response to the modernization that urbanization enforces to the subcultural groups. Stroope (2012) wearing the same lens in studying the relationship between Casteism, class and urbanization in India emphasizes that the subcultural urbanism cannot divorce itself from “urban ethnic solidarity”. These scholars, while moving a step beyond the early sociologists who denounced the agency of religious believers of

the rural societies in the cultural transformation of urban expansion, did not focus their lens on the impact of social space on the process of urbanization of rural religious culture. Wu (2015), for instance, differentiates the human mobility of culture through migration from urbanism and asserts “[w]hile the study of migrants is the study of people moving into the city, urbanization concerns the reverse – that of the expansion of the city into communities where people did not move” (p. 243).

This approach is not what all sociologists or human geographers would necessarily apply. To Lefebvre (1991) and the followers of his theories space is not a solid three-dimensional location, thus urban public spaces do not play only as geographic signifiers but as intervening factors that “serve” the cultural hegemony. Lefebvre characterizing space as “socially produced”, relates it to the transformation of the mode of production through which urbanization becomes an “immortal” process of both “knowledge” and “action” reproduction “of a system”. He asserts:

“‘Our’ space thus remains qualified (and qualifying) beneath the sediments left behind by history, by accumulation, by quantification. The qualities in question are qualities *of space*, not (as latter-day representation suggests) qualities embedded *in space*. To say that such qualities constitute a ‘culture’, or ‘cultural models’, adds very little to our understanding of the matter.”
(1991, p. 230)

Perhaps, he could respond to the question Ausloos et al (2016) raised by the end of their empirical quantitative research on the urbanization process in Italy when their finding of Agatha, a female saint cultural establishment made them so surprised that they asked: “Why men, usually

leading the populations at those early Christian times, would give her name to a city is nevertheless an open question” (p. 1564). In fact, they had carefully examined the religious characteristics of Saint Agatha: “[s]he represents one of the most important martyrs of the Sicilian Christianity: she is venerated at least as far back as the sixth century, ‘because’ she had her breasts cut off, whence of Interest for cults by women in order to produce gynecological miracles” (ibid). Indeed, social groups do not leave their rural culture as soon as they are urbanized; the urban public spaces do not play as blank slates to receive the imported culture of the rural society. The mobility of religious culture from rural to urban public spaces is observed in the study of Muslim societies. AbdouMaliq Simone (2020) is among urban sociologists who applies a historical approach in studying the reproduction of religious culture through urbanization. His focus on the Muslim culture in the urban space during the early days of urbanization in the Middle East highlights some historical elements that regenerates a new space of hegemony growth in urbanism. He figures out that besides the Islamic ritual characteristics there is a significant historical motivator in urban public spaces and landmarks: migration (Hijra). He emphasizes that Muslims have tied their religious culture and identity to mobility and “a practice of dispossession” (2020, p. 259). He argues that for Muslims the religious cultural shift through urbanization is well formulated not only in its theology but also history:

“The Islamic notion of *hijra* addresses the importance of these shifts as both something temporary and continuous. Familiarity, with oneself, with an environment, and with Allah is attained not in the consolidation of position, not in defensive maneuvers against an ‘out there.’ Rather this familiarity entails a shift in position, through precipitating an event that enables the performance of new capacities as a means of reconciling

oneself with what has been virtually present all along. [...] *Hijra* means being exposed to the world, not as an established, pre-fixed geography, but as something in motion, just as the earth, with its tectonic shifts constantly rearranges itself. It is exposure to the movements of the world as that which is familiar defamiliarizes itself and finds new forms and venues of recognition” (ibid).

The Shift of Simone’s (2020) can be regarded as in alignment to previous literature by scholars such as Jose Van Santen (1998) who elaborated on the potentiality of reaffirmation of Muslim culture in urbanism due to the strong ties between its theological jurisprudence (ulama) and capitalist economy (the historical economic capstone of mercantile classes in Hijaz). The historical culture of dispossession through the temporality of sedentarism of Bedouins (the Arab nomads) was previously studied by the Australian sociologist Riaz Hassan (1972) who argued that Islam’s birth was the product of the cultural shift Arab nomads required in their process of sedentarism and urbanization. It generated a “social solidarity” which also provided the rule of “law and authority”, therefore Islam as a religion became “the most important force in the creation of the ‘Urban Culture’ and served the ‘development of urbanization” (Hassan, 1972, p. 109). Hassan’s study of both urban public spaces and landmarks in Muslim cities of the Middle East and the cultural practices of solidarity such as Friday Prayers bases itself on the mobility of religious culture by its believers, or as Cohen and Sirkeci (2011) describe “[f]aith, like a label, marks the mover and restricts mobility as well as ability” (p. 6).

While Simone (2020) brings the history of mobility into the conversation, not as a natural characteristic of the mobile bodies but as a continual process of culture motion in the dynamism of space and time, he also opens the door to the questions which require a new approach to be

resolved; the question of the reproduction of religious subculture through urbanization and how the ‘community of believers’ in their ‘public life’ bring agency in ‘knowledge and action’ when migrating from rural to urban spaces, and how the urban space ‘serves’ the new urban ‘religious subculture’.

2.4 Thesis Questions: Religious Culture and Urban Spatial Reproduction

The review of the theories provided the framework in which this research defines the relationality of urban space and culture. Thus, I approached “urban space” as dynamic, “culture” as a processing system of reciprocal relationship of practice and experience, and “urbanization” and “immigration” as a trajectorial, spatial process. The research studied how the mobility of socio-cultural relations, values and ideas from rural to urban settings is embodied by migrants. It looked closely at the way migration from the rural to urban communities carries and regenerates culture and examines the process of the mobility of culture embedded in the process of urbanization. As Shiite minorities of Beirut are the case study in this research, it is worth highlighting that Lebanon is a highly divided country based on religious and tribal identities and the enclaves are distinctly formed (see Chapter One). Among all religious groups, Maronites and Shiites share some geographic districts in South Lebanon and Beqaa Valley. These two large regions are dominantly occupied by peasants and farmers who entered the urbanization process later than Beirut and the Western region, and mainly during the post-colonial era of late 1940s. Limited number of studies on the cultural geography of Lebanon and the growth of Shiism, such as the work by Lara Deeb and Mina Harb (2013), show the gradual expansion of Shiite culture across Beirut’s ethnic and religious enclaves and a strong link between the growth of consumerism and the growth of Shiite ideology in Beirut. They highlight three factors to be considered in studying the cultural mobility of the minority Shiites: “class, sect and space”.

Despite the reappearance of the lens proposed by this thick ethnography in a few later studies, important questions are still left unanswered and wrong assumptions are made. Therefore, this thesis focused on embodied cultural mobility of religiosity through the growth of Shiite culture in Beirut via rural to urban migration.

2.5 Relational Approach: Method and The Process of Data Gathering

This study signifies the process of the reproduction of minorities' religious culture in urban spaces through collective immigration. This section explains the research process and the procedures through which the data were collected.

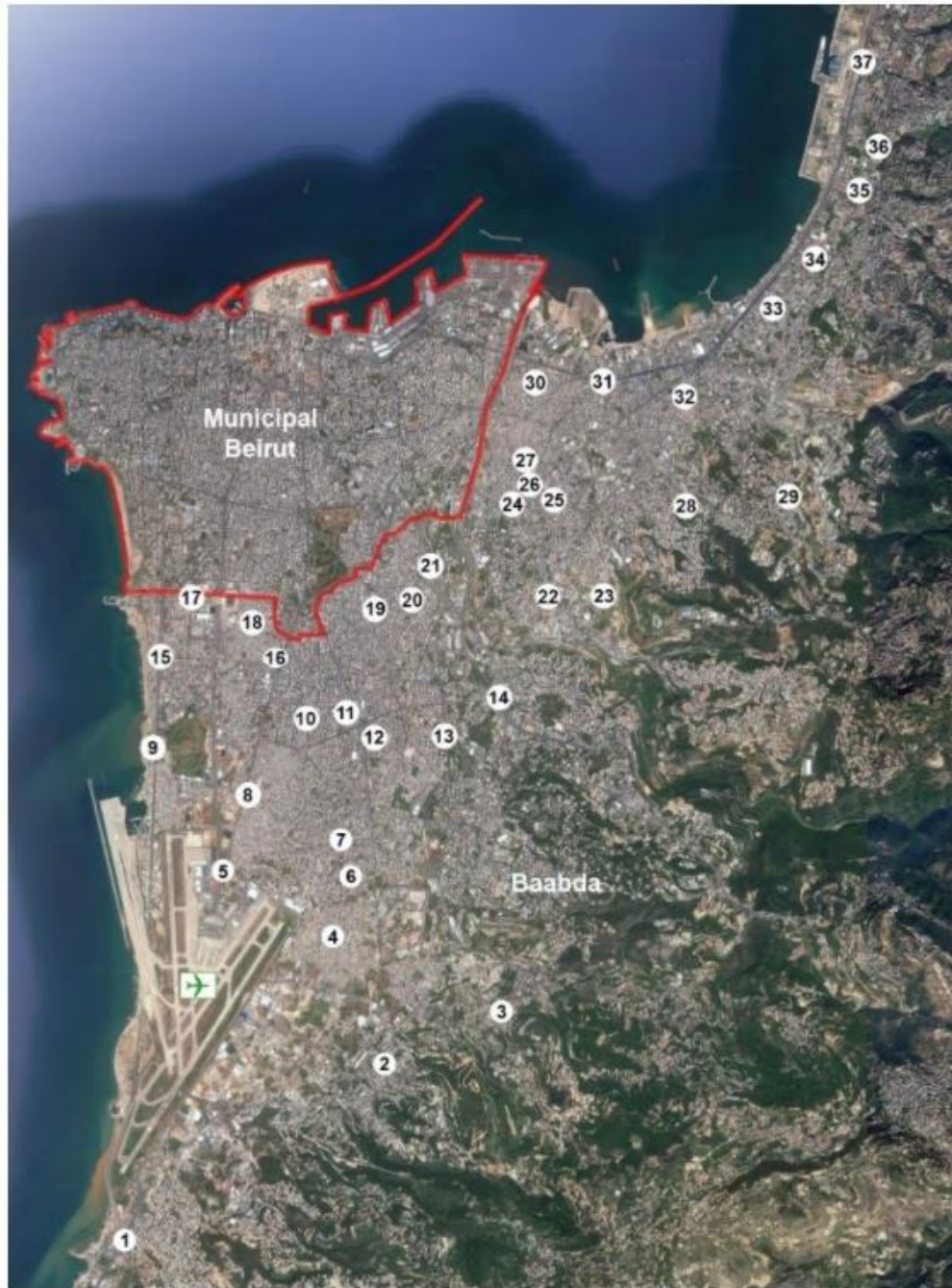
The method I applied for this research is what Don Mitchell (2017) calls “relational approach”. It relies on the comparison of two dialectically related landscapes or places, to figure out not only the historical change in the landscapes but also how the two are related. In his research on Moraga, California, he applied this method by highlighting important landscapes, comparing the historical transformation of the place use and he compared it with the same process Oakland, the neighboring community, went through. Besides the historical archives, interviews, and census, he used photos which he analyzed. Wearing the lens of critical racial geography, his focus was on “who has the right to the city”, once argued by Peter Marcuse (2009). He argued that through the comparison of the images of the landscape, the researcher looks for the “social order”, defined as “a set of social relations concretized in and given expression through the landscape”. He also emphasized that no landscape is local but “relational”. His analysis starts with a comprehensive historical review of Moraga from the day it started to transform from a rural to an urban area in the early 20th century. He used the archival images not only to code the differences

in the landscape, but also analyze the spatial transformation tied to the historical change of class, ethnicity (e.g., the arrival of Mexican workers) and racial occupation of the land. The elements of size, shape and the usage of space appear in his analysis. He went through the same process and the relatedness of the urbanization process in Oakland, to see what he calls “beneath and beyond” the images (p 278). To analyze the agency of the people within the spaces of the study, Mitchell also relies on the written archival sources, interviews done with the local archivist and archived historical accounts.

Based on his proposed research method, I used the lens of critical cultural geography by applying the relational approach method, i.e. I used archival maps, photos, images, postcards, and artifacts of urban cultural landscapes and landmarks in Dahieh, South Beirut, the Shiite neighborhood, and the adjacent non-Shiite neighborhoods including Mazra’a on the north, and Hadath/Al-Hadat on the East, pre- and post-migration of 1947 (the era of decolonization in Lebanon), 1978 (the beginning of Shiite’s mass migration from the South), as well as the past ten years.

While Mitchell’s case study, i.e., Moraga-vs-Oakland, show a bilateral relationality, my case study, i.e., Dahieh had to be studied in its relationship with two other neighborhoods that are in dialectical relationship with the region. As seen in Figure 3, Dahieh is bordered with a working-class, mostly Sunni old neighborhood of Mazra’a. Mazra’a literally means farm and is one of the rural areas which was urbanized during the displacement of Muslims and Maronites from the East and West of Beirut in the early days of urbanization in Lebanon by the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century. Located on the north of Dahieh, it is the most southern district of Beirut which is known for its poverty.

Map of Greater Beirut



The links below take you to our map *Local Authorities in Lebanon*, where you can click on the blue marker to access more information about the relevant municipality.

Figure 3: The Map of Greater Beirut. Source: Lebanese Arab Institution



Figure 4: Map of Dahieh, Mazra'a and Hadath/Al-Hadat neighborhoods. Source: Google Earth Pro

Dahieh is also adjacent to Hadath/Al-Hadat on the East, which is predominantly a Christian neighborhood, majority of whom are the Maronites who settled down in this ancient archeological region due to their displacement. The population of Hadath/Al-Hadat grows at a larger number after the urbanization of Southern Shiites of Beqaa in Dahieh. The sharp division between the two districts has never been moderated but as the Shiites of Dahieh grew their territory and embraced the displaced Palestinians, this division became more acute and racially and religiously practiced by laws and regulations (Lebanese Arabic Institute, 2018). As Dahieh was historically built on the destroyed campsites for displaced Armenians, Syriacs, and Palestinians, its development is also tied to its historical relationship known as “misery belt” (ibid). In the thick ethnographic research on the urban landscapes of Kuzguncuk-Istanbul, Amy

Mills (2010) finds out a significant relationality between the sense of belonging and the history of the landscapes that experienced massacres and ethnic cleansing. The land of immigrant camps of Bourj El-Barajneh (literally meaning the largest tower among all fort towers) in Dahieh, once destroyed, became the land for the new flux of immigrating minority ethnic groups who are displaced. Therefore, the historical analysis of the land was also essential. The Green Line, which sharply divides the entire Great Beirut to two sections of West, historically dominated by Sunnis and the affluent East dominated by the Christians, also plays a role in the formation of relational dialectics in the formation and developments of the religiously sectarian urbanism.

