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**MASTER'S PROGRAMME IN URBAN MANAGEMENT AND
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**Identity Politics in Contested Urban Spaces:
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Mohsen, Tripoli**

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Lebanon

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Summary

In light of the polarisation of international political powers, and with the simultaneous instability this has caused within the context of Lebanese politics, the area of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen in Tripoli, Lebanon, has witnessed a series of events that have altered its urban fabric, hence shaping its current socio-spatial dynamics. Poverty and tension reign over the neighbourhoods, trapping the residents in a vicious cycle of marginalisation. Identity and historical pasts seem to highly influence the perceptual filter through which the residents of the area view themselves and the world around them, especially through the symbolic projections visible in the urban landscape.

The objective of this research is to deconstruct the elements that justify the existing fractured socio-spatial dynamics, and that are intensifying the tensions on the ground. The aim is to single out the variables that come into play when analysing the interaction between the residents and the space they inhabit. The research therefore questions how identity politics in the area is impacting collective memory and consequently socio-spatial dynamics in Bab el tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen.

My hypothesis claims that Identity politics (independent variable) is influencing collective memory (dependent variable) through the use of symbolism (intermediate variable), hence affecting socio-spatial dynamics (outcome). A list of indicators and values was respectively developed for each variable in order to filter and analyse the collected data gathered during fieldwork. This research was based solely on the collection and analysis of primary and secondary qualitative data for the sake on analysing this case-study. The fieldwork period consisted of a desk review, mapping and personal observations of the case-study area, and semi-structured interviews with residents, NGO representatives, and Urban extract. The desk research aimed at collecting secondary data from newspaper articles in order to frame the chronological outline of my findings. Personal observations and semi-structured interviews were used to analyse the current socio-spatial dynamics to test the validity of my hypothesis.

Following the data analysis and after evaluating the significance of the variables on the ground, the conclusions that were drawn signalled that identity politics has historically actively participated in shaping collectively memory using symbolism as a main tool. Nonetheless, the direction of my hypothesis was interrupted following the implementation of the security plan in 2014, because residents of both neighbourhoods have broken ties with the influencers of identity politics. Following years of formation, collective memory is now acting as a significant independent variable that is shaping the individual identities of the residents.

The concluding remarks have identified the underlying factors that have enabled my hypothesis to be expressed in space. In fact, poverty, the foreign-backed Lebanese sectarian system, and the regional political history of Lebanon, have provided a nurturing ground for identity conflict in Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen.

Keywords

Identity politics, symbolism, collective memory, post-conflict urbanism, reconciliation

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Tripoli has always been a source of wonder to me. Growing up in the capital Beirut but being originally from the second biggest city in Lebanon, I have always wanted to become more than just an estranged Tripolitan. I had developed a keen interest in the gems of the city especially during the last two years prior to moving to the Netherlands, spending almost every weekend in the old souqs and the old ports of Tripoli. My affinity for the food, the people, and the authentic atmosphere provided an incomparable escape from big city life. I came to see for myself that this city had much more to offer than what media portrays as dangerous lands – which has been a source of frustration to me, like many other Tripolitans. Combining my background in Political Studies with my current studies and my experience in a European context, I decided to give back and dedicate a part of my work to this city, by trying to deconstruct the elements that have shadowed its prominence. Moving to Rotterdam and pursuing my studies in Urban Management and development provided me with the tools, experience, and knowledge in order to realize my aspiration to provide my share to Tripoli by writing this thesis. Therefore, I would like to first and foremost express my sincere gratitude to the Lutfia Rabbani Foundation and family, without whom moving to the Netherlands would have never been possible. Their sponsorship and support of my ambitions in bridging European and Middle Eastern culture, knowledge, and academia have been a milestone in my professional and personal life, to which I am eternally grateful.

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Abbreviations

ADP	Arab Democratic Party
BT	Bab el Tebbaneh
JM	Jabal Moshen
SS	Syria Street
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
US	United States

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

In broad terms, Identity Politics can be defined as the “claim to power on the basis of a particular identity” (Kaldor, 1999). More specifically, the oxford dictionary defines the concept of identity politics itself as “a tendency for people of a particular religion, race, social background, etc., to form exclusive political alliances, moving away from traditional broad-based party politics”. Identity politics has been specifically relevant in the last century, with the emergence of newly accepted and constructed identities in the post-modernist era, such as feminism, sexual orientation, ethnicity and racism, communism and post-communism (cold war and post-cold war era) and most recently religious identity related to the polarization of monotheistic religions and their direct implication in international political tensions. A peculiar aspect of identity politics is its manifestation in space, which is practiced directly or subtly depending on the context within which identity politics is articulated. Academics have tried to bridge the connection between identity politics and spatiality. Several case studies around the world have tried to determine the role of identity politics in space and city planning, such as identity politics in Jerusalem and in post-communist countries (see for example Andersson, 2011, and Czepczyński, 2010). As such, Soja has stated that it is important to realise “the deeper social origins of spatiality, its problematic production and reproduction, its contextualisation of politics, power and ideology” (Soja, 1989). This thesis will focus around the exercise of identity politics in light of the polarization of political alliances between the Western and the Eastern parts of the world, which is directly manifested in the socio-spatial context of a small neighbourhood in Tripoli, Lebanon, called Bab el Tebbaneh.

Located at a crossroads between West and East, North and South, the city of Tripoli, Lebanon has witnessed a long-lived history of battles of civilizations, cultures, and religions. Peeking from the “East” into the Mediterranean sea, the city was first established on the North Coast of -current- Lebanon by the Phoenicians in the 8th Century BC. It comprised of three districts, and was at the center of a Phoenician confederation formed by the cities of Sidon, Byblos, and Ugarite, thus earning its name Tri-poli, meaning the “triple-city” in Greek (Le Thomas, 2009). As Tripoli was consecutively conquered by the Greeks, the Romans, the Mameluks, and many other civilizations, the city has witnessed a rise in its geographical, economic, and political importance in the area, accompanied by centuries of civil unrest (Jadeh, 2010). Tripoli embodied the qualities of a regional capital, and became the main seaport of the area until the end of the 19th century. By then, the port of Beirut started gaining recognition and importance, and was therefore becoming a competitive rival to Tripoli. Under the French Mandate, and with the declaration of Tripoli as part of Greater Lebanon (with Beirut as a Capital) in 1920, Tripoli was geographically cut off from Northern Syria, which greatly hindered its relevance in the area (UN-Habitat, 2016). In the 1990s, and following the 15 years of civil war that tore Lebanon into fragments and remnants of a once emerging country, a wave of neo-liberal policies focused exclusively around the post-war reconstruction of Beirut. This had tremendous effects on Tripoli, creating a new social class of extremely poor and marginalized individuals, living in a secondary city whose comparative advantages were ripped off during the civil war. Gentrification and extreme social segregation currently represent the socio-economic status of Tripoli. Extreme social conditions, accompanied by sectarian divides that were further fuelled by identity politics, led to the eruption of deadly clashes in 2008 between Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tebbaneh, the poorest neighbourhoods not only in Tripoli, but in the Middle East as well. Currently, Tripoli, capital of the North Governorate of Lebanon, is the second largest city in Lebanon following the capital Beirut, in terms of size – with a metropolitan area of 24.7 km²

– and in terms of population (around 500,000 individuals, including 100,000 refugees from Syria and Palestine) (UN-Habitat, 2016).

My area of interest is the Tebbaneh district which is around 2km², and is composed of 11 neighbourhoods. For the sake of this research, these neighbourhoods could be categorized into two main areas: Bab el Tebbaneh, and Jebel Mohsen.

A street called "Syria Street" clearly cuts through the area and divides it into Bab el Tebbaneh from one side, and Jebel Mohsen on the hillside. Syria Street is considered to be the demarcation line between the two neighbourhoods, where the clashes had almost destroyed the urban landscape of the surrounding area. The residents of the Jebel Mohsen area belong to the Alawite Muslim religious sect, which is directly affiliated with the Syrian regime and Syrian President Bashar el Assad (who is often regarded as the "leader" of the Alawite community). On the other side, the residents of Bab el Tebbaneh belong to the Sunni sect, which represents the overall majority of Tripoli and the Northern Governorate. Apart from the Lebanese political group called the "Future Movement" which has a high influence on Bab el Tebbaneh, this neighbourhood was infiltrated by militants and political gangs belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood, and most recently to the so-called "Islamic State". Therefore, the area could be metaphorically defined as a battlefield for higher political hegemonies of the world: The Syrian regime, Iran, Russia, from the Jebel Mohsen side, and, Turkey, The United States on the other side.

The top down security plan to end the clashes in Tripoli in 2014 was mainly focused on the disarmament of the men involved in the clashes. However there was never a strategic plan implemented that addresses the social and economic challenges of the area. Urban and political professionals in Lebanon believe that there is an unspoken political decision to keep the area as is, in order to keep the citizens of the area in need of the political leaders that had fuelled the clashes in the first place (UN-Habitat, 2016). The local government of Tripoli plays a major role in the reaffirmation of the political dependency of the residents of Tebbaneh on the local politicians. Local and national governments must have "A physical base of population and territory; they must have institutions of some sort which govern the physical base; and there must be some idea of the state which establishes its legitimacy in the minds of people" (Buzan, 1991). However this constructivist approach is negated by this specific context, since the local government in Tripoli is exclusively using ideology and political belonging to reaffirm its power, and not its legitimacy. And it is doing so with the help of the alternative forms of governance which the militias in Bab el Tebbaneh represent.

Identity politics therefore seems to be the means through which the competing powers in the Tebbaneh district are exercising their influence and dominance on the ground. The political identity of the residents of the Tebbaneh district is therefore fuelled and reaffirmed by an interplay of extreme deprivation, extreme marginalization, and subtle social, political, and spatial polarization of the conflict.

Following the top down disruption of the clashes in 2014, several organizations and initiatives tried to revitalize Syria street with the purpose of reconciliation between the two neighbourhoods with placemaking and self-organisation initiatives. The urban landscape and spatial segregation that is reflected on the ground when in Syria street is still quite evident. Diana Mitlin's (2004) explanation of poverty as being rooted in the local government's inadequacy to address the problems of poverty seems to be contested in this specific context, as the complex political dynamics of the situation has resulted in a deliberate neglect.

1.2 Problem Statement

In academic literature, the concept of identity politics has often been used to describe the gendered and ethnic political affiliations that arose in the late 20th century, along feminist and civil rights movements in the USA (see Keith and Pile, 2004, and Crenshaw, 1991). However while the concept is similarly relevant in the context of Lebanese politics and the Middle East in general, and while identity in Lebanon has been extensively elaborated by scholars, the concept of “identity politics” is quasi-absent from the literature revolving around Lebanese politics, conflict resolution, or post-conflict urban regeneration processes in the country. Nonetheless, the Lebanese political system itself is based on a Power-Sharing mechanism that supposedly aims to preserve the numerous sectarian identities that exist within the diverse Lebanese community. The “Taef” agreement that came into action following the 15 years of civil war from 1975 till 1990 established this power-sharing system, hence rendering the Lebanese political system a consociational democracy, which scholars have described as a post-conflict political mechanism to solve religious and ethnic divisions by allowing factions from all backgrounds to have a share of power (and hence a say) in the decision-making process on national and local levels (Lipjhart, 2004). However, instead of bridging the gap that erupted the sectarian civil war in Lebanon in the first place, the Lebanese power-sharing system gave Lebanese politicians and previous war lords the rightful tool to institutionalise sectarianism and favour their own political agendas at the expense of the well-being of Lebanese citizens as a whole (Ofeish, 1999). This system has resulted in an overwhelming clientelist provision of public goods and services between sectarian political leaders and their respective supporters among Lebanese citizens (Atzili, 2010). Therefore, this has compelled a majority of Lebanese citizens to support the system and the political leaders as there were no other alternative means of subsistence, especially among the lower and marginalised classes of society. Other scholars have shed light on the implication of foreign countries in this sectarian power-sharing system, Lebanon having a major geopolitical location and role in the Middle East (Salamey, 2009). This offered a win-win situation for political leaders in Lebanon who would benefit from the financial, hegemonic, and political support of these foreign interventions, in order to preserve their position of power in Lebanese politics, and to compete against their political opponents. More specifically, and in present times, “mobilizations are being primarily drawn along sectarian lines with pro-Iranian-Syrian Shia groups, led by Hezbollah, pitted against a Sunni-led coalition, backed by France, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United States. Christians, taking the sideline of the growing regional Shia-Sunni rivalry, have been evenly divided between Shia and Sunni allies” (Beydoun, 2009, in Salamey, 2009, p. 92). Therefore, identity politics is intensified by the international and local political dynamics alike, and has become deeply rooted in Lebanese collective memory.

The post-war reconstruction of Lebanon following the civil war mainly revolved around Beirut, as mega-millionaire and previous PM Rafic Hariri aimed at reviving the capital’s previous acquired title as the “Paris of the Middle East”. Scholars have negatively described this post-war reconstruction as a means to mask the scars of the civil war, by imposing a created identity on the urban fabric of the city, which went in vain given the already deeply rooted socio-economic, classist, and religious struggles in the capital (Nagel, 2002). However, in academic literature and on the ground alike, Tripoli has not received the same relevance or importance as Beirut. A lack of literature concerning post-war dynamics in Tripoli is evident with the overwhelming majority of articles exclusively taking Beirut as a case study or as an example in other works of literature. The years that followed the civil war did not spare any city or region in Lebanon, as most of the country was impacted by the assassination of PM Rafic Hariri in 2005, the numerous political assassinations that followed, the 2006 war against Israel, and the clashes that erupted across the country in 2008 between the different political factions of

Lebanon described above. However while Beirut constantly manages to heal from these outbreaks – largely due to its primordial role in Lebanese economy – Tripoli’s fate has been on a never-ending downwards spiral. A speculation for the reason behind this leads one to deduce that the present socio-economic situation in Tripoli has trapped the city in a vicious loop. A walk in the neighbourhoods of Bab el Tebbaneh, Jabal Mohsen, El Qobbeh, on the outskirts of Tripoli demonstrates the striking impact of the Lebanese sectarian system (and hence, identity politics) on the ground, through the visual landscape, the recurring tensions between the different religious groups, and the stories that are recounted by the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods that clearly reflect a strong collective memory. Nonetheless, this has unfortunately not been documented in academic literature.

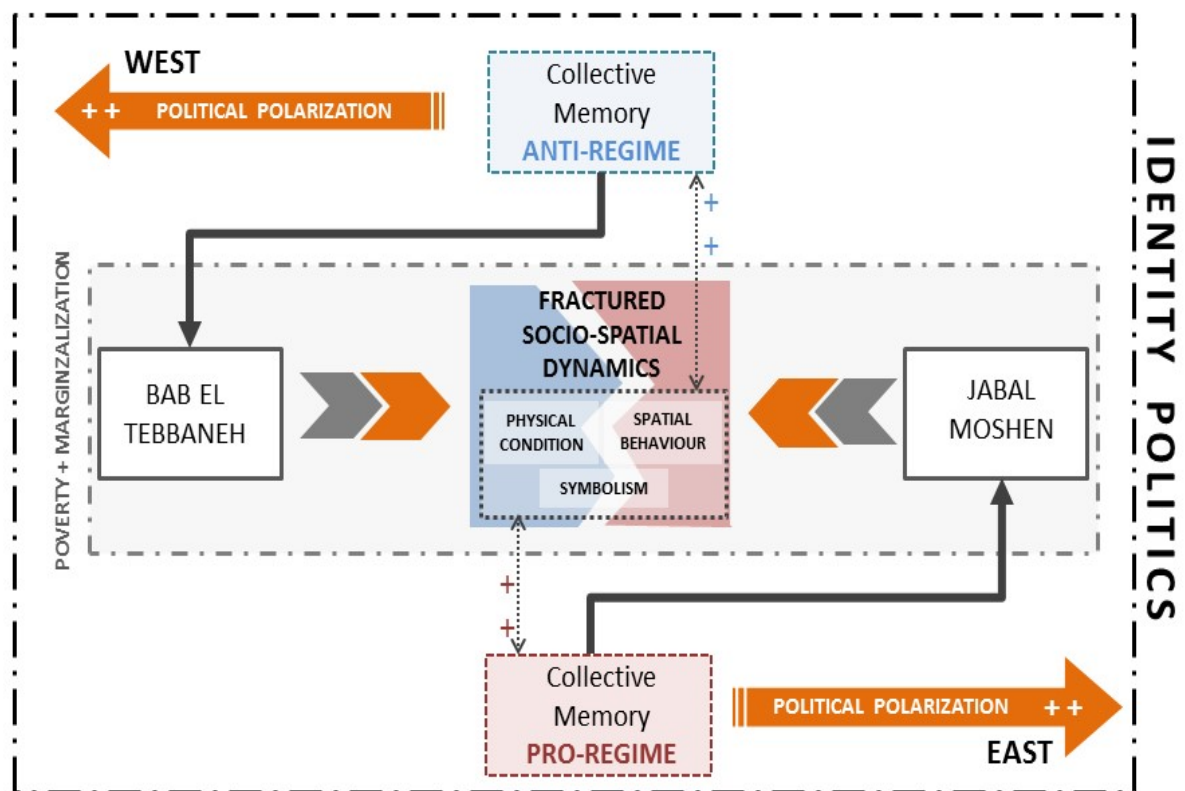


Figure 1 Problem Statement

The disruption of the clashes in 2014 between the neighbourhoods of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen revealed an extremely marginalized strata that is socially and economically regressing. The Extreme social tensions between the two neighbourhoods persist to that day regardless of the military rule in the neighbourhoods. The failure of reconciliation and place making and social innovation efforts carried out by external organizations within the neighbourhoods revealed that there are several layers to the socio-economic struggle of citizens that include but are not limited to the prevalence of poverty and unemployment in the area. These layers also include political factors such as identity politics and cultural differences, polarization of the conflict between external actors such as the Syrian regime and the neo-liberal Lebanese political parties; and the provision and access to infrastructure: the state of the built environment, the lack of basic infrastructure, housing informality etc... This interplay between Identity politics, poverty, and spatial structures has resulted in the stagnation of development in the ar.

The diagram above aims at framing this problem statement, taking into account the several previously-mentioned layers of the conflict in Tripoli. As such, Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen are both afflicted with extreme socio-economic marginalisation and poverty, which has allowed local political leaders to extensively use sectarianism (and hence identity politics) as a tool to recreate the international political factions on the ground. The recurrence of this cycle over the generations, especially since the beginning of the Lebanese civil war, has concretised the struggle into two powerful opposing collective memories divided along the international factions. The polarization of ideologies is reflected on the ground through a seemingly fractured and contested urban fabric

1.3 Research Objectives

Therefore the objective of this research is to collect spatial and social evidence of the influence and prevalence of identity politics in the context of the Tebbaneh conflict, specifically in relation the phase that followed the disruption of the clashes in 2014.

- To identify the variables of my thesis
- To identify the respective indicators and locate them throughout data collection
- To correlate the variables and test my hypothesis on the ground
- To draw conclusions regarding the prevalence of identity politics and provide recommendations for future policy-makers

1.4 Provisional Research Question(s)

My research will therefore focus on providing an answer to the following research question:

How has identity politics contributed in shaping the socio-spatial dynamics and physical landscape of Bab el Tebbaneh?

In order to facilitate and guide my research process, I will also address the following sub-questions:

- What is political identity in the context of Bab el Tebbaneh?
- How has it been formed over the years?
- How has symbolism been an important tool for the mediation of identity politics on the ground?
- What are the impacts of symbolism on collective memory? And how has this shaped socio-spatial dynamics?

1.5 Significance of the Study

In light of the complexity of the situation in the Tebbaneh district that has hindered all spatial and social dynamics in the neighbourhood, dissecting the role of identity politics in the socio-spatial dynamics of the area and demonstrating its correlation with the degradation of the livelihoods of the residents of Tebbaneh could direct us to the core and root of the vicious cycle that was previously mentioned. Due to the previously-mentioned lack of academic literature concerning identity politics and its impact on the ground, specifically in the context of Tripoli, building my thesis on this topic might pave the way for further research on the ground in the future, in order to provide an academic framework of the peculiar situation in the area.

Proving this could allow a mass awareness of the Lebanese population regarding the situation in Tripoli, which could initiate alternative solutions to the present problem. If I am successful in qualitatively correlating political identity to the state of poverty roaming around the streets of the Tebbaneh district, and the never-ending political tensions that exist between the different

political factions, it could enable the residents themselves to break the state of the art and impose their own individual identities.

From an academic perspective, the findings generated from the data collection of my case-study will serve an additional structure of knowledge to the existing literature regarding post-conflict settings and reconciliation. When possible, I will try to challenge the existing body of literature in order to provide input based on the in-depth analysis of my case-study.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

My research will mainly focus on finding evidence on the ground to prove my research question. My field analysis will hence be limited to Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen, and will not include other areas of the conflict such as Al Qobbeh, Dahr el Moghr, and Al Bakkar for time efficiency and management of the data collected. Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen will be treated as a single case study that includes two sub-groups. The choice of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen is representative of the variation of the religious sects within this area.

The main limitations include the risky and unpredictable nature of the field because of the previous armed conflicts in the area. Additionally, the validity of the data collected through interviews with residents could be challenged due to biased perception, fear of local political authorities, and mistrust of the researcher.

Chapter 2: Literature Review / Theory

2.1 State of the Art of the Theories/Concepts of the Study

From the concept of complexity theory emerges the complex relationship between society, individuals, and space. Socio-spatial dynamics are deeply rooted in this theory. What we understand by socio-spatial dynamics is the pattern of behaviour of individuals confined to a certain physical territory, that is determined by their social characteristics: "space is a material product, in relationship to other material products – including people -who engage in [historically] determined social relationships that provide space with a form, a function, and a social meaning." (Castells, 1972, in Castells 1996, p. 411). Therefore, in our literature review, socio-spatial dynamics are an expression of society, its history, and specifically its collective memory. We will be elaborating on the theories that shape the social-spatial behaviour of individuals of a society, as well as the means through which they are expressed in space and time.

Therefore, I will first be analyzing collective memory as the expression of the cognitive behaviour, and conative memory of a specific population. Following this, I will be elaborating on the importance of collective memory and current global forces in the shaping of identity politics and its effect on societies whose collective memory is powerful. I will be continuing my analysis by determining the meaning of space in academic literature, and in my research most specifically, how it is used, and why. Finally, I will be bridging the theoretical gap between identity politics and socio-spatial dynamics, by analyzing the theories that emphasize on the expression of identity through space, such as symbolism, iconography, and the physical landscape as an expression of identity.

2.1.1 Collective Memory

In societies that have witnessed traumatic events, or events of a certain historical importance, we often find that the individuals of this society share a strong bond over what these circumstances represent to them. In social theory, this phenomenon is termed "collective memory", and has been thoroughly analysed and studied by social theorists and urban planners alike in order to explain or demonstrate a certain behaviour in societies. The concept of Collective memory was first introduced in the mid-20th century by a now-renowned social theorist, Maurice Halbwachs. His work on memory and space conveniently falls right after the traumatic world wars, which has left great impacts in the memories of the survivors throughout Europe specifically, and the world in general. According to Halbwachs, there is no such thing as individual memory, in any given context: memory is a collective recollection of past historical events and the current expression of these events through the social structure of society (family, marriage, religion etc...) (Halbwachs, 1950). However, it is important to differentiate between history and collective memory and notice the dichotomy of the two concepts. In fact, in his analysis of Halbwachs, Jeffrey Olick stated "History is the remembered past to which we no longer have an "organic" relation—the past that is no longer an important part of our lives—while collective memory is the active past that forms our identities" (Olick, 2008, p.7).

In my analysis of literature, I will assume that collective memory "is thus constructed in the context of the present culture—and not the past—it both *shapes* and *is shaped* by groups." (Moeschberger and DeZalia, 2014, p.12). Therefore, the process through which collective memory is shaped, and how it is sustained over the generations, is highly crucial while analyzing the behaviour within a certain society, because the process itself is representative of

the characteristics of the society: whether it is through media, symbols, or cultural landscapes, which I will analyse thoroughly at a later stage within my literature review. Andriani (2014) referenced Assman (2008), and wrote: “Collective memory is transmitted from one generation to the next through use of the media, commemorative rituals, or grounded symbols [...]. Over time, collective memory gradually becomes more homogeneous and institutionalized as the function of transmission shifts from the people bearing witness and the political elite recording these now unified recorded memories and reporting them to future generations” (Assman, 2008, in Andriani, 2014, p.112). Thus, collective memory is not a concept that stands out on its own, it is implicated in the social dynamics of a population, and is often institutionalized and therefore becomes the ground base of the collective identity of a people.

In this theoretical review of collective memory, I will analyze the process of the formation and sustainability of the collective memory through the concepts of cognitive memory on one hand, and conative memory on the other hand, basing myself on the work of Scott Moeschberger and Rebecca Philipps DeZalia who wrote “Symbols that bind and Symbols that Divide” in 2014. What we understand by cognitive memory is the way information is stored in the subconscious and conscious of human beings, the map that is utilized to locate and store certain events, which is both shaped and fueled by the environment within which the individuals are interacting as a collective entity: it “situates memory as a consistent and stable source of information that is utilized as a cognitive map for identity and meaning construction.” (Eyal, 2004, Poole, 2004, in Andriani, 2014, p. 112). Therefore, the cognitive memory’s function in collective memory is to engrain the aspects of information that stabilize and shape identity formation. Nonetheless, the phenomenon of collective memory is incomplete without taking into account the function of conative memory. In fact, collective memory is not merely restricted to identity formation, it is also reflected in the behavioural tendencies of people sharing the collective memory, especially regarding its impact from one generation to the other. This is explained by the function of the conative memory in behavioural psychology, which presses a sense of responsibility towards the identity that is inherited through the cognitive function. Therefore, conative memory “situates memory within the realm of the uncertain and unstable that must be resolved by future generations” (Eyal, 2004, in Andriani, 2014, p. 112). It transfers the sense of accountability from one generation the other, which is how collective memory is produced and reproduced throughout generations.

