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THE POLITICS OF PUBLIC SPACE IN THE POSTWAR CITY: THE
CASE OF HORSH BEIRUT

MADELAINÉ ASSI AND STARLING CARTER

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Methodology	3
Theoretical Background	4
Postwar Development and Public Space in Beirut	10
Contestations over Public Space	16
Rising Tide of Civic Engagement and Activism: the Impact of “You Stink”	18
Case Study: Horsh Beirut <i>A Brief History of the Horsh</i>	21
<i>“Together to Reopen Horsh Beirut”</i>	26
<i>Assessing Access: Is Horsh Beirut truly a public space?</i>	33
Conclusion	40
Appendix A: Interviews	42
Appendix B: Map of Horsh Beirut	43
Appendix C: Materials from the Campaign	45
Bibliography	48

Introduction

The triangular shape of Horsh Beirut sticks out like a sore thumb on a map of Beirut, Lebanon, as one of the few spots of green in a city jam-packed with luxury condos, historical houses, shops, streets, cars, and skyscrapers. Nonetheless, many Beirutis are unaware of the oasis of grass and tall pine trees that sits just south of the National Museum, hugging the notorious Green Line that separated the two sides of the city during the civil war (1975-1990). Older residents of the city may have memories of playing in the forest (*horsh* means “forest” in Arabic, and Horsh Beirut is also known historically as the “*horsh al-sanawbar*,” or Pine Forest), but the area was fenced-off and closed to the Lebanese people for more than 20 years following extensive damage during the war, even after the replanted trees and grasses were deemed ready to accept the public. As a new generation came of age and the public went on with their lives, many forgot about the Horsh, despite its being one of the few open public spaces remaining in a city undergoing a frenzy of postwar development.

However, not everyone forgot about the green space. In 2010, a coalition of NGOs and civil society organizations jumpstarted a sustained campaign to reopen the park to the public. These activists combined public protest, lobbying, media campaigns, and legal action in a concerted effort to put pressure on the Municipality of Beirut. The “Together to Reopen Horsh Beirut” campaign culminated in June 2015 when, after years of contestation and negotiations, the governor of Beirut announced that the Horsh would finally be opened to the Lebanese public.

Building on interviews with activists and members of the organizations involved in “Together to Reopen Horsh Beirut,” this paper situates the case of Horsh Beirut within a wider discussion of the role of public space in a city subject to strict social divisions, capitalist postwar development, systemic elite corruption, and the resulting struggles against privatization and

securitization of public space that have emerged across the city in recent years. We examine the struggle over Horsh Beirut in relation to broader trends in Lebanese politics and society, particularly one embodied by 2015's "You Stink" protests and the subsequent political movement, Beirut Madinati. These recent mobilizations promote a political discourse of public rights and services over the clientelistic, identity-based politics that currently and traditionally dominate the Lebanese political system. The campaign to reopen Horsh Beirut is not a singular phenomenon within Lebanon or the wider regional or global context. However, this specific campaign, its eventual success, and the pushback following its reopening, neatly encapsulates how public space has emerged as a vital arena in which an increasingly mobilized segment of Lebanese society is struggling with ruling elites over rampant corruption, capitalist development, and neglect of the rights of the people. While the immediate issue at hand is the availability and public use of public green space, ultimately what is at stake is the heart of the Lebanese political system, in which elites treat the people as clients and seek their own continued power and profit above the needs and rights of the people.

After an introduction to our methodological approach and the theoretical literatures that inform our research, we introduce the postwar development of Beirut and the current status of public spaces in the city, then move to a discussion of recent movements and other contestations surrounding those public spaces, contextualizing these within broader trends in Lebanese political discourse. We then introduce the history of Horsh Beirut, tell the story of the campaign to reopen it, and analyze the problems of accessibility that remain even after the park was reopened. Finally, we unpack the power of the "security" narrative in Beirut for restricting public rights, and examine what the case of Horsh Beirut tells us about ruling elites' perceptions of and practices toward the people they govern, and how some members of Lebanese society are

pushing back by articulating their rights to the city as citizens, not clients.