In order to relate the amount of data gathered from the landscapes and the history of the neighborhoods, as Sauer (1941) discusses, the researcher's needs to "combine knowledge of how a culture functioned with a command of existing historical data" (Travis, et al. 2020). Thus, using Mitchell's relational approach, I studied the relationship of Dahieh with Mazra'a and Hadath/Al-Hadat in three historical epochs: between 1947 to 1975 (i.e., post decolonization and before the civil war), between 1975 to 1990 (during the Lebanese Civil War), and between 1991 to today (i.e., after the civil war and during the urban developments of neoliberal governments amid the rise of Hezbollah and expansion of Dahieh). In the first and second periods, I studied the rural to urban development of the city, the landscapes and local reproduction of Shiite culture, the change in demography, the establishment of Shiite institutions and housing regulations. In the third historical period, I studied the changes in Dahieh as well as Mazra'a and Beirut Municipality, not only based on the demography and the census, but also the public illustration of Shiite culture including Shiite streets and business names, architecture, signs, symbols and banners that indicate Shiism including photos and quotes from Shiite Imams and leaders, mottos promoting ideologies such as martyrdom and Welayat (clerical leadership).

Following Mitchell, I also studied the form and shape of the new urban spaces and how they are culturally related to rural Shiism, including introverted architecture, narrow alleys, communal bazaars, etc.

My study searched for the data that carry the mobilized culture of Shiites from the rural area of Beqaa to Dahieh and its expansion in the neighboring regions of Greater Beirut, answering the questions of when, where, and to what extent have Shiites' culture grown. I also studied the trend and extension of such a growth in specific places and found out in which urban spaces it pops out. By using this method, I was able to analyze the relationality between the growth of Shiites' urban life with Beirut's urban development and divisions. I also found out the role of Shiites' cultural resistance in the process of urbanization.

In gathering and coding the data collected from reliable archival sources, I used some software including Atlas.ti, and Google Earth Pro. The archival sources such as the American University of Beirut (AUB) archive, Localiban association, Lebanon Support, Lebanese Arab Institution, MemoryAtWork (ديوان الذاكرة اللبنانية), UMAM Documentation and Research (UMAM D&R), Old Beirut Lebanon, Arabic Collections Online, Library of Congress's Sources for Historical Photographs of the Middle East, National Geographic's archive of Beirut, photo archive of photobeirut.typepad.com, sets of annual publications of Mapping Migration in Beirut Municipality: A Comparative Study of Three Neighborhoods published by UN HABITAT For a Better Urban Future, and the urban maps of Beirut provided by Institute for Urban Planning and Development of Ile-de-France IAU IDF.

Via the lens of critical cultural geography (Mitchell, 2000), this study focused on the spatialization of religious culture. However, as explained earlier in this chapter, the analysis of

the data collected in each urban space, whether private or public, requires an in-depth historical analysis. Placing the collected data in their historical context is necessary so that the analysis includes the impact of the variables that generated or perpetuated collective immigrations, such as decolonization, war, and urbanization. In other words, the face value of the data collected from the cultural products in urban spaces can only illustrate the existence of the religious culture but not explain how cultural mobility occurred. Referring to the skepticism of critical landscape theory about the findings based on the image of a landscape, Mitchell (2017, p.279) highlights the shortcoming of the empirical findings that solely rely on landscape imagery. However, he proposes that by paying “close attention” to the imagery, when done in historical contexts, the researcher can more appropriately analyze the lived experience of the people and how these people have been able to describe the life they have obtained (ibid).

Thus, the data collection procedure was divided into two sections; one, acquiring raw data on urban landmarks in each of the three districts of Dahieh, Hadath/Al-Hadat, and Mazra'a in three mentioned timeframes; two, adaptation, matching and comparing the data of related images within historical contexts. The relationality of the images was confirmed based on their location, i.e., the images of one landmark taken in different periods and the presence (or absence) of Shiites in similarly used spaces in the three districts. City maps were also used to confirm the proximity and relationality of the landmarks illustrated in the images. This section was highly dependent on the historical accords, which help the relational analysis of the acquired data.

Whilst this roadmap for collecting and polishing data was initially decided to directly lead the research towards finding answers to the research question, its application prompted some primary questions that could specify the step-by-step procedure to acquire data. In order to search for Shiite cultural mobility, I needed to specify the cultural representations of Shiism in a

space. I also needed to clarify if these variables (i.e., spatialized cultural representations of Shiism) are either originally rural or also practiced by other urbanized ethnic groups. In other words, what is the origin of these cultural symbols and representations, rural or urban? And at last, how do these data relate historically to a relational urban district, e.g., Hadath/Al-Hadat or Mazra'a. In other words, how could one say that these landmarks of two separated urban districts are relationally produced? These three questions drew the procedural framework within which the archive research, image collection, coding, and polishing were done. Therefore, the data collection passed three stages:

1. **Coding:** The coding via Atlas.ti was to answer the question of Shiite cultural symbols and representations in the urban spaces. It also provided raw data to facilitate the comparison between the rural and urban Shiite culture in public and private spaces such as local shops and residential areas, and architecture. For the first step at this stage, 1640 images (including photos, paintings, postcards, and maps of both city and rural areas) were collected from 53 archive sources. The collection had a wide range of variables, including dates (from the late 19th century maps to the present, all districts of Beirut, its suburbs, and South Lebanon from where the mass migration of the Shiites to Beirut happened, etc.). The selected images had both urban elements such as buildings, streets, and landmarks and socio-cultural elements such as people, murals, posters, banners, or signs of people's presence in the area such as automobiles, open shops, and businesses. The compilation was reduced to 150 images after the first polishing before coding. At this point, the primarily collected images were categorized by time period and districts to be Shiite or non-Shiite. In order to filter down the findings, the images were compared with maps, their old location, and what they are like according to the updated Google

Map. The images which carried both urban and socio-cultural elements and could relate to the precise map locations were chosen. The common features among the 150 images stood out for further categorizations so that they would help confirming what exact cultural representations could be brought into the list of variables for this study.

2. **Comparison and Categorization:** As the primary coding was done, the second stage of categorization was begun in order to provide reliable data for the rural-versus-urban cultural representation comparison. The new categories were subcategories of the earlier temporal and spatial main categories, i.e., four time-periods (pre-1940s, decolonization era, war era, and post-war era to today) and six districts (non-Shiite Beirut, Dahieh, Hadath/Al-Hadat, Mazra'a, South Lebanon, and Bachoura). These subcategories were as follows: Urban, Rural, Residential, Commercial, Cultural Landmarks, Business Landmarks, Architecture-introverted, Architecture-extraverted, public, private, Outdoor Activities, Indoor Activities, Shiism_ collective culture, Shiism_ ideology. All streets in the Shiite district of Dahieh were studied through their landmarks. Based on the subcategories, the comparison between Shiite urban and rural cultural representations was facilitated. Each landmark was compared with its adjacent buildings, public spaces, and streets. It was also compared within time frames to observe its changes in time.

Primary data was concluded at this stage.

3. **Historical Context and Polishing:** In order to examine the process through which the cultural mobility of Shiism happened, the measured data need to be screened in their historical period. Each of the images belongs not only to a specific place but also to a specific time period. Each of the four time periods corresponds to a specific socio-political era and sets a series of factors in larger scales of national, transnational, and

global that impact urbanization. Moreover, Dahieh and parts of Mazra'a have been built on the remains of Palestinian refugee camps, prisons, and detention centers. Dahieh and Bachoura have been repeatedly attacked in vast measures during the Lebanese Civil War (the second time period in this study), the War of Brothers between two main Shiite groups of AMAL and Hezbollah (April 1988–November 1990), and the 34 day war against Israel in 2006. The historical settlement of the Palestinian refugees, the displaced Maronites, and the first Christian settlers in Dahieh were brought into account. At this stage, the gathered data was matched to related historical accords, as well as the oral history collected by the American University of Beirut. This final stage prepared the data for their meaningful analysis to answer the research question about how the minority religious culture of Shiites was represented in the urban cultural places and landmarks during their migration to Beirut and how it is being developed to other sectarian enclaves of the city, today.

In the next chapter, these polished data are used within their historical context to be analyzed. Based on the method and its procedural framework, the changes, and findings on the cultural mobility of the Shiites to/from each district is discussed within its historical context. In the second section of the chapter, the relationality of these districts and the process of spatial reproduction of Shiism is analyzed.

Chapter Three: Findings and Analysis

In this section, I use the data that I gathered from the coded images and compare them within their historical context. Through the procedure of my data collection, I coded all

physically noticeable elements and related them to the cultural practices as of three basic groups: universal, such as the private use of space in shops, stores, and residential buildings; rural such as the commonly use of space by peddlers, or the communal use of electricity, and Shiite as of relating to the religious and ideological reproductions such as murals, banners, graffities etc. Many of visible elements in each image fell into more than one group. Such a procedure allowed the data to connect themselves with comprehensible *beyond the surface* concepts and made analysis more precise. Thus, the results of the study facilitated a new window to the understanding of Beirut's cultural divisions developed in their relationality.

It was not my initial intention in this study to illustrate a new cultural map for Beirut. In fact, if one aimed to draw such a map, they would require years of conducting research. However, the process of data gathering impacted my initial positivist lens to the city and was developmentally constructed in the analysis. Perhaps I can compare the result of the process of my data gathering with what Amy Mills (2010) experienced while studying Istanbul. In the introduction to her observation of Istanbul, she points out that she started her study journey by bringing her understanding of Istanbul and its "sociocultural neighborhood" into a pre-research "mental map of the city" (ibid., p. 2). While her research adds details and proves more complexity to her mental map, I walked a quite opposite lane. As I explained in the previous chapter, I started with gathering maps of the city from three different eras and connected the landmarks to the locations on the map. At this stage I did not presuppose what I might find. Although I knew that I might come across in more upscale modern districts in the Christian neighborhoods of East Beirut, and culturally European style in the historical neighborhoods of the downtown and the Northeast district of Ashrafyah/Achrafieh, I decided to undo my prior knowledge of the area when I first came across a report of poverty growth in the districts of the most growing number of

immigrants in Beirut (UNHABITAT, 2018). In this report, three districts were highlighted as the neighborhoods of “mainstreaming migration” (ibid., p.4): Arab El Maslakh, Daouk Ghawash and Karm El-Zeitoun (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: Three districts of growing immigrants in Beirut. Source: UNHABITAT, 2018

Amongst the three districts, Daouk Ghawash had quite similar urban cultural features and public structures as Dahieh (see Figures 6 to Figure 9). Unpaved or poorly paved narrow streets, shared electricity, decaying old village type buildings, the use of the public space for sharing the belongings of private houses, shops’ outdoor sales goods, and the graffities and murals demonstrating the message of resistance (compare with Figure 18, Figure 32 and Figure 60). The report as well as images showed that these three neighborhoods are culturally mixed. The immigrants who populate these enclaves are widely from different countries of origin, from Palestine and Syria to Southeast Asia and even Armenia and Russia. Amongst the three, Daouk

Ghawash was in closest proximity to Dahieh. However, the other two places which had many similar urban features with those of Dahieh are placed far from Dahieh and in close proximity to upscale districts of the Northeast.

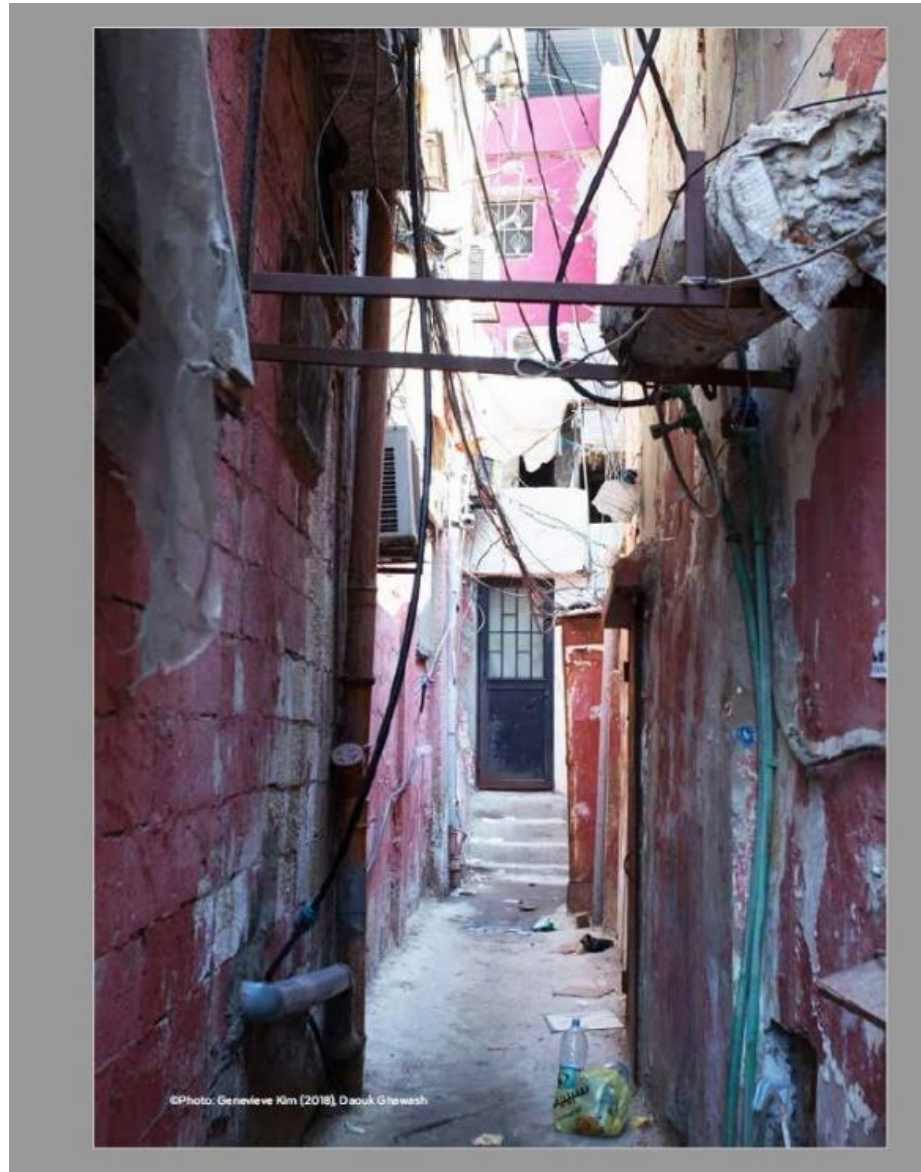


Figure 6: Daouk Ghawash. Photo by Kim Genevieve (2018); Source: UNHABITAT,



Figure 7: Daouk Ghawash. Photo by Kim Genevieve; Source: UNHABITAT, 2018



Figure 8: Daouk Ghawash. Local grocery store. Photo by Kim Genevieve; Source:
UNHABITAT, 2018



Figure 9: Daouk Ghawash. Mural. Photo by Kim Genevieve; Source: UNHABITAT, 2018

Such similarities and differences brought about concerns if there are more factors to consider in the immigrants' cultural reproduction of urban space than the elements from the place of origin and the destination. Through the search within Beirut's urban districts, I also encountered a mainly Shiite neighborhood in the middle of the downtown, Bachoura. Located in the middle of the city, the district is a neighbor to upscale neighborhoods on the West, North and East but less privileged district of Mazra'a on the South where mostly working class and immigrant Sunnis and Palestinians reside (see Figure 10). Although the neighborhood is visibly deprived of public facilities and is described as a forgotten neighborhood, its Shiites residents share the same religious culture as of the Shiites who reside in Dahieh. Thus, new considerations were raised about more impacting factors than the culture of origin.