2.1.2 Identity Politics and Global Forces

Within the realm of collective memory, identity politics comes as a catalyst of memory formation, especially with regards to conative memory and the transfer of political ideologies and socio-political behavior that is reproduced from one generation to the next. In broad terms, Identity Politics can be defined as the “claim to power on the basis of a particular identity” (Kaldor, 1999, p. 7). More specifically, the oxford dictionary defines the concept of identity politics itself as “a tendency for people of a particular religion, race, social background, etc., to form exclusive political alliances, moving away from traditional broad-based party politics”. In order to understand how collective memory and collective ideology are involved in the formation of identity politics, one must look closely at the concept of “Structure-Agency” that has strongly influenced the social sciences in the last decade. First, to define the structure-agency concept, the structure is often associated with the norms, values, societal relations and behavioural consequences and observations in society (Aggestam, 1999). The agency is the institution or system structure through which these norms and values are exercised and transferred on the ground through actors, policies, and other vectors (Checkel, 1998). It can also be established that collective memory is a social construct, as we have explained in the section above. Thus, our theoretical review will consider identity politics as a constructivist

creator of collective memory. In fact, “in contemporary studies on collective identities, constructivism is the dominant approach” (Andersson, 2011 p. 21). Therefore, through the “Structure-Agency” approach, we may bridge the theoretical gap between collective memory and identity politics. Indeed, as Ann-Catrin Andersson (2011) states: “Identities, as well as political systems are constructed in a constant interaction between structure and actor, where causality is often difficult to pinpoint” (Andersson, 2011, p. 21). whether it concerns strengthening an existing identity construction or reconstructing a community through ethno-symbolism [...], inventing [...] a new identity, or imagining a community” (Smith, 1999, and Adama, 2007, in Andersson, 2011, p. 21).

Studying identity politics and collective memory within a confined space, or more specifically a city, is actually quite interesting and relevant to the field of urban studies and development. Indeed, cities, neighbourhood, and landscapes, could be seen as transmitters, as the ‘agents’ through which the ‘structure’ representing the norms, values, or even the global flows are expressed in space: “The cities shaped by globalization represent mediators, transmitters and transformers of global flows, adopting the imperative of global competitiveness as an aim and/or a tool of urban economical sustainability” (Stupar, 2005, p. 1). Therefore, globalization in this context could also represent the international political polarizations and flows which are shaping identity politics in certain contexts, and are therefore strengthening the “Structure/agent” relationship within space.

In theory and in practice, the notions of collective memory, identity politics, are reflected in space through several mechanisms. In my study, I will focus mainly on cognitive mapping, spatiality, spatial behaviour, positionality, and most importantly: symbolism and iconography.

In order to shift our review of literature to the analysis of space through academic literature, we must first shed light on the relevance of human social dynamics and its implication on space. In fact, communities that share certain identities have simultaneously used the space they inhabit to position themselves, delimit their boundaries, and mark their territories. Through evolution, human beings have developed a sense of cognitive mapping, which is “meant to allow people to become aware of their own position in the world, and to give people the resources to resist and make their own history” (Keith and Pile, 1993, p. 3). One of the major reasons why territoriality and boundaries became such an important aspect of the relationship between people and space, is of course the scarcity of resources and the fight over capital and interests. This fact also justifies the existence of contested spaces and lands in theory, and therefore gave the first incentive for people to juxtapose themselves across the use of space: “it is the logic of capital itself which produces an uneven development of space” (idem, p. 3). The same could be applied to communities that evolve in proximity to each other, but have oppositional political identities, and therefore share similar interests over the land they occupy which creates competition between the two groups in socio-spatial terms. As Ed Soja has famously and accurately stated in 1989:

“We must be insistently aware of how space can be made to hide consequences from us, how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology” (Soja, 1989, p. 6).

With this respect, positionality becomes highly crucial, as it reflects a group’s incentive according to their spatial behaviour. Helga Leitner has defined positionality and understands “that differently positioned subjects have distinct identities, experiences and perspectives, shaping their understanding of and engagement with the world – subjectivities, imaginaries, interests and knowledge” (Leitner et. Al, 2008, p. 163). Therefore, this highlights the relationship between a group’s subjective collective identity and their position in space. They

reflect on the power relationships that exist within the different groups of society: a group's position in space relatively to another group's position could determine its power or influence over the other group. Nevertheless, similarly to the norms and values that constitute the structure of society, power relations are a social construct, and are therefore constantly subject to change according to the societal trends: "Through subjects' practices and imaginaries, relations of power and situated understandings are contested and re-negotiated, as are socio-spatial relations, thereby potentially transforming socio-spatial positionalities" (Rose 1997, Valentine, 2002 in Leitner et Al, 2007, pp. 163-164). We will later analyse in details the relationship between that same group and their use of the space they occupy.

Hence, to conclude this section, identity politics can be transcribed into space through the structure-agency theory, which has created the incentive for communities to preserve their identity capital through the use of space and human geography. Therefore, my next section will analyse the multiple uses and facades of space, which have created a platform for identity and collective memory to ripple into a socio-spatial continuum.

2.1.3 Space and Spatiality

Academics such as Castells, Soja, Foucault, Lefebvres, Harvey and many others have analysed space in literature from different angles and perspectives. Nonetheless in my review of literature, I will pursue an analysis of space that is relevant to my research, notwithstanding the different analytical approaches that exist in literature.

"A key first step in recognizing a socio-spatial dialectic is to recognise that physical space has been a misleading epistemological foundation upon which to analyze the concrete and subjective meaning of human spatiality. . . . Space in itself may be primordially given, but the organization, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation, and experience. (Soja, 1989, p. 79).

As such, the notion of spatiality is the framework within which this analysis of space will be presented. We will adopt the understanding of spatiality as was explained by Michael Keith and Steve Pile (1993), which aims to "capture the ways in which the social and spatial are inextricably realized one in the other; to conjure up the circumstances in which society and space are simultaneously realised by thinking, feeling, doing individuals and also to conjure up the many different conditions in which such realisations are experienced by thinking, feeling, doing subjects" (Keith and Pile, 1993). Therefore, spatiality is the concept that aims to analyse how the Structure/agency approach of collective memory and identity politics is realised in space, and its implication on the inhabitants of space and on the "structure" itself.

Defining space in itself and the possibilities it can contain would first allow us to have a starting base upon which all other definitions within the socio-spatial realm are articulated. My first argument is that within my research, space cannot be taken in absolute terms: it cannot be measured by mathematical sequences or absolute numbers, and therefore the definition of space by the likes of Newton or Descartes does not coincide with the nature of space that my research is tackling. First and foremost, space can be viewed from different perspectives because space is relative to its surrounding, it cannot be theorised without taking into consideration all the factors that are in play within the space itself. Therefore, in this context, space is tackled from the relational view, which is a concept first introduced by Leibniz and explained by David Harvey in 2004 in a paper he wrote entitled "Space as a Key Word". In this relational perspective, space cannot be taken as a whole without the consideration of the time through which a certain physical event or object is analysed: the output of space and time is inherently interdependent. This entails that space is a materialisation of structural and societal processes that occur within a specific temporal framework: "the relational view of space holds there is

no such thing as space outside of the processes that define it. Processes do not occur *in* space but define their own spatial frame. The concept of space is embedded in or internal to process.” (Harvey, 2004, p.4). Furthermore, as Manuel Castells (1996) states: “social processes influence space by acting on the built environment inherited from previous socio-spatial structures. Indeed, space is crystallised in time” (Castells, 1996, p. 411). Bill Hillier (2008) identifies this specific phenomenon as the spatiality paradigm, and explains that both the study of urban sociology and the study of society and space “approach the society– environment relation ‘society first’, in that the form of the environment is sought as the product of the spatial aspects of social processes” (Hillier, 2008, p. 218). Similarly to Castells and Harvey, the author also places a primordial importance on time and the tempo-spatial dynamics within which processes are occurring, as he states: “society may be ‘virtual’, but it only really exists and projects itself through time by being realized in dispersed space–time practices” (idem., p. 222). However, the most important factor Hillier brings into the discussion is the concept of reproduction of processes in space and time, and therefore how they are transferred on this tempo-spatial axis: “the pattern of situated practices is not itself the structure of society, but it is through dispersed situated practices that the virtual structure of society is made real for us and, more importantly, reproduced” (idem., p. 222).

This also places the built environment within space at the forefront of our discussion regarding the symbolic expression of the structure of society in space, which I will be elaborating further in the next section. Going back to this literature review in particular, processes here could indicate the formation of collective memory, how it is transferred from one generation to the other, and of course its implication in identity formation within a group, and how identity politics and global forces infiltrate the spatial dimension. All these factors listed are processes that are occurring on an elongated timeline and that are being reflected in space.

This brings us back to Castells’ definition and interpretation of space. In fact, his work is relevant and accurate in this theoretical drawing of space, since Castells mainly states that “space is not a reflection of society, it is its expression” (Castells, 1996, p. 410). Castells views space as dynamic flows of information (“purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in the economic, political, and symbolic structures of society” (ibid., p. 412)) and of factors that shape and reshape space according to the direction in which information is going, and “this includes contradictory trends derived from conflicts and strategies between social actors playing out their opposing interests and values” (ibid., pp. 410-411). The latter statement also relates to the concept of positionality previously mentioned, here relating to the positionality of interests and values in space rather than physical positionality of contingent groups.

Therefore, in the previous paragraphs we have analysed how social phenomena reverberates through space and the importance of time in the reproduction of societal structures in space. Nonetheless, it is also crucial to determine the nature of the socio-spatial environment provided in order to fully understand the actions and processes that unfold in a certain community and at a specific time. This takes us to the analysis of spatial quality, and the different qualities and aspects a certain space can have. In my study, I will be adopting the view of author Amos Rapoport who contributed to the discussion around socio-spatial dynamics by publishing the journal article *The Study of Spatial Quality* in 1970. Much like the previous authors, Rapoport draws a crucial difference between the physical qualities of space, and the perceived qualities of space: the social space. Further in my study I will be adopting his study of spatial quality as a reference point to my data collection and analysis. Therefore I have presented the table below (Table 1) in order to list the different qualities of space and their respective definitions according to Amos Rapoport’s study.

Table 1 Spatial Quality by Rapoport

	Spatial Quality	Definition and Implication
1	Symbolic Space	This perception of space is the umbrella to all the qualities of space that will be discussed below. It implies that space is highly influenced by the culture of the communities that occupy the space itself. As explained previously, space is the expression society. As Rapoport puts it: “It is clear that in order to understand spatial symbolism we must know the underlying cultural imperatives of the people concerned” (Rapoport, 1970, p.83)
2	Behavioural Space	It is the perceived space of a certain community where they are able to express their societal norms through their behaviour within space: in relation to each other, and in relation to other communities: “space which is available as a behaviour setting of a given individual or group. For a racially segregated group the behavioural space of a city is very different from that shown on a map, or that experienced by the dominant group” (ibid., p. 83)
3	Subjective Space	On Subjective Space, Amos Rapoport writes: “perceived space may be seen as the total, cognitive construct based on psychological criteria, one of which is subjective space. Many examples exist showing how objectively similar distances are “seen” differently depending on what degree of control over movement one has [...] or depending on location [...] or quality [...]. An important component of this is subjective time, since distance is often evaluated in terms of elapsed time rather than spatial separation.” (ibid, p. 84). Therefore space could be subjective in terms of location, quality, and time elapsed.
4	Experiential Sensory Space or	“This can be visual, acoustic, olfactory, thermal, kinaesthetic, or tactile, and the stress on specific sensory modes – and hence on sensory spaces – will vary from culture to culture” (ibid, p. 84)
5	Involvement Manipulation or	“This depends on the open-endedness of the environment, the degrees of freedom or constraint of the designed space. Ethologists, psychologists, and designers have all shown that space which is actively modified, changed, and manipulated is experienced and remembered differently from kinds where the organism adapts passively to the environment.” (ibid., p. 84). This spatial quality also related to my previous section on identity politics and global forces, and how power dynamics and the influence of global forces can affect space, and how this has repercussions on the community itself.
6	Cognitive or cultural space/ imaginary space	“Space defined by different groups affected by training, previous experience, adaptation, memory, and cognitive categories of the group” (ibid., p. 85)

7	Social Space	“This refers to the spatial arrangements reflecting the patterns and regularities of various social groups – their hierarchies and roles.” (ibid., p.86)
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2.1.4 Symbolism, the Physical Landscape, and Spatial Behaviour

In this section of my literature review, I will first analyse the expression of societal structures in space from different perspectives: first, I will consider space as a landscape: as a visual reflection of physical components that relate to the person who is perceiving this landscape. Second, I will also consider space as a fostering ground for symbolism, iconography, and sensory and physical expression of collective memory.

In previous sections, we have determined the different qualities of space, and we have concluded that defining space is relative to the eye of the researcher, the beholder, or the inhabitant of the space itself. In this context, I will be shedding light on the value of space as a cultural landscape, bridging together the different meanings of space that were attributed by Rapoport in the previous section. It is crucial to understand the meaning of landscape as a spatial arena for the expression of society, as it paves the way to determining how it affects spatial behaviour, social dynamics, and cultural norms within a society.

The idea of space as a product of tempo-spatial processes (see section 2.1.3) is similarly relevant in academic literature tackling the cultural landscape. In fact, history and memory – both present in the cultural landscape – belong to this tempo-spatial axis: “Cultural landscape, as social construction, is a form of spatial and cultural negotiation between representation of the past and imagination of the future” (Czepczynski, 2010, p. 67). As such, “interpretations of history, together with past and present depictions are integral part of landscape discourse” (Black, 2003, in Czepczynski, 2010, p. 67), and “landscape we can see now is the result of present and past ideologies superimposed on urban tissue, and additionally modified by cultures, economies and societies” (ibid., p. 69). Therefore, the cultural landscape is a production and reproduction of socially constructed factors and “flows” that occur through time. Processes are thus central to the understanding of the cultural landscape, and as Rowntree and Conkey stated in 1980 “the processes through which symbols are created, elaborated upon, and modified (and hence the process whereby the cultural landscape is created and transformed) is rooted in-and a part of-societal processes, one cannot describe or explain either without reference to the other” (p. 459). In reference to the previous statement, I will be further elaborating on symbolism in the cultural landscape in the next section.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that the notion of cultural landscape in literature is mainly depicted through the spatial lens that Rapoport would define as the “symbolic space”, since people and communities living within the cultural landscape are seemingly the central focus of academics as it reflects how people have “represented to themselves and to others the world about them and their relationship with it, and through which they have commented on social relations” (Cosgrove, 1998, p. 1). In fact, cultural landscapes are seen as mediators for representation on behalf of a community, a buffer zone between their remembered past, and social constructions, and the present state of art. By representations we understand that they “are social in their nature and as such they have subjective, intersubjective and epistemic dimensions. They need to be understood in a holistic way as systems of meaning that encompass values, emotions, beliefs and ideas, as they function within the context of social relations.” (Psaltis et. Al, 2014). And therefore, the landscape is used as a means to retransmit these values. Here I quote Czepczyński (2010), who has deduced the following based on the works of Ashworth (1998) and Robertson and Richards (2003):

“Landscape is one of the most visible and communicative media through which thoughts, ideas and feelings, as well as powers and social constructions are represented in a space. Representations through landscapes are therefore central to the process by which the meaning of space is produced. Members of the same culture share same values and meanings and must reveal same or similar system of communication, based on mutually understood codes and signs. Cultural urban landscape is a system of representation, by which all sorts of objects, buildings, features, people and events are correlated with a set of concepts or mental representation we carry in our heads”.

However, it is important to note that the concepts of representations in the cultural landscape, and collective memory (see section 2.1.1), are highly interrelated. As a matter of fact, since representations are subjective and stem from mutual values of a certain community, they must be impacted by their acquired collective memory. And as we have previously mentioned, in communities that have been impacted by clashes and traumas, collective memories highly depend on the managing powers at stake (Czepczyński, 2010). As Czepczynski (2010) clearly states: “Landscapes contain the traces of past activities, and people select the stories they tell, the memories and histories they evoke, the interpretative narratives they weave, to facilitate their activities in the present and future. The process of selection of memories is conditioned or determined by several factors, most of which related to the past or circumstances” (ibid.). Therefore when analyzing a certain cultural landscape, one must always take into consideration the subjective nature of representation, and what it entails in terms of power struggles and remembered histories, which could be indicative of the nature of current socio-spatial dynamics.

Symbolism, as well as iconography, is one of the means through which these interpretive narratives and perceived histories are expressed in space. It also serves to transmit these socially acquired narratives to younger generations, hence ensuring, reinforcing, and often reshaping the sustainability of collective memory: “The cultural landscape in part functions as a narrative, a symbolic legacy conveying, if not realizing, information from one generation to another, information about subsistence ways, cosmology, territory, or historical position.” (ibid.). De Zalia and Moeschberger (2014) have categorized the functions of a symbol into four different categories:

Table 2 Functions of Symbols

The Four functions of a Symbol (De Zalia and Moeschberger, 2014)	
1	Connection to past generations
2	Elicit a strong emotional reaction
3	Express and maintain cultural narratives as they contribute to social representations
4	Perceptual filter to understand the self in relation to society

Therefore, these four categories seem to also be fulfilling the role of collective memory in the shaping of identity within a specific social context.

Symbolism thus falls under the realm of communication, generating, regulating, or even restricting flows of information on the ground (Rowntree and Conkey, 1980). As such “they have the potential to establish and reinforce the boundaries of human life, particularly those between social units. It is well documented that humans employ symbolically imbued artifacts, gestures, items of clothing, or architecture in the process of boundary- maintenance” (ibid.). The key word in the previous statement are boundaries, as these are highly relevant in my

research. And therefore, while symbols are diversified and could hold different meanings depending on the context and on the person being subject to this symbol, it establishes a system of differentiation or separation between one community and the other, or the external world: the “out-group” - Rowntree and Conkey (1980) describe this system of symbolism as being “tied directly to environmental stress”. As such, “given that symbolic structures, in large part, are generated by humans to enhance predictability, and that predictability reduces the potential anxiety and stress in the face of change, even at this broadest level, symbolization as a mediator of stress is a characteristic human strategy.” (ibid.).

Volcan (2006) provides a particular analysis of symbols as a “hot place” creating “immediate and intense feelings among members of an ethnic or large group” (p.137), which can either cause positive, powerful feelings of social belonging within one’s culture or negative, oppressive feelings of “hatred among others” (De Zalia et.al,2014, page). In fact, symbols, shape people’s perception of the world, which differs based on racial, religious, sex and social class belonging (ibid.,page). Hence, symbols reflect sociopolitical struggles and conflict, and shed the light on the “perceptual, emotional, sensual, cultural, and identity-driven aspects of conflict” (Schrach, 2005 , p. 32; De Zalia et. al, 2014).

Symbols have the capacity to influence people’s conduct by fueling feelings of “victimization, oppression, triumphalism, occupation or struggle” (Psaltis et al, 2014, page) within various social groups in divided societies. Such social representations tend to exacerbates differences and conflict in pluralistic societies (ibid) because “they establish thoughts that come to be the basis of the community belief system, automatic assumptions to which the members can return when confused, which is common in conflict settings” (De Zalia et. al, 2014).

Moreover, social representations “connect the past with the future” (Moscovici & Vignaux, 2001) and “guide individuals towards particular realities” which strengthens their connection with members of their own communities (ibid).

Therefore, symbols and icons echo “power” and particular social ideas and ideologies, which makes them volatile and changeable in the face of “radical change of structures of powers” (Czepczynski, 2010); “landscape icons [for instance] anchor national, regional and local traditions of patriotism and commemoration, particularly during periods of political change.” (ibid.)

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Indeed, through the lens of academic literature, it seems that symbolism and collective memory are highly interrelated, and interact in space. We will consider that this space itself is the “symbolic space” that Amos Rapoport (1980) has elaborated on in his work. As we have seen in the section covering identity politics, the later concept operates within the structure-agency arena, where structure is the set of norms and values that are transmitted within the “agency”, or the institution through which these factors are being transmitted. Therefore, as a conclusion to this academic literature review, we will consider that identity politics and collective memory are both part of the structure within this context, where identity politics is directly influencing collective memory. In the last section of the literature review, we have analyzed how symbols are mediators of stress and a communication tool for the reproduction of identities and beliefs in space. The spatiality of the symbolic space is thus the agency in this structure/agency approach that is strengthening the influence of identity politics on collective memory.

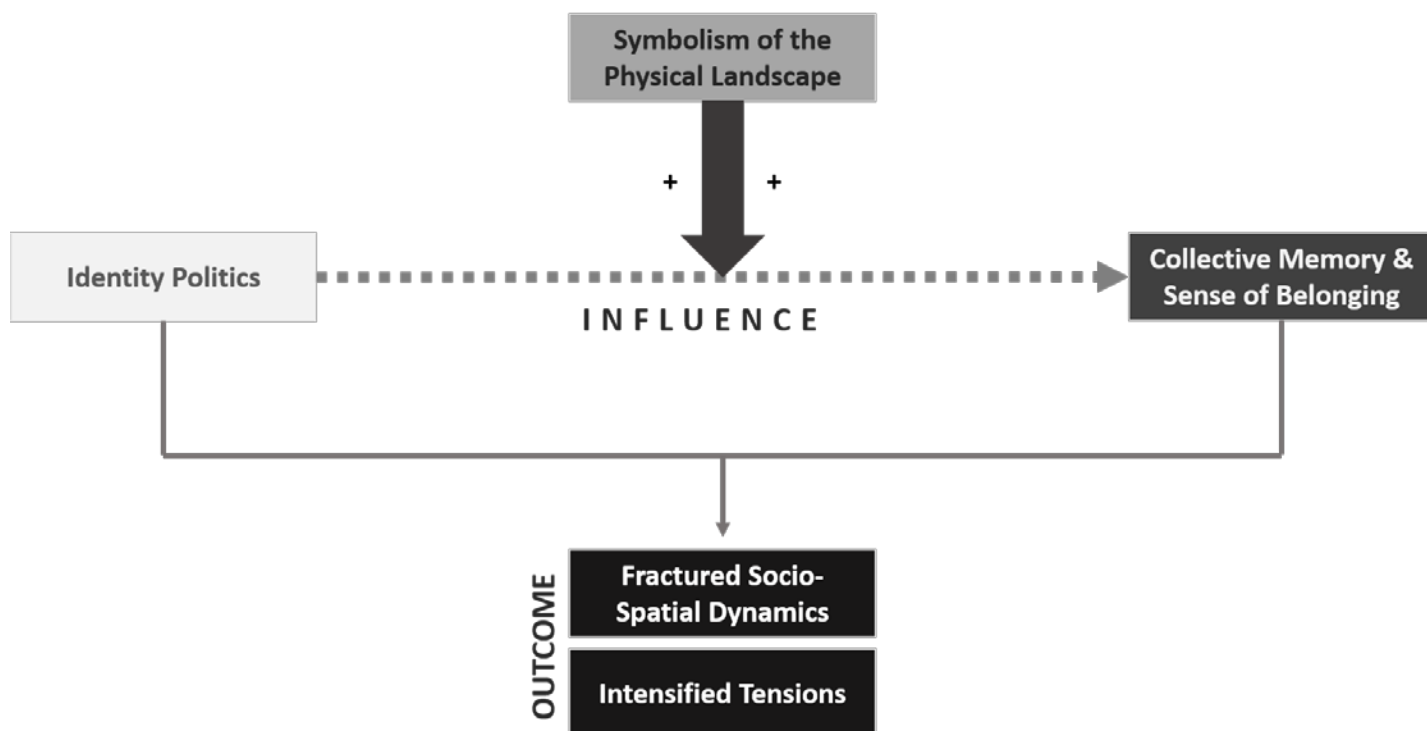


Figure 2 Conceptual Framework

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods

The previous review of literature has helped shed light on the main concepts that will contribute in analysing and elaborating on the problem statement stated in the first chapter. In fact, it dissected the research question posed in the first chapter, through elaborating on identity politics, spatial dynamics, and the basis of my research: symbolism of the physical/cultural landscape. My research therefore aims to explore the roots of the spatial dynamics specifically in the neighbourhoods of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen, in order to justify people's behaviour, their perception of the other, and their level of identification with the political dynamics that exist in the area.

My preliminary hypothesis places the interaction between identity politics, symbolism, and collective memory at the forefront of answering my research question. In fact, the expression of identity politics in space could be determining and limiting the residents' socio-spatial behaviour because of its impact on collective memory.

In order to answer the research question, and to test the validity of my hypothesis, the methodology of choice is a case study approach, which will be further elaborated below



Figure 3 Study Area in Tripoli

3.1 Operationalization: Variables, Indicators

This section will further elaborate on the main concepts and variables of the research question of this study, in order to operationalize the variables and determine their indicators, which will directly contribute to answering the main research question.

In my research question, the independent variable is identity politics, while the dependent variable is collective memory. My hypothesis states that identity politics influences collective memory through symbolism, hence impacting socio-spatial dynamics.

However, what is needed to be found is the relationship between both variables, and to specify how identity politics is expressed in space, in order to directly relate it to the noticeable indicators of the dependent variable: collective memory.

In order to operationalise this relationship, the following table will list all the concepts and variables, with their respective indicators and their significance and implication in this research.