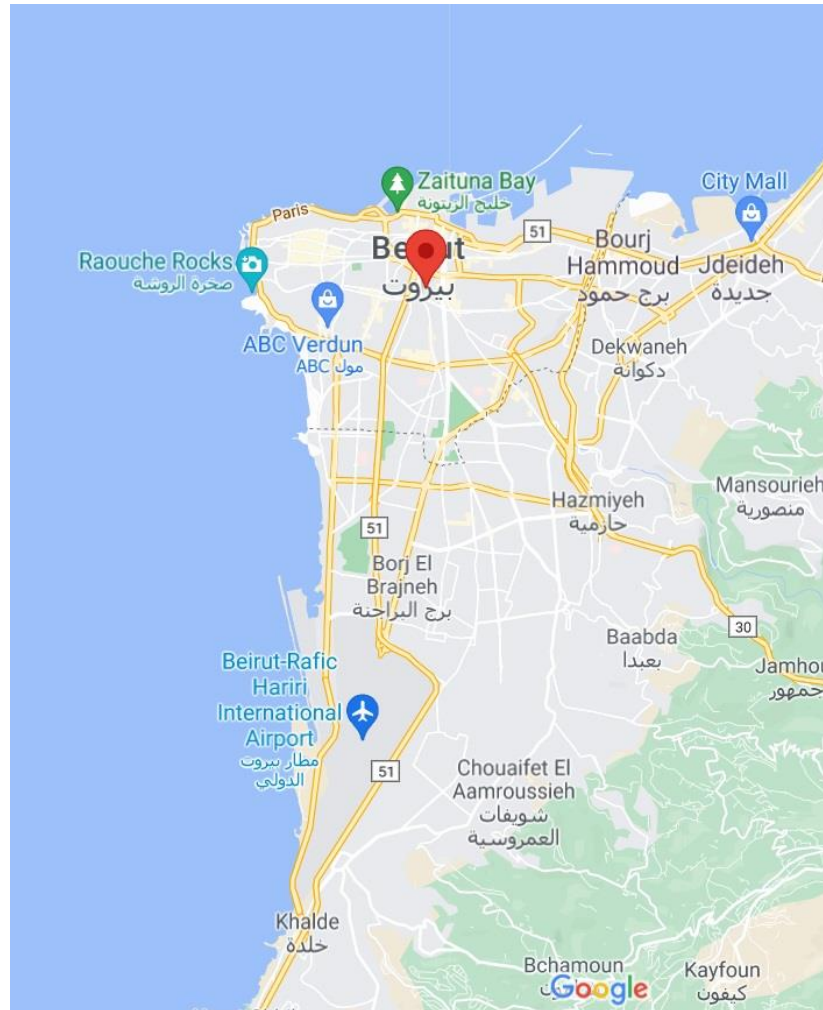


Figure 10: Bachoura's location in the middle of Beirut shown by the red indicator.

Source: Google Map

Therefore, my prior understanding of Beirut's cultural map which would stereotypically assume the underprivileged neighborhood of Shiite and immigrants to be located at the southern-most suburb of Beirut (South Beirut- Mazra'a and Dahieh) was changed. I needed more in-dept analysis of the findings in their process of formation. In the following sections, I go through the analysis of the data in different scales, as of their

relationship with other neighborhoods as well as the process through which the immigrations occurred historically and how these relationalities impacted today's reproduction of cultural urban spatialization.

3.1 Overview of Beirut

Beirut is one of the most religiously and ethnically divided cities in the Middle East. Divided into 20 neighborhoods, Beirut has 12 distinct districts which is almost half the number of the entire district in Lebanon (Lebanese Arabic Institute, 2018) (see Figure 11). As explained in the introduction, Lebanon's 26 districts correspond to the ethnic groups who have settled in the region at different historical time periods, from different places of origin and through different process of immigration. Therefore, the districts relate to not only physically archeological and geographical areas and lands but also the religious and ethnic groups.

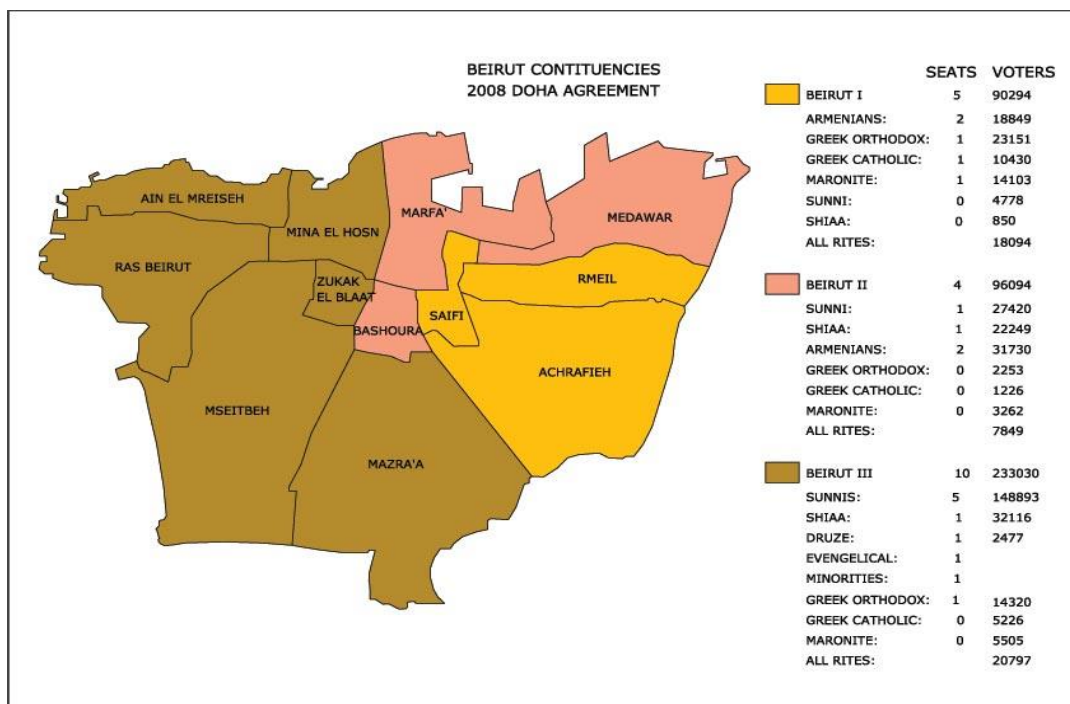


Figure 11: Map of Beirut Sectarian parliament.

Although the urban districts in Beirut indicate the social and economic class of its settlers, they are divided into neighborhoods in which certain ethnic groups reside. For instance, Mazra'a in the South Beirut is considered one of the least economically privileged neighborhoods of Beirut with the annual income less than Lebanon's average of \$2500. Considered as one of the regions in the so-called "misery belt" with Muslim residents most of whom are Sunnis and Palestinian immigrants, Mazra'a is also famous for its prominently affluent neighborhood of Badaro on its East, adjacent to the Green Line, the North-to-South line which physically divides the Western rich Christian districts from the Eastern working class Muslim districts. Formerly a village consisting of pine gardens and green lands, Badaro is now a commercial district where mostly employs the working class in Mazra'a. The same district is also known for its Palestinian refugee camp of Shatila (Chatila) and Sabra neighborhood where the 1982 massacre of Sabra and Shatila claimed the lives of between 460 and 3500 Palestinian Sunnis and immigrant Shiites (see Figure 12).

The same type of divisions is also observed in other districts in Beirut. Bourj Hammoud Armenian Suburb on the Northeast of Greater Beirut and in Matn District, for instance, contains divided neighborhoods such as the Shiite Nabaa District (see Figure 13 to Figure 17). Although it is now a commercially growing district, it is also known as the most ethnically diverse in Greater Beirut and the most densely populated neighborhood in the Middle East with the population of between 150000 and 175000 people in 2.5 square kilometres (Verrhiest, et al, 2016; *Bourj Hammoud: Lebanon's Little Armenia.*,2015). Its population is still growing due to the growth of immigrants who build their ethnic enclaves in this district. Thus, besides the Armenian neighborhoods you can find Shiite,

Syrian, Ethiopian, Filipino/a, Sunnis, Maronites, Tamilians, Syriacs, Kurdish, Turk, Alawites, and Palestinian neighborhoods within Bourj Hammoud, making it an ethnically divided mainly working-class district.

Although Nabaa neighborhood in Bourj Hammoud shares a considerable amount of resemblance to the streets in Dahieh, the latter is more distinctly detached from its neighboring districts, especially Hadath/Al-Hadat on its East. Formed on the old gardens and farms on the South skirt of Beirut, Dahieh (which literally means ‘suburb’ in Arabic) is outside the governance of Beirut and has an independent municipality. However, nowadays it is considered a part of Greater Beirut while it connects Beirut to the country’s only international commercial airport, Rafiq Hariri Airport, owing such a transition towards a political significant district to the neoliberal policies implemented by Rafiq Hariri’s administration (The Daily Star Newspaper – Lebanon, 2015). Unlike other districts which are tightly related to the neighboring enclaves and their residents do not face considerable mobility obstruction, Dahieh is legally and culturally detached from its neighboring Christian district of Hadath/ Al-Hadat in which Muslims are restricted from purchasing any assets, properties, or businesses. Recently, new local laws ban temporary/rental residence of Muslims and Shiites in Hadath/ Al-Hadat (BBC News, 2019). Dahieh does not have the same relationality with its Northern neighbor, Mazra’a. In fact, many Palestinians and even Maronite working class residents have moved down to Dahieh in the recent years, as Dahieh’s infrastructures and commercial economy has improved and developed.

In the following section, I am going to analyze the data gathered from all streets in Dahieh and compare them with the ones from Hadath/Al-Hadat and Mazra’a.

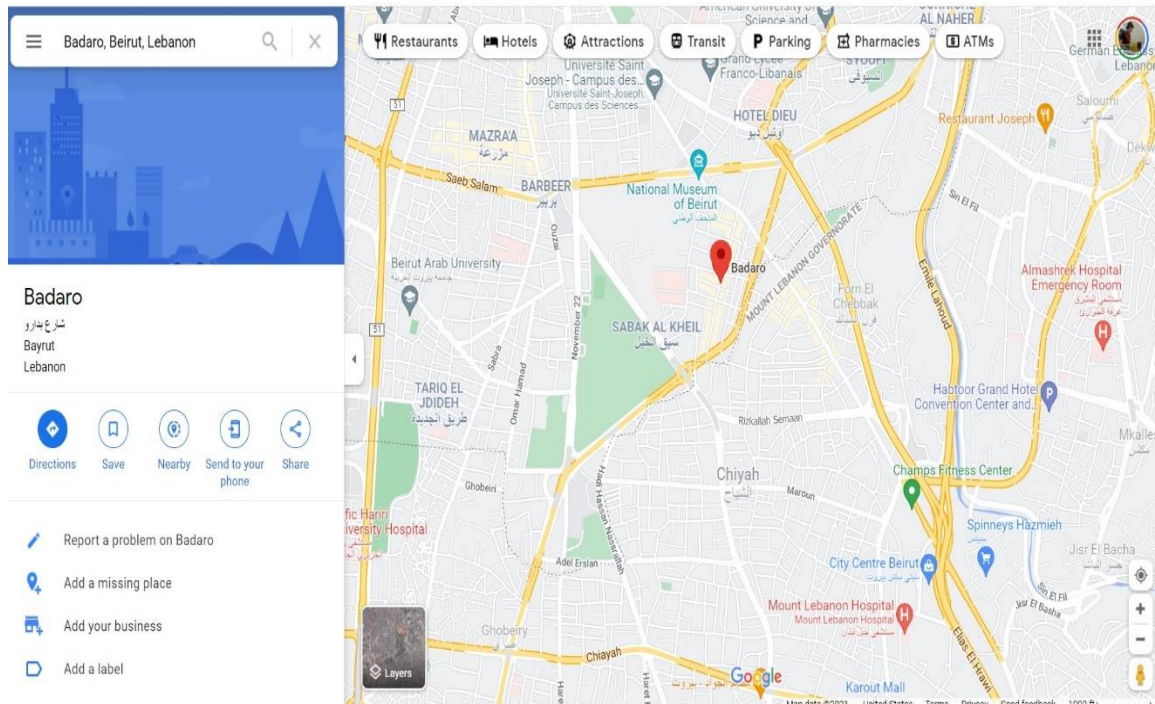


Figure 12: Badaro and Sabra, Mazra'a District, Beirut. Source: Google Map



Figure 13: Bourj Hammoud Armenian Refugee Camp, Beirut (early 20th century), from the George Gratham Bain. Source: Collection of Library of Congress



Figure 14: Bourj Hammoud-Lebanon's Little Armenia, photo by Susan Wilson (Apr. 24, 2015); Source: The Daily Star.

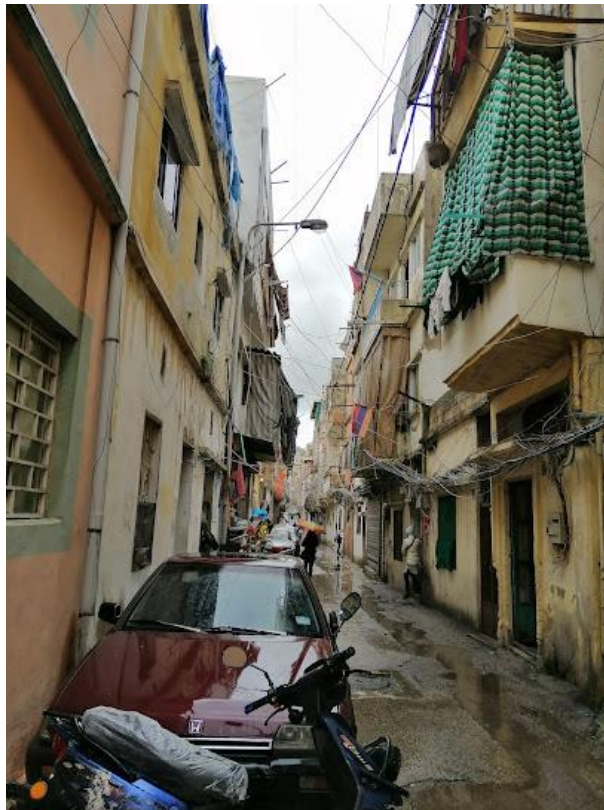


Figure 15: Syrian refugee neighborhood in Bourj Hammoud, 2020.