Table 3 Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Concept	Value/Definition	Indicator
Identity Politics	Political Belonging and Affiliation	Active or Passive member/supporter of one of the two	Membership to Group A/B: Yes or No

			political blocks present in the area	Support of Group A/B: Yes or No
		Foreign Political Influence	Active or passive supporter of foreign political ideology/ group/ state	Historical Political Involvement from Foreign Powers: Yes or No Support of Foreign Group: Yes or No
		Willingness to Participate in conflict	Readiness to join armed clashes in case of a future breakout (for diverse reasons)	Readiness to join conflict: Yes or No
Collective Memory	Cognitive Memory	Perception of past events	Biased / personalized view of actual historical facts or occurrences within the political and historical discourse of the conflict (from 1975 till present)	Mention of past events: Yes or No Sign of politicized perception of event: Yes or No Inaccurate/falsified fact: Yes or No
		Perception of the “other”	Judgmental or preconceived statements or perception of members of other block / religion	Biased statement based on political factors: Indirect or Direct Biased Statement based on religious factors: Indirect or Direct
	Conative Memory	Prevalence of Group identity	Occurrence of statements highlighting group identity – belonging, and exclusivity based on religious or political affiliation	Affiliation to Collective identity statement: Indirect or Direct Feeling of responsibility towards group

				identity: Indirect or Direct
		Previous involvement in the conflict	Having actively participated in the previous armed conflicts that occurred (either during the civil war or from 2008 – 2014)	Actively participated in previous armed conflict: Yes or No Actively supported armed conflict: Yes or No
Symbolism		Symbols / icons	Presence of symbols or icons on the ground such as posters, slogans, pictures etc... that would elicit feelings of hatred / belonging or would refer back to the conflict or tensions (Based on DeZalia (2014) – Refer to Figure)	Connection to past generations: Yes or No Elicit a strong emotional reaction: Yes or No Express and maintain cultural narratives as they contribute to social representations: Yes or No Perceptual filter to understand the self in relation to society: Yes or No Personal Perception of Symbols/Icons
		Symbolic Objects	Presence of objects on the ground such as monuments / memorials / army checkpoints / tanks / damaged buildings that would refer back to the conflict and the tensions (Based	Connection to past generations: Yes or No Elicit a strong emotional reaction: Yes or No

		on DeZalia (2014) – Refer to Figure)	Express and maintain cultural narratives as they contribute to social representations: Yes or No Perceptual filter to understand the self in relation to society: Yes or No Personal Perception of Symbolic Objects
	Spatial Layout	The geographical location, situation, or positionality of individuals or symbols (icons or objects) that would refer back to the conflict	Object Significantly located in BT or JM: Yes or No Individual Significantly positioned in BT or JM: Yes or No Personal Perception of Spatial Layout
	Boundaries	Elements in space that define the geographical or cognitive boundaries of each of the concerned group	Presence of delimiting elements Personal Perception of boundaries

3.2 Research strategy

In order to answer my research question, I will be opting for the case study strategy. The case study strategy generally allows the individual pursuing the research to study, examine, and analyse a certain trend, subject, or phenomenon in depth rather than in breadth, through the use of a real-life setting and existing physical framework (Thiel, 2014). The researcher thus chooses a case or several cases to support and justify the hypothesis of his research, or to find out or explore the reasons or variables that are behind a certain phenomenon.

The case study strategy applies when there is a large quantity of data to be collected (that could be quantitative, but are more commonly qualitative specifically for a case study research), and to be analysed in depth in order to explain the phenomenon being studied. The case study in question could be a unique phenomenon that has occurred, which a researcher would like to investigate further, or it could be a more common-place phenomenon that a researcher would

want to fully understand, and therefore uses the case study strategy in order to collect in-depth data that could help him strengthen his research (Thiel, 2014). The case study in this case could also be used as a pilot or preparation for a broader and larger research where another type of strategy could be used (i.e.: survey).

Furthermore, the case study strategy is generally adopted when there is a small number of units (for instance: one case-study, or multiple individual cases). In a nutshell, the case study strategy is best applied when the research aims to explain or investigate a phenomenon, when the research comprises of small number of units to be studied, but a large number of variables come into play. One of the aims of the case study is to determine these variables. In the case that is presented in the problem statement, it could be assumed that the events and phenomena occurring within the Tebbaneh district are unique, and therefore require an in-depth research in order concretize the understanding of the events. As seen in Table 2 above, there is a large quantity of indicators for which the respective data will need to be collected on the ground, while there is only one unit of study, which is the area of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen. As my hypothesis does not distinguish between the nature of the expression of identity politics in the opposing neighbourhoods (however does take into account the differing impacts of identity politics on the ground), I will be opting for a one-case study analysis, that has two sub-groups and objects of study: Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen. The aim is to prove the prevalence of the expression of identity politics in both sub-neighbourhoods, but the differing socio-spatial outcomes on the urban fabric and social dynamics, which will later help us draw conclusions about the nature of the conflict in the area as a whole. The case study will also allow me to determine the nature of the spatial quality in the Tebbaneh district, and how residents behave according to the physical landscape and the expression of identity politics in space, through symbolism, propagation, communication, and propaganda.

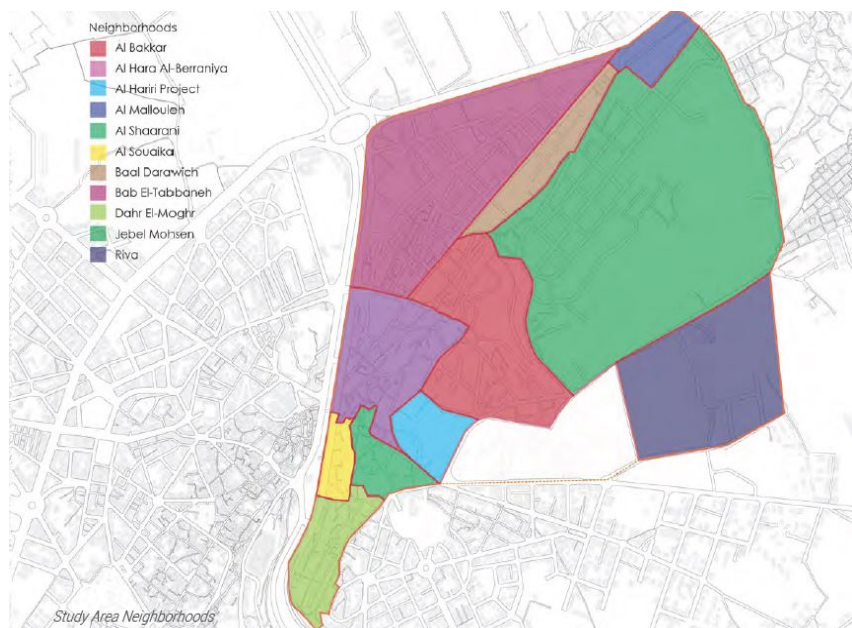


Figure 4 Neighbourhoods of the Study Area

In literature, three types of case studies have been identified: co-variation (COV), causal-process tracing, and congruence analysis (Blatter and Blume, 2008). Blatter and Blume (2008) have written an in-depth description of these three different types of case studies in their work: *In Search of Co-variance, Causal Mechanisms or Congruence? Towards a Plural Understanding of Case Studies*. For the purpose of this research, the co-variation type of case study will be applied: In a nutshell, the co-variance type deal with a factor X that has a causal effect on factor Y, where X is the independent variable, while Y is the dependent variable, and where the indicators of both variables vary across time, space, and in nature. In my case, Identity politics has a causal effect on socio-spatial dynamics, where identity politics varies according to political polarization and socio-spatial dynamics vary according to the degree of

expression of the former variation. While my case study is a homogenous design (since I have chosen the one-case study analysis), the existence of two sub-groups (Bab el Tebbaneh, and Jabal Mohsen) has allowed for the variation of the independent variable (identity politics). This case study will explore the variation of identity politics and its relevance on the ground, which means that the independent variable in the case is relatively unknown. Therefore, this case study will take on an inductive research in order to determine what constitutes identity politics and how it is expressed on the ground, and its degree of causality on the dependent variable.

Nonetheless, a few challenges and dilemmas will most probably endanger the flow of my research. First and foremost, as this is a research that has adopted the case study strategy, the external validity of my findings will be hindered, since these are specific cases in a specific context (The Tebbaneh district, within Tripoli). The complexity of this research therefore renders the results hardly applicable in other contexts. However, this could be overcome with an accurate and precise internal validity, meaning that the case has to be thoroughly investigated in order to provide findings that can be found by other researchers.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The dominant and main type of data that I will be collecting for the purpose of this research is qualitative data. In fact, qualitative data will allow us to have an in-depth insight to each of the sub-groups of my case study, which will help me better assess and understand the subjective perception of the residents, and the objective observations that I will be undergoing. The qualitative data collected will allow me to develop several hypotheses which will be proven or refuted in the data analysis period.

My data collection will be carried out in three different steps and methodologies: first, secondary data collection and analysis, second semi-structured interviews with residents and experts, and third, personal observations and mapping on the ground. Chapter 4 below will be structured according to each data collection method.

Secondary data collection will mainly serve as a press review of the main political and historical events that have occurred within Tripoli and the Tebbaneh district. The data collected will have direct implication in the forming and strengthening of both identity politics and collective memory in the neighbourhood, while observing the variation of the different variables and indicators in each historical phase. More details will be provided in the fourth chapter as to how I have structured the chronological occurrence of these events.

Personal observations on the ground will allow me to collect evidence of symbolism and the impact it has on the physical landscape of the neighbourhood in both areas of my thesis. This will later help me relate the indicators of symbolism with the indicators of both identity politics and collective memory, and thus analyse the influence it has on the influential relationship between them.

The semi-structured interviews with the residents will serve as the backbone of my research, as they will provide the main data that will help me determine and finalize my findings concerning the independent variable of the research question.

Semi-structured interviews will be carried out with urban experts in Tripoli, and with designated representatives of local organisations in Tripoli and in the neighbourhood specifically (i.e. MARCH, a local non-governmental organisation which has actively contributed in the reconciliation efforts between the neighbourhoods of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen..). These expert interviews will be considered as supporting data for my thesis, and will be treated as means of triangulation for my analysis.

Going to my sample, the sampling method that will be applied is the following:

- For the semi-structured interviews with urban experts in Tripoli, I will be interviewing 2 to 3 experts through a non-probability snowball sampling in order to identify the units of the interview.
- For the semi-structured interviews with representatives from local NGOs, I will be interviewing 2 representatives, through a non-probability snowball sampling as well.
- For the semi-structured interviews with the residents of the neighbourhoods, I will also use the non-probability method, with a quota sample. The quota sample will allow me to categorize the perception, and behaviour of residents by **age group, gender, religious affiliation, and geographical positionality**. For the sake of time constraints, I will be interviewing 6-7 individuals from each religious affiliation, with a variation in the geographical positionality (one Sunni household residing in the Alawite side, and one Alawite household residing in the Sunni side). During the data analysis period, attention will also be given to the age group and gender according to the responses of the households.

Data collection will be acquired in three major steps. First of all, the expert interviews will allow me to acquire further and general knowledge regarding politics in the Tebbaneh district, and how identity politics is manifested socially, economically, and politically. These expert interviews will be coupled with my personal observations on the ground, which as described above, will consist of mapping indicators of identity politics in space, as well as behaviour, including the principle walking routes of residents from both neighbourhoods.

The questionnaire for the semi-structured interviews with residents is presented in Annex 2 below. The questionnaire for the semi-structured interviews with experts can be found in Annex 3.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

As for the analysis itself, my main strategy is to find a clear causality connector between the indicators of identity politics and those of collective memory, also by using the indicators of symbolism. and to categorize these connectors according to the criteria described above (age group, gender, religious affiliation, geographical positionality). These connectors will serve as the backbone of my analysis, and will also help bridging between my personal observations on the ground, and the primary data collected through the semi-structured interviews.

Mapping will specifically allow me to determine spatial behaviour and to prove the causality factor between identity politics and its influence on socio-spatial dynamics.

As previously mentioned, the data collected through the semi-structured interviews with the residents of the neighbourhood is the backbone of my research. These residents will be grouped into four different age/gender groups as per the following:

- Group A: Young Men (18-28), Bab el Tebbaneh
- Group A': Young Men (18-28), Jabal Mohsen
- Group B: Young Women (18-28), Bab el Tebbaneh
- Group B': Young Women (18-28), Jabal Mohsen
- Group C: Men (28 – 70), Bab el Tebbaneh
- Group C': Men (28 -70), Jabal Mohsen
- Group D: Mothers, Bab el Tebbaneh
- Group D': Mothers, Jabal Mohsen

In order to establish an analysis according to the different variables that I have previously operationalized, my data analysis will follow the following three-step methodology:

1 – Facts Timeline:

The facts timeline will allow me to further elaborate on collective memory in the Tebbaneh district and its importance in the conflict discourse. It will allow me to establish connectors between my variables across a chronological outline, and to understand how socio-spatial dynamics came to be realised over time in order to produce the current dynamics in the area. This will also allow me to analyse how each respondent perceives a certain historical event that occurred in the context of the conflict (since the beginning of the frictions in 1975) and establish a pattern of thought according to the different age/gender categories on the one hand, and the different religious affiliations and geographical positionalities on the other. The differences in perception will facilitate the behavioural justification and analysis.

2 – Mapping symbolism and analysis:

Following the collection of data on the ground through my personal observations, I will develop a map to portray symbolism in the area, with special attention being made to the different meaning that each symbol portray, especially with regards to its geographical location. I will also develop a coding system for symbols in order to analyse the impact of symbolism on collective memory according to its nature, using the functions of symbolism analysed and developed in the second chapter

3 – Analysis of semi-structured interviews according to table of indicators:

This will allow me to test my hypothesis in present terms and in relation to the perception of the residents themselves. The interviews will be coded and analysed according to the indicators of identity politics, symbolism, and collective memory as shown in the table of indicators above. I will also create a superposing connection between the historical analysis, my personal observations, and the findings collected through interviews in order to analyse the differences and similarities and hence draw conclusions based on this.

This 3-step methodology for the analysis of the qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interviews with residents will answer and objectively analyse the three-dimensional aspect of my research question.

The validity of my data will be established through the triangulation of the data I will be collecting during the fieldwork period. The expert interviews will allow me to have a basis for the semi-structured interviews with the residents, my personal observations will allow me to gain a better understanding of the spatial qualities of both neighbourhoods, as well as to observe specific patterns of behaviour of residents and principal walking routes, while the semi-structured interviews with residents will allow me to collect my primary data and answer my main research question. Also, the secondary data collected through the press review for the sake of the historical analysis will provide the context within which my research is embedded.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

Following the three-week fieldwork that was undergone in the area of Al Tebbaneh in Tripoli, in the period of July-August 2017, this chapter will give an overview of the main findings that have been collected on the ground. As described in the methodology, the findings were collected through secondary data and press reviews, personal observations on the ground, interviews with NGO representatives in the area, interviews with Urban experts in Tripoli, and mainly, semi-structured interviews with residents from both Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen. For the sake of this study, the area of the case study has been delimited as per the two maps below.

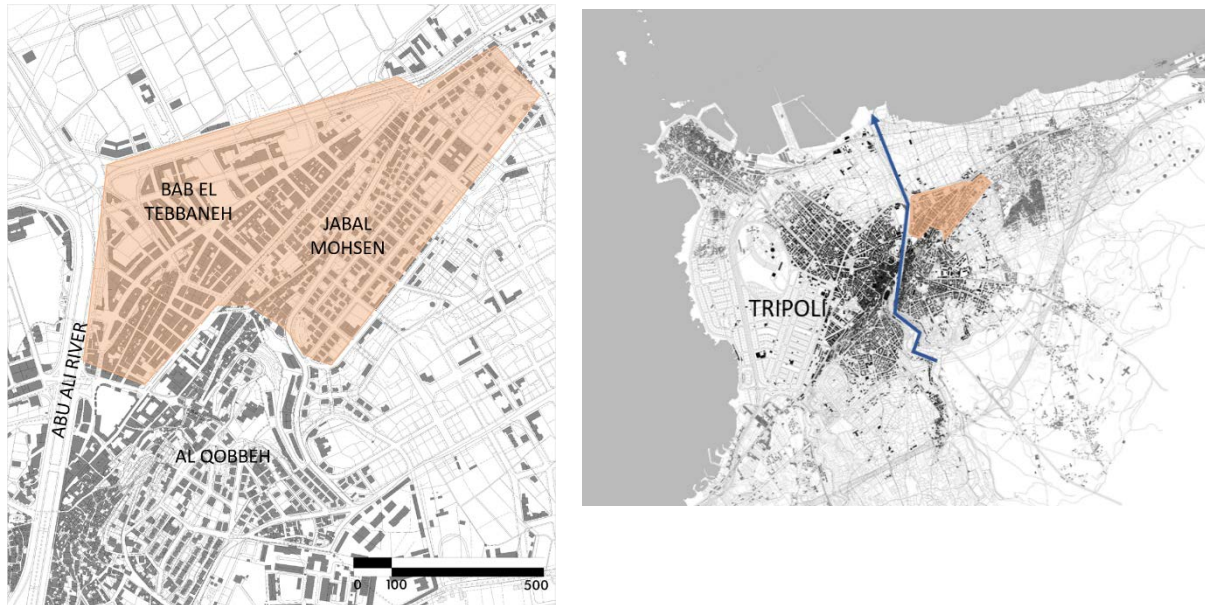


Figure 5 Area Delimitation (Micro and Macro)

The data gathered through the semi-structured interviews with residents, NGO experts, and Urban experts indicated that it is highly crucial to take a historical perspective and analysis in order to understand the current socio-spatial dynamics in the area, and the influence of identity politics on the ground. My research question “How has identity Politics contributed in shaping collective memory and socio-spatial dynamics in Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen?” therefore aims at assessing the importance of identity politics in the context of the area, taking into consideration collective memory and the symbolism of the physical landscape. However, the connection between these three variables has been shaped and altered over time, and in order to understand how my hypothesis is currently operating on the ground, the chronological events that led to its manifestation cannot be disregarded. In fact, collective memory in the area has been shaped and reshaped according to the historical and political context of Tripoli and Bab el Tebbaneh more specifically.

According to the information collected through the interviews, this historical analysis could be traced back to two different time periods that are both symbolic but independently from each other, as they have different chronological impacts in the time period that followed their occurrence. The first historical event in that case would be the declaration of Greater Lebanon in 1923, which was the beginning of the French Mandate in Lebanon, and the end of the Ottoman rule on the area. The declaration of Greater Lebanon had geographical, political, and economic consequences, as Tripoli was annexed to Lebanon in that process (despite the discontent of its inhabitants), having been one of the main sea gates of Syria in history. Therefore, Tripoli lost its economic and administrative importance in the area, with the capital

Beirut being the central hub of economic activity in Lebanon. To this day, and as Bilal Ayoubi (representative of SHIFT NGO, expert on Tripoli) mentions, “Tripoli is still paying the price for its opposition in joining Greater Lebanon back in 1923”, and that up to this day, Tripoli opposes any central political decision that comes out of the capital “as if it wants to reassert its presence”.

However, while the annexation of Tripoli to Greater Lebanon represents a major event in the political history of Tripoli, its effect is broader, has more national impacts than local, and is intangible in the face of the clashes that occurred in the Tebbaneh area. The second major historical event that is implicated in the chronological deterioration of the situation, and the one from which my analysis will be launched, is the heavy flood of the Abu Ali river in 1955. Indeed, the source of poverty in the area could be traced back to this event, since prior to its occurrence, Bab el Tebbaneh was renowned for its economic prominence and its souks of Gold, being the major gate towards Northern Syria (hence the name of its primary road “Syria Street”, which used to be the main road to Syria back then). This event had two major negative impacts. From a social perspective, following the flood the residents surrounding the river relocated east to the river, up on the hills, creating new marginalized neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city. During the years that followed, these residents were replaced by people living in extreme poverty coming from the areas of Akkar and Donniyeh in the North of Lebanon. Therefore, and as Ayoubi states, “the face of the Old city was changed during that period”. From a spatial and physical perspective, the flood of the Abu Ali river represents the start of the spatial segregation that is currently tangible in the city, becoming a clear demarcation line between the Tebbaneh, Qobbeh, al Bakkar region on the eastern side of the river, and the rest of the city on its western side. Following the flood, the municipality of Tripoli poured concrete into the sides of the river in order to refrain it from flooding again, which altered the previous natural and organic flow of the river within the city, rendering it a straight clear concrete line. Elias Bou Mrad, an urban expert and author of the latest Strategic Plan for Bab el Tebbaneh, explains in his interview that while the municipality had the interest of the people in mind, it unwillingly placed a clear physical separation in the middle of the city, excluding the above-mentioned area from the economic activity of the city, having only one main bridge connecting the two areas (while it previously had several passage ways that were naturally made). As he mentions, “the barrier that caused the current discrimination within the area of the conflict was actually physically built”. The impact of this physical seclusion will be explained in detail in the first part of my analysis below.

Nonetheless, when studying the current political and socio-spatial dynamics in the Tebbaneh area, we cannot afford to disregard the major political, national and international forces that came into play simultaneously with the social and physical transformations that the area has been undergoing since the middle of the 20th century. With the cold war and the Lebanese civil war both in sight, the international and local political dynamics took the degrading situation of Bab el Tebbaneh as bait, and as an arena for “sending political messages”, as most of the residents of BT and JM have mentioned in their interviews. The presence of the Alawite community in the Tebbaneh region placed the area at the frontlines of the ideological clashes between the Alawite Syrian regime, the Palestinian Sunni opposition, the Arab nationalism of Jamal Abdel Kader, and the rest of the international powers that had influence in this ideological schism. A study done by the US state department in 1959 in Tripoli, and therefore a few years following the flood of the river, depicts the resulting extreme state of poverty surrounding the river as a “fostering and nurturing ground” for communism (the terminology of terrorism having not seen the light yet, considering that the US foreign policy viewed communism as its major ideological threat). Ayoubi reaffirms that indeed, the events that occurred between 2008 and 2014 in the area have actually been recurring through out the 1950s,

the 60s, the 70s, and so on, with different armed rebel or militia groups seeing the light every now and then. Each conflict has ended in a similar way: with a strong intervention of army troops, whether Syrian or Lebanese.

Therefore the aim of this chapter is to analyse this recurrent cycle, and to reach to the conclusion: its roots. The chapter will be divided in three parts, each tackling one of the three sub-questions of research question: first, I will be tackling the construction of collective memory, through the historical, political, and socio-spatial narrative of the Tebbaneh district. Second, I will be analysing the current socio-spatial dynamics by dissecting the layers of physical symbolism, poverty, and purposive neglect within the spatial fabric. And third, I will be analysing how this has been reflected on the resident's collective memory, and its direct effect on socio-spatial dynamics in both neighbourhoods.

4.1 The Construction of Collective Memory: A Historical, political, and socio-spatial Narrative

In order to frame the political discourse within the area and restrict it to answering my research question, I have prepared a table listing all the political stakeholders in the area, their function, and their implications. This table could be found in the Annex

This section of my chapter will take a chronological structure, depicting each major time slot with its corresponding historical and political event, with the accompanied socio-spatial implications and their effect on the construction of collective memory. My literature review has recurrently highlighted the notion of “relational view”, which brings process at the forefront of the discussion surrounding space. Additionally, this tempo-spatial importance is highlighted again throughout the “Symbolism” section of my literature review, and in this respect I quote Rowntree and Conkey “the processes through which symbols are created, elaborated upon, and modified (and hence the process whereby the cultural landscape is created and transformed) is rooted in-and a part of-societal processes, one cannot describe or explain either without reference to the other” (Rowntree and Conkey, 1980). Therefore the processes through which the current socio-spatial dynamics came to be realized cannot be overseen, as they provide main reference points and deconstruct these dynamics.

This chronological structure will lead to the understanding of the current socio-spatial dynamics in the area in the second section of this chapter. The data present in the following chronological timeline is a compilation of secondary data (through a press review, and a review of the Strategic Plan for Bab el Tebbaneh), data gathered through the semi-structured interviews with residents, and data gathered through the interviews with NGO representatives and urban experts.

1955:

Historical/Political Event:

- Flood of the Abu Ali river
- As a result, high concrete walls were built around the river to refrain the floods from occurring again.

Socio-spatial and symbolic Narrative:

- Leaving 2000 households in a state of homelessness, who later on resettle in the neighbourhood currently known as “Al Mankoubin”, located within the Tebbaneh region
- Spatially, this has divided the city of Tripoli in two, the old city and “current” Tripoli from one side, and Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen from the other

- Migrations of population away from the river, with a remaining low-class population accompanied with migration influxes from the extreme North of Lebanon
- The maps below depict the transformation of the Abu Ali River following the flood and the pouring of concrete walls surrounding the siege of the river. As seen on the maps, the organic flow of the river through the old city became a stricter, more linear delimitation between the two parts of the city.

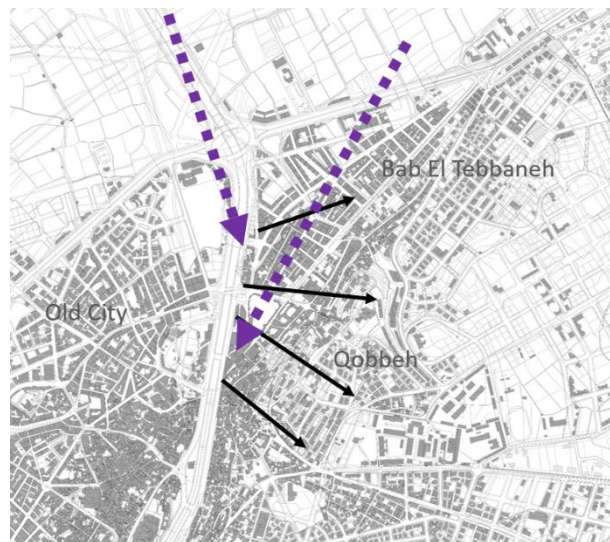


Figure 6 Migration Fluxes (1955 - 1960)



Figure 7 Map of the old city 1939 (left) and 1993 (right)

Impact on Collective memory:

- Up to this date, residents of “Al Mankoubin” area blame the Lebanese government and the municipality of Tripoli for their neglect and disregard when it came to the Tripolitan population surrounding the river. This area is currently outside the jurisdiction of the municipality, and therefore its residents lost their legislative belonging to Tripoli. The residents of this area are known to have participated aggressively in the recurring clashes from the 80s onwards.

1975:

Historical/Political Event:

- Start of the Lebanese civil war.

- Alawites joined forces with the Syrian Army through the Arab Democratic Party (ADP), fighting Al Tawhid movement (A radical Islamist party, supported by the leaders of the Palestinian resistance – Abou Ammar etc...) sunni fighters in the area. The clashes represented a series of political messages between the two fronts

Socio-Spatial and symbolic Narrative:

- This has created a disruption in the spatial dynamics of the neighbourhood, with a clustering of Alawites on the hills adjoining Bab el Tebbaneh (figure 8)
- Creation a clear geographical distinction between the Alawite area and the Sunni Area within the Tebbaneh area.
- Hence, the beginning of the spatial segregation as we know it today took its roots at the beginning of the Lebanese civil war.

Impact on Collective Memory:

- The sectarian discourse between Alawites and Sunnis in the area places its roots with the start of the Lebanese civil war. Prior to this date, the overwhelming poverty in the area was the main issue of concern for the municipality of Tripoli, while this sectarian debate was never on the table.
- Identity formation took a sharp turn, as residents of the area started identifying themselves according to their religious affiliation rather than their local geographical identity. Hence the start of identity politics' impact on spatial dynamics and collective memory.

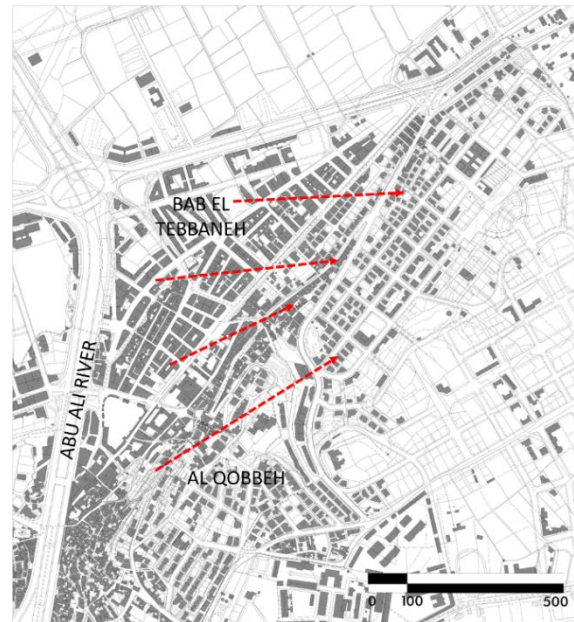


Figure 8 Migration fluxes (1975)

1984-1986:

Historical/Political event:

- Violent clashes erupted between the two armed militias, leaving hundreds of casualties
- Members of the Syrian army, aided by members of the ADP and other political alliances conducted what is famously known as “The Bab el Tebbaneh massacre”, leaving more than 500 sunnis and residents of Tebbaneh dead.
- Members of the Sunni armed militias retaliated following this event, attacking members of the Alawite community, including women and children.

Socio – Spatial and symbolic Narrative:

- Following the Tebbaneh massacre, a numerous amount of Alawite families fled Bab el Tebbaneh and joined the rest of the Alawite community on top of the hills.

- In order to claim the newly-established territories of the Alawite community within the Tebbaneh area, this geographical location was coined Jabal Mohsen (the mountain of Mohsen), as a tribute to a famous local Alawite trader who had also relocated into the Alawite geographical area
- “Syria Street” now clearly demarcates on the map (Figure 9) the neighbourhoods of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen.
- Migrations occur on both sides of the demarcation line.

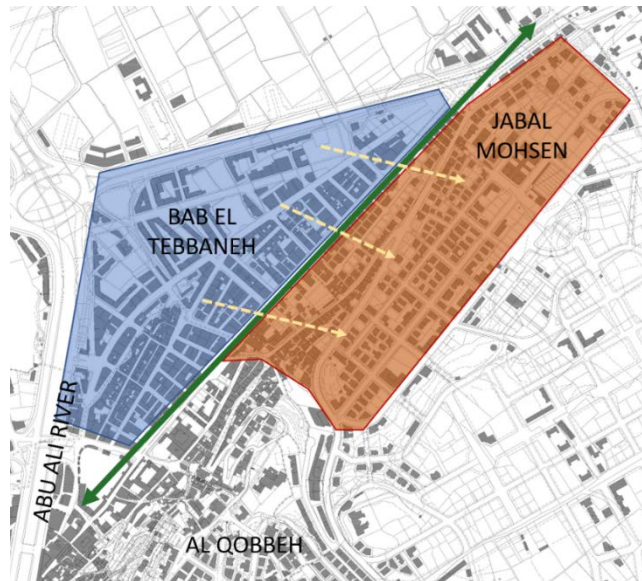


Figure 9 Spatial Demarcation (1986)

Impact on Collective Memory:

- The Tebbaneh massacre had tremendous effects on the collective memory of the Tebbaneh residents. Its occurrence was mentioned in all the interviews with the residents of the area, as well as with the NGO representatives and Urban experts.

Hatred and frustration boiled to a point of no return, as most of the families within Bab el Tebbaneh were affected by this massacre. Ziad Allouki, a sunni war lord and leader of the Sunni frontline during the most recent clashes, mentioned that in he believes the Sunni community of Tebbaneh armed itself and participated in the clashes against the Alawites in order to protect its members from the occurrence of another massacre of the sort perpetrated by the ADP, since the Lebanese government and the Lebanese army was not able (or was not willing) to do so.

- An official apology has not yet been issued by the ADP nor any Alawite official, which is still triggering frustration within the Sunni community.
- While this event has been encrusted in the memory of the residents of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen, Bilal Ayoubi affirms that it is not recorded in the national collective memory of Lebanon, since Lebanese citizens in other territories have no recollection of such an event occurring during the civil war. Also, he mentions that it is unknown where the victims of this massacre have been buried, since the bodies of the victims were held hostage by the Syrian army within the local hospitals in order to capture members of the deceased's families who would claim them at the hospitals. Therefore it is believed that there was an attempt to erase this event from the national and local collective memory, which represents a deeper grudge within the area towards the Alawite community.
- Members of the Alawite community today often speak of a massacre against Alawites that occurred prior to the Bab el Tebbaneh massacre, and use it as a means to justify the event. However, Ayoubi states that there has been no records of such an event, which indicates how collective memory has not only been shaped by the political and historical events that have occurred, but has also, at times, been created.

1990 - 2005:

- End of the civil war, with small conflicts occurring here and there, but no major clashes, and no casualties.
- Collective memory is on hold, as it becomes taboo to recall the events of the civil war, while both communities are trying to heal from its impacts

2005:

Historical/Political Events:

- The assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, shakes the entire country and creates a series of events, political assassinations, political messages, threats, and conflicts that are still on-going in the country to this day
- The Syrian army is forced to leave the Lebanese territory
- Alawites of the ADP are left with no direct support from the Syrian regime on the ground, rendering them a vulnerable and dangerous group
- Tensions rise between different political movements, creating a clear break in Lebanese Politics: the 14th March movement (the coalition of Lebanese parties anti Syrian regime, including the Future movement, the Phalangists etc...), and the 8th March movement (the coalition of Lebanese parties pro Syrian regime, including Hezbollah, Amal movement, and the ADP).

Socio – Spatial and symbolic Narrative:

- Tensions are translated on the ground as frictions rise between Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen
- Militias of both areas start receiving weapons and arming themselves in preparation for the inevitable clashes to come
- As a result, sectarian migration fluxes from one side of the demarcation line to the other start again.

Impact on Collective memory:

- As the assassination of PM Rafic Hariri is believed to have been orchestrated by the Syrian regime, the Bab el Tebbaneh community is once again reminded about its enmity with the Syrian regime, and more specifically the ADP, since the latter political party is – in their opinion – the representative of the Syrian regime on the ground (even with the departure of the Syrian army from the Lebanese territories).
- The marginalization of the Alawite community starts taking form during that period of time, since its affiliation with the Syrian regime is considered as a national crime. The identity of the community is threatened by the overwhelming Sunni presence in the area that surrounds Jabal Mohsen, especially after its direct ties are broken with the Syrian regime and army. Alawites are also discriminated against by the entire population of Tripoli, which create a heavy socio-economic gap within the area.

2007:

Historical/Political Event:

- May: Conflict breaks out in Nahr El Bared, a Palestinian refugee camp north of Tripoli, between the Lebanese army forces, and Fateh El Islam, a Palestinian radical Islamist militant group
- May 7th – 10th: Armed clashes broke out in all Lebanese territories between Hezbollah and Sunni militant group because of an attempt of the Lebanese government to shut down communication networks of Hezbollah.

Social-Spatial and symbolic Narrative:

- The clashes are specifically abundant between Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tebbaneh, which escalated into an exchange of heavy gunfire and missiles.
- Lebanese Army immediately intervened to calm the clashes in the area.

2008 - 2012:

Historical/Political Event:

- June 22 – September 8, 2008: Renewal of clashes, death toll reaches 32 individuals from both Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen. Leaders of the Sunni movement and Arab Democratic party sign reconciliation agreement on September 8, for the first time since the civil war
- 2009 – 2012: Hundreds of individuals are killed in the ongoing clashes between Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tebbaneh, while political Assassinations on a national level orchestrated the clashes between the two fronts.
- Radical Sunni Islamic groups such as the Muslim brotherhood and the Islamic Group infiltrate Bab el Tebbaneh and recruit a number of militants in the area, who become the leaders of the Tebbaneh front, waging a sectarian and indentitarian war on the militias of Jabal Mohsen
- Politicians from both fronts heavily fund the clashes, by bribing the militants with excessive amounts of money. For instance, 3 bullet fired would earn the militant a hundred US Dollars. As this is the only means for the residents of both neighbourhoods to provide for their families, the heads of households are stuck in this dilemma and forced to participate in the conflict against their will.

Socio – Spatial and symbolic Narrative:

- Households living on the front lines are migrating backwards from both sides of the demarcation line, running away from the frontlines of the clashes. However as most of the residents of the area are initially in a dire situation, they have no choice but to join their families within the same areas they live in, and cannot relocate to other areas in Tripoli. This has resulted in the degradation of their socio-economic status, as most residents are left un-employed and homeless.
- The area surrounding Syria street slowly becomes deserted
- Demarcation line becomes larger by the day. Figure 10 depicts the fluctuation of populations within the conflict area.

Impact on Collective Memory:

- As clashes take a new round in the area, accompanied by a direct influence from local politics and international powers, the memory of the previous deadly wars between the Alawite and the Sunni communities are brought back to life, and are used as a means to gather militants from both sides of the conflict. Ayoubi, Bou Saad, and the Mukhtar of Jabal Moshen all point to the fact that local media has played a major role in reviving this memory, and in highlighting the schism between the Sunni and Alawite communities.



Figure 10 Spatial dynamics (2013)

- Ayoubi also mentions that the Islamic Group posted videos on Youtube depicting the Bab el Tebbaneh massacre of 1986, blaming the Alawite community and the Syrian regime for its actions. (Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qH5XTbBzK4s>). It is important to highlight that almost 20 years had passed without the memory of the massacre having ever resurfaced to the news or the collective memory of Bab el Tebbaneh.
- Syria street becomes a physical symbol of the schism between the two communities, as the segregation becomes wider by the day, and circulation between the two neighbourhoods becomes deadly and therefore is avoided at all costs.

2013:

Historical/Political Event:

- Twin bombings of Sunni mosques in Tripoli on the outskirts of the Tebbaneh area kills 50 individuals, while 500 others are severely injured.
- The Sunni community puts the blame on the leaders of the Arab Democratic party: Ali Eid and his son Refaat Eid.
- Renewal of clashes between JM and BT leaves 13 casualties
- An attempt to assassinate Ali Eid, leader of the Arab Democratic Party, with a bomb planted in his car in downtown Tripoli

Socio – Spatial and symbolic Narrative:

- As the area is raided by snipers on top of the roofs on both sides of the conflict, walls are built on every demarcation line (between JM and BT, and JM and Qobbeh etc...). These walls represent to this date a physical separation between the two communities.
- Sand barriers are placed on the stairs leading up to Jabal Mohsen in order to prevent Sunni militants and war tanks from entering the upper neighbourhoods.

Impact on Collective Memory:

- The bombing of the mosques leaves a deeper scar in the consciousness of the residents of Bab el Tebbaneh. This event will come as an additional layer of hatred and segregation between the two communities following the preceding major event of the massacre.
- Most of the households of Bab el Tebbaneh are impacted by this event, and leaders of the Sunni fronts in the area as well as the leaders of the major Sunni political parties (such as the Future movement and the Islamic Group) use media as an outlet to point fingers at the Alawite community of the area.
- While only a few individuals from the Alawite community were perpetrating these acts of terror, the Alawite community as a whole is further marginalized as the Tripolitan community and the Lebanese army alike take an aggressive stance against the residents of Jabal Mohsen.

2014:

Historical/Political Narrative:

- March: 25 individuals are killed as a result of renewed clashes between JM and BT
- April 1st : The Lebanese army, through direct orders from Ashraf Rifi (the minister of justice and defense at the time) launches the security plan that puts an end to the recurrent clashes of the past 30 years.
- More than 200 individuals from both BT and JM arrested and jailed
- The new leader of Arab Democratic Party Refaat Eid flees (and is on the run to this day).
- Relative peace has been witnessed and is still ongoing
- Several NGOs, start ups, and initiatives base themselves in Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen (mostly on Syria Street)

Socio – Spatial and symbolic Narrative:

- The arrests caused skyrocketing poverty in the entire area, as poverty levels reach the highest records since the flood of the river in 1955 (UN-Habitat, 2016).
- As all the arrested individuals are males, this has created a class of female-led households within the area, noting that the role of women in those neighbourhoods was restricted to taking care of the household, as men were the sole breadwinners of the family.
- The returnees to the demarcation area are left unemployed, are some of the most marginalized households in the neighbourhoods (in both Jabal Moshen and Bab el Tebbaneh)
- Heavy and symbolic presence of Army checkpoints on the demarcation lines, which gradually becomes a symbol of the most recent clashes.
- Pictures of Bashar el Assad and Hafez el Assad, and Alawite slogans adorn the hills of Jabal Mohsen, while pictures of Saad Hariri and Najib Mikati are overwhelmingly present in Syria street and on the outskirts of Bab el Tebbaneh.
- The Future movement, headed by Saad Hariri, conducts rehabilitation works strictly in the area surrounding Syria street, and paint the facades of the rehabilitated buildings in blue, which is the colour of the political party.

Impact on Collective memory:

- The presence of the army is a constant reminder of the war, the clashes, and the potential dangers to come if the army leaves the area.
- This new demarcation is a mechanism to translate power dynamics on the ground
- Pictures, colours, banners, and slogans become a new demarcation mechanism as identity is enforced on the residents of the two neighbourhoods, noting that the residents have developed hatred against all politicians. However, with the overwhelming presence of poverty, and with politicians paying a considerable amount of money for every picture or slogan hanged, the residents are caving in to this new cycle of hypocrisy and identity formation.



Picture 1 Syria Street (picture by author)

Synthesis of the variables per indicator:

Identity Politics:

The findings of the press review provide evidence for the historical political involvement indicator. In fact, as we can notice through out the chronological timeline, local political presence plays a great role in the triggering of clashes and segregation, which is also greatly influenced by regional and international political forces.

The following table depicts each indicator of historical political involvement, with the direct political event it triggered. This table is relevant in proving how external and local political influence have played a role in constructing the identity of the residents of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen. Thus this helps to understand the prevalence of identity politics in the context of the neighbourhood, before analysing its impact on collective memory. Dismantling identity politics in the area helps to establish a clear logical connector between this variable, and symbolism, since the latter cannot be made sense of without an a priori understanding of identity politics and its influence on the major stakeholders of the area and its community.

Table 4 Identity Politics Indicator and Repercussion

Historical Political Involvement Indicator (Trigger)	Repercussion and Event
1923: French declaration of Greater Lebanon and beginning of French Mandate	Geographical Separation of Tripoli from Syria and beginning of its political, economic, and social demise + centralisation around Beirut

1950 – 1970: International: Cold war between the two opposing political international hegemonies Regional: cold war extended between Arab Nationalist ideologies (Jamal Abdul Nasser) backing Palestinian and Sunni populations in Bab el Tebbaneh, and the Syrian Regime, backing the Alawite community	Cold war orchestrated the tensions present on the ground between the Sunni and Alawite communities who, prior to this phase, were evenly dispersed in space in the Tebbaneh district.
1975: Syrian regime established the Arab Democratic Party in Lebanon, the Lebanese Alawite Political party	Driven by identity-fuelled discourses, alawites of Bab el Tebbaneh were mobilised into joining the ADP, drifting away from their Lebanese identity
1986: Syrian regime commands the Syrian Army and ADP to conduct the Tebbaneh Massacre	The Bab el Tebbaneh massacre leaves more than 500 dead from the Bab el Tebbaneh Sunni community
2005: Assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, and withdrawal of the Syrian army from the Lebanese territories	Rise of the tensions between Alawite and Sunni communities
2007: Radicalisation of Palestinian Islamist group Fateh el Islam in Palestinian refugee camp in the North of Lebanon	The Palestinian – Sunni discourse is brought back on the table once again and triggers frustration from the Sunni community of Bab el Tebbaneh towards the Lebanese army
2005 – 2008: Political assassinations in Lebanon targeted against opponents of the Syrian regime Infiltration of Bab el Tebbaneh by radical groups such as the Muslim brotherhood	Start of the most recent conflicts between Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen, with no clear motive or political affiliation from both sides.
2013: Syrian regime and ADP are accused of conducting the twin bombings in Tripoli	The clashes become stronger by the day as the death toll rises in both areas.
2014: Local Political powers order to execution of the Security plan	Relative peace

Therefore, in section 2.1.1 of the literature review, we have reviewed how academics have discussed identity politics, global flows, and structural dynamics. Relating back the above-mentioned findings to my literature review, and specifically to the review surrounding the structure-agency approach, indeed demonstrate how identity politics is the structure through which global political powers are expressing their flows on the ground. Literature has also revealed that cities are used as mediators of these global flows, which is the case of Tripoli, and the Tebbaneh area most specifically. In fact, the table above suggests that the neighbourhood has been used as a physical arena for sending political messages and therefore translating the political power dynamics on the ground. In this section we are exclusively discussing the structure aspect without taking into account the agency, which is the receptor of these global flows (the agency here being the space where politics and identities are expressed). This will be discussed in the following sections.

Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that while identity politics in the neighbourhood is the result of international, regional, and local political involvement, this identity has been embedded within the communities that exist within this area. This is specifically because these political powers have made use of identity politics, and hence appealing to the socially constructed identities that were already existing in space (namely, the Sunni identity and the Alawite identity). In the face of poverty and recurring marginalisation that has been provoked ever since the declaration of greater Lebanon, and particularly after the flood of the Abu Ali River, the residents of the neighbourhood were deprived of an equitable access to their basic needs and did not receive proper goods and services. Their multiple identities were the only roots they were able to hold, which thus made them vulnerable to manipulation by political powers.

Collective Memory:

The indicators I have previously attributed to the collective memory variable (Table 4) are specific and relevant to the present expression of collective memory within the socio-spatial dynamics on the ground. This information was collected through the semi-structured interviews with residents of the neighbourhood, and supported by statements from the urban experts and NGO representatives that were interviewed. Nevertheless, I have decomposed the collective memory variable into two main concepts: Cognitive memory and conative memory. As my review of literature has described, cognitive refers to the remembered and perceived past that binds a community with a collective identity, and serves as a map for social behaviour and identity formation. Conative memory on the other hand refers to the expression of this map through the perceived responsibilities that these communities transfer from one generation onto the next. The time-frame elaborated in this section will allow me to relate present statements and expressions of both aspects of collective memory to concrete events. As I have also mentioned in the literature review, there is an existing dichotomy between actual history and collective memory, since history is the “remembered past to which we no longer have an organic relation to”, while collective memory is the present reflection of the past within a community. The aim of this section was to bridge the gap between actual history and present collective memory. In fact, this chronological description represents the formation of collective memory throughout the years, specifically with respect to the indicators of the following concepts: cognitive memory - Perception of past events, perception of the “other”, and conative memory - prevalence of group identity, and previous involvement in conflict.

In the following table, I have extracted the main impacts on collective memory that I have described in the time-frame above, and coded them according to the collective memory concepts. I did not use the indicators in this case since as I mentioned above, the indicators of collective memory were attributed to the present expression of collective memory.

Table 5 Coding Collective Memory

Impact on Collective Memory	Code (as per concept of collective memory)
Up to this date, residents of “Al Mankoubin” area blame the Lebanese government and the municipality of Tripoli for their neglect and disregard when it came to the Tripolitan population surrounding the river. This area is currently outside the jurisdiction of the municipality, and therefore its residents lost their legislative belonging to Tripoli. The	Cognitive Memory – Perception of past events

residents of this area are known to have participated aggressively in the recurring clashes from the 80s onwards	
The sectarian discourse between Alawites and Sunnis in the area places its roots with the start of the Lebanese civil war. Prior to this date, the overwhelming poverty in the area was the main issue of concern for the municipality of Tripoli, while this sectarian debate was never on the table.	Cognitive memory – Perception of the other Conative memory – Prevalence of group identity
While this event has been encrusted in the memory of the residents of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen, Bilal Ayoubi affirms that it is not recorded in the national collective memory of Lebanon, since Lebanese citizens in other territories have no recollection of such an event occurring during the civil war	Cognitive memory – Perception of past events
there was an attempt to erase this event from the national and local collective memory, which represents a deeper grudge within the area towards the Alawite community.	Cognitive memory – Perception of past events Cognitive memory – Perception of the other
Members of the Alawite community today often speak of a massacre against Alawites that occurred prior to the Bab el Tebbaneh massacre, and use it as a means to justify the event.	Cognitive memory – Perception of past events Conative memory – Previous involvement in conflict – Prevalence of group identity
The Bab el Tebbaneh community is once again reminded about its enmity with the Syrian regime,	Cognitive memory – Perception of the other
The marginalization of the Alawite community starts taking form during that period of time	Conative memory – Prevalence of group identity
the memory of the previous deadly wars between the Alawite and the Sunni communities are brought back to life, and are used a means to gather militants from both sides of the conflict	Cognitive memory – Perception of the other Conative memory – Prevalence of group identity
Islamic Group posted videos on Youtube depicting the Bal el Tebbaneh massacre of 1986, blaming the Alawite community and the Syrian regime for its actions.	Cognitive memory – Perception of past events – Perception of the other Conative memory – Prevalence of group identity
Most of the households of Bab el Tebbaneh are impacted by this event,	Cognitive memory – Perception of the other

an aggressive stance against the residents of Jabal Mohsen.	
The presence of the army is a constant reminder of the war, the clashes, and the potential dangers to come if the army leaves the area.	Cognitive memory – Perception of past events

Therefore, the table above provides a guideline to the establishment of collective memory in both Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Moshen as it relates each concept on the collective memory variable to a specific event. It should be noted that the events extracted from the impact on collective memory which have been coded with both cognitive memory and conative memory indicators are of great value. In fact, and as we will see in the next sections, these events are greatly mentioned by interviewees from both areas and are given as justifications when addressing the current social dynamics within the two communities. Therefore, events that both help concretise identity formation and act as transmitters of social responsibility within groups have a direct and tangible impact on socio-spatial dynamics, as will be further elaborated in the conclusion of this chapter.

Symbolism:

To analyse the prevalence, formation, and installation of symbolism within the area, we must first go back to the value of space and spatiality, especially with respects to the area of study. As we have previously seen in my review of literature symbolism is one of the means of communication that bind society and space into the realisation of socio-spatial behaviour. Symbolism here of course, operates within the realm of the cultural landscape, which we have previously defined as a “social construction, a form of spatial and cultural negotiation between representation of the past and imagination of the future” (Czepczynski, 2010). In this respect, analysing the historical events in a chronological manner has allowed us to analyse the factors that came into play regarding the formation and installation of symbolism within the cultural landscape, and that explain the current symbolism of the physical landscape. In the case of the Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen areas, it important to distinguish between two types of symbolism: Symbolic objects (i.e. pictures, monuments, icons, slogans, buildings, and physical elements), and Symbolic representations (i.e. boundaries – physical or mental, migration fluxes, naming). Of course, the chronological time-frame only depicts symbolic representations and not symbolic objects, since symbolic objects are part of the present urban fabric, as described in the next section. However, symbolic representations here and at each stage were the expression and mediums of communication of power struggles and dynamics. This has been made visible through the mappings of spatial transformations provided above.

The symbolism variable here acts as a clear intermediate variable between the identity politics independent variable and the collective memory dependent variable. The table below aims at depicting this correlation and chain of impact:

Table 6 Connecting the variables

Independent Variable Identity Politics	Intermediate Variable Symbolism		Dependent Variable Collective Memory
	Symbol	Value/Function	

Flood of Abu Ali River	Concrete Walls	Symbolic Object: Boundaries	“Al Mankoubin” Neighbourhood Culture of Marginalization
	Spatial Division	Symbolic Representation: Boundaries	
	Migration Fluxes	Symbolic Representation: Regulate Behaviour	
Civil War ADP vs. Al Tawhid	Clustering of Alawite Population	Symbolic Representation: Identity – driven + Feeling of oppression	Start of the Sectarian Discourse
Bab el Tebbaneh Massacre	Coining of “Jabal Mohsen”	Symbolic Representation: Boundaries + Perceptual Filter + Predictability	Collective Trauma
	Syria Street as Green Line	Symbolic Representation: Boundaries + Mediator of Stress	
Assassination of PM Rafic Hariri Syrian Army Retreat Frictions b/w JM & BT	Migration Fluxes along Syria Street	Symbolic Representation: Regulates Behaviour	Collective Memory Awakened Alawite Community Marginalisation
Local Political Assassinations Heavy Clashes	Desertion of Syria Street	Symbolic Representation: Mediator of Stress	Identity Politics and Collective Memory are both used as tools to trigger conflict Syria Street becomes a tangible separation in Collective Memory
Security Plan	Army Checkpoints	Symbolic Representation: Mediator of Stress – Regulate Behaviour - Boundaries	Constant Reminder of the War Imposed Collective Memory
	Symbolic Objects (Pictures – Slogans –	Symbolic Objects: Connection to Past Generations – Emotional	

	Martyr monuments)	Reaction – Cultural Narratives – Perceptual Filters	
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Therefore, it is evident that symbolism has been applied in the historical context of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen in order to mobilise both communities by appealing to their collective memories and identities. The value and function of each symbol is reflective of the impact on collective memory: for instance boundaries shape the perception of the other within each community and create a larger schism, while symbolic objects that appeal to the four functions of symbols play a major role in recreating collective memory, somehow imposing an imagined past in order to destabilise the present social dynamics.