Figure 16: Bourj Hammoud local businesses and neighborhoods. Source: Pixabay



Figure 17: Two Ethiopian Christian immigrant women in Shiite Nabaa district of Bourj

Hammoud. Source: Adrian Hartrick /Al Jazeera

Dahieh: Shiites' Settlement In The "Forgotten Place"

Dahieh (Arabic ضاحية) is a large suburb area in South Beirut with no official reports of its measurements. There are three distinct areas that can be used as the thresholds to Beirut's Dahieh: Mazra'a to the North, Hadath/Al-Hadat to the East and Rafiq El Hariri International Airport to the South. The mentioned areas do not clearly distinguish the border to Dahieh either, except for Hadath/Al-Hadat that has implemented city laws and regulations for entering and residing of Dahieh Muslims and therefore has chosen the West side of Hadath/Al-Hadat street and Old Saida Road as an assumed border. The border of Dahieh and Mazra'a, for instance is vague; some maps assumed it to be Ghobeiri crossroad to the West of which is Emam Mousa Sadr Road and to the East of which is Michel Zakhour Road. However, based on the maps of Lebanon's governorates, Dahieh begins about 3000 feet to the North of Chiayah neighborhood. Based on the latter specifications of the districts, both Islamic Martyrs Cemetery and Rawdat el Shahidain are the two landmarks that separate Mazra'a from Dahieh. In the South, Dahieh is still expanding towards the town of Khalde, which is 12 kilometers (almost 7.5 miles) South of Beirut and via Beirut-Saida Highway connects Rafiq El Hariri International Airport to villages in South Lebanon that are historically and predominantly homes to Shiites and Maronites. Thus, Dahieh area can be estimated to be about 6 square miles that contains two main neighborhoods, Bourj El Barajneh (in Arabic البراجنة) and Haret Hraik (in Arabic حارة حريك).

Dahieh's population has been growing, too. While the population of Beirut is reaching 2 million, Dahieh is estimated to have about 700 thousand residents, half of which are Syrian and Palestinian refugees (*World Population Review-Lebanon Population 2021*

Live,2021). In fact, the area which is nowadays famous for being a dominantly Shiite district and Hezbollah's stronghold has historically been a vast suburb land on which the largest refugee camp in Lebanon was built. Historical traces to Bourj El Barajneh which literally means the tower of all towers are vague. In fact, the name that corresponds to the Palestinian refugee camp in the area does not appear in any maps that date earlier than 1948, the year in which Bouj El Barajneh Refugee Camp was established amid Israel's attack to Palestine and the mass migration of the displaced Palestinians to Beirut (Figure 18 and Figure 19).

The earliest photos, paintings and maps found in this study dated the late 19th century, which show the borders of Beirut to be Moussaytbeh, beyond which were farms and gardens (Figure 20).

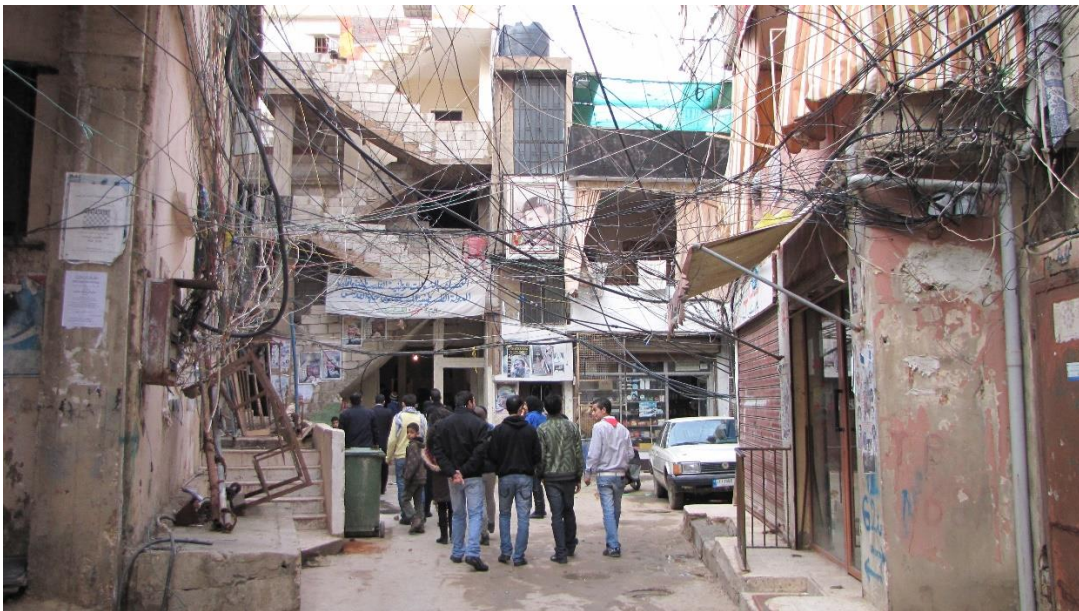


Figure 18: Bourj El Barajneh Refugee Camp, 2010. Source: Cagi Kasapoglu, Wordpress

The images show detached two to three story residential buildings with almost no specific Islamic Shiite features, except a Sunni Minaret of a mosque near an upscale mansion in distance, in Ras Beirut. In a photo taken in 1927, builders and laborers can be seen while building a mosque near a colonial mansion owned by a Khan (Figure 21).



Figure 21: 1927, Khan, Little Mosque, by a colonial mansion.

The mansion in the photo looks similar to the mansion in the painting, however no sign of the mosque minaret can be seen. Nevertheless, as the locations are from the same area in about a 4-decade time gap, the similarities can conclude the urbanization process in Beirut to be based on the immigration of Muslim laborers who settle not far from the

earlier colonialist residents for whom they worked, meaning South of Moussaytbeh or the farms in Mazra'a.

The first residents in Dahieh were Christians, most of whom were from Maronite clans who were displaced from Mount Lebanon on the East of Beirut. In documented maps and images that dated before the 1970s, the area is shown as a rural suburb, with detached houses and unfenced gardens. The structure of the houses also resembled the typical Christian buildings that could be found in the Northern districts of Beirut; two to three story buildings with a main balcony and Western style large windows with Italian style exterior green shutters which was commonly used by the French colonials in Beirut (Italian Window Shutters, 2017). Almost no special activities done by the residents are illustrated in these images (see Figure 22).



Figure 22: Tayyouneh in Dahieh, 1949. Painted by Moustafa Farroukh. Source: Beirut Heritage Society.

In one of the images which is recently painted by Lamia Labban (2021) to depict late 1950s or 1960s, the area is illustrated as more densely populated, with attached houses and modern cars parked outside. The artist shows the significantly noticeable Christian urbanized residential place, not only by the architecture and structure of the buildings, but also by the image of a Christian family with their baptizes infant in their arms standing in the balcony (see Figure 23).



Figure 23: Beirut's vintage suburb style. painted by Lamia Labban, March 2021. Source:

Beirut Heritage Society.

By 1948 there was no city plans to expand Beirut southward in neither Beirut's municipality nor the neighboring Mount Lebanon Governorate. The neighborhoods on the southern outskirts of Beirut such as Haret Hreik, Chiyah, Hadath/Al-Hadat, and Ghobeiry belonged to Baabda District of Mount Lebanon and kept their Christian suburban identity. On the Southwest of Haret Hreik, Bourj El Barajneh still appeared as a vast land that could keep the Palestinian refugees away from Beirut and its adjacent towns and suburbs. In Figure 24, the first campsite of Bourj El Barajneh can be seen with a “makeshift hut pieced together from flattened oil drums, old pieces of corrugated iron, scraps of wood and old sacking” as UNRWA reports.

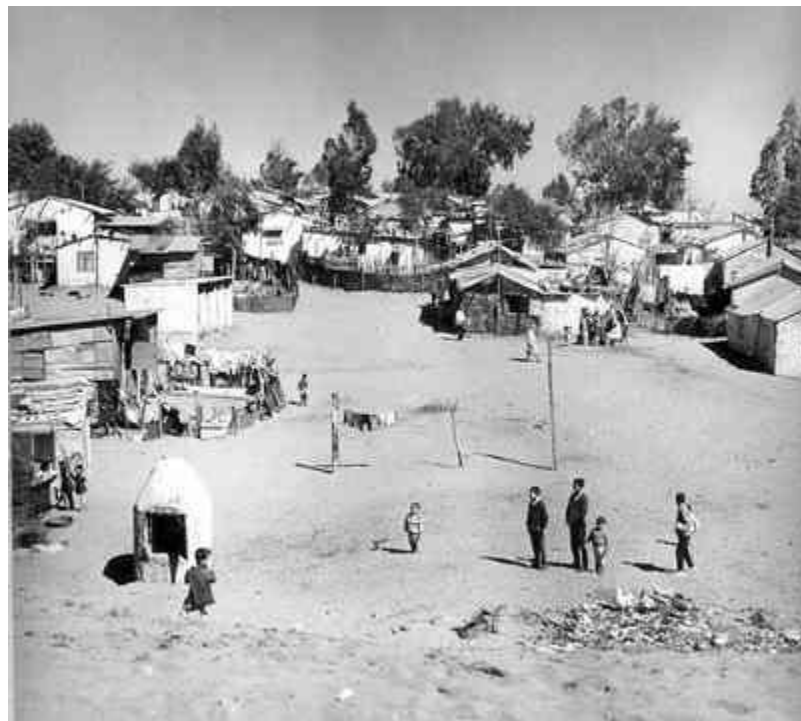


Figure 24: Bourj el-Barajneh camp in the 1950s. Source: from UNRWA photo archives in Latif (2008).

Although in following years more refugee camps, such as Shatila in Mazra'a were erected in Beirut to shelter displaced Palestinians, Bourj El Barajneh records no

considerable urbanized expansion except for the growth in the number of refugee huts. It was not until 23 April 1954, the day Rafiq Hariri International Airport was first opened for operation, when Bourj El Barajneh received some attention due to its location between Beirut and the new cargo airport (see Figure 25). As the new urban expansion and modernization policies were being implemented in the 1950s, new roads passed through Dahieh to facilitate transportation to both the airport and the road to Saida and South Lebanon.



Figure 25: Beirut Intl Airport. 1954. From article published by Olivia Snaije in Popula.

Photo with Courtesy of Lebanese Ministry of Tourism

Despite the growth of urbanization process of Beirut, Shiites did not join the new incoming immigrants to Dahieh until Israel's attack to South Lebanon in 1978 (Vertzberger, 1998). By then, the country had already suffered from a civil war which had started three years before on the matter of Palestinian refugees and the Phalangist

Christians assault against them due to their rivalry against the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) (Collelo, 1987). As soon as the Civil War was flamed in Beirut, the ethnic groups from different towns and regions were grouped with their sects, especially those who had already claimed a district as their own.

While Bourj El Barajneh remained as the land of civil conflicts, Shiites who had had a chance to move from Amel Mountains to Beirut expected newcomers from Shiite villages in Beqaa Valley who were at the time supportive of Druze's leftist party which was fighting in alliance with PLO. The findings of this study show the presence of AMAL Movement leaders in South Lebanon (Figure 26). The villages in South Lebanon became scenes of banners and mass community support for AMAL Movement (Figure 27).



Figure 26: Imam Mousa Sadr, the leader of Shiite Amil Movement sitting with three brothers of the influential Rammal family including physicist Dr. Rammal Rammal, 1970s, Doueir village in Nabatieh- South Lebanon.



Figure 27: Demonstrations commemorating Imam Mousa Sadr and Saad Haddad the leaders of Lebanese resistance, amid mass immigration of Shiites from Bint Jbeil, Nabatieh in South Lebanon, 1981.

The immigration of the Shiites from the South to Beirut started in 1978 after the mysterious disappearance of Sadr and continued until 1982. These Shiites amongst whom the newly established Hezbollah have grown popularity moved into Dahieh, mainly Bourj El Barajneh and Haret Hreik. Hezbollah being less flexible with Druze and Christian parties, soon claimed the area by forcefully displacing the early Christian residents in the suburb. They set up check points to bar their claimed districts from Christian residents and militia. The Hezbollah checkpoints which are still active in the area started to grow during the war between Hezbollah and AMAL, known as War of Brothers (in Arabic: حرب الاخوة) from 1984 until the end of the Civil War in 1990 (see Figure 28).



Figure 28: Hezballah's Checkpoint in Dahieh, 1988. Source: Lebanese War Archive

By the end of the war, not only have Shiites dominated the entire Dahieh, but also have been fully led, provided and even controlled by Hezbollah. The new era of Shiite urbanism in the Southern suburb of Beirut started.

The findings in the following section show how the urbanization process of Shiite immigrants' settlement in Dahieh took place and what cultural features of their communal rural life was reproduced in the city.

3.2 From South Lebanon to South Beirut: Immigration of Bodies and Culture

The Shiites from villages in Nabatieh Governorate in South Beirut started moving upward to the southern suburb of Beirut in 1978. Already militarized and experienced attacks from Israel on their borders, the Shiites who were identified as certain clans with

rural communal culture found themselves in previously owned Christian homes in Dahieh that did not have the characteristics adaptable to their accustomed lifestyle. In Figure 29 an interior home of a Christian resident in Dahieh can be seen. Besides the damages seen in the picture, there is a specific feature of the house that stands out when it is compared with the buildings in which Shiites live; that is the curtains. The curtains are installed as indoor shades. Shiites' buildings are distinguishable with their thick curtains that are installed outside the balcony, the rural custom they still keep in the modern buildings (see Figure 30 to Figure 33).



Figure 29: Christian home in Dahieh damaged in War of Brothers, 1988. Source: Joe Hammoura, *Lebanese War Pictures*.



Figure 30: Haret Hreik. Source: Alchetron posted in 2018.



Figure 31: Dahieh Blast, 2013. Source: Naharnet



Figure 32: Dahieh, Beirut. Source: Beirut, wamcares.org



Figure 33: Chiya, Dahieh. Photo by Evan Chakroff. Source: Flickr

The custom of installing the drapes outside the balcony can also be seen in Palestinian neighborhoods such as the refugee camp in Bourj EL Barajneh (see Figure 34). It may be concluded that the feature is related to Islamic beliefs in general and is inspired by the idea of introverted Islamic architecture which secludes the private space from being seen by unrelated people (in Arabic غير محارم). In some of the archives such as wamcares.org this feature is recognized as a sign of the districts being “slums” (*Slums of Beirut*, 2015). However, the feature is overtly observed in all Shiite districts, including the commercially developed streets in Haret Hreik, as well as the more underprivileged abandoned Shiite neighborhood of Bachoura and Nabaa (see Figure 35 to Figure 37). While no other Sunni districts strictly follow such a custom, Shiites neighborhood in South Lebanon’s Nabatieh closely follow it (Figure 38). Shiite modern buildings in more developed streets such as Hadi Nasrallah Highway on the border of the Christian neighborhood of Hadath/Al-Hadat also share the same feature distinctly (Figure 30). Intensified by poverty (as a technique to keep inside cool with minimal need to use electricity for cooling) or a general Islamic custom, the feature appeared in the study as one of the ways the Shiites use public or nonprivate spaces for private uses; a reproduction of the rural communal life that fluidifies the border between public and private spaces.



Figure 34: Bourj El Barajneh Refugee Camp. Source: Ramzy Baroud, posted in 2010



Figure 35: Dahieh Haret Hreik, Hadi Nassrallah Highway. Source: aadv.com.lb



Figure 36: Bachoura. Photo by Alessandro Rota. Source: Getty Images



Figure 37: Beirut Neighborhood of Nabaa. Photo by Patrick Baz. Source: AFP.



Figure 38: Nabatieh South Lebanon, 1980s.

The curtain installation which makes the facades of the buildings in Shiite communities in Dahieh distinct is not the only feature one might find in Dahieh that represents both rural and Shiite communal culture. The second feature is shared electricity with massively tangled clutters of cables that are directly connected to the power post, locally known as “stolen electricity” (in Arabic كهرباء مسروقة) (Whewell, 2019). This feature is so obvious that can easily mark the district and indicate the social class and economic structure of the neighborhood. Although the crisis power and electricity infrastructure of Beirut is commonly experienced by all residents from all districts and has become an infamous national crisis of Lebanon, the stolen electricity is dominant as the only source of power in all sectors of Dahieh regardless of their class (see Figure 30 & 40) (Bar’el, 2021). The stolen electricity is also practiced outside the Dahieh and Palestinian

neighborhoods such as Bourj El Barajneh's camp, for instance in the Shiite district of Bachoura and Nabaa neighborhood (See Figure 41 & 42). Regarded as a characteristic of a slum district by some archives, the commonly use of electricity is also seen in other non-Shiite non-Muslim middle-class neighborhoods, such as Beirut's Central District in the North of Beirut (see Figure 43). Sector 13, as seen in Figure 43, is famous for being a secular neighborhood.



Figure 39: Dahieh, Hadi Nassrallah HW- border of Hadath/Al-Hadat,2013. Source:

aadv.com.lb

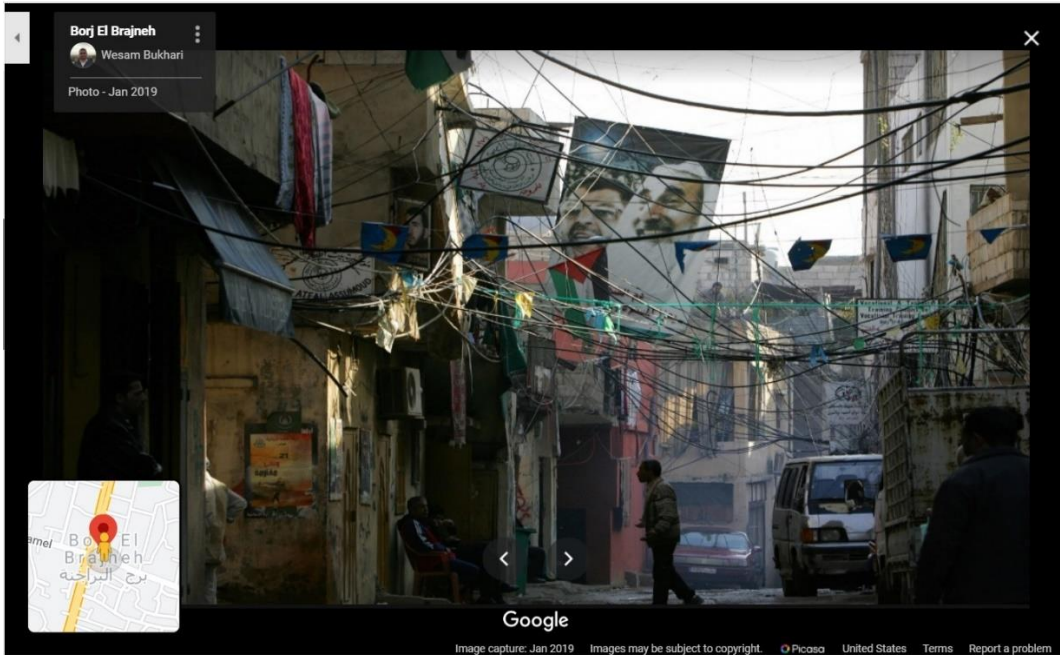


Figure 40: Dahieh, Bourj El Barajneh, 2009. Source: Wassam Bukhari in Google



Figure 41: Khandaq Al-Ghamiq in Bachoura, 2021. Photo by Dalia Khamissy, Source:

Orientxxi.info



Figure 42: Nabaa in Bourj Hammoud. Source: pixabay



Figure 43: Beirut Central District, Sector 13, 2018. Source AFP from Asharq Al-Awsat

Thus, the first conclusion of such an observance is that the shared electricity is due to the economic and infrastructural crisis of Lebanon due to the wars and the impoverishment of Beirut's neighborhoods. Besides, what makes this feature distinct in Dahieh is the religious order of Islam (in general) against the use or sales of stolen goods or services. As Islam strongly prohibits stealing or unconsented use or possession (be it a temporary or permanent possession) of anything (even land) which is not lawfully obtained, one may not expect to see the method of stealing electricity as the only source of power use in Dahieh. However, the Shiite clergies whose Fatwa (religious order) is used as the law of Sharia by their followers, have had a different approach towards stealing from public power (see Figure 44). As the Fatwa published on the website of Islamic Network (Islamway, 2010) reads, the order for the products or income from the productions that use stolen electrical power is not a sin (Haram, in Arabi حرام) as long as it is from a public service source and a portion of the revenue that equates the price of the stolen power is used for charity, public or religious use. In such a case, stealing is not forbidden but even permissible. In fact, the action done by the stolen electricity as in favor of the religious community is the matter of virtue. In other words, the communal use of electricity in Dahieh is an action of Shiite cultural resistance as well as survival through economic crisis.

The screenshot shows a webpage from Islamway.net with a fatwa titled "حكم كسب من يستخدم في عمله كهرباء مسروقة" (Ruling on earning from using stolen electricity for work). The fatwa is dated 08-07-2020. The text of the fatwa discusses the permissibility of using stolen electricity for work, stating that it is haram if it leads to the theft of the electricity, but permissible if it does not. The answer is provided in Arabic, starting with "الحمد لله، والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله، وعلى آله وصحبه، أما بعد:" (Praise be to Allah, and the prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, and upon his family and companions, after that:).

Figure 44: Fatwa for using *Stolen Electricity* for work. Source: Islamway.net

The fluidity of the use of public and private spaces that represent the reproduction of Shiite rural culture can be seen in the uses of balconies for house choirs that are assumed to be private (Figure 45), the use of sidewalks and alleys by the local shops for the mostly used goods (Figure 46), and individual use of the sidewalks for sittings and small evening chats between neighbors (Figure 47). Such a widely practiced custom is a curation of communal lifestyle in South Lebanon rural areas with modern urban structure of Beirut. The 1970s archived photos of South Lebanon show balconies and terraces of the second floor to lead directly to the streets by staircases separate from the houses' main entrance: a distinct feature of these village houses (Figure 48). The first Shiite immigrants to Dahieh also built the same structured houses (Figure 49). These village plans had two main uses: one, to accommodate more than one family in one house who would share

common spaces as the living-room, kitchen and restroom, but yet have autonomy and independence in their more private matters including commuting in and out of the house; two, to facilitate contact with other neighbors in the community to different parts of the house, regardless of the privacy of the room, i.e., one could easily invite a neighbor to the bedroom upstairs, or a hallway or balcony.



Figure 45: Dahieh 1982. Shiite woman in the balcony peeling as many potatoes as could serve more than a household in a neighborhood. The signs of war destructions can be seen in her background. Source: Steve McCurry Official Website

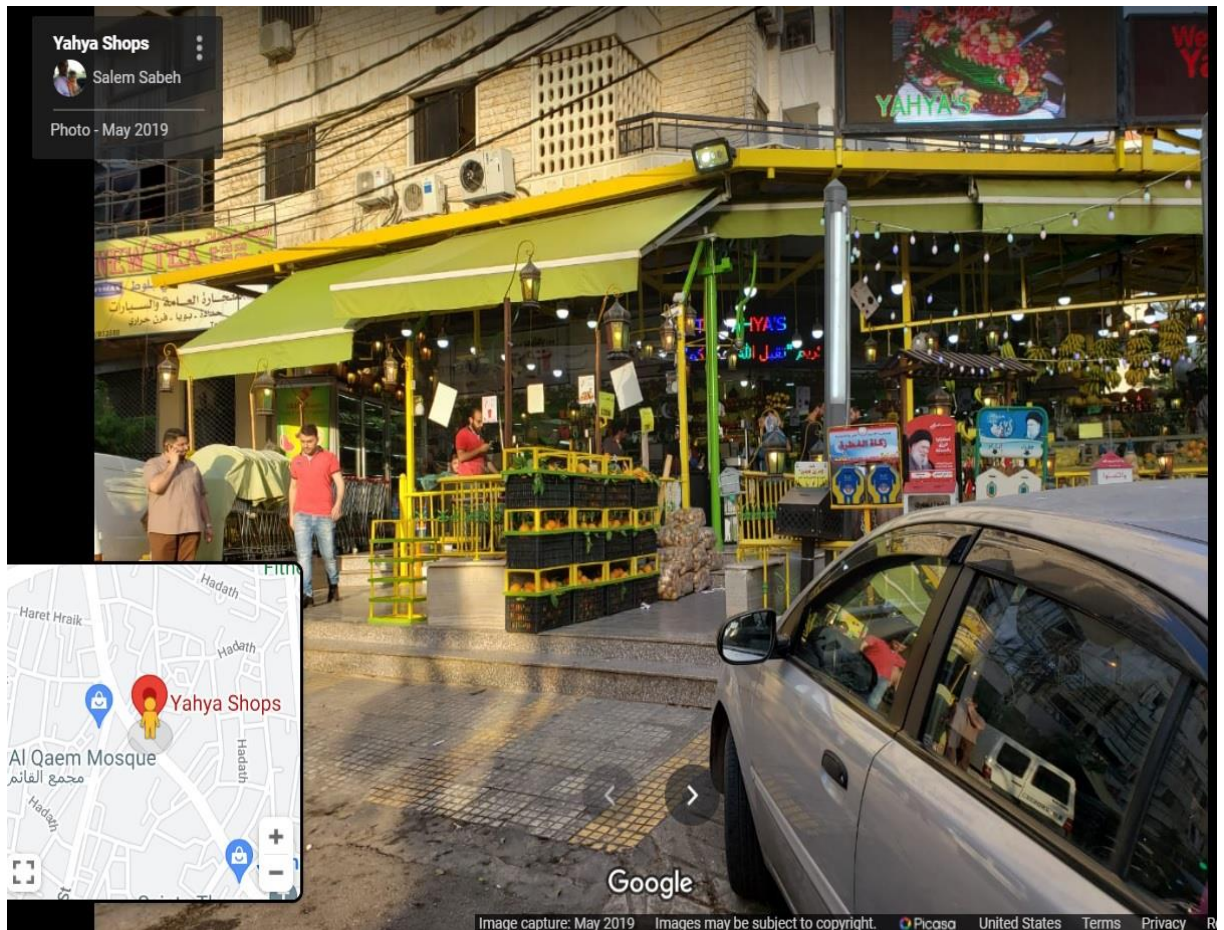


Figure 46: Yahha Shops, Dahieh on the border of Hadath/Al-Hadat, 2019. Typical Dahieh shops using the sidewalk to present and sell the mostly used goods of the neighborhood. Source: Salem Sabath, Google.

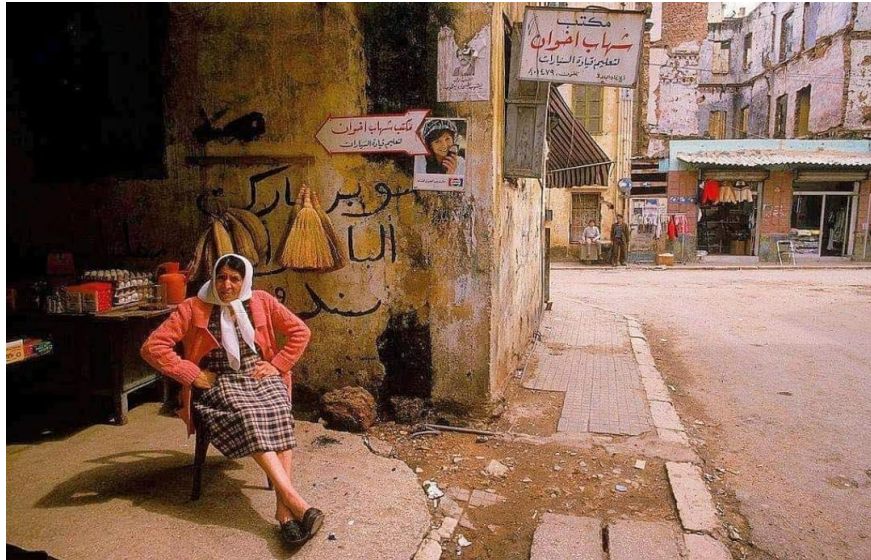


Figure 47: Dahieh, Bourj el Brajne, Beirut 1984. Woman selling goods, the word on the wall behind her reads “Supermarket”. At the end of the alley men from the neighborhood are sitting on chairs outside their house and shop for an evening chat. Source: Bill Foley - The LIFE images collection



Figure 48: Bint Jbeil, South Lebanon Shiite village, 1979. The distinct structure of top floor balconies. Source: Lebanese War Pictures



Photo ID: 1542

Gallery ID: 134 - [Beirut Mutations](#)

Photo Title: [Lebanon, Beirut end of the civil war and beginning of reconstruction 1985-1995](#)

Figure 49: Dahieh, Beirut 1985. Source: copyright of Arab Images

3.3 War, Reconstruction, and Ideological Reproduction of Space

The reproduced Shiite culture in Dahieh was not limited to their residential architecture, and community public use. As Dahieh had been going through constant wars, the reconstruction of the destroyed neighborhoods became vital for these new residents. By the end of war in 1990, Hezbollah, which was officially founded in 1982, had already been well established among Shiites as a militant party (Harik, 2004). Having gained

control over most parts of Dahieh after its combat with AMAL movement in the War of Brothers, and being well supported by Iran, Hezbollah started reconstruction plans in Dahieh (see Figure 50). As shown in Figure 50, the new constructions followed the government's gentrification plans and resulted in densification through mass construction of buildings which would accommodate the increasing number of residents who would immigrate to Dahieh. Thus, the new suburb lost most of its past features including the detached houses or the ones that depicted the South Lebanon village structures.



Figure 50: Haret Hreik in Dahieh, 1988. The reconstruction plans started with the rising flag of Iran as the main investor. Source: OLJ archives

By the 1990s, Hezbollah had introduced itself as a political party representing Dahieh as well as Shiites of South Lebanon, however it did not give up its militancy. In Figure 51, their tanks can be seen maneuvering in the streets of Dahieh. Thus, it used some urban nodes to build up new landmarks that represents the party's Shiite ideology and be used as its militancy strongholds (see Figure 52 to Figure 54).