4.2 Current Socio – Spatial Dynamics: Mapping and Personal Observations

The previous section of this chapter allowed us to establish a chronological order to the superposing layers of political, spatial, and social transformations that are underneath the morphological and social urban fabric of the Tebbaneh district (Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tebbaneh). It paved the way for the better understanding of the current spatial and social dynamics that are currently operating on the ground.

As explained in chapter 3, in the methodology section, a section of the fieldwork consisted of personal observations on the ground. Therefore, following an extensive field analysis during the three week period, I was able to gather enough data on the ground, through my personal observations, and through the explanations of the local guides that were guiding me through the neighbourhoods, in order to develop the following map of my observations. The map depicts the current spatial situation on the ground, following three years of ongoing military rule in the area, and is the result of the superposing layers of the previous maps explained above throughout the chapter.

The main purpose of my personal observations and mapping on the ground is to identify the “symbolism” indicator in the area in present terms. It will give a better understanding of the nature of symbolism in the area, specifically when analysing the findings of the semi-structured interviews. The data collected through my personal observations should hence be considered as supporting data to my main and dominant data findings: qualitative findings through semi-structured interviews with the residents. It provides the context within which my problem statement operates in order to triangulate my findings.

The map, which is accompanied by a legend, is explained below according to the two neighbourhoods of interest: Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tebbaneh. The information provided is a result of my personal observations and analysis of the elements observed, along with supporting statements from the interviewees that help to shape the context in relation to the residents of the neighbourhoods.

While my preliminary problem statement considered the expression of identity politics through symbolism as being similar in both neighbourhoods, the time spent on the ground proved otherwise. Identity and collective memory is evident in the two neighbourhoods, however is not expressed in similar ways: this difference is thus a symbolic reflection in itself that depicts the discrepancies in power dynamics on the ground, which I will be further analysing in my concluding chapter.

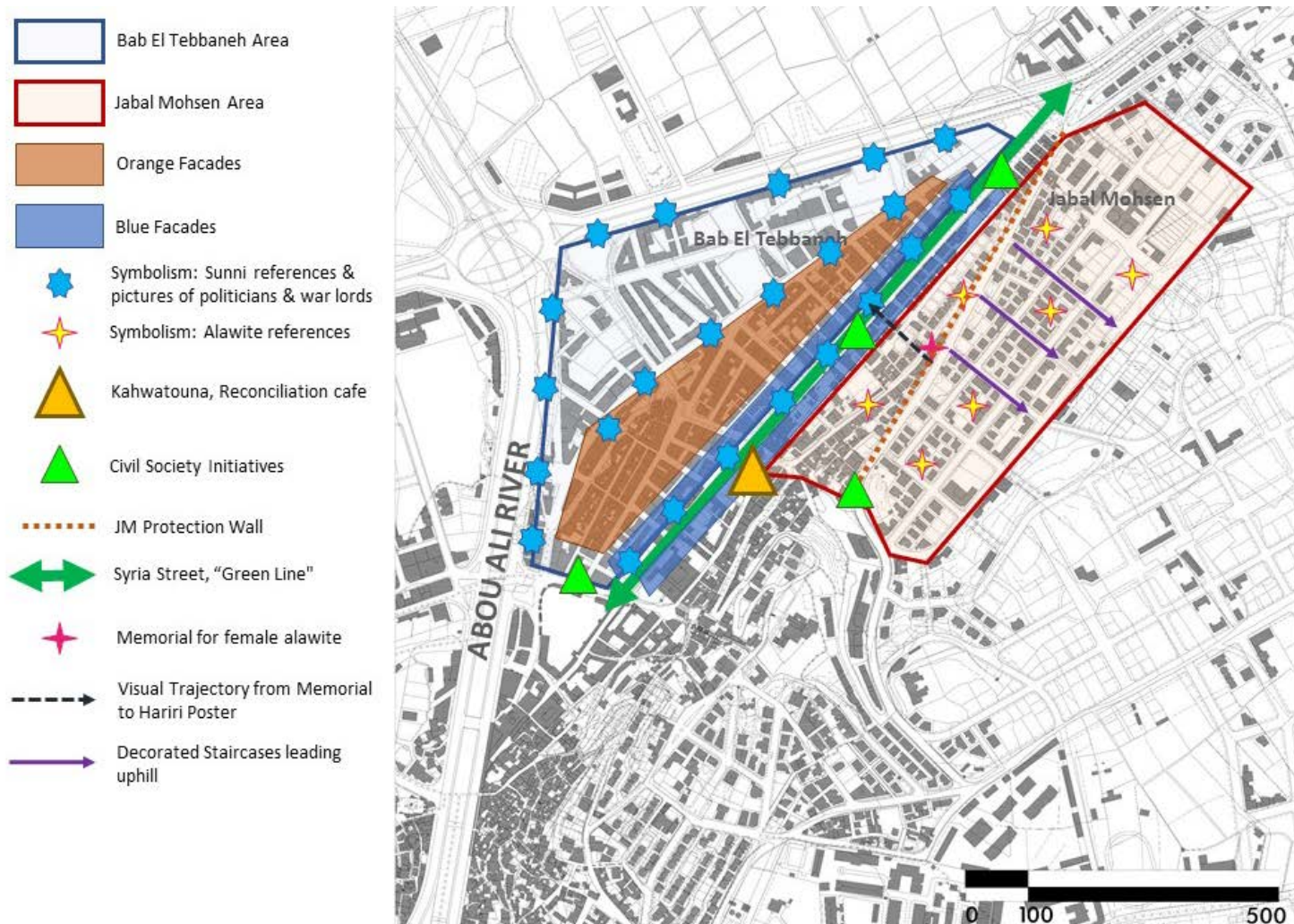


Figure 11 Mapping current symbolism in space

Bab el Tebbaneh:

- Bab El Tebbaneh is currently full of posters of Saad Hariri (Prime minister, leader of the future movement, one of the main sunni parties of the country – who claims to be moderate, however everyone agrees that he has contributed in arming Bab El Tebbaneh), Ashraf Rifi (Defense minister, has participated in arming the conflict, but however was the main person in charge of sending to jail all the war participants, including Ziad Allouki – the warlord that has been interviewed for the sake of the this research), and Najib Mikati who is the most powerful and wealthiest man in Lebanon, from Tripoli, and spends tremendous amounts of money on donations in BT, however has also



Picture 2 Hariri Poster (picture by author)

participated in arming the conflict. His help is misplaced: he gives out money allowances instead of tackling the main problem of the area: unemployment. His strategy is to feed the underdog and keep him on the sidelines of the community – figuratively and geographically. On the map, the blue stars represent how these pictures are strategically spread out on the walls and balconies of the buildings, since most pictures are hanged on Syria street (the demarcation line) and along the buildings that are visible from the Abou Ali River (the geographical separation between BT-JM and the rest of Tripoli). Therefore, this could be an attempt to delimit the geographical territories of the power influences on the area, through claiming the identity of the residents of Bab el Tebbaneh.



Picture 3 Poster of Ziad Allouki (Picture by author)

- Saad Hariri and Najib Mikati are rivals in politics although both being Sunni, however members of the same family hang posters of both of them in order to collect money: each poster is an income of at least a 100\$.
- Additionally, pictures of Chadi Neshebe are now hanged in the streets of Bab el Tebbaneh. Chadi Neshebe is the founding father of Utopia, an NGO that has rehabilitated the famous market of bab el tebbaneh: Souk el Ameh. His pictures are symbolic: it shows how pictures translate the power dynamics within the area. NGO representatives can also become a symbol of identity politics and power because of the resources they provide.



Picture 4 Picture of Chadi Neshebe (picture by author)

- Bab el Tebbaneh buildings have been fully rehabilitated from the external façade (see Picture 1). The first front on the demarcation line (Syria street) was rehabilitated by Saad Hariri and his political party (the Future movement) and thus all the façade was painted in blue, as visible on the map.
- The inner parts of Bab el Tebbaneh (those that are not visible on the front line from Jabal Mohsen) were rehabilitated by Najib Mikati and all the facades were painted orange and yellow (refer to map), which are the colours of the rivals of Hariri. There are less pictures hanged on the inner parts of the neighbourhood, which demonstrates again how pictures and slogans are not emanating from the residents of the area themselves, but are a strategy used by politicians to assert their presence and influence over the area

- MARCH, an NGO that has based itself in Bab el Tebbaneh, established a reconciliation initiative through setting up a common space in Syria street called “Kahwatouna” (translation: Our Café). Several reconciliation workshops, poetry nights, plays, and screenings of football matches take place within that space, and residents from both Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tebbaneh attend these events together.



Picture 5 Community Dinner at Kahwatouna (source: Kahwatouna Facebook Page)

- MARCH also conducted a project along Syria street and its branches: the facades of the shops and stores were completely renovated under the project theme “Bab el Zahab” (The door of Gold) in order to bring back the blooming commercial aspect of the area. However they were criticized by a “Mukhtar” (area representative) of the area for exclusively tackling the aesthetic aspect of the business, without taking into consideration the basic infrastructure needed, and the lack of customers in the area.
- A group of Lebanese artists and activists called “Ashekman”, conducted a reconciliation and peace-awareness project in September 2017, painting the word “Salam” (Peace) in Arabic on the rooftops of the buildings along Syria Street. Therefore, symbolism here is being used as a reconciliation mechanism rather than a tool for sectarian division.



Picture 6 "Salam" Painted rooftops (source: Ashekman Facebook page)

Jabal Mohsen:

- A wall built by the Lebanese army geographically separates Jabal Mohsen from the rest of the region (pictures below), the wall is visible on the map (dotted brown line). This wall was built in order to protect passers-by from the snipers from both areas. The result is a concrete separation and a reminder of the conflict. The wall is fenced by metallic



Picture 7 Concrete wall between BT and JM (by author)

wires that do not allow people to jump over the wall.

- Stairs that lead to the upper neighbourhoods were painted in different colours – an initiative from various NGOs present in the areas. However, these stairs are mostly empty of people during the day and during the night. Bou Mrad (Urban Expert and author of the Strategic Plan), states in his interview that residents of both areas subconsciously avoid taking these stairs, even after they have been rehabilitated, since these areas were the most exposed to snipers during the war. The residents of Jabal Mohsen, and those of Bab el



Picture 8 Coloured Stairs (by author)

Tebbaneh wanting to

visit the upper parts of the area, generally take other longer routes that are less visible in order to circulate up and down the hill.

- Pictures and slogans of Bashar el Assad and Hafez el Assad were completely removed from the streets – especially the main streets, those that traverse Jabal Mohsen to get to Al Qobbeh neighbourhood (Sunni residents) to Bab el Tebbaneh. As an employee at the reconciliation café explains, this was an attempt from the Alawite community to reclaim their Lebanese identity with the heavy presence of the army in the area: to remind politicians that they are Lebanese as well and have been excluded from the spatial rehabilitation process?
- These pictures are still visible inside the shops, or in secluded areas of the neighbourhood, those that are not visible from the main streets or from bab el tebbaneh.
- Some banners are advocating for the preservation of the alawite sect through the support of alawite candidates in the municipal elections.
- There is an abundance of pictures of Martyrs – mostly people who passed away in the recent conflicts. There are even built memorials for the women who passed away



Picture 9 Pictures of BA and HA inside shops (by author)



Picture 10 Banner advocating for the right of preservation of the Alawite community (by author)

during the events. There is an impressive culture of “martyrdom” within the neighbourhood => reflects the status-quo of the Alawite community in Lebanon

- The topography of Jabal Mohsen (JM is situated on a hill) gives a visual landscape onto Bab el tebbaneh: when looking down from any corner in JM, the first sight are the blue walls and pictures of Saad Hariri, especially from the corners where the memorials are situated.

Synthesis of personal observations per symbolism indicator:

With reference to section 2.1.4 (Symbolism, The Cultural Landscape, and Spatial Behaviour), and to section 4.1, we were able to provide an operational framework to the functions and categories of symbols. First, it is important to highlight again the distinction between the two kinds of symbols: symbolic objects (tangible: pictures, monuments, icons, slogans, posters, etc...), and symbolic representations (intangible: cognitive boundaries, migration fluxes, spatial divisions, colours etc...). Recognising representations in such a manner helps forming the understanding of symbolism in literature and on the ground, as symbols are commonly associated with tangible objects, while intangible representations actually play a bigger role in the cognitive memory mapping, which is what my research and personal observations have proven. Nonetheless, as the observations collected on the ground suggest, symbolism – as a communication, mediation, and propagation tool – is not only used by the perpetrators of identity politics in the context of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen in order to shape collective memory and raise tensions. Indeed, civil society initiatives have used symbolism as a tool to transfer messages of peace and reconciliation and to highlight similarities rather than differences. Therefore, symbols can either have a Negative (-) value or a Positive (+) value, depending on the nature of the independent variable (purpose of message delivery) and dependent variable (impact on collective memory and socio-spatial dynamics).

Combining Moeschberger and Dezalia’s (2014) categorisation of the functions of symbols, along with the functional attribution to symbols that were identified throughout my review of literature, and my own interpretation of the Positive symbols identified on the grounds I will be giving a value to each symbol identified above according to the following functions, some of which I have also used in the previous section of this chapter:

Table 7 Value of Symbols

Function of Symbol	Value of Symbol
Connection to Past Generations	Negative (-)
Elicit Strong Emotional Reaction	Negative (-) or Positive (+)
Express and Maintain Cultural or Sectarian Narratives	Negative (-) or Positive (-)
Perceptual filter to understand the self in relation to society	Negative (-)



Picture 11 View from JM onto Syria Street (by author)

Boundaries	Negative (-)
Enhance Predictability	Negative (-)
Mediator of Stress	Negative (-)
Feeling of Pride/Oppression	Negative (-) or Positive (+)
Highlights Identity	Negative (-) or Positive (+)
Regulates behaviour	Negative (+)
Enhances Reconciliation	Positive (+)
Highlights common identity	Positive (+)
Highlights peace	Positive (+)

Building on the table above, the following table aims to make sense of the symbolism intermediate variable on the ground by attributing a function and value to each identified symbol. The purpose is to analyse how the value of each symbol has impacted the sectarian discourse by also relating their value to statements from my semi-structured interviews with both residents and non-residents (NGO representatives and Urban experts). The symbols have also been categorised by geographical location, in order to test whether my hypothesis operates differently in each area.

Table 8 Value of Symbols as per location

Area	Symbol	Value and Function
Bab el Tebbaneh	Saad Hariri Posters	Negative (-): Highlights Identity Maintain Sectarian Narrative
	Najib Mikati Posters	Negative (-): Highlights Identity Maintain Sectarian Narrative
	Pictures of Ziad Allouki	Negative (-): Highlights Identity Elicit Strong Emotional Reaction Maintains Cultural Narrative
	Spatial location of posters (territorial delimitation)	Negative (-): Boundaries Regulates Behaviour Enhance Predictability Mediator of Stress
	Orange Facades	Negative (-): Highlights Identity Predictability

		Perceptual filter
Syria Street	Blue Facades	Negative (-): Highlights Identity Predictability Perceptual Filter Boundaries
	Separation wall	Negative (-): Elicit Strong Emotional Reaction Boundaries Mediator of Stress Regulates Behaviour
	Army Checkpoints	Negative (-): Elicit Strong Emotional Reaction Boundaries Mediator of Stress Regulates Behaviour Feeling of Oppression
	Army Flags	Negative (-): Regulates Behaviour Mediator of Stress Positive (+): Highlights Common Identity
	Reconciliation Cafe	Positive (+): Highlights Common Identity Enhances Reconciliation
	Bab El Zahab Facades	Positive (+) Maintain Cultural Narratives Highlights common identity
	“Salam” Painted Rooftops	Positive (+): Highlights peace Enhances reconciliation
Jabal Mohsen	Pictures of Bashar Assad and Hafez Assad (hidden)	Negative (-): Perceptual Filter Feeling of Oppression Highlights identity
	Alawite Banners	Negative (-): Perceptual filters Feeling of Oppression/Pride Highlights Identity

		Express Sectarian Narrative
	Pictures of Martyrs	Negative (-): Express strong emotional Reaction Connection to Past Generations Feeling of Oppression
	Graffitis	Positive (-): Highlights peace Highlights common identity
	Coloured Stairs	Positive (+): Highlights peace Enhances reconciliation

Following the findings presented in the table above, we can notice a trend in the value and function of each symbol according to their geographical location and positionality. In fact, it appears that generally speaking, symbolism in Bab el Tebbaneh appeals to sectarian identity, by delimiting the geographical boundaries and territories of the Sunni sect. An analysis of this could entail that political influences in the area have placed a high importance on marking their overwhelming presence and power over the neighbourhood. As we have previously seen in the literature review, social representations “guide individuals towards particular realities” (Moscovici and Vignio, 2001), the reality in this context being that Bab el Tebbaneh Sunnis are expected to identify with their respective sectarian political leaders. The pictures of Ziad Allouki could aim to revive the initial cause of conflict between the two communities, since he was the leader of the Bab el Tebbaneh militia, taking into account the Bab el Tebbaneh massacre as his primary cause and motivation (which we will also see in his specific interview). While these symbols might elicit feelings of pride and identity within the Sunni community, their overwhelming presence especially on the green line of the conflict could entail feeling of oppression within the Alawite community: “the same object can symbolize two quite different ideas and emotions, and the particular meaning depends on the context within which the symbol is used” (Moeschberger and DeZalia, 2014).

Symbolism in Jabal Mohsen hence appears to serve a different purpose. As we have seen in the previous section of Chapter 4, following the retreat of the Syrian army troops from Lebanese territories, the Alawite community (who already were a minority in Lebanon) became a marginalized “out-group” in the context of Lebanon and Tripoli in particular. Therefore in this context, symbolism could have been used in order to either form a sense of resistance of the sect, or to nurture this feeling of marginalization in the community as a defence and coping mechanism. The table above demonstrates that symbols in the area (namely the sectarian banners and the pictures of the martyrs) are used as means to propagate feelings of oppression and marginalisation by appealing to past generations of struggle and martyrdom. An even more striking sign of marginalisation is the removal of all forms of political belonging to the Syrian regime from the visible landscape, in order to highlight the Lebanese identity and belonging of the Alawite community in Jabal Mohsen. Identity politics here is therefore exploited differently than in the Bab el Tebbaneh area, which is visible through the communicative messages behind

these symbols. This proves the variation of my independent variable, but still falls under the conceptualisation of my hypothesis, as symbolism is still meant to influence collective memory but for a different purpose. Therefore this could lead to the conclusion that there is a disruption in power dynamics on the ground. As symbolism has different purposes in the two areas, it demonstrates that the Sunni powers and political influence on the area is greater than that of the Alawite community. By testing my hypothesis through my own observations on the ground, I was able to perceive the imbalanced repartition of power, which could in turn be determining the nature of socio-spatial dynamics in the area.

Additionally, Syria street has shown to be a symbolic buffer zone between the two neighbourhoods, where clashing symbolism could be translated as clashing ideologies and collective memories. On one hand, the symbolic presence of the army symbolises the forced security imposed on the ground, and is a constant reminder of the pre-existing tensions between the two communities. On the other hand, it appears that civil society organisations and initiatives have specifically chosen this buffer zone in order to transform its symbolic nature into a reconciliation zone.

4.3 Qualitative findings and analysis from interviews with stakeholders

This last section of chapter is dedicated to the semi-structured interviews that I have conducted on the field with residents of both Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen. It was of utmost importance to collect this information, as it concretises all my previous sections of chapter 4, and translates the information I have previously analysed into the real and present discourse.

The table below gives a general overview of the interviews that were made during that period with the different stakeholders of the area. These interviews provided the main information for the qualitative data analysis.

Table 9 Overview of Interviews

Profile	Number of Interviewees	Interview Duration
Urban Experts	2	60 – 120 minutes
NGO Representatives	2	40 – 70 minutes
Mukhtars	2 Of which: 1 from BT, and 1 from JM	30 minutes
Bab El Tebbaneh	7 Of which: 1 Female – 6 Male (3 participated in the conflicts, including 1 war lord)	15 – 30 minutes
Jabal Mohsen	7 Of which: 1 Female – 6 Males (3 participated in the conflicts)	15 – 30 minutes

As discussed in chapter 3, I have extracted some main interview statements and coded them according to the indicators of identity politics, symbolism, and collective memory. The table of these statements can be found in annex 4.

The statements collected from my interviews have actually formed an anti-thesis to my hypothesis. In fact, most residents that were interviewed were very aware of the context and circumstances they are involved in. While some interviewees denied the tensions that exist within the communities, others were able to provide an explanation for their perceived presence. In my concluding chapter, I will be analysing the underlying factors that have caused the uncertainty of the results I have received through my findings.

In order to provide a better understanding of the table above I will analyse the findings of the interviews by synthesising the statements recorded according to each variable. But first, I have also included below my personal perceptions and general observations I have annotated concerning the semi-structured interviews, according to age, group, and function. Indeed, after coding and extracting statements from my interviews, it was evident that there was a difference in opinions and perception according to first, the positionality of the person interviewed, second, the age group, and third the function of the person within its own community.

Table 10 Findings in relation to hypothesis

Profile	Age/Group/Function	Findings in Relation to Hypothesis
Bab el Tebbaneh Residents	War Lord (Ziad Allouki)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not a matter of religion -> a matter of politics and political message from different poles: Iran – Saudi Arabia – Syria – USA - All Lebanese parties were involved - Believes in the preservation of his community -> why he participated in the clashes (he witnessed the massacre 86) - Reconciliation should come from JM => the leaders of ADP should give themselves in - Alawites not the enemy, but ADP is - Symbolism as propaganda and demarcation mechanism - Agrees to remove all signs if JM does (note: JM does not have any symbols anymore) - Poverty as mechanism but not cause to conflict - Agrees that if military leaves clashes will return
	Male (18 – 28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refuted initial hypothesis - Believe that poverty is the root cause of conflict - Excellent relationship b/w individuals of JM and BT => do not believe there are tensions - Believe current reconciliation is effective and gives them hope - Agrees that if military leaves clashes will return
	Male (28+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main concern is poverty, however identity is also relevant - Symbolism as propaganda mechanism - Hatred towards all politicians - Believe tensions are decreasing b/w JM and BT but history will always be there to remind them - Agrees that if military leaves clashes will return
	Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main concern is children - Strict rules about going out on the streets - Believe they are “the forgotten” people of Tripoli => a lot of frustration and cynicism - Hatred towards politicians - Agrees that if military leaves clashes will return

	Mukhtar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Believes BT massacre is still not forgiven, and that there is still a lot of frustration. Says JM people are still proud of it - Believes JM have no national belonging, and that they have already received their rights => they are not marginalized like they claim to be - Claims it is an international plot against Lebanon, but the fights are concentrated in BTJM to keep them away from the capital Beirut - Agrees that if military leaves clashes will return
Jabal Mohsen Residents	Male (18 – 28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refuted initial hypothesis - Believe that poverty is the root cause of conflict - Excellent relationship b/w individuals of JM and BT => do not believe there are tensions - Believe current reconciliation is effective and gives them hope - Agrees that if military leaves clashes will return
	Male (28+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strongly believe they are marginalized as a sect - Believe only a few people from JM have been manipulated into the ADP, and they do not represent the entire population - All they are looking for is someone to look over them and help them financially and morally - Claim they no longer have ties to Syria, and that Bashar El Assad is merely their “spiritual” figure rather than political or ideological, because they learned the hard way that no good will come from the Syrian regime - Want to prove they are loyal to Lebanese government by cooperating with Lebanese army - However some cynicism was obvious when mentioning disruption events - Agree that if military leaves clashes will return
	Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main concern is children - Did not want to give any more details
	Mukhtar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was abducted during the clashes because he was non-aligned => through a collaboration between participants of JM and BT

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Believes the entire war was political messages between west and east and different international fronts - Because people were forcefully involved => family feuds started arising (feuds that did not exist before the war) - Claims that people from JM infiltrated BT at the beginning of the clashes in 2008 and started shooting at JM in order to start the war - Believes that collective memory is still being transferred on both sides through mosques, religious lessons, talks on the streets, says that everything that is being told to me is a lie - Believes religion is the root of all problems - Agrees that if military leaves clashes will return
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Identity Politics:

Throughout the interviews, it is evident that identity politics is prevalent in both Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen. There have been countless mentions of interventions from higher political powers that have hidden behind the local authorities in order to send messages of threat. Ziad Allouki, former leader of the Bab el Tebbaneh militia, admits himself that “it was all a matter of sending political messages, no matter who the author of these messages were, from both sides of the conflict”. However, there is a clear difference between the actual impact of identity politics on the ground, and the perceived impact it has. My findings signal that the residents are able to distance themselves from the conflict and to give statements from outsiders’ point of view. This is evident within all the indicators of identity politics that were identified throughout the interviews. Nonetheless, in both Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen alike, the older generations of interviewees (28+), and specifically those that participated in the previous conflicts show a more significant interest in the competing powers at stake, mentioning their influence as means to justify their former actions. Identity politics as manipulation seems to be the general theme that residents agree on. However, the tool of manipulation that is being mentioned is not symbolism, but poverty.