Figure 51: Dahieh, Bourj el Brajne, Beirut. Source: Pierre Sabbagh/Al Jazeera



Figure 52: EL Ghobeiri, Dahieh, during the War of Brothers between AMAL and Hezbollah, 1988.



Figure 53: Rowdat El Shahidein (The Martyrs Cemetery), EL Ghobeiri, Dahieh. Photo by

Ali Khara Source: Fars News

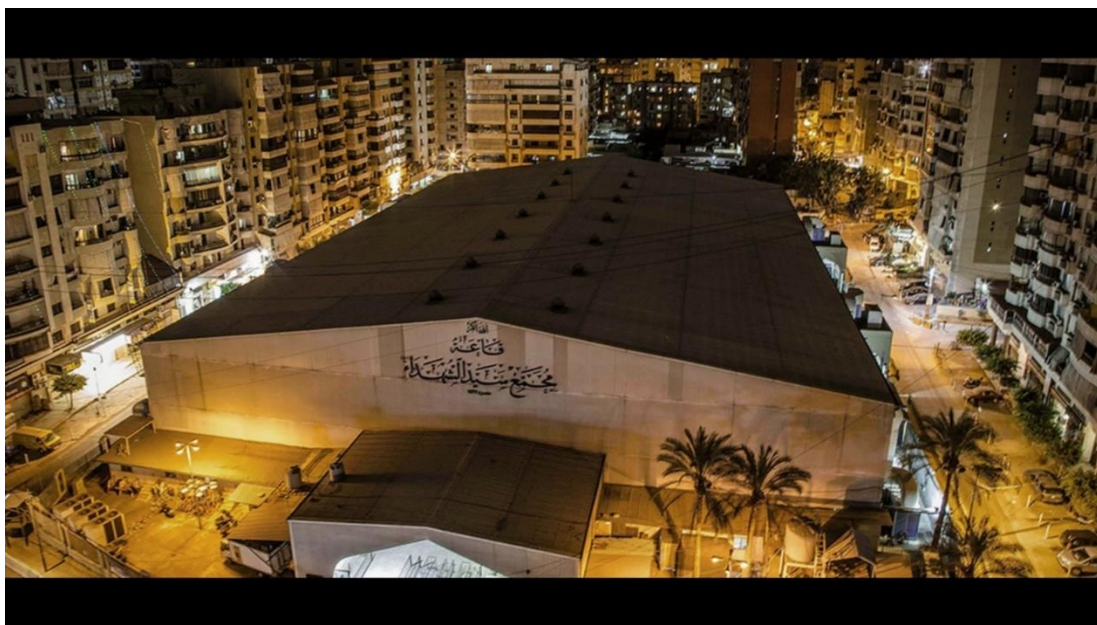


Figure 54: Sayyid El Shohada Complex, Bourj El-Barajneh, South Dahieh.

Rowdat El Shahidein, a building in which Hizbollah's martyrs' graves are well-kept and designed as a sacred place in a shape of museum glorifying the Shiite's resistance, is built exactly on the location of ruins that is shown in Figure 52. Sayyid El Shohada Complex, the modern large building for Hizbollah's mass prayers, rituals or political gatherings and named after Shiite's third Imam's nick name Master of All Martyrs, is built on the ruins in Bourj El Barajneh_ the place that can be seen in Figure 51.

Beirut has historically been reconstructed from ruins 7 times, 3 of which happened since 1975 Civil War (Khalaf & Khoury, 1993; *Discover the enthralling history of Beirut, n. d.*). The post-war general deconstruction of Beirut to fit the new era and the implementation of neoliberal policies during Rafiq El Hariri's administration, did not only provided opportunities for Hizbollah to expand its control by reconstructing Dahieh and the destroyed infrastructures, but also gave Dahieh a strategic weight for all Beirut residents and Lebanon's economy (Nardella, & Abbas, 1999; Sharp, 2018). The New Road and Sidon Highway which pass through Hizbollah's stronghold in Bourj El Barajneh, required more tolerance of the Lebanese government with Hizbollah's autonomy in reconstruction projects to keep the passages safe. As a result, more Shiite religious buildings and mosques as well as Hizbollah's political and ideological buildings were erected. The banners, posters and kiosks advocating Shiite's ideology of 'martyrdom', 'unity' and 'resistance' are in almost all streets in Dahieh (see Figure 55 to 57). However, the Shiites who are still loyal to AMAL raise their banners and the posters of their leaders, in some places next to Hizbollah's banners (Figure 39 & Figure 57). As the leader of AMAL movement, Nabih Berri, is the speaker of the Lebanese parliament, Hizbollah has shown alliance to the movement; thus, more posters in which the leaders

of both parties are illustrated as allies can be seen during the election season. While many Hezbollah's posters promote the Palestinian resistance, the Palestinian neighborhoods and the camp in Bourj El Barajneh show their independence from Hezbollah's politics by murals and graffiti in support for Palestinian leaders (Figure 58 & 60).



Figure 55: Haret Harik, Dahieh 2021- Poster of the chief militant general of the Iranian Qods Sepah, Qasem Soleimani.



Figure 56: Dahieh, 2006, Hezbollah's banner promoting Shiite ideology in their reconstruction project known as "Jihad El Bina" after claiming victory in the 34-day war against Israel.



Figure 57: Dahieh, Hadi Nassrallah HW- between Hadath/Al-Hadat and Mriejeh, 2013. Hezbollah's banners, flags and posters of Iran's Islamic leader Khomeini and the party's militias obstructing a street lane. Source: aadv.com.lb



Figure 58: AMAL propaganda poster, Dahieh, 1993. Source: Artprintsondemand.com

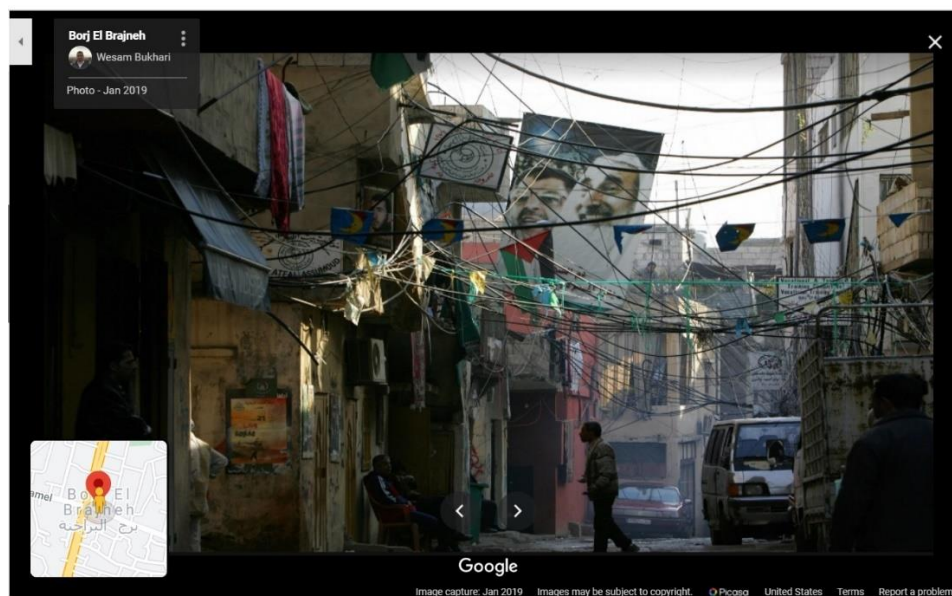


Figure 59: Bourj El Barajneh, 2019. The posters of Hamas founder, Sheikh Ismael

Yassin. Photo by Wesam Bukhari. Source: Google

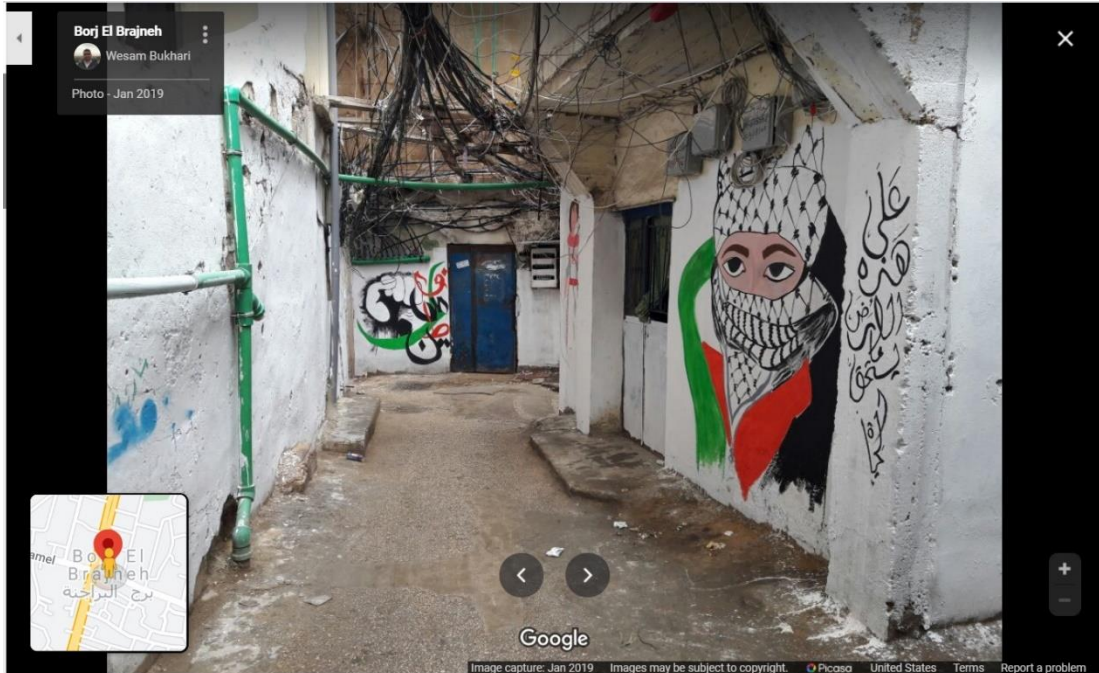


Figure 60: Bourj El Barajneh, Palestinian refugee camp. 2019. Amateur murals of Palestinian resistance painted by the residents. The Arabic graffiti next to the picture of a Palestinian boy reads: “On this land he has the right to live”. Photo by Wesam Bukhari.

Source: Google

Hezbollah’s claim to the public spaces as well as its control of the urban development plans in Dahieh requires party’s more flexible cooperation with local cultural reproduction of rural communality in public urban spaces. Thus, the ideological landmarks privatized by Hezbollah have become places of Shiite mass rituals, and communal share of products and free use of food known as Nazri (in Arabic نذري) in Shiism (Figure 61 to Figure 63). As pictured in Figure 61, the Hezbollah’s building of Sayyid El Shohada Complex (also see Figure 54) is frequently used as a farmers’ market and food fair that gives free spaces for local manufacturers or even individual’s home products to sell or exhibit their goods. Many of these products such as pickles, jams,

pastries, and cookies are made by the neighborhood women at home or in a group consisting of stay-at-home-moms in an alley (see Figure 62). Outside the complex, people of the entire neighborhood including the local shops gather to commemorate Shiite rituals such as Ashura while cooking and distributing foods and edibles for free to whoever passes by (see Figure 63).

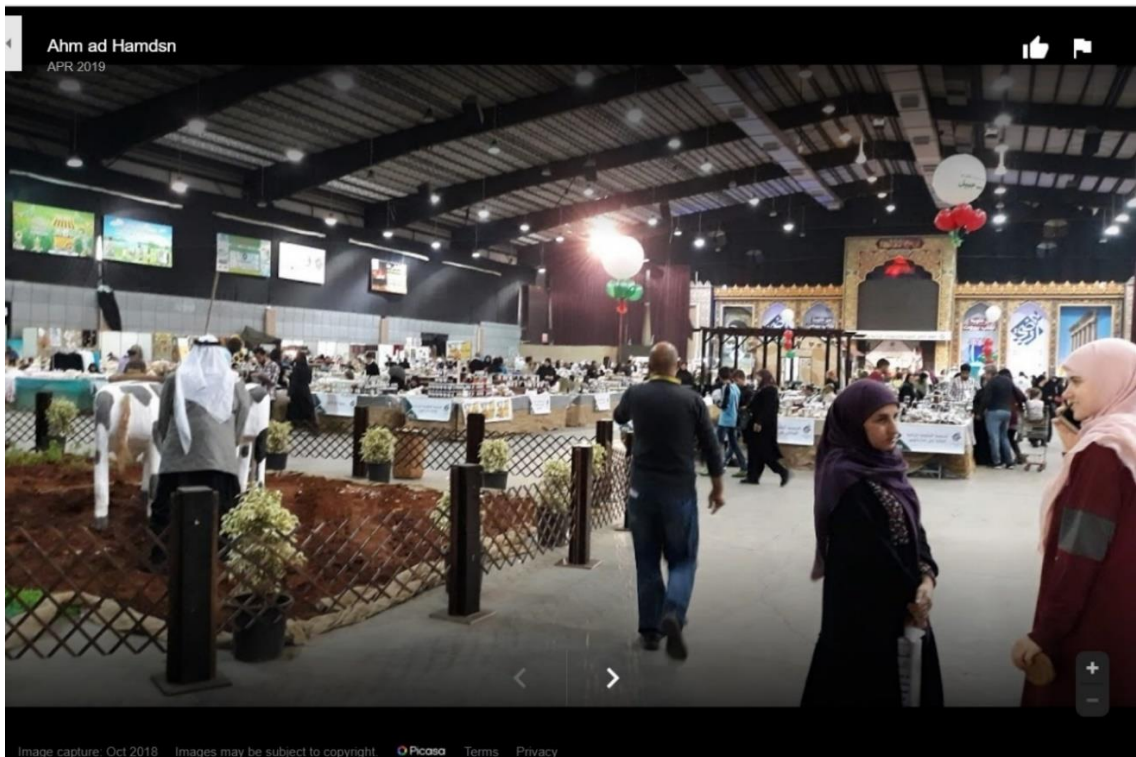


Figure 61: Sayyid el Shohada Complex, Bourj El Barajneh- 2019. Food Fair. Photo by Ahmad Hamdan. Source: Google.



Figure 62: Sayyid el Shohada Complex, Bourj El Barajneh- 2019. Local products done by community organizations mainly run by Shiite women. Photo by Ahmad Hamdan.

Source: Google.

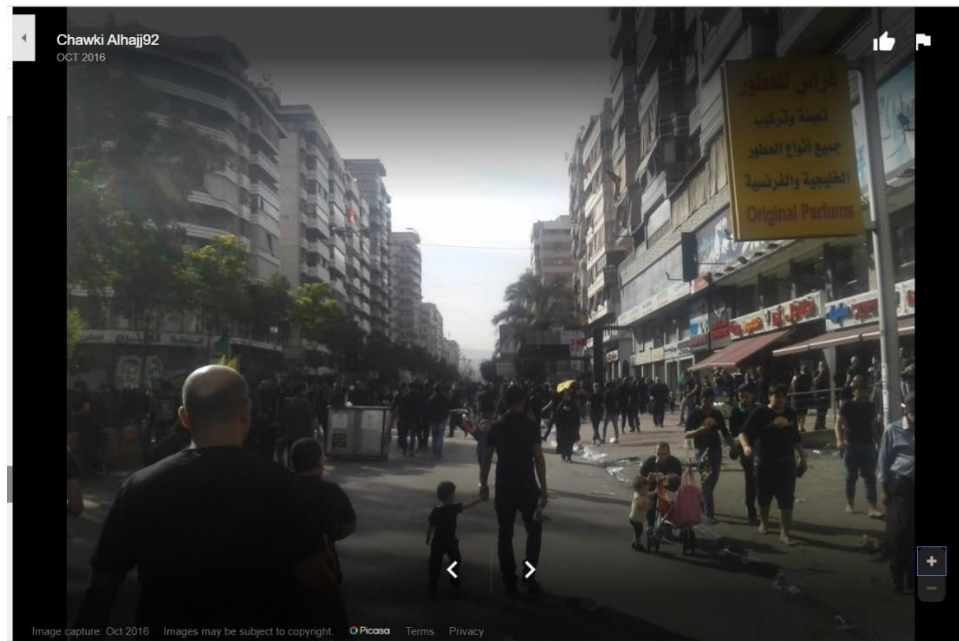


Figure 63: Streets next to Sayyed El Shohada Complex, Bourj El Barajneh, Dahieh, 2016.

Shiite rituals in the public space with community's participation. Photo by Chawki Al

Hajj. Source: Google.

3.4 Dahieh's Development: Cultural and Class Contrasts

One of the elements that appeared in this study was the outstanding urban construction contrasts. On the streets that are considered as crossroads between old and new neighborhoods of Dahieh, specific landmarks have divided it into two contrasting areas with almost opposite features: on one side, there are buildings and alleys with all above mentioned features of Shiite rural reproduction of public space, on the other side there are more upscale Christian features, such as modern new cars, no signs of rurality such as outdoor curtains covering balconies, use of sidewalks for communal gatherings, or posters and murals indicating Shiite ideology. For instance, one of the famous landmarks is Rawda High school (see Figure 64). Established in the middle of Imam Khomeini Street on the north of Dahieh, this famously expensive and upscale school has divided the street to two sections: on its west (see Figure 65) the streets feature all Shiite rural cultural elements, including the village structure of the houses, the stolen electricity cables, AMAL posters and the use of the sidewalks for selling farmers' vegetables. On its east (see Figure 66), the more upscale houses and modern cars demonstrate a totally different culture and class.

The school, which emphasizes Western standards of education, has been advocating for inclusivity and has enjoyed the support from the local religious leaders from all religions and sects including Christians, Sunnis and Shiites (see Figure 67). The school did not have any Shiite or Muslim students until very recently as it was mostly funded by Christians (see Figure 68). Moreover, the Shiites entered the area much later in the early 1980s. Despite the systematic departure of early Christian residents of the area and the

radical changes to the public spaces including changing the name of the street to Iran's Islamic leader Imam Khomeini, the school thrived by enjoying both governmental and Christian upper class's funds and financial supports.



Figure 64: Rawda High school, Imam Khomeini St., Dahieh.

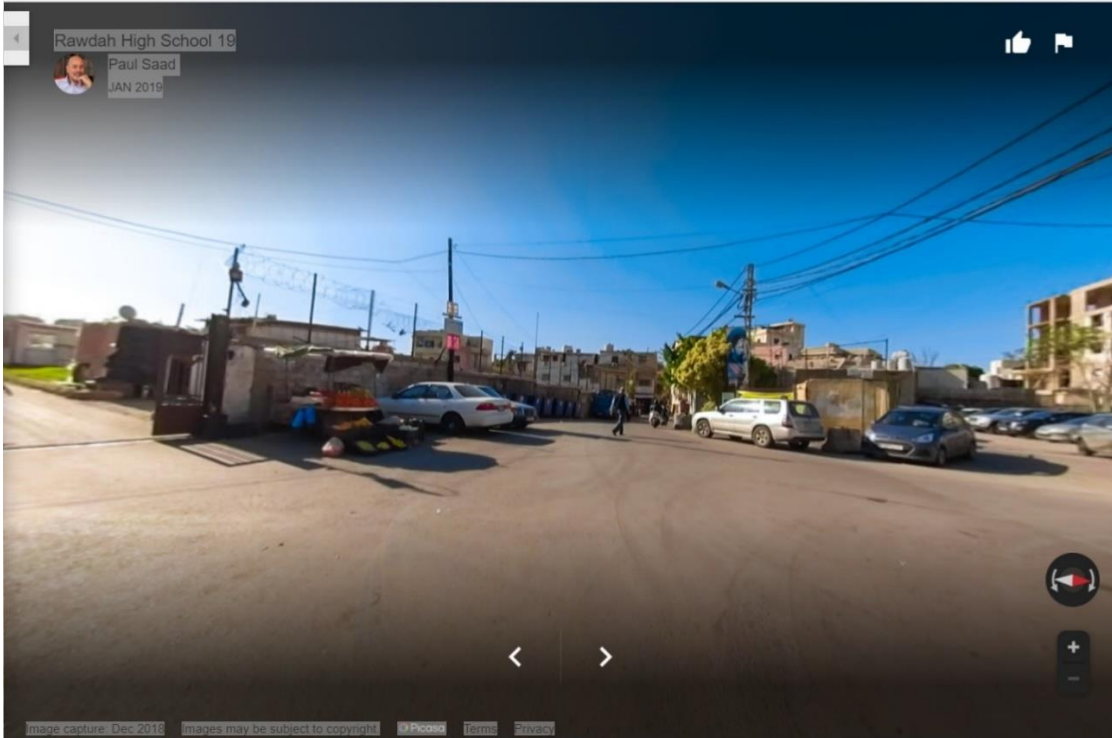


Figure 65: East of Rawda High school, Dahieh. 2019. Photo: Paul Saad. Source: Google

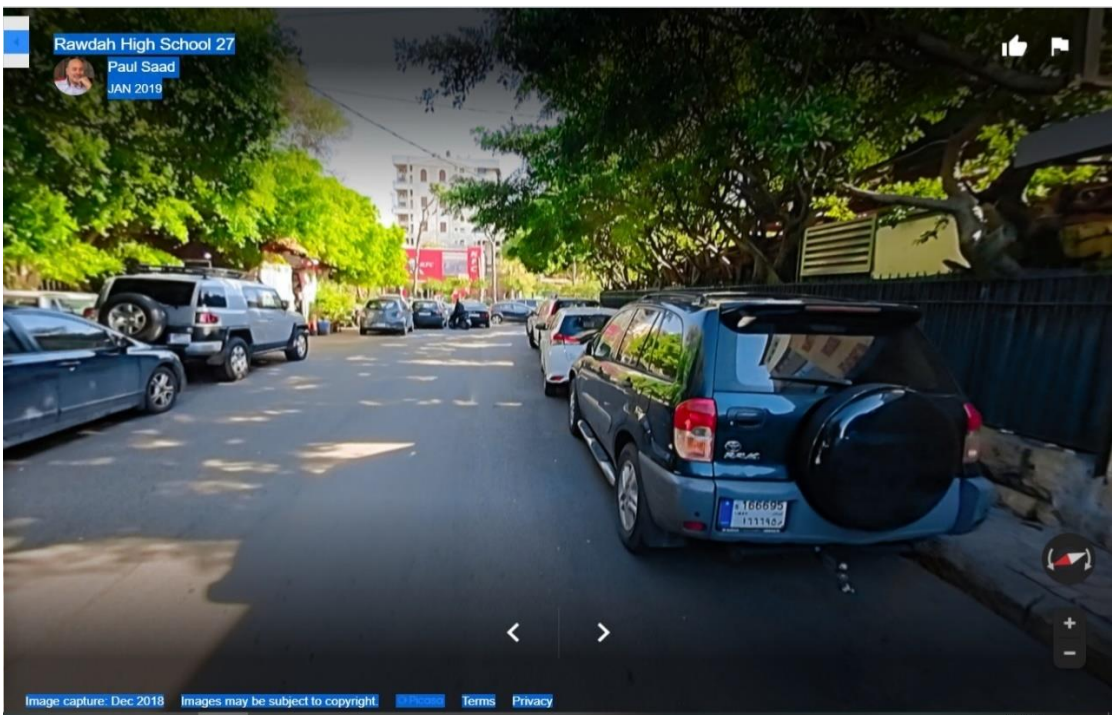


Figure 66: West of Rawda High school, Dahieh, 2019. Photo by Paul Saad. Source:

Google



Figure 67: screenshot from an uploaded photo on Rawda High school website, indicating the participation of clergies from all religions and sects celebrating the success of 40 students from G10 and showing religious tolerance and diversity.



Figure 68: Rawdah High School, Dahieh, 1974. No Muslim Student is in the photo.

Source: Old Beirut Archive

Such contrasts exist in almost all main streets in Dahieh, especially the ones that are closer to the borders of other neighboring districts such as Palestinian and Sunni dominant Mazra'a and the Christian district of Hadath/ Al-Hadat. Besides the cultural division within the main streets of Dahieh, there are contrasting features near the strongholds of Hezbollah where most urban and economic developments have happened. Despite the anti-Western/anti-American propaganda of Hezbollah visibly illustrated in the large installed banners, large billboards advertising Western products and multinational corporations are installed near Hezbollah's offices and cultural centers (See Figures 39, 58, 69, & 70).

The tolerance that Hezbollah has recently shown towards non-Shiite investors to attract Western capitals as well as the government subsidies for its urban development projects has impacted the local Shiite small business in all parts of Dahieh. In Figure 71, a small business owned by two local Shiite women can be seen. The shop is a local tailor that sews customized Hijab/veil. It has adopted a French name, "C'est Moi", following the custom practiced by early Christian residents who were inspired by the era of the French colonizers.



Figure 69: Dahieh, Hadi Nasrallah Street towards Kafaat and Choueifat. Source: Pomedial



Figure 70: KFC is in Dahieh, Imam Khomeiri Road between Nourj El Barajneh and Haret Hreik, 2015. photo by Mohammad Najem, Source: Twitter.



Figure 71: C'est Moi, Dahieh between Haret Hreik and Imam Khomeini Rd.

3.5 Dahieh Versus Hadath/ Al-Hadat and Mazra'a

Dahieh's cultural reproduction in urban spaces makes it outstanding. However, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, its relationality with its neighboring districts is vague in the North and strictly sharp in the East. The War of Brothers occurred mainly on the matter of AMAL and its Druze allies' support of PLO and divided the Palestinian refugees into two parts, those who would have less sympathy towards PLO and Fatah that are believed by Hezbollah to have compromised with Israel during the peace agreements, and those who strongly support the two Palestinian movements, i.e., Palestinians in Bourj El Barajneh and Palestinians in Shatila in Mazra'a district. However, such a distinction is not vividly seen amongst Palestinian refugees. Although there are more signs and murals

commemorating Yasser Arafat, the leader of PLO in Shatila, some murals which celebrate his legacy can also be seen in Bourj El Barajneh Camp in Dahieh (see Figure 72). The findings of this research show a gradual growth in cultural mobility and mutual impacts between Dahieh and South Mazra'a, with more businesses owned by Sunni Palestinians being established in Dahieh and more Shiite cafés and landmarks in Mazra'a. Therefore, the only distinction between the two districts is their municipality borders, which is barely noticed by residents and travelers (Mahmoudeau, 2015).



Figure 72: Bourj El Barajneh Camp, Dahieh, 2015- Mural commemorating Yasser Arafat, PLO leader. Source: Offbeat Travelling

The relationship between Dahieh and Hadath/Al-Hadat, on the other hand, is and has always been rough. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Hadath/Al-Hadat has been implementing a law that prohibits Muslims from buying any properties or businesses in

the district. There is no available source to the specific law, just like most of the archives of Hadath/Al-Hadat. However, the city council and municipality keep emphasizing on the law which according to Hadath/Al-Hadat's authorities has always been there. The law is supported vastly by Hadath/Al-Hadat Christian residents who use it to limit mobility of Shiites from Dahieh to their town. Despite the fact that almost half of the old residents are Muslim (Associated Press, 2019), the propaganda to bar Muslims from what Hadath/Al-Hadat authorities call "the Christian land" can be seen in many urban spaces, especially the main roads adjacent to Dahieh (see Figure 73).



Figure 73: Hadath/Al-Hadat, 2019, The banner promoting "not selling the lands" by Tadamoun organization of Hadath/Al-Hadat. photo posted by Najib in BlogBaladi.

The banner in Figure 73 is a promotional praxis of an organization run by local Hadath/Al-Hadat authorities, business leaders and influential icons, called Tadamoun. The poster reads: "Guarantee the youth of Hadath [Al-Hadat in local dialect], For the survival of Hadath/Al-Hadat...Do not sell your land". Tadamoun.org is a promotional

website for the 2016 city council election, and consists of slides that introduce the city plans of the team led by today's Hadath/Al-Hadat's mayor, George Edward Aoun. It starts with the emphasis on the Christian Catholic Maronite identity and beliefs of the residents of Hadath/Al-Hadat and draws detailed plans of sustainable and independent urban development based on the needs of Maronite's Christian tradition.

There are very few, inconsistent, and mostly unprecise archives of the city, its history, landmarks, data, and even laws and regulations available. In fact, protecting detailed and accurate information and data about Hadath/Al-Hadat has been a resilience strategy practiced in this area for long. In 1999, Walid Ra'ad published a piece of archival research about Beirut's cultural landmarks based on the project he had run in 1975 (early days of the Lebanese Civil War) by recruiting one hundred photographers. He had referred to the archives of a Beirut based research organization called Al-Hadath/Al-Hadat (Ra'ad, 1999). As he reported the obstacles to their project, he highlighted the resilience of the suburb Hadath/Al-Hadat to provide any information. A few years before the publication of this article, Anne Tohme (1995) had published a controversial article in *Peuples Méditerranéens* about her research on the social changes in Hadath/Al-Hadat district. In her article, she described that while the district had become the place of interest for political parties and investors during the early days of the Civil War due to its strategic location, it would no longer enjoy developments as the war was over. She showed how the resilience of Hadath/Al-Hadat against the growing Dahieh could push them back from acquiring the interest of political parties and investors after the war, when the strategic importance of Hadath/Al-Hadat would fade away.