Symbolism:

The two previous sections in chapter 4 have highlighted the importance of symbolism and the superposition of layers that have resulted in the observed current symbolism in space. However the interview findings suggest that my intermediate variable is not relevant in this kind of qualitative data collected, specifically when correlating identity politics with collective memory. While the interviewees do recognise how politicians and local leaders are trying to impose their dogmas through symbols and propaganda, they are aware of this strategy, and condemn them for trying to appeal to emotions in such a matter. Nonetheless, Ziad Allouki did mention that his community would be willing to completely remove signs of political or religious belonging from the ground, if the Jabal Mohsen community was willing to do the same. However, and as we have previously discussed, symbolism in Jabal Mohsen does not

portray any political affiliation, but rather serves to translate feelings of oppression and marginalization on the ground. Additionally, the Mukhtar of Bab el Tebbaneh addressed both my understandings of Positive (+) and Negative (-) symbolism. In fact, he condemned positive symbolism by mentioning how civil society organisations are only catering to the external needs of the residents of the area, by for instance rehabilitating facades instead of rehabilitating infrastructure. As for negative symbolism, he stated that it is understandable that inhabitants of Bab el Tebbaneh wish to portray their political belonging and support of local political leaders on the ground on the basis of their Lebanese identity, but believes it is outrageous that the Alawite community expresses their “worship” towards non-Lebanese stakeholders. Thus, this signals a biased perception of symbolism on behalf of some Sunni residents and hence calls back to the role of identity politics in this context. However, interviews with residents of Jabal Mohsen indicate otherwise. In fact, when asked about their perception and feelings concerning the pictures of the martyrs and the slogans supporting the Alawite sect, most of them have claimed that it is their only means of remembering their roots and honouring their martyrs, as a reminder of the marginalisation and suffering they have been exposed to.

Nevertheless we cannot oversee that most of the residents of Bab el Tebbaneh interviewed do not identify with the symbols on the ground. Therefore, it could be said that in present times, political powers are using this form of negative symbolism to reinforce the external image of Bab el Tebbaneh and to claim its territory in the face of the interplay of power dynamics in the area. Failing to politicise and mobilise the residents with the help of ideologies and symbolism, political leaders are rather opting to take advantage of the pre-existing poverty and marginalisation to reach their ends. However both Bilal Ayoubi and Elias Bou Mrad noted that even to this day, symbols are indeed affecting the spatial behaviour. For instance, Bou Mrad mentions that most of the stairs that have been repainted and rehabilitated after the war are still deserted and avoided by the community. Therefore, this means that symbolic representations (which we have defined as migration fluxes, boundaries, spatial layouts etc...) have a much stronger effect on the community than symbolic objects. This proves why it was important to distinguish between the two types of symbolism, as they both have different repercussions on the ground, and aim to communicate different meanings.

Collective memory:

While the role that identity politics plays within the framework of my hypothesis has been downgraded by the statements made by the interviewees, collective memory indicators indicate otherwise. In fact, in general terms, the residents seem to have a strong attachment to their geographical belonging, their sectarian identity, and their remembered pasts (or in this case, their respective collective memories). However it is important to distinguish the role that collective memory plays in the identity formation and socio-spatial behaviour according to several factors: the religious background, the age group, the function within society, and gender.

The interviewed Sunnis of Bab el Tebbaneh, and especially those above 28 years of age, seem to hold on strong to the memory of the Bab el Tebbaneh massacre. Almost every interview depicts the event as a targeted attack on the Sunni community on behalf of the Alawite community and the Syrian regime. The recollection of this specific events is the main driver of frustration towards the Alawite community. In the same interview, a resident of Bab el Tebbaneh first mentioned that there is no hostility among the Sunni and Alawite communities

in present terms in the area, but when asked about the Bab el Tebbaneh massacre, he states that there is a lot of hatred and frustration towards the Alawite community because of this events, and the fact that the Eid family hasn't issued an official apology is hindering reconciliation. The mukhtar of Bab el Tebbaneh even states that it is indeed the Sunnis of Bab el Tebbaneh who are marginalised in the area, and not the Alawites: "they claim to not have rights, but they have already obtained their rights when they were allowed to stay on these lands!". This points back to the discrepancy that was expressed between the expert interviews, and the interviews with residents with regards to the existing tensions between the two communities. Aside from the mentions of the massacre, 28+ male adults in Bab el Tebbaneh have shown a strong affiliation to their sect and community as Sunnis from Bab el Tebbaneh, also distinguishing themselves from the rest of Tripoli. The BT residents that have participated in the previous conflicts have stated that even then, it was not a matter of hatred towards the Alawite community, but a stand to preserve their existence and community: "it was an existential conflict". When an interviewee was specifically asked about his affiliation to his community, he mentioned "I have no political affiliation, but I do have a communitarian belonging". Therefore, when it comes to 28+ males from Bab el Tebbaneh, it seems that collective memory is based on preservation concerns and is deeply rooted in the remembered past and massacre. Nonetheless it is important to note that symbolism has indeed played a role in shaping this collective memory. Here, I am referring to symbolic representations and not symbolic objects. As seen throughout the chronological description in the first section of chapter 4, prior to 1986, there was no such thing as "Jabal Mohsen". However, Bab el Tebbaneh residents seem to place a significant importance on spatial layout, by recurrently referring to the "guys of the Jabal" and by acknowledging the distinct spatial layout. Additionally, Ayoubi has mentioned that the Tebbaneh Massacre had actually been erased from the national collective memory following the civil war, and was uncoincidentally brought back on the table by the Islamic Group of Bab el Tebbaneh while tensions were being refuelled during the conflict of 2008-2014. Therefore the Bab el Tebbaneh massacre itself was being used as a symbol to strengthen and guide collective memory into a certain reality. Cognitive memory and conative memory henceforth strongly interact, where cognitive memory shapes and reinforces the Sunni identity, and conative memory has harvested the feeling of responsibility towards the preservation of the Sunni community within the Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen discourse.

On the other side of the green line, collective memory seems to have a different role and source of origin. In fact, the 28+ male residents of Jabal Mohsen that were interviewed have all shown that they perceive themselves as a marginalised minority, both locally (in the face of the Sunnis of Bab el Tebbaneh), and nationally (the Alawite community being one of the smallest sectarian minorities in Lebanon). When asked about the Bab el Tebbaneh Massacre, most of them argue that they did not partake in the event, and that the entire Alawite community is being blamed for an act conducted by a few individuals of their community that were manipulated by the Syrian regime. When inquiring their affiliation with the Syrian regime (especially considering the pictures of Bashar el Assad and Hafez el Assad hidden inside the shops), one of the interviewees mentioned that they view Assad as a "spiritual leader" to their Alawite community, as they do not have any representative in the Lebanese community itself (because they are on the side-lines of society). Another interviewee mentioned that the Alawite community has broken ties with the Syrian government in order to reclaim their Lebanese identity, as their previous affiliation with the Syrian identity has hindered their integration within the Lebanese community. This is being strongly reinforced by the remembrance of

“martyrs” of the war, especially that most of the people whose pictures are visible in the landscape fell victims of the shootings during the most recent conflicts and were not actively participating in the clashes (most pictures are those of children, women, and young males). Additionally, political banners that are visible in the landscape advocate for the preservation of the Alawite sect, and interviewed residents have confirmed that they do identify with these statements. Therefore, we notice how symbolism and collective memory interact differently in the contexts of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen, specifically because of the variation in the nature of identity politics within both areas.

Contrastingly, the interviewed males aged between 18 and 28 years of age from both Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen have shown no sign of identification with neither sectarian identity. One of the interviewees from Bab el Tebbaneh belonging to this age group has even mentioned that his own brother was killed during the twin bombings in 2013, but he still believes that the reason behind these bombings is specifically because both communities are affiliating with different identities rather than a common one. He also pointed to the fact that his parents constantly blame him for cooperating with Jabal Mohsen young men (at the reconciliation café), accusing him of neglecting the memory of his brother. Young interviewees from both Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen have shown high interest in the reconciliation initiatives currently taking place in the area. They believe that poverty alone was the main driver of the participation of young adults in the conflict. This shows that collective memory is much stronger and more vivid in older generations, especially those that have witnessed the events of the civil war. It also signals to the limited impact that collective memory can have on conative memory through the years and generations. We can deduce that in present terms and with the overwhelming impact of social media and globalisation, younger generations are becoming less and less concerned about the state of the art of their own communities. Nonetheless, and as a concluding statement for this section, the interviewed Mukhtar of Jabal Mohsen has clearly stated that collective memory is in fact still being transferred from one generation to the other, through religious lessons, preaches at the mosque, on TV, and even on social media. He even mentioned that anyone who states the contrary is obstructing me and other researchers in the area from seeing the reality of the situation. While of course this is the point of view of only one person interviewed, it is interesting to obtain this kind of statements from a resident of the area himself.

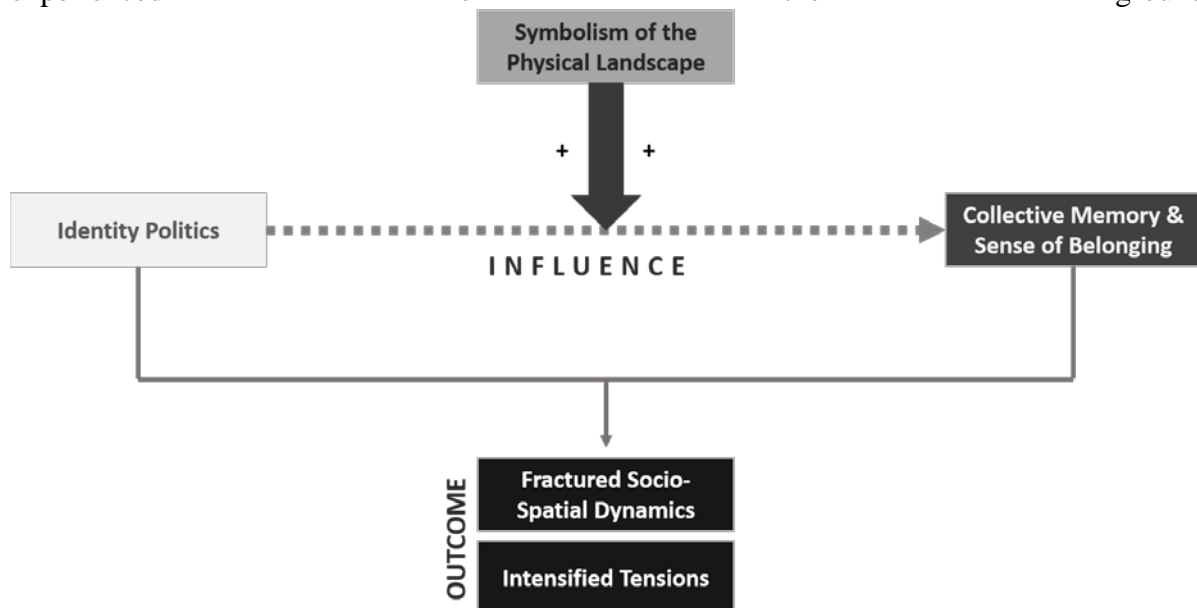
It is important to note that my interview sample was restricted to 7 interviewees from each area, and therefore the validity of this qualitative data obtained through the semi-structured interviews cannot be generalised on both communities. Nevertheless, my personal observations, the historical overview, and the interviews with experts have allowed me to gather enough information to establish an analysis and synthesis of each of my variables as seen above, through the triangulation of my data.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

Conducting and writing this thesis aimed at deconstructing the elements that have disrupted the social and spatial dynamics of the areas of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen, over the period of time extending from 1955, till today. Poverty, tensions, and sectarianism are the most common adjectives attributed to this area, both from media representations, and Lebanese citizens themselves. Drafting this thesis has allowed me to elaborate an in-depth analysis and overview of the underlying factors that are determining the nature of the socio-spatial dynamics in this post-conflict context. The research question hence meant to examine the impact of identity politics on collective memory and socio-spatial dynamics of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen.

The review of literature has allowed me to single out the concepts that were relevant to my problem statement, as identity politics, collective memory, and symbolism and spatiality were recurrent concepts in literature within the context of conflict and post-conflict settings (see for example, the cases of Cyprus, Northern Ireland, and the Israeli-Palestinian discourse).

My preliminary hypothesis as explained in the conceptual framework of Chapter 2, aimed at establishing a connection between these concepts, in order to form a strong argument explaining the nature of the fractured socio-spatial dynamics existing in the area. Therefore, my hypothesis claimed that identity politics, as the independent variable, is influencing and shaping the dependent variable - collective memory, with symbolism in space acting as an intermediate mediator between the two variables. The resulting interaction between these variables has hypothetically resulted in the current socio-spatial dynamics visible and experienced on the ground.



I conducted a three-step methodology for both data collection and data analysis: first collecting information through personal observations on the ground, semi-structured interviews, and secondary data through an in-depth press review; second analysing the data through a chronological time-frame, a mapping of my observations of symbolism and its interpretation, and an analysis of the interviews with residents, acknowledging and making use of the three variables presented in my hypothesis, with their respective indicators.

As international political hegemonies are orchestrating the power dynamics on the ground, it was important to dive deep into the root causes and factors at stake. The findings unravelled a number of factors that have predetermined the validity of my hypothesis. As poverty,

international influence, the Lebanese sectarian system, and political history were recurring topics that appeared throughout my findings, the question was to discover whether my independent variable was interchangeable with any of these factors, and whether an anti-thesis was at stake.

In order to formulate my concluding statements, I will first be tackling each sub-question I have listed for answering my research question. I will thus be giving a brief overview of the findings elaborated in chapter 4, and relating them with the theory explored in chapter 2.

5.1 What is Identity Politics in the context of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen?

Given that identity politics is understood in literature as the “claim to power on the basis of a particular identity” (Kaldor, 1999, p.7), its prevalence in my study area has proven to be quite controversial and conflictual. As I have previously placed identity politics within the realm of the structure-agency framework, identity politics in this context is the expression of the determination of global and local forces in the area to maintain power over the region, through mobilising the communities by exploiting their individual identities. As my findings have proven, the level of power and influence of global forces is determined by the level of assimilation of one group to a political or sectarian identity. Nonetheless, there was a clear discrepancy between the relevant findings explained in the chronological framework and those that were extracted from the qualitative data collected through the interviews. Historically, residents of Bab el Tebbaneh have identified with the powers that were dominating the area (namely, the Palestinian resistance, the Arab nationalism movement of Jamal Abdel Nasser, and later on the Islamic Group), which explains their initial participation in the clashes that occurred during the civil war. Residents of Jabal Mohsen on the other hand, have identified with the Syrian regime of Hafez el Assad, hence participating in the establishment of the ADP. In present terms, identity politics has taken a different shape, breaking away from global flows and party politics. Residents of Bab el Tebbaneh currently identify with their religious and geographical affiliation rather than political powers, while residents of Jabal Mohsen identify with their Alawite heritage and the preservation of their existence on Lebanese territories. Thus identity politics in this context is “meant to allow people to become aware of their own position in the world, and to give people the resources to resist and make their own history” (Keith and Pile, 1993, p. 3). Therefore, identity politics is currently being exploited by both groups in order to preserve their right of existence on the territory, which of course justifies why space comes into play in this context.

5.2 How has it been formed over the years?

Before jumping to conclusions surrounding the impact of identity politics, symbolism, and collective memory on socio-spatial dynamics, it was important to answer this sub-question and provide an overview of the relevance and formation of identity politics through history. As literature review has determined, understanding space entails an understanding of the processes that were at play over a tempo-spatial axis. Since my findings have proven that identity politics does indeed have a role to play within spatial dynamics, it was thus important to highlight the process through which identity politics itself was formed over the years. It is important to note that identity politics in the chronological framework provided in section 4.1 is the result of the interaction and implication of each historical/political event on the identity of the residents of both areas. However, while this sub-question was meant to make a sense out of the historical formation of identity politics in the area, the findings have shown that it is the interaction between the different variables over time that greatly justify the current existing dynamics on the ground. Symbolism and collective memory were also part of this process. In this respect, it

is conative memory that is implicated in this process since it is the transfer of the importance of responsibility in the protection of identity that has proven to be mostly relevant in present terms. Therefore chapter 4 has indicated that the answers to the next two sub-questions are the most relevant ones in terms of deducting my conclusion.

5.3 How has symbolism played a role in the mediation of identity politics on the ground?

Framing my findings in accordance to my literature review has allowed to conclude that it is the quality of space and spatiality itself that has provided the nurturing ground for symbolism to be used as a mediator between identity politics and collective memory. Quoting my own analysis in chapter 2 “spatiality is the concept that aims to analyse how the Structure/agency approach of collective memory and identity politics is realised in space, and its implication on the inhabitants of space and on the “structure” itself”. Space in this context is once again perceived as dynamic flows of information (quoting Castells (1996): “purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in the economic, political, and symbolic structures of society” (p. 412)), since local and international forces have used the spatial confines of the Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen territories in order to deliver messages and to preserve their power on a local and international level. The three sections of chapter 4 have shown that indeed the spatiality of the conflict has played an important role in determining the hold of power over the area: residents of both BT and JM have themselves stated that the purpose behind the conflict was delivering messages. And the conflict itself was being translated on the ground through series of clashes that have historically transformed space. As symbolism has been identified as a means of communication, especially in conflict-driven societies, it is the nature of space itself that has allowed symbolism to mediate identity politics on the ground.

Hence, going back to Rapoport’s analysis of spatial quality, it is evident that space in this context is of symbolic quality. However, in conflict contexts, I could synthesise his analysis of spatial quality into the following overlapping categories, the rest of the categories having no actual value when analysed on the ground:

- Behavioural/subjective space/Cognitive space: behavioural space in this respect is defined as the perceived space of a community to express their societal norms through behaviour within space, and it places importance on perceived space rather than the space as seen on the map. This has proven to be the case in the BT and JM area, as it is the representation of symbolism on the map that has turned out to be the cognitive map that the residents associate with the space they are living in. Therefore this justifies my intention of combining both behavioural and subjective space under the same umbrella, as they both interact and shape behaviour simultaneously. Here we can go back to the example given by Elias Bou Mrad concerning the children that have developed their own path for heading to school instead of taking the most logical one because of previous traumas caused by the conflict.
- Involvement or manipulation/sensory space: this attribute of space entails that sensory space (space which is perceived and experienced by individuals through their senses) “which is actively modified, changed, and manipulated, is experience and remembered differently from kinds where the organism adapts positively to the environment”. Indeed, space in this context has been actively transformed over the years due to foreign manipulation and the extensive employment of symbolism and the use of symbolism to shape collective memory. In terms of collective memory, it would be interesting if further studies could establish a comparison between how residents of Bab el Tebbaneh

and Jabal Mohsen perceive their habitat, and how the rest of the residents of Tripoli perceive theirs.

- **Social Space:** social space was defined as “the spatial arrangements reflecting the patterns and regularities of various social groups – their hierarchies and roles”. In fact, the first section of chapter 4 suggested that the families living closest to the demarcation line were the most deprived and marginalised of both communities, and the farthest they are positioned from the demarcation line, the higher their social status and implication in the conflict. On a bigger scale, and historically, the residents nearest to the Abu Ali river side tended to belong to lower classes of society.

Going back to symbolism itself, the most significant finding within my research was distinguishing between the nature of the symbol itself, whether it a symbolic representation or a symbolic object. Its impact also differs accordingly, having either a Negative (-) value or a positive (+) value, and pertaining to different purposes explained in table 7. It is this variation in symbolism itself that has allowed me to answer the following sub-question.

5.4 What are the impacts of symbolism on collective memory? And how has this shaped socio-spatial dynamics?

We can deduct from the main findings of chapter 4 that the interaction between symbolism and collective memory varies according to the temporal context, and the spatial context where the findings are being analysed. The chronological superposing layers that have come to contextualise the current socio-spatial dynamics have been subject to a series of negative symbolism (as seen in table 6 of chapter 4) that have had an implication on collective memory during each phase of the BT/JM discourse from 1955 up until today. Negative symbolism that fosters spatial distinction, territorial delimitation, and identification with one of the two sectarian identities has created a larger schism between the two communities by creating individual and differing collective memories. Contrastingly, NGOs and civil society initiatives have made use of positive symbolism in order to highlight the importance of reconciliation and to create common grounds from the fostering of a common identity. This hints at the real importance of symbolism on the ground since the counter-stakeholders of identity politics have used symbolism to counter-produce the negative impacts that have left scars in the urban tissue of the area.

My personal interpretation of spatial symbolism in section 4.2 has shed light on the various nature of symbolic representation and objects in space that reflect a deeper overview of the connection of the residents with the space they inhabit. The hypothesis elaborated in chapter 2 with regards to the way symbols “connect the past with the future” does in itself prove that symbolism has not only been reflected by the predictability of the residents to behave in a certain way in space, it has also allowed us to somehow predict the findings of the qualitative data collected through the interviews with residents. The added value of my findings to literature with regards to symbolism places a crucial importance on distinguishing between the various types of symbolic communication on the ground.

However, this very last section of chapter 4 has to some extent challenged the validity of my hypothesis with respects to the statements given by the residents themselves. There seems to be a break between the variables of my conceptual framework, where collective memory is, on its own, shaping socio-spatial dynamics. While my personal interpretations of space and the interviews with urban experts and NGO representatives have suggested otherwise, residents themselves claim to have disconnected from identity politics and symbolism, and base their identity solely on their remembered pasts and collective memories. With tensions and clashes

culminating into a saturation point, residents have realised that political stakeholders have taken advantage of the state of poverty in the area in order to transform the available space into a battlefield of ideologies and powers. Nonetheless, this realisation did not overshadow the impact that political history had on collective memory, with collective memory currently itself expressing the identity of residents from both sides of the green line.

5.5 Concluding statements

Therefore, my findings have strongly reaffirmed the literature surrounding collective memory, both in conflict settings (through my analysis of the historical overview), and in post-conflict settings (through the findings generated by the current analysis of socio-spatial behaviour). It places collective memory at the forefront of reconciliation measures.

However, my thesis has proven that each post-conflict case study should be analysed according to the specific context under which the hypothesis formulated in the second chapter is being tested. While my findings have demonstrated that the concepts elaborated can be generalised and applied in all post-conflict settings, their interaction can only be validated if the context is taken into consideration. Indeed, the interaction between the spatial and the social in my specific case-study has allowed us to unravel the complexity of the context within which my hypothesis is operating, which has, at some places, hindered its validity. Nonetheless, the findings of my thesis have suggested that there are underlying factors and root causes that together, have provided a nurturing ground to activate my hypothesis. Thus, as concluding remarks, I make the following statements:

- **The overwhelming and pre-existing poverty in the area is a mechanism of manipulation.** It has been exploited by political powers from both fronts in order to render the residents of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Moshen dependent entities relying solely on the benefits generated through compliance. Deprivation and familial bonds have entitled the male residents of both areas to provide for their families on way or another. The overwhelming presence of schools in the area suggests that education is hence not a source of conflict, as all interviewees have obtained high school diplomas or more. The infamous reputation of these residents generated from years of conflict and institutional neglect from local authorities has automatically excluded them from the local job market.
- **The Lebanese sectarian system, coupled with external foreign support, has allowed local political stakeholders to continuously influence and manipulate socio-spatial dynamics.** As explained in my problem statement, the establishment of the “Taef” agreement that allows sectarian political leaders to divide the shares of political powers amongst themselves has created a resilient but corrupt political class. With each political bloc being financially and politically backed by an international alliance (see problem statement), their influence and power is multiplied on the ground. On a smaller scale, there are two factors that justify how local political leaders are achieving their goals in the area in the context of a supposedly democratic state: 1 – no parliamentary elections have been held in Lebanon since 2009, as elections are being postponed at each round, supposedly due to the inability of the members of parliament to agree on a new electoral law. 2 – as seen in section 4.1, residents of Bab el Tebbaneh are originally from other areas of Lebanon (namely Akkar, Al Donniye, etc...), and therefore, given the current electoral system in Lebanon, do not have the rights to elect Tripolitan MPs, as they have to vote in the electoral rounds of their own regions. While Tripolitan MPs and political stakeholders have purposefully excluded the area from taking part in any strategic or development plans, they have appealed to the rest of the

Tripolitan community through clientelism. Therefore, this has excluded the residents of Bab el Tebbaneh from participating in the political arena of Tripoli.

- **Regional and Political history has played a primordial role in Lebanon's current political context.** This covers the fall of the Ottoman empire, to the acquisition of political power from the French government in 1923 and the installation of the French mandate, to the declaration of Greater Lebanon and its independence in 1943, and the ongoing influence of the two international blocs (West and East). Political history and historical international influence have taken advantage of Lebanon's significant geopolitical location to exercise power and rule over the region. This has resulted in a weak institutional Lebanese system that has not entirely claimed its independence, as Lebanon's constitution was inspired by the French constitution of the Third Republic (knowing that France is in its 5th Republic), and is still in act today (with only three amendments that were made in 1943 following the independence; in 1989 for the Taef Agreement; and in 2008 for the Doha Agreement).

Therefore, the following diagram portrays my concluding remarks and displays the underlying factors that have enacted my original hypothesis in the context of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen:

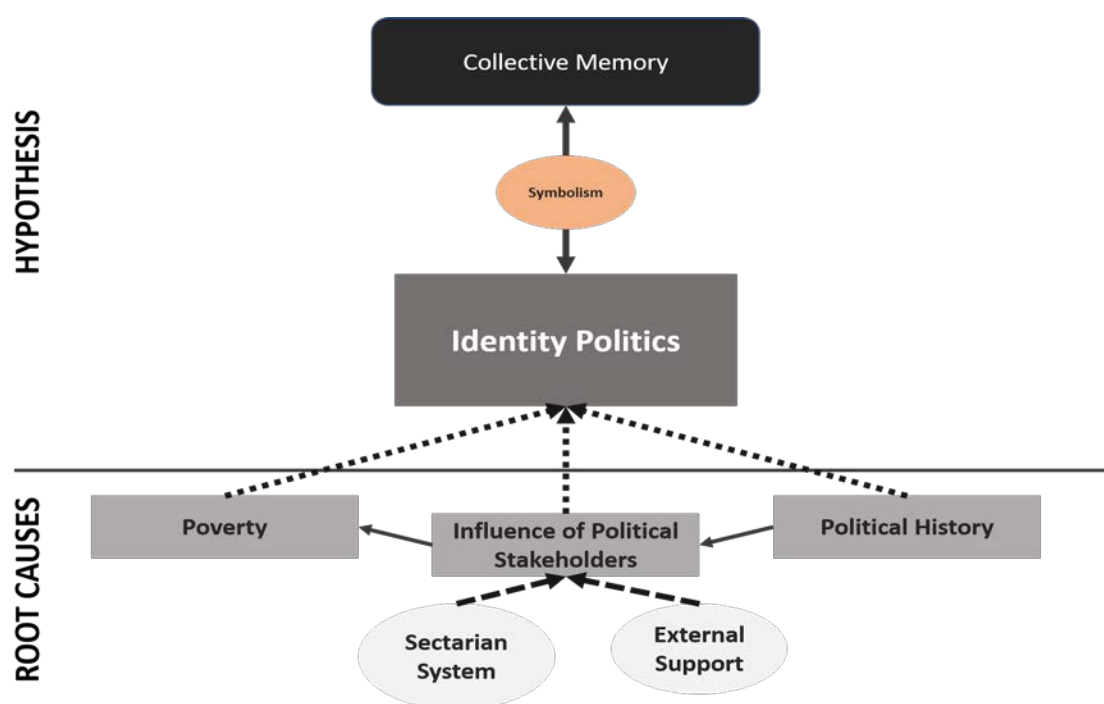


Figure 12 Root causes

My research focused on the impact of identity politics on space, and took an urban understanding of space. Nonetheless further research taking a more social than scientific approach regarding each of the factors that have enabled the validity of my hypothesis could lead to a better understanding of the context itself. A hypothesis could be developed for each of my concluding remarks, as a number of variables and indicators come into play in all the branching sections. Other research could test whether the alleviation of poverty through the provision of jobs in the area could contribute to a decrease in tensions.

5.6 Recommendations

Following the conclusions of my research, the recommendations below can be made. It is important to note that these are small-scale interventions since larger scale action (such as the complete independence of Lebanon from Foreign political powers) require individual policy research and proposals.

- Direct action from civil society organisations to pressure MPs to hold elections as soon as possible
- Multiply and highlight the importance of reconciliation initiatives in the area
- Raise awareness in the international community about the necessity of funding reconciliation initiatives in Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen
- Establish a specific strategic plan to integrate the residents of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen in the job market
- Remove all signs of Negative symbolism from the urban landscape
- Establish a step-by-step strategy for the retreat of the Lebanese army from the area while maintaining peace
- Probe local authorities to cater to the basic needs of residents such as basic infrastructure, and access to goods and services
- With the help of civil society organisations, elect a local council composed of residents from both areas on the basis of merit (and not sectarian belonging) to make shared decisions regarding the area
- Elect a local youth council
- Promote the cultural and historical value of the souqs of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen in order to attract tourism
- Heavy and strategic use social media and traditional media to alter the image of Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen both locally and regionally
- Remove Tripoli from the list of danger and prohibited zones of international embassies in Lebanon

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Annex 1: List of Stakeholders

Political Stakeholder	Function	Description/Implication
Hafez el Assad	President of Syria (1971 – 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Founder of the current Syrian Nationalist regime - Leader of the Syrian Army - Commanded the launch of what is currently known as the “Tebbaneh Massacre” - Backed the ADP - Committed war crimes in Syria and Lebanon, specifically in the North - Was seen as the leader of the Alawite Community
Bashar el Assad	President of Syria (2000 – Present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seen as current leader of the Alawite community and the leader of the Syrian Regime
Syrian Army	Army of the Syrian regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directly participated and initiated clashes during the Lebanese civil war - Heavy presence on Northern territories during the war especially in Tripoli - Committed war crimes and crimes against humanity on Lebanese territory - Was forced to leave territories in 2005
Yasser Arafat	<p>Chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (1969 – 2004)</p> <p>President of the Palestinian National Authority (1994 – 2004)</p> <p>Founding Member of Fatah political party</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Led and funded the ideological clashes that occurred between Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen during the Lebanese civil war - Was considered as the Arab sunni leader during that time period
Arab Democratic Party (ADP)	Lebanese Alawite Political Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funded and supported by the Syrian regime - Represented the Alawite front during the recurrent clashes in Bab el Tebbaneh and Jabal Mohsen - Operated the BT massacre - Was supposedly dismantled
Al Tawhid Movement	Lebanese Sunni Political Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based in Bab el Tebbaneh, represented the Sunni community during the clashes that occurred in

		<p>the area during the Lebanese civil war</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Switched alliance after 2005
Rafic Hariri	Prime Minister of Lebanon (1992 – 1998 and 2000 – 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was assassinated in 2005, believed to have been assassinated by the Syrian regime - His death represents the re-degeneration of the situation in Lebanon and in BT/JM specifically from 2005 up to today
Hezbollah	Iranian - Lebanese Political Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manipulated and at times initiated the clashes that occurred in BT/JM from 2008 – 2014 - Seen as political representative of the Shiaa community in Lebanon
Saad Al Hariri	<p>Prime Minister of Lebanon (2009 – 2001 and 2016 – Present)</p> <p>Leader of the Future Movement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Son of Rafic Hariri, leader of the future movement and the 14th March bloc - Was not personally or directly implicated in the clashes, but is known to have secretly funded the armed militias in BT, especially the supporters of the Future movement
Future Movement	Lebanese Political Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lebanese Sunni political party that became a strong part of the national government following the assassination of Rafic Hariri - Has an anti-syrian regime stance - Has many supporters in BT, however is recently hated by the residents of BT because of the neglect of the area
14 th March Bloc	Lebanese Anti-Syrian Regime Political Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alliance of political parties formed following the assassination of PM Rafic Hariri, anti-Syrian regime, formed by both Christian and Muslim parties
8 th March Bloc	Lebanese Pro-Syrian regime Political Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alliance formed following the assassination of PM Rafic Hariri, pro-Syrian regime, formed by both Christian and Muslim parties
Lebanese Armed Forces	Lebanese Army	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intervened at several occasions in the clashes that occurred between JM/BT - Massive intervention in April 2014, and current presence in the area as part of the security plan implementation - Fought militants from both Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tebbaneh

Ali Eid	<p>Leader of the Alawite Community (Until 2015)</p> <p>Founder of the Arab Democratic Party (1972)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was considered as a Alawite figure in Lebanon - Believed to have directly led the massacres of BT and JM - Despised by the Sunni community in the area - Fled the clashes in 2013 and passed away in Syria in 2015
Refaat Eid	Leader of the ADP (since 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Son of Ali Eid, took over his father's position in the ADP following his death - Heavily participated in the clashes from 2008-2014 - Fled to Syria in 2014, and is currently wanted by the Lebanese government and will be convicted with death penalty
Najib Mikati	Prime Minister of Lebanon (2011 – 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sunni representative in Tripoli, but member of the 8th March bloc - Political rival of Saad Hariri within Bab el Tebbaneh itself - Known to have also manipulated the clashes through the distribution of donations - Carried out several well-being projects aimed at aesthetically rehabilitating some parts of BT

Annex 2: Questions for semi-structured interviews with residents

Part 1: Background

- 1 - Where do you live?
- 2 - Were you present during the latest clashes:
 - a) Yes: Why did you stay?
 - b) No: Why did you leave, and why did you come back?
- 3 - Were you involved in the clashes in any way:
 - a) Yes: what was your motivation? Did you feel personally concerned by the conflict? How has [the other community] threatened/harmed you? Do you still feel this way?
 - b) No: Why not? Do you know anyone who has? Was it a personal decision to refrain from participating or an influence from parents/family?

Part 2: Collective memory Narrative

- 4 - How do you feel about: [BEGIN DISRUPTIONS TIMELINE]
- 5 - Have you noticed a change in your family's behaviour before and after the war? What has changed? Has it affected your perception about [the other community]?
- 6 - Do you discuss this with your family/surrounding? Do they share your point of view? Have you ever tried to convince people from your surrounding about your point of view?

Part 3: Spatial Behaviour

- 7 - Describe your daily routine:

Where do you usually hang out? And with whom? Do you have social encounters with members of the other community? Do you often visit [the other neighbourhood]? If so, under which circumstances? Do you feel unsafe when you are there? Why?

Do you consciously decide to take longer routes to arrive to specific destinations in order to avoid frictions? Have you noticed any change in your circulation within the neighbourhood before and after the 2008-2014 clashes?

Part 4: Symbolism

- 8 - How do you feel about the posters and slogans hanged outside your house? Do you identify with any of them? Do you feel like they represent a person's opinion, or a collective opinion? Do you feel protected by their presence?
- 9 - How do you feel about the posters and slogans in the other neighbourhood? Do you feel threatened by their abundance? What exactly makes you feel threatened by them? Do you feel like they limit your circulation/behaviour?
- 10 - How do you feel about the abundant presence of the military in Syria Street?
- 11 - Why do you think the walls of the buildings in Syria street were painted in blue? What do you believe was the main purpose?
- 12 - Do you believe there is a reason why the facades full of bullet holes were not rehabilitated to this day?
- 13 - Do you feel physically and spatially excluded from the rest of Tripoli? In what way?

Annex 3: Questions for Expert Interviews

Strategic Plan (For Elias)

- Who were the main stakeholders involved in the preparation of the strategic plan, its formulation, and its drafting?
- How was the strategic plan initiated? What were the main challenges faced during the initiation phase? What were the challenges in the data collection phase?
- How was the team able to reach key focal points in the area? To what extent were the residents willing to cooperate? How about the main non-governmental organisations?
- Has the municipality of Tripoli granted any sort of support to the initiative or were there hesitations? If so, what were the main causes?
- Who would be in charge of the implementation of the strategic plan? Has the municipality of Tripoli shown any interest or commitment towards this proposal?
- How long would the process take in case the strategic plan is taken into consideration?
- How would the residents of the neighbourhood react if the strategic plan was implemented? Would anyone oppose to it? And why?

Part 1: Collective memory and Identity Politics

- Taking into consideration that identity politics in Tripoli specifically is the process through which citizens of both neighbourhoods are identifying with a political view and claiming power on the basis of a religious identity, which is widely known to be encouraged by political parties from both sides, how relevant do you believe identity politics is in light of the recent armed clashes and the current political tensions that exist between both sides?
- How would you define collective memory in both neighbourhoods?
- How have the major political disruptions that erupted since the 80s shaped the collective memory of these inhabitants?
- Do you believe that politicians and/or militias played a role in shaping and reinforcing this collective memory? If so, how?
- Is collective memory in both neighbourhoods a major facilitator of the clashes and tensions? How is collective memory transferred from one generation to the next?
- Does the young generation identify with this collective memory of the clashes of the 80s? Has it been reinforced in 2008, and in 2011 following the eruption of the civil war in Syria?

Part 2: Symbolism

- Who is in charge of setting up all the posters, slogans, and symbols on both sides?
- Do the residents identify with these symbols? What is the main message behind their abundance?
- Do you believe these symbols reflect on the collective memory of the residents, or instead, do they reinforce the sense of belonging and reshape their collective memory?
- Could Syria street also be classified as a symbolic space in the Bab el Tebbaneh/Jabal Mohsen conflicts?

- How relevant are these symbols in the tensions that currently exist between both neighbourhoods?
- Do they reflect power, tensions, or feelings of threat?
- If all the symbols, posters, slogans, and icons were to be completely removed from the landscape of the Tebbaneh district, do you believe this would resolve some of the tensions, and facilitate reconciliation processes? And to what extent?
- Are there any initiatives to do so?

Annex 4: Coded Interview findings

Variable	Indicator (Code)	Statement from Interview
Identity Politics	Membership to Group A/B: Yes or No	<p>“I have no political belonging, but I do have a communitarian belonging” – BT – Yes</p> <p>“The municipality of Tripoli in this context has been useless and has actually fueled more hatred and frustration by purposefully neglecting the area” BT – No</p>
	Support of Group A/B: Yes or No	“I only support the military institution in Lebanon, why? Because I am a citizen of this country, and I have to respect its laws, no matter what” – BT - NO
	Historical Political Involvement from Foreign Powers: Yes or No	<p>“There is no real sectarian divide between the two communities, it is fueled by bigger powers and poverty” – BT – YES</p> <p>“There is no radicalism or terrorist groups in BT and JM, don’t talk to me about ISIS and Al Nusra, these are false claims, the real problem is the people with money, the superpowers that are triggering these clashes” – BT – YES</p> <p>“It is just a matter of delivering political messages. There is no Lebanese Politician that is not affiliated with a foreign embassy and agenda” – BT - Yes</p>
	Support of Foreign Group	“It is just a matter of delivering political messages. There is no Lebanese Politician that is not affiliated with a foreign embassy and agenda” – BT - NO
	Readiness to join conflict	<p>“If the army troops retreat, I can guarantee that the clashes will return” – JM</p> <p>“Yes, I will participate in the clashes again if it comes to protecting my community, my family and my friends” – BT</p> <p>“The clashes will surely return if the army troops retreat, but our community has already caused a lot of problems so far, it would be foolish to risk our existence by participating in the clashes again. However, I cannot guarantee that the rest of the people you are interviewing will be telling the truth about their willingness to participate in any upcoming clashes” - JM</p>
Collective Memory	Mention of past events	<p>“The events that occurred from the 1980s till today were a huge lie. It was a plan by Hafez el Assad and Yasser Arafat to take control of the area” - BT</p> <p>“They were sending political messages” - BT</p> <p>“The political discourse of Syrian – Palestinian. The Palestinian forces were dominating the Sunni community” – BT</p>

		<p>“There is a lot of frustration and hatred towards the Alawite Community because of past events, and this is hindering reconciliation” – BT</p> <p>“JM residents are still proud of the Bab el Tebbaneh Massacre”</p>
	Sign of politicized perception	<p>“The Poverty in Jabal Mohsen is even worse than the poverty in Bab el Tebbaneh, don’t get me wrong” – BT1, NO</p> <p>“There is no real sectarian divide between the two communities, it is fueled by bigger powers and poverty” – BT1- NO</p> <p>“All residents of Jabal Mohsen support Bashar el Assad” – BT - Yes</p>
	Inaccurate/falsified fact	
	statement based on political factors: Indirect or Direct	<p>“There is one recurring problem in the conflict, and the reason why these tensions are persisting: it is the Eid family. If they are recognized for the blood they have spilled, all tensions will be resolved”</p> <p>“There is no real current sectarian debate, the problem is that they have manipulated us into hating each other on the basis of identity and religion and we have spilled too much blood, and therefore the tensions rise because of the political events”</p>
	Statement based on religious factors	<p>“Alawites brought prostitutes – alcohol – drugs, and marijuana into this predominantly muslim neighbourhood” – BT – Indirect</p> <p>“We Sunnis are very affectionate” – BT - Direct</p>
	Affiliation to Collective identity statement	<p>“I do not claim my belonging to any political group, but I do claim my belonging to my identity as a Sunni from Bab el Tebbaneh” - BT</p> <p>“We Sunnis are very affectionate” – BT</p>
	Actively participated in previous armed conflict	<p>“I participated in the conflict to prove my existence, and to protect the name of my family. If I didn’t participate, they would have used us. We don’t have any political affiliation, but we do want to preserve our name and existence” – BT - YES</p>
	Actively supported armed conflict	<p>“Yes, we were doing our duty, for the preservation of our community” - BT</p>
Symbolism	Personal Perception of Symbolic representation	<p>“Someone actually came once to tell me to hang a poster here and was giving me money in exchange, but thankfully I have my own shop and I don’t need their money to survive” - BT</p>

	Personal Perception of Symbolic Objects	<p>“All the posters you see were paid for. That’s how people here make money. And then they go behind the politician’s back and criticize them. But to be honest these people are vain as well” – BT</p> <p>“The pictures of the martyrs and the memorial for Lina are the only way for us to remember the suffering that we have experienced, and the blood that has been spilled. It is very different from the political support that the people in Bab el Tebbaneh show by hanging the posters of their leaders” – JM</p>
	Personal Perception of Spatial Layout	<p>“A lot of people from the outside don’t come to Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tebbaneh because of misconceptions, and a lot of people from BT and JM don’t commute between the areas for the same reasons” JM</p>
Anti – thesis statements	Feelings of Regret	<p>“We were foolish to believe we were fighting for an honourable cause. The only thing we were fighting was our own existence and dignity” – BT</p> <p>“Yes, unfortunately, some people from my community have committed unspeakable atrocities” - JM</p>
	Evidence of Manipulation	<p>“Poverty is really a degrading thing here in the area, and then the political leaders throw money here and there, 50\$ for each bomb, and 20\$ for each bullet fired” – BT</p> <p>“Poverty is how they are able to manipulate us, I don’t think it’s a matter of sectarian tensions” - JM</p>
	Anti-political Statements	<p>“It is just a matter of delivering political messages. There is no Lebanese Politician that is not affiliated with a foreign embassy and agenda” – BT</p> <p>“They created terrorism, it was never here in the first place” - BT</p> <p>“With the help of Kahwatouna we tried to make projects to get people close together but the politicians are not allowing us to realise this, sending us people to threaten us”</p>
	Highlighting Poverty as main problem	<p>“Give any of these people a job, no matter how petty the job is, he will be happy to abide and to leave his weapons at home” – BT</p> <p>“Do you see all these young men on the street? Why is none of them employed do you think? How easy would it be to manipulate them into crime? It’s very easy to guess!” - JM</p>

Annex 5: Interview with Elias Bou Mrad (12/07/2017)

In the city of Tripoli, there was no Tripoli from one side and Jabal Mohsen from the other, which is now the case in the minds of people. Now this perception is decreasing but it was especially relevant during the conflict area. The media was painting this conflict in a violent image onto the whole city which got people from the city of Tripoli to be repulsed by the area. From the perspective of these other residents... so that the spill over does not arrive to Tripoli. From 2008 till 2014, this conflict is the freshest in the mind of people today. This is what made stitching back the city even harder, the existing physical gap became larger than it actually was (the river), Jabal Mohsen, BT, El mogher and al bakkar from one side, and the rest of Tripoli from the other. And you can see that even explaining this strategy to people, they can easily enter in the traditional discourse of Tripoli vs JM and BT, but it's actually all Tripoli. They mention these areas as separate from Tripoli, as if it became an island, and it did come and island. And because of the obstacles, even when there are no ongoing conflicts, the obstacles stay, the checkpoints, in the landscape, not just the symbols, but also about the conflict elements, the physical elements in the urban landscape. They are not symbols but they symbolize the conflict, they remind people of the conflict, of the snipers, the shooting, the throwing of grenades from one side to the other. Such as walls that are installed, which are ridiculous if people don't know there was a conflict in the area. They are everywhere, protection walls against snipers. You didn't see the area from the point of view of the armed militia men who were using it. What was important while we were doing the analysis, we saw these militia men, they told us stories about how they were snipping at people from the rooftop of this building or the other. We had to understand how the conflict is actually operating from the point of view of the city and the urban fabric. SO all these are symbols, not just the things that you see written or posted or the billboards, these are physical elements that hold a negative value or connotation to the people

How do you think this is affecting the people who are living within the neighbourhood?

Basically when the conflict ends and unless these are removed, the conflict would not end. If you really remove them without having people to build them again the next day, you need a proper reconciliation effort on a grassroots level, and you need a real transitional justice path, with all its aspects. Now these has happened a little, and this urban strategy was part of these because it made sure to include all the residents who wanted it in the decision making, which is why it is inclusive.

Now let's say that all these symbols are removed from the physical landscape, how exactly is it going to change the dynamics?

It changes the dynamics in all the day to day usage of the urban outdoor, it completely changes. Imagine that some people were avoiding to go up and down some of the stairs, while we were doing it, while literally dragging kids with us because the kids had enough curiosity and not enough trauma to say no, and then they started noticing that oh these consultants are going up from one point to the other through the shortest path that no one uses, because they were not used to use it because of the conflict. And it's a no-no for people to go there, and they take the long road up so that they don't go through these areas. If you want to go from Dahr el Moghor to the old souks, it would only make sense to go down the stairs and walk straight. If you give an outsider the map of the area with the topography, and you tell him to go from point A to

point B, he will draw the line that none of the residents of Dahr el Moghr use, which is the logical path. This path is crossing the conflict line, which is not a line, which is also in people's minds, since the actual zone of the interface is actually just a line of buildings. The lower floors open from one side while the top floors of the same building (the neighbours who share the same sewage system), have their entrance from another upper street. If you look from a satellite view, there is no one line.

So Syria street is not the demarcation line?

Syria street is not the conflict line! This is when the media simplifies it as the demarcation line, while Syria street is actually fully located in BT. But why did Syria street become the conflict line? Because it was the road that was mostly opened for the snipers that were above. Because as the French did in Beirut with Damscus road, they also made built Syria street which used to lead straight to Hums. If you see it on the map it is actually really bizarre compared to the other streets, because it is one straight line and 1 km. So if you are a sniper in the Hay el Amerken, you have the hield of the entire street.

So this is also one of the ways that media tried to manipulate the conflict?

Media tried to simply things, by saying that Syria street is the demarcation line. But actually the demarcation line is a slope, it is defined by the geography and not by the streets, the geography of the strong slope. It breaks on the stairs, which means they are not accessible to the jeeps. We mapped all the stairs of the area.

Jabal Mohsen was surrounded by enemy areas (Al Moghr, El Amerken, BT, el riva). Dahr el moghr is half up half down. The conflict line starts in Syria street then it enters inside this neighbourhood. We kept it as is, that it is one neighbourhood.

There is a grey zone, and it's not a clear line, it's always zig-zagging, and it's not always clearly following a specific road. Usually this line is one side or the other, because if you think about it, there is no road that is always delimiting otherwise it won't last, because none of the two would be able to cross it.

Going back to when you said that some of the streets no one would cross them because of the conflict, do you think this shapes their spatial behaviour? and if it does, how is it affecting them exactly? is it increasing the tensions? Choosing where to go or not, is it hindering the reconciliation process? how relevant is this in the current tensions?

There no more tensions now like before, after the security plan of the army, and supposedly now that there is relative peace and security, the conflict is not really present anymore. What i am saying is that there were things present during the conflict and the people that lived the conflict and lived its experience with those physical elements in space, will still behave the same way in their regard, whether they are removed, change function, or they rebrand into elements of peace. Is it hindering political reconciliation efforts? I don't know if there is reconciliation efforts at the moment, i don't know what is going on, so I can't answer your question directly, but I can tell you for sure that it is affecting their spatial behaviour, because they were placed there and put there to manage the spatial behaviour during the conflict. Also you will go back there and might see that these symbols have been removed, and some of them not. It's not just about these symbols, there are also the scars of the war, bullet holes in the

buildings... even though when there is a fund for rehabilitation, the people opposed to this. Like hariri painted the whole facade of syria street in blue. If you look closely, there is one apartment that painted his apartment in orange just to piss off Hariri, because in his opinion it wasn't just about the scars that are visually there, it is really about deeper intervention, one level deeper into actually fixing the infrastructure of the building. When the ground floor sewage is not functioning and the water pump that needs to pump the water into the tank is leaking. If you are living there and there is some money to help you, would you rather remove the scars or would you rather fix it to function. Think about the human body in a mess, would perform a plastic surgery first or would stop the bleeding and you fix the failing liver etc... the crucial organs of this urban fabric are failing, with an intervention on a plastic surgery level. AND this pissed people off. So the symbols are not only the ones we expect. I don't know whether you consider these as symbols. So it depends on your angle. but they are the result of the extreme neglect and poverty that existed there and naturally in times of war, whatever minimal resources you have you are going to prioritize for your survival, which leads to the complete screw up of the infrastructure needed for your daily life with time. There was one NGO that was actually smart about this, I think the person is now the head of OTI in the North. It is the implementation agency for USAID, so I think their head is CHadi Neshebe, who is also in the municipality, and he is the head of UTOPIA, and their intervention was okay, we are not going to paint, we are going to fix the pipes on the ground floors, and the water pump, and the piping and the electricity, which led to great support from the people.

So people from both sides of the conflict actually wanted this? would you consider an ex-militia men in on this? Let's say in his perspective he also wants the approval of people, and for poverty to remain the same for people to be dependent on the politicians?

No he wants to lead a normal life. And actually I have no clue whether the municipality will implement the plan anytime soon, we were requested by the municipality to make this plan but I have no clue. Because they were part of it, they participated, they were part of the process, they were involved in the discussions of the scenarios that developed into the strategy, but then again they have to sign this, or give feedback, and none of that happened and I don't know why. Did they want the funds first so then they could decide who they would allocate the funds to? One of the answers would be oh okay, possible clientelism and corruption, or do they not want this area to move forward, because different politicians feed on this conflict? That's another option. Or maybe they completely disregard this because the board changed and the new ones just don't care about this area? Most of the people living in this area actually don't vote in Tripoli, especially in tebbaneh. So for the politicians, they always decide on things but what am i getting in return? And the impact is something in return? so this is what they will be asking themselves. If tebbaneh was inhabited by people who vote in Tripoli it would have been a game changer, but the majority don't vote in Tripoli? They vote in Akkar, Donniyeh, Minyeh. So lots of immigrants in tebbaneh. Jabal Mohsen much less, it is a bigger percentage of people who are from Jabal Mohsen, there is a more solid sense of community there than in BT maybe because BT is so big and so dense, and JM is up on the hill and it's somehow has its own character by the geography, so it's not just the flatland that is an extension of the city or the old souk, you have to go there and walk up the stairs etc...