The suburban Hadath/Al-Hadat that Tohme talks about is a part of Baabda Governorate, just like Dahieh, however, it has always been closer in relationship with the Maronite villages and districts on the Northwest of Baadba, in order to save its Christian Maronite identity. The oldest historical accounts of Hadath/Al-Hadat appear in war and riots of Druze immigrants against the Ottoman Empire in the mid-nineteenth century (Fawaz, 1994). It has gained acknowledgement beyond being an area of a few Maronite villages but as an urban district during wars, especially the Lebanese Civil war. As Dahieh starts to grow as a Shiite district with independent control over the urban areas of the Southern suburb of Beirut, Hadath/Al-Hadat secures its Christian identity in relationality against the neighboring Dahieh. The border between the two districts is just a road, Hadath/Al-Hadat Street/Camil Chamoun Rd that separates Haret Hreik and Bourj El Barajneh on the West from the Christian neighborhood on the East (see Figure 74). The findings of this study show that unlike the strict laws of Hadath/Al-Hadat to separate itself from Muslims and their influence, the public urban spaces that are close to Hadath/Al-Hadat Street/Camil Chamoun Road are vividly influenced by what is considered as Shiite urban way of life. As Figure 75 and 76 show, the neighborhoods facing West towards Dahieh have the same features of using public and private spaces. The poverty in these areas is observable, unlike the upscale developments in the areas more distant from Dahieh (see Figure 77).

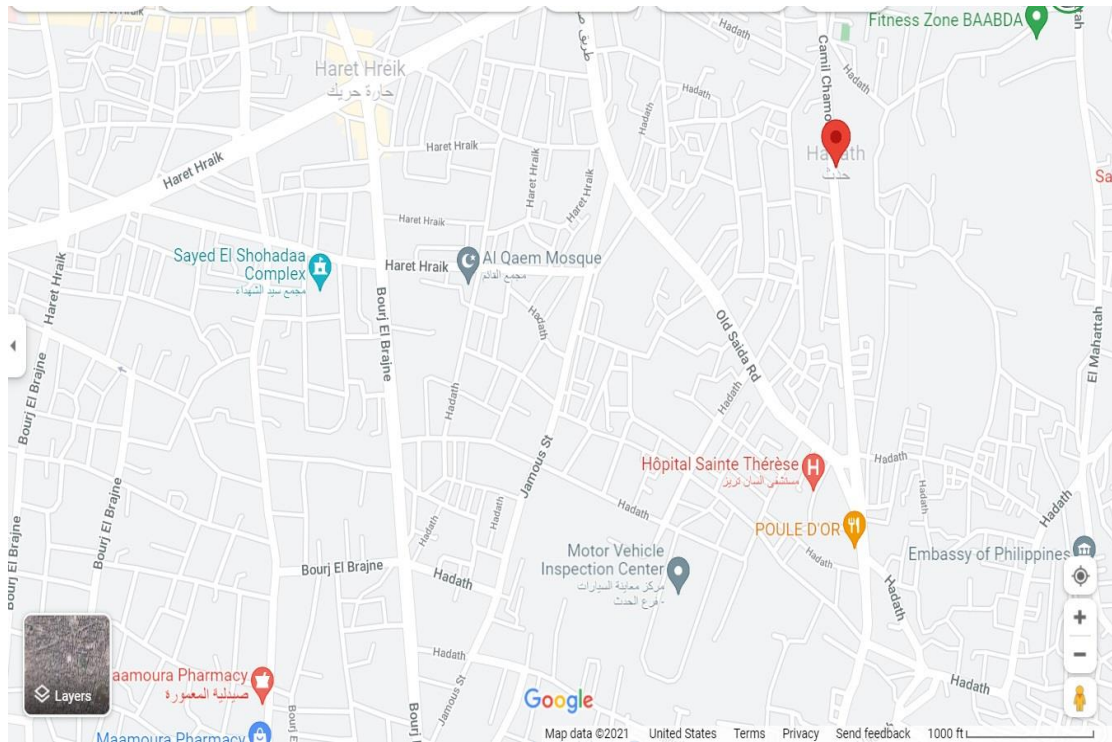


Figure 74: Map, border of Dahieh and Hadath/Al-Hadat

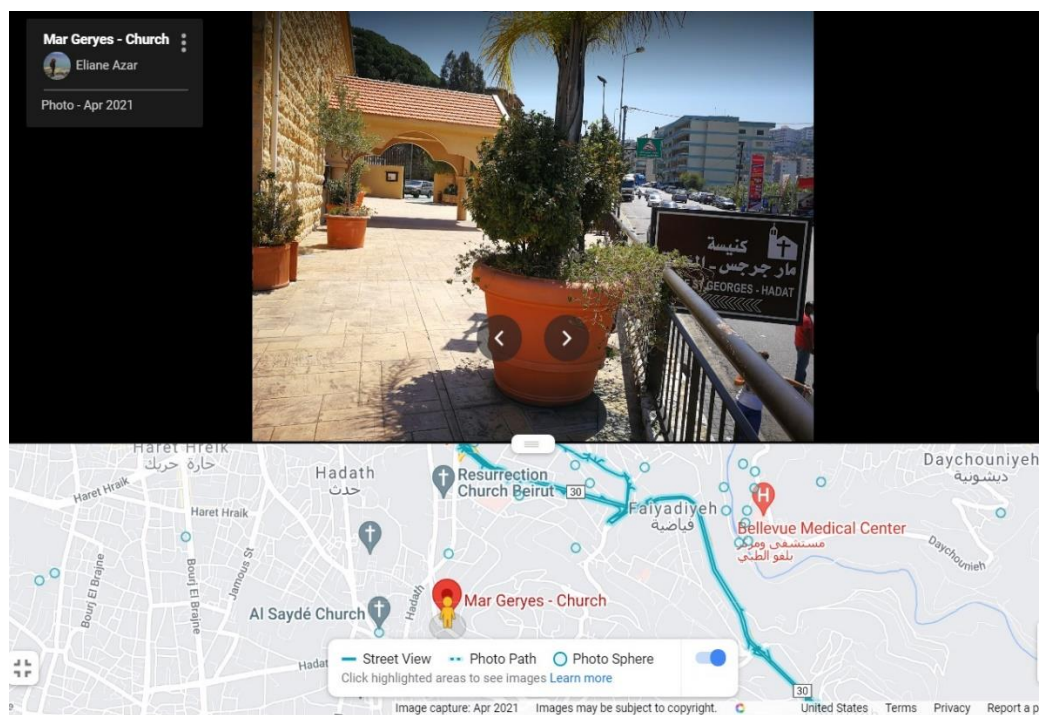


Figure 75: Mar Geryes's Church in Hadath/Al-Hadat/Hadat facing Dahieh on the other side of the road. Photo by Eliane Azar. 2021. Source: Google



Figure 76: East side of Hadath/Al-Hadat/Hadat, 2019. Source: DailySabah



Figure 77: Overview of Hadath/Al-Hadat/Hadat with its Christian identity emphasized with its central Cross tower. The further the neighborhood from Dahieh, the more developed the area. Source: Indus Scrolls

Chapter Four: Conclusion

The world has been constantly experiencing fluxes of migrations, even in the midst of pandemic diseases such as COVID-19 that limited travelling to most economically developed countries.

Today, one in every seven people in the world is a migrant, the majority of whom are internal migrants (763 million internal migrants and 281 million international migrants in 2020)

(*Migration in the world, 2020, The World Migration Report 2020, 2021*). These immigrants that make ethnic enclaves in their destination do not fully assimilate with the dominant culture and social constructions of their new place of residence. They are assumed by many scholars to develop resistance towards the dominating cultural power of the new place.

However, as scholars such as Mae Ngai (2003) and Golash Boza (2015) have argued, the immigrants' enclaves are places claimed by the immigrants who are both resistant against the existing dominance of cultural power and inclusive in order to build a community of diaspora.

The rhetoric of immigrants' adaptation to the new place emphasizes the impact of the new place, especially the racializing character of capitalism that is often more developed in the metropolitan urban destinations. Missing in these analyses are the role of cultural practices in the immigrants' place of departure and the synthesis of the duality between their cultural practices in their place of departure and the place of arrival. In fact, immigrants carry the cultural experience of their past and find themselves in the process of surviving as an ethnic group through and after immigration. Therefore, what makes diverse forms of immigrants' ethnic claim to the city is the process that starts from the point of departure and passes throughout immigration paths until after the arrival, settlement and forming their enclave.

Thus, this research studied the process of rural to urban immigration of the minority religious group of Shiites in Lebanon who are not only racialized due to their religion and ethnicity but

also criminalized because of the militant groups of AMAL and Hezbollah that have led their enclave in the Southern suburb of Beirut. While studying the process of this ethnically and religiously collective immigration, I analyzed the reproduction of Shiite rural culture in the urban spaces of Dahieh and how such spatialization of culture has impacted other religious districts of Beirut. The findings of this study support my contention about the reciprocal impact of the embodied culture of immigrants and the pre-existing social construction and cultural dominance of Dahieh in the formation of the enclave. The study also discovered a dialectical relationality between Dahieh and Hadath/Al-Hadat/Hadat, the neighboring district which develops its recognized Christian identity against Muslim Shiite Dahieh. Based on its findings, this study concludes as follows:

First, Shiite immigrants to Dahieh reproduce and spatialize rural and religious culture to claim their identity right to the city. Such a spatialization was a curation of their past social construction with the pre-existing structures in Dahieh. Although, the forgotten place of Bourj El Barajneh Palestinian Refugee Camp and the land of constant wars made the residents suffer mass destructions of their urban spaces, they impacted the way Shiite immigrants reproduced their embodied religious culture that they had carried into Dahieh. The impacts were bilateral; the synthesis of which makes the entire district a curation of both cultures of resistance. Thus, there is a reciprocal impact between embodied religious culture of immigrants from their rural origin and the pre-established social constructions in the urban areas of their arrival.

Second, the urban spatialization of immigrants' culture expands beyond their enclave border as a style of life and survival in the time of crisis and downward class mobility. At the time of power crisis and economic hardship which made secular districts of the North

Beirut, South Mazra'a and the Central District face a fall of class, the urban spatial practices formerly known as Dahieh's style, including commonly use of electricity and the fluidity of private and public use of space were implemented by those of the newly suffering districts, as a means of survival.

Third, the process of cultural spatialization as immigrants' collective claim to the city is relational. When racialized as a minority religious ethnic group of aliens, they face resistance from the privileged religious ethnic groups, thus they become restricted and avoided by communities that are formed in relationality *against* their claimed districts. Although, both Dahieh neighborhoods and Hadath/Al-Hadat existed before the immigration of Southern Shiites, and both districts became the war fields during the Lebanese sectarian Civil War and Israel attacks, the growth of Dahieh as a Shiite district led to the Christian nationalist and anti-Islamic identity claim to distinguish itself in contrast to its neighboring Dahieh. Such an opposing urban relationship between the two communities does not necessarily cause abandonment and isolation but can result in the growth of the immigrants' enclave to be inclusive of other oppressed immigrant groups. It was due to Hadath/Al-Hadat's resilience towards Shiites and the racialization of all immigrants as unwelcomed Muslims that Syrian and Iraqi refugees, Kurds and even labor immigrants from Southeast Asia found Dahieh as a sanctuary, regardless of their common share of ideology with those of Dahieh's dominant Hezbollah.

Fourth, the capital investors go where racialized immigrants settle as devalued cheap labor forces, regardless of the resistance inspired by the ideological basis of the immigrants' religion. The immigrants can show their resistance to neoliberal policies by curating the new urban structural plans with their rural cultural spatialization. The Fatawa

of Shiite clergies that let the use of stolen electricity for commercial use as long as a portion of the revenue is spent in the community, legitimizes the growth of economy regardless of its means as long as it is for the benefit of the Shiite community. Thus, when the investors from ideologically sympathizers of Iran raise their national flag for their massive reconstruction plans in Dahieh, they face almost no resistance from Dahieh's residents, even from those who did not support Hezbollah. As the neoliberal policies of reconstruction and development reaches Dahieh with its Western corporations, such as KFC, Dahieh embraces their investments, while keeping its banners of anti-Western imperialism up in every street.

The above-mentioned results were derived from the findings gathered from Shiite's Dahieh, while other minority districts such as Bachoura have not formed as strong and impactful cultural resistance despite their proximity to culturally, historically, and economically significant districts in the heart of Beirut. What made Dahieh a stronghold of Shiite resistance and influence via their cultural urban spatialization was due to the rural culture from where they emigrated. Therefore, the study ultimately concludes that the culture of communality that was embodied by the entire flux of Shiite immigrants from South Lebanon, where the collective rural life as well as tribal religious culture that is racialized and criminalized by the urban Christian majority was practiced, made these immigrants a "quasi-nation".

At a more general scale, when depending on how collective religious culture of rural life is practiced communally by its residence, the emigrants will co-create and reproduce the communal culture in the urban district of their destination, not as a group of newcomers but as a quasi-nation that will protect itself, its identity and culture by resisting as well as

influencing and curating the spaces. Thus, the elimination of the political parties that represent them would not necessarily eliminate their resistance and tendencies to grow their hegemony beyond their enclaves; as long as their religious rural culture of communality protects their identity, organizes them to claim their right to the city, reproduces itself in urban spaces and becomes a model for other oppressed groups.

Chapter 5: Suggestions for Further Studies

In the process of conducting this research, new elements appeared to be likely regarded as impactful factors that deserve independent focus in further studies.

- Gender: Shiite women frequently appeared in the spatialized practice of communal Shiite culture in Dahieh. Moreover, new businesses that are either producing cultural products or are representing the Shiite cultural rural values are being established and run by Shiite women in Dahieh.
- Environmental Justice and Resolution to Climate Change and Beirut's Garbage and Waste Disposal Crisis: Both Dahieh and Nabaa districts have been extensively facing environmental crisis.
- Ecology: The role of Beirut River, Jbal Lebnon Mountain, Marfa' Port, Gardens and Farms on the East and South Beirut and the Green Line that divides the city into two ethnically and religiously opposing sectors.
- New Roads: The New Road to Rafiq Hariri Airport, Imam El Khomeini Road, Old Saida Road, Beirut-Saida Highway, Sami El Solh Road- Dividing Beirut Governorate and

Mount Lebanon Governorate, Emile Lahoud Road along Beirut River, The New Road (Tariq el Jdid) between Mazra'a and Dahieh.

- Urban Development Policies of Neoliberal Salaam and Hariri administrations
- Gentrification: Gentrifications are happening and have long been practiced in all districts in Beirut, especially in Dahieh.
- Carcerality: Dahieh, and Mazra'a have been refugee camps and prison sites (also Sabra Massacre)
- War: The epochs of peace and stabilities in Beirut are rare in the past century. Each war, besides the destruction, has left obvious changes in the ethnic, religious, and cultural urban features and demography.
- Violence: The displacement, ethnic district claims, and urbanization of ethnic groups have been tied to some sort of violent incidents or policies, including massacres, checkpoints guarded by armed forces and sectarian wars. Such features keep appearing in different forms of data.
- Displacement: Unlike what appears in official historical scripts, the displacement in Beirut has not only happened in some specific epochs. It keeps happening every time a new crisis happens. It is happening today as a result of the Marfa' Port blast.

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