Yes I consider the geography of JM as one of the symbols. The fact that they are so overwhelmingly there in the landscape is also why they are considered as a threat, snipers etc..

But be careful when you are standing by the river and look up, the hill that you see is not JM, what you see is Dahr el Moghr, it's the Hariri project, these are all tebbaneh in the conflict, so JM is more up, with Hay el Amerken. Once you are looking on this hill, it's several areas, not clear. After the Omari slope,, this is JM so part of it is JM, so the snipers that sit on the rooftops of Al Hariri project are tricky, they can be from both sides. The conflict is not from up to down, it's up down, left right, it goes in all directions. The conflict is not as simple as you would imagine. Al Hariri Project which should have been a symbol of social housing... these massive buildings, they are war time architecture by default because of their scale. And everyone was shooting at everyone. There used to be an excel sheet, so you killed these many people this month, therefore this is your salary. If you are the leader of a front it could go up to 3000\$ a month. This one kid that we caught on the street, and asked him to tell us his story, three kids playing on the street: where do you play? Here. Ah okay. Where is your school? They told us where the school was. Show us how you go there, because we wanted to map their exact route, we get there. First they get shocked that wow the school was renovated, so they were excited to go back to school. The headmistress of the school told us that one of them does once every second week a crisis, and she is taking to the shrink of the school, she is aware enough to have a shrink at school, because his dad shot himself in the head in front of him because he couldn't get food on the table anymore because of the conflict and the lockdown of the area, he couldn't access work and the labor market. SO imagine any person in this situation, and he is not getting support in bread, but is getting support in ammunition. The deal is: this is your box of ammunition that costs shitloads, use it on the other side of the conflict and get your food for the family. So this one good guy here refused to be part of the violence ended up killing himself because he was starving with his family. So it's not as simple as you would think it is. Yes most of the guys who were part of the conflict would love to have a peaceful setting, and that's their job, the conflict job. Sometimes they would know that help is coming, and they would agree together from both sides of the conflict, get your children out so that i'll bomb your living room, and i'll get my children and wife out of the house and bomb my bedroom, let's get some support. They used to coordinate together, they are not enemies as you would think.

But in the media, the way they are portrayed, as if there is animosity between both sides.

But in reality not really, we were all sitting in the same workshop talking about the strategy together.

Yes when I was sitting in the Kahwatouna cafe, people from JM and BT were sitting together and talking to me, telling me that they were always the greatest friends but during the war they were fighting each other, but outside of this conflict.

Like in Hay El Amerken they sell alcohol, while in the Hariri project they don't, there is a checkpoint in the middle, the army checkpoint of the conflict. Everyone crosses and buys alcohol from there, they know each other, and then they come back. Other than the red light district of the area. They all meet in the same places with the same ladies. But good luck finding that though! I can tell you who told me the story you can go talk to him.

So this is aspect that I want to see, beyond the symbols that we as outsiders see, the symbols the residents themselves see. This is one of them. They have a completely different perspective than the things that we see through the media and through what we see on the ground

The most important symbol to really fix this situation is the river. It's not between the two conflicts inside, it's between these two conflicting sides one on one side, and the rest of the city on the other, that's the main location of the problem, that the root of the problem, it goes all the way there, it goes 60 years back to that exact spot. There was some effort to stitch the city back together in this location, and it was with good intentions but really bad implementation. It was the platform when they poured concrete on the river sides and built the platform on top of it. It was with good intentions. The houses were actually very close to each other, just 10 meters apart. And you could cross the bridge naturally from one side to the other. [Points at his map] so this section is very important because it shows you how the river was in the past and it shows you how it is currently. And before you could see that it was just one city (from the black parcels). So what happened was that the river flooded, i'll show you what happened. It used to be more organic, they poured the concrete. When they made these interventions, you don't measure the river's largeness, you measure how long it is, because of the heavy and rapid flow of the water, when it turns it takes more time to continue, and it had the possibility to flood in places. What happened here was that there was a channel, which made a massive flood within the city. When this whole area flooded, all the houses around the river were destroyed. So this channel is now a barrier, it divided the city right and left, so the barrier that caused the current discrimination for all the area of the conflict was actually physically built, it was not there. Their intentions were stupid. When a river floods, you don't come and pour concrete into it. They thought they were treating the river for it not to flood but actually it cut the city in two. So the people there had to migrate into another neighbourhood, which became known as the Mankoubin neighbourhood, so these people had to migrate within tripoli. They are refugees in an area next to JM. And al Mankoubin is a place you do not want to set foot in because of the aggressivity of these people, which is understandable because they people were at the centre of the city and the municipality threw them out to make the wall, they should have been compensated and they never were, and they ended up living for the last 60 years in worse conditions than refugees, in the shittiest conditions, waiting for someone to answer their needs. When we were doing the site analysis and surveys, we passed by the edge of this area, (btw they put them in an area that is outside of the jurisdiction of the municipality), so that's how marginalised they were, literally. So when we went there, it was the only place we were threatened by aggressive residents, they threatened us with arms, it was so tense and we were not even inside. They felt so threatened by anyone who is slightly related to authority or government. They are outside the municipality while they are actually from tripoli itself.

The roots of the conflict is the poverty that was created. The poverty that was created started here. Bab el tebbaneh used to be called bab el dehab (the door of gold), that was the gateway to trade with hums and aleppo, it started through syria street, and look what happened. So they made this chanel, and they made one street on the right and one street on the left, so basically to be able to commute from here to there, it was the same urban morphology and now it ends, you cross a road, there was a side parking next to it, now there is the platform. It should have been a travel at least and they should have removed the street from left and right now but right now you need to go up to the platform and cross it, then go down, there will be a side parking in front of you then you cross the road, and now oh okay, i need to look for the stairs that lead up to the neighbourhoods, versus the fact these platforms could have happened but in a different way. First of all these walls should be removed at least, to remove this barrier, and you stitch back this area that used to be there, you look at the old fabric, where there used to be a

pedestrian passage, and you bring it back, because what was there was very logical, it was the fastest way to cross the river, and to go up the stairs.

Do you think it's still possible?

Yes of course it is and this what we tried to do in the plan. One of the scenarios was to place a path here. But these are scenarios. We made different interventions here and there with urban accupuncture in different places. So this is one action. These are the scenarios we proposed to people and the municipality but they ended up giving feedback that we need to reach a fourth scenario which was this strategy. Another one was linear interventiosn that dealt with urban environment of several things. For instance this promenade inside JM from hay el amerken, and you cross the stairs into JM, almost flat [...]. So this was the stitch the area back with the whole city and the suburbs. And the project is considerably big to be used to rebrand the area, at a city scale.

Annex 6: Interview with Bilal Ayoubi

The roadmap to reconciliation was building on this experience with OTI, this long experience of the work with the support of civil society, the rejection of violence, since there was violence until 2014, there was more than one initiative that we were supporting and working on, which aimed at making Tripoli a city empty of arms, Tripoli against violence³. Either it was with the youth, as rap projects or placement activities, or reconciliation with both sides. There was a huge number of activities that we tried to do, we even reached a point where we were directly getting involved following the damage. For instance if a shop for Alawites was burnt down we would go down and fix it, make a quick rehab, or after the explosions of the mosques we supported rehab for all the commercial shops that were next to Taqwa, we changed the windows, a full rehab. I remember next to the Taqwa mosque there used to be this commercial agglomeration on the Malloula, meaning on the Abu Ali river, it all burned down, where there was also an artillery shop for hunting, this was all rebuilt and rehabilitated. So the idea is, okay all this and then what? Okay we all did this and then??

So in your opinion, in current times tensions still exist between the two communities?

Yes because no one actually was able to respond to the root causes of these problems. All these problems are reactions of the outcomes. We are dealing with the outcomes and the results, while the root causes are still far from reach, especially that we don't know what they are. So the RMR came two years after the clashes in Tripoli, to truly ask people what is their main problem and issue, from 30 years till today.

Basically what i'm trying to study is how identity in BT and JM alike, and especially identity politics, how is it shaping collective memory? There are several hypothesis and this is the hypothesis that I am tackling... [...]

Other than the RMR, I recently took something that is called establishing of mechanism of social stability with UNDP. Here we were also asked to make a conflict analysis in Tripoli, which is partly built on the RMR, but at the same time it also looked at more socio-economic training, and wider also not just on the issue of JM and BT, larger on the city scale. So, to go a little backwards, this is not yet published like the RMR, but I found out a lot of interesting stuff, which I did not know personally about this. Especially when we are talking about identity, so yes first of all I believe that the city has the identity of a rebel city, the people who are especially in the areas that are marginalised and poor, there is always a clear cycle for the cases where gangs are created or armed groups that are imposing themselves on the people in the streets, they are either called the "machos" or "front leaders", or parties etc... There is always something, but at some point there is this marginalisation and feel of victimization that takes its roots, which appears in this rebellion, in different ways.

So can you say that this victimization is their common identity?

Yes of course. And this is written in the RMR, that they are both identifying themselves as victims, probably not because of the same events, but for different various and numerous reasons.

But do you mean victims in the face of the government or victims in the face of each other?

Both. Of course there is an agreement that it is the government, but I also believe that the identity of the victim goes back in Tripoli since the declaration of Greater Lebanon (in 1920), which you know well the city of Tripoli was against [it was part of Syria], and since then Tripoli is suffering and being punished because of this opposition. But the interesting thing is that when it comes to Tripoli and Beirut, Tripoli always plays the role of the opposite of Beirut when it comes to political decisions. So if Beirut decides to go with the French government, Tripoli wants to fight the French government. If Beirut decides that it is with Yasser Arafat, Tripoli goes against it. So you can feel that whatever decision comes in a specific situation, Tripoli will go against it as if it wants to reassert its presence, that it is against this and this and this. And every single time the central government is punishing Tripoli because of this, from a development perspective and security wise. Also it is very important to take into consideration the main event that happened which was the flood of the Abu Ali river, which I personally consider as the main event within a lot of research that is being made. There was a change in the face of the old city, since that moment. When this river flooded, thousands of people that were relocated within the city, they started building houses far from the river because they were afraid that it would happen again. The people that came in their place are mostly from Akkar and Donniyeh, so the face of the old city changed completely. So here, I read a very interesting piece about the US state department in 1959, a little after the flood, and also after the events of 1958. You know that usually when the US state department undergoes a research somewhere, or to report somewhere, where there is a security paranoia to have groups that are against its ideology, its its priority in the research. So in this report, and imagine how old this report is, they mention that Tripoli, because of the neglect that exists within it and because of the problems, is considered as a nurturing environment for communism (since back then there was neither terrorism nor anything else). So this report mentions in that time the fear of its nurturing environment of "terrorism", and therefore this should be taken into consideration while tackling development and other, the type of poverty that exists and what they mentioned in their report. So I think this is mentioned in the Foreign policy. What happened is that this recurred a lot after the 50s, so in the 60s and the 70s, and if you take a political perspective, you'll see groups such as Nefer Moukaddem [another front leader back then], or the movement of 24th of October, and after that the groups of Kaddour and others, who were called at some point the nation of the wanted, similar to these rebel groups of Ziad Allouki, but from the 60s till today are being repeated, in the same scenario. And how do they end? A strong intervention from the army troops, they either shoot them or jail them. This is how it happens every single time, in different cycles and different fronts and issues. So who came to work on what the state department mentioned, about the root causes of this violence? And imagine that today everyone tells you about Tripoli and Bab el Dehab and they money and everything, well okay, and they refer to the 70s, but apparently this is not true. Of course there was business, there was a hub, there was economic activity. But in the 50s and 60s and 70s apparently, all the period after the flood, was declining from an economic activity perspective, and not the opposite. Probably they are building this based on a nostalgia that was before Greater Lebanon, or until the 50s, or until Tripoli started losing its economic relevance in this new country that it became part.

But do you believe that poverty alleviation in Bab el Tebbaneh would be the only solution?

No, no, of course not. But what I am saying is that it was the root cause, until this arrived to the point where during the civil war, the first incident that was Sunni/Alawite that was visible was during this time. Which was in the mid-70s, according the Alawite Story, there was a group

of people that were mostly communist, in cooperation with Arafat I guess, infiltrated the area that was inhabited by Alawites that were with Syria, and during that time Yasser Arafat and Hafez el Assad were against each other, and they exiled them from the area. So these people went away for a few years and came back, so this is how they justify the massacre conducted by the Alawites on the Sunnis of BT. So as if they were retaliating against this exile that occurred a couple years back. And to go back to what you were mentioning about collective memory, in reality there are people while we were interviewing residents for RMR, that invented another massacre that happened inside JM, saying that they were also victims of a massacre back then and a few hundred people had died, in 1981. Now what is nice in the research, is that we are working with fighters for peace, but these fighters were all fighting during the civil war, so they know whether something like this happened or not in 1981. So this collective memory. So could this be generalised on all JM? I don't believe so but maybe this mentioned during this specific meeting to create a specific dynamic. However, one of the main things that are hindering reconciliation is that there is no clear collective memory. Even when it comes to the massacre of BT, which happened for sure, there are pictures, but no one knows the real number. After the massacre, the parents of the martyrs were not able to claim the bodies of their deceased because they were afraid of the Syrian intelligence which was located in the nearby hospitals, so anyone who came to ask for a body was taken. So there was one mass grave established, no one knows where it actually is. In these meetings that we had we heard that they were buried in the Miten street (inside new Tripoli), we also heard they were buried in the Amerken neighbourhood and others. But actually there is no respect to these people who died in the massacre which was as big as the BT massacre. It's not even in the collective memory of the country. So today if you say massacre in Lebanon, they talk about Sabra and Chatila, or Damour, of course a lot of events happened in Beirut and other areas, but no one mentions the BT massacre and there is not much information about it. We heard about 500 victims, and then 700 victims, or 2000 victims even, but who knows the real number? So in our opinion, dealing with the past is one of the important routes towards reconciliation, but definitely without traumatising people, meaning we have to deal with the past in a very sensitive way, so that it truly answers the question of so what now? [off record: some people who were in these meetings confessed that they were part of the massacre, well okay you can tell me that today the governmental law doesn't protect even if there was general and national pardon after the civil war, but it was still a massacre against humanity, but some people still confessed that they participated for about 25% in this massacre, but they also mentioned that they were not alone, that X, Y, and Z also participated in the massacre, so why does no one mention them? Well because this issue was supposedly and according to my personal political analysis, that the Syrians wanted to paint this massacre in the sectarian paint, because this will protect the entire country]. So today if I point only to the Alawites while talking about the massacre (who actually did participate of course, I am not saying otherwise), then of course I can say that this was meant to create a clash between the two sects. But actually, no one mentioned this massacre from 1986 till 2005. This is how the information slowly faded away, but after 2005 and the problems that happened, this event resurfaced and BT massacre posters were hanged again, it was used in local politics, for elections as well. And not long ago the Muslim brotherhood made a video about this massacre, you can find it on youtube, the video talks about how the syrian regime ravaged the area, and how they destroyed the city. The incentive was not a historical reason, the real incentive was to recreate these tensions surrounding these marginalised people so that they could circulate it in politics. And no one actually talks about this massacre to

essentially say that they want to resolve the problem with the Alawites, but do you actually hold all the Alawites responsible? In the first place, 3/4 of the Alawites do not support this. Ali Eid and his brother died, and Refaat Eid was just born back then, so this means that even an apology is not present in the minds of people. Now in my opinion, to come back to the story of so what? In my opinion, it might be important to make inside Syria street a monument or a park or something to remember the martyrs that died in that massacre, and of course we are talking about the urban side of it. Get the memory of the people respected, like it happens everywhere, in Kosovo for instance or all eastern Europe... so this remembrance is necessary, but at the same time if we are able to receive an apology, it would be from the bottom of the Table. If we are able to do this, we would be doing a step further towards turning this page.

How do you think it's possible?

We are working on it, we've been working for months on different things, things like the creation of fighters for peace in tripoli, we are working so that specific services will be delivered in areas for trust. One of the approaches that the RMR is tackling is that there are some common issues that people are able to work together on, like the Hariri project, since it occupied by both Sunnis and Alawites who are today facing eviction. So we came to help them create a common committee called "under to roof", so that they stay under their own roofs, and under the roof of the law. So the idea is that today Sunnis and Alawites are working together on this common problem, and in my opinion this is guiding them a step further towards reconciliation. Does it answer all the root causes of the problem? No, but their mutual success will be a proof of reconciliation. Today we are trying to create a group of the physical victims of the war and those who were injured or handicaped because of it, that works on common demands, maybe there could even be an urban design for the city so that they could circulate within the area in wheelchairs etc... So imagine these people, and after they were harmed or paralysed etc... no one is asking about them, no one is giving them anything, no one is telling them, you used to work X, and now you don't work anymore. So, that;s it? So these people of today we are able to work with them together, they are the people who are still living the war on a daily basis, it didnt end in 2014, he lives his situation every day, he is now unemployed, he is paralysed etc... The fact that there are common issues that we are able to work on, and also the role of the former fighters is crucial to reingrate them, because today there is a state of refusal among these former fighters against all that happened: that they were manipulated, etc... One of the comments in the RMR is that the people are very aware, there is a high level of awareness among the people of this area, and they talk exactly the same way we do. They talk about how politicians are taking advantage... so you feel that they are not stupid, but they don;t have alternatives, they don't have options. So that i don't blame them, they know exactly that politicians are lying to them, and they know that they are being taken advantage of in exchange of a few hundred dollars, but today if he is sick, where does he go? He can't go the governmental hospital without "wasta" or anything. The level of poverty is really scary, it's not a joke, even in the services that are provided. So this really hurts. But of course poverty is not necessarily the primary cause, but their lives are declining, until one them completely falls... so here the health issue is being what is causing the most pain, is breaking their backs, even if they don;t want to be clients for the politicians or don;t want to give up etc... but at some point they just can't get over this health issue... so this is one of the main things that the ministry of social affairs can tackle, or the ministry of health. In the end, the governmental hospital in tripoli is headed by someone who is super politicized..

Going back to collective memory, you were saying that most of the people now were not born when the massacre happened, so how is this collective memory being transferred from generation to the other?

They talk about their uncles, fathers, families, they tell you about how this uncle died with his entire family. These stories are being inherited. There were lots of videos that were being uploaded while the clashes were ongoing between 2008 and 2014, reportages and etc... the front leaders were always on TV. So the idea is that every time there is a reference to something somewhere. So they say there is nothing between us but the Eid family caused this and this problem etc... They always go back to it because it was a milestone in the separation of both sects. But there is also something crucial which you probably know: there is nothing called Jabal Mohsen, you can't even delimit the area. Jabal Mohsen is a connotation, it is a created identity by itself, because essentially JM is just the area that today is inhabited by the Alawites that are pro-syrian, that's it. So you could be standing in a street and someone will tell you this is JM, but how is this JM? This is Qobbeh! This is Tebbaneh! It is not actually a district on the official cadastral map (he means that it is all tebbaneh), the area of JM is today delimited by politics and posters. Now after the security plan, JM's borders were drawn by the Lebanese government through the army checkpoints, so you know that you are entering JM when you cross the army checkpoint, in all the streets. But in reality, all the residents of JM, or most of them at least, are originally and legally registered in BT. So after the sectarian separation, and even during the massacre, there are stories of Alawites who supported their Sunni neighbours, and helped them escape the massacre, or even hosted them in their houses, or helped them escape to Zgharta (mountain of Tripoli). So it is important to shed a light on this fact to preserve a history of this, it shows it wasn't actually a sectarian mission, more like a political one. So today this sectarian division that occurred made the Alawites leave BT, and to live uphill. So mainly this happened during the civil war, and JM was created like this. This urban space was created and given a specific name during this period. What happened today, is that of course during the war, there are a lot of people that died just because they are living in this area but are not Alawite. The first person who died in 2008 was Sunni in JM. So this means that a lot of Sunnis actually live in JM, and a lot of Syrians, so why should everyone be punished because of this? Today it is the army that draws the limits of JM, and even more so, the installment of physical barriers by the army. So today you can see in the middle of a street a concrete wall, so these are the new limits of JM. Therefore there might be limits of JM from before the security plan was initiated in 2014, there are pre and post limits. Also, snipers used to install barrells during the war which would also delimit the areas. This also has a historical connotation since this was also used during the civil war. These barells were transformed after the security plan to walls. So today there is wall if you are going up to the Northern rail (in JM), all the road on your right is a concrete wall. This is a new wall, it was made after the security plan. And on the stairs between the areas, there are also walls that were constructed. These also became fixed structure. So today what we see is that the shape of the area is changing based on a security paranoia, but also on the basis of identity. The municipality of Tripoli supported this, and especially Mohamad Chamsine (the previous mayor), while placing parks on the Riva, and another park next to Hariri project. It closed the roads instead of opening them, and usually parks are made for meeting places, however today they are not meeting places at all, because we do not find the soft component that should accompany the hard component, they destroyed the park a few days later because the residents didn't want their children to play together. the UNDP also made a park there, but it today an empty space that no one visits, and even if they

do, they just walk through it. But even if it was passage-way for cars, there would have been army checkpoints on it anyway... the army would have closed down the area.

So in your opinion this physical separation between both neighbourhoods was a conscious decision? For instance on the media, this separation was always highlighted.

Yes of course, you always have this image that you are crossing from one area to the other. There is always a physical barrier. It is a virtual barrier for people. We have a center in the area called SHIFT. It was established in 2015, we worked on rehab in the areas, in the OUmari slope, in Malloule, Riva, on the demarcation lines. After the security plan we went on the field and removed all the sand barriers between the areas. Some stairs had sand barriers and we wanted to open up the areas on each other. After this, in Malloula riva and oumari, what happened was that we saw that we actually need to be there, and this is how SHIFT was created in 2015. SHIFT is a social innovation hub, its idea is to be an incubator for social entrepreneurship and social initiatives in the area. But also, at a certain point, when we started, the idea was to be a center for people to come from both sides, since it is on the demarcation line between Qobbe and JM. In This location, when we first launched the center, the street was completely empty, no one crossed there, a real demarcation line. What happened two years later is that today, this street never gets empty, it is always busy, children, traffic, cars. NGOs etc... Life was brought back to this street. Now of course we cannot claim the entire thing, security itself helps a lot, and today the HRC (Higher Relief Council) is reconstructing all this line, removing all traces of destruction. And I believe this is highly important for the well-being of the residents, since people always complained that the state is not reconstructing because there are clashes coming soon, and they are not investing in this. I think if we had a pre and post to see how this affected on the people, it would have been a worthy study, but the HRC would not invest in this and now they are almost done though. About the virtual barrier in the minds of people, SHIFT is situated on a corner Alawite/Sunni, and some of the buildings there are sometimes appropriated by sunnis, and other times alawites, and they would fight over the land ownership of these buildings. The idea is that the virtual barrier here is the following, the residents of a building from one side would pile of their garbage in front of their building, while the garbage cans were literally on the other side of the street (10meters away). The problem was that for them, these cans were located in JM and they would not go there, so they didn't want to travel this distance of 5ms because in their minds, this is JM. In the mind of the people, the memory of the sniper being there is still present. This was all through observations, and that was 2-3 months ago. The terminologies of "on their side" and "on our side" is very present, but it's only delimited through a sidewalk! And when trash cans were installed on their side, they didn't throw the garbage on the street anymore. This is where collective memory is reflected on the ground through observation. The residents are not being able to overcome it easily. So what we did was that we collaborated with the NGO Basma and Zeytouna, we made a fun fair with a lot of games and balloons, and music etc... we completely transformed the street, kids from both sides came and spent the entire day playing, and there were no problem. Who knows were these kids were from? They were from everywhere. You need to change the virtual barrier in the minds of people to something that is essentially loved by the people. The initiative of "Under the Roof" launched its campaign from the garden that used to be a barrier, the one that lacked the soft component. In Ramadan we organised a common Iftar for both sides, Sunnis and Alawites broke their fast together in this garden where no one used to go. The concept is to make use out of this space, and this use is a priority, which is something that a lot of donors

and intervention makers do not understand. Sunnis and Alawites collaborated together through the committee of the Iftar, wives of sunni war lords, with alawite leaders, not youth only, they are influencers. Why did they collaborate? Because there was a priority: they did not want to sleep on the streets. So responding to priorities is definitely a very important aspect.

Is there a plan to monitor those interventions in order to assess their impact in the future? For instance are people re-using this space?

Our proposal, and in order not to be doing monitoring and evaluation for our own interventions - since we are not only researchers, we do activities on the ground - is to create something called Tripoli Reconciliation barometer, so that this barometer measures what you are talking about. It is very hard to quantify a very qualitative issue like reconciliation, however we are not the only people on the ground with this trial, for instance today there is something called Rwanda reconciliation barometer, SA rec bar, and it can be tailored according to the needs of the areas. The main concept of the barometer is to have mass surveys, in order to really measure how all the interventions are effectively impacting the perception of people towards reconciliation. And that could lay the foundation of reconciliation in order to eventually reach it: the trust of the people in the government, in the media... It's important to check the experiences of Rwanda and SA in order to check how this barometer functions, and we shall see, we can tailor it according to the needs of our area. However I believe that if today you would like to measure this barometer in this area, and in relation to the times before the security plan, it would not change at all, and so what? Okay maybe there are a lot of soldiers on the ground securing the area, but you can see for instance that drug abuse is at its highest peaks today, Sunnis and Alawites go together to common places and abuse drugs together, and ironically this is breaking a barrier between people. But this is really scary, and this is notwithstanding all the social problems that are present, from harassment, to rape, and domestic violence. And it doesn't end. Yesterday we were in a meeting with social workers and people who were working on child protection, they were telling us about a man who is politically covered that is raping children in the area, so what do you do with this? And there is a need for an urgent intervention for this, but people are scared to act for their own safety. So until when will this man be able to do this to these children? When the parents of these children found out about this, they beat them up. We hear about these stories every other day. Is that not a root cause today for things that will happen in the future that are worse than today's situation? This will generation and create a group of people in the future that are angry at society, at the state, who are completely traumatised. It will explode in the end.

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