Methodology

Our research for this project consisted of a combination of preparatory background research into the media and social media dialogues on the issue of public space in Beirut and field research, including visits to Horsh Beirut and interviews with several key stakeholders in the campaign to reopen the Horsh. Social and local media were important tools in the designing and mobilizing of the campaign to reopen the Horsh. As such, in preparing for our visit to Beirut, we utilized social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter to gain a greater understanding of the general public dialogue regarding the Horsh, as well as the most recent developments in the campaign. Blogs and online news sources based in Lebanon also provided a lens into the discourse surrounding the increasingly privatized and commercialized spaces of Beirut, demonstrating that this issue is highly relevant to the public imaginary among some social spheres in Beirut.

We completed our field research in Beirut from January 4-13, 2017, conducting a total of five interviews with members of three organizations that played crucial roles in the campaign to reopen Horsh Beirut (NAHNOO, the Green Line Association, and the Heinrich Boll Foundation), as well as an academic expert on public space in Beirut who is also an activist and a member of Beirut Madinati (Mona Fawaz, professor of urban planning and studies in the Department of Architecture and Design at the American University of Beirut). We attempted to contact some other activists and organizers, but ultimately found that these three organizations were the most active of the consortium that made up the campaign, and sought quality in our interview material over quantity. The individuals we spoke with were primary organizers who had detailed knowledge of the activities of that campaign, and they provided us with a wealth of

vital information and different perspectives. These interviews ranged from 45 minutes to nearly three hours. In addition to members of the campaign, we sought to interview an official from the Municipality of Beirut who is responsible for the administration of the Horsh. As per instructions from one of our interviewees, we submitted a formal letter to the office of the Governor requesting an interview, but unfortunately never received a response.

In addition to the interviews, we visited Horsh Beirut in order to observe the state of the space, how it is being utilized, and by whom. The visits were crucial to our ability to visualize, describe, and analyze the Horsh. Through these visits, we were able to better understand what our interviewees told us, and to know which questions to ask. We were also able to observe that despite the limited opening hours of the Horsh and the lack of public knowledge about its existence, it is clearly a space that people from many different segments of Beirut society are using for a variety of purposes. Our visits allowed us to witness a wide range of users, from older people exercising and socializing with family, to young people going for a stroll with a boyfriend or girlfriend and young children running and playing. This experience reaffirmed for us the crucial need for public space in Beirut, and the importance of analyzing this poorly-understood space as a subject and site of contestation.

Theoretical Background

Contestations over public space in Beirut must be grounded in the existing literatures on the relationship of public space to democracy and the public sphere; neoliberal urban development and responses to it; and Beirut's specific spatial legacy of identity-based violence. To begin with a brief overview of theories of the public sphere, Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas in particular stand out as theorists who emphasize the importance of a public sphere for the exchange of views, collective deliberation, argumentation, and collective action, and

therefore, for democracy. Arendt sees an absolute need in a democratic society for institutionalized public spaces in which individuals can act together in plurality and exercise their freedom and agency as political beings.¹ Jurgen Habermas, in his seminal work entitled *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), theorizes the public sphere as a realm which is vital to democratic society, in which individuals are able to engage in rational discourse as equals and discuss different viewpoints and opinions in a respectful manner. Habermas' original idea of the public sphere was grounded in spaces such as the coffee shops and salons of 19th-century Europe, as well as the virtual space of the press, though these are not fully public spaces in that they were largely accessible only to certain classes and segments of society (specifically, to white men, although there is some room for cross-class engagement with this sphere).

Some feminist thinkers have criticized Habermas' formulation of the public sphere as "bourgeois," and exclusive towards a number of "marginalized" groups, including women, the lower classes, and non-whites.² Nancy Fraser coined the term "counterpublics" in response to Habermas, referring to those groups which are excluded from the hegemonic public sphere and who, in turn, form public spheres of their own.³ It is, therefore, important when talking about "public space" to consider which public(s) are being invoked, which are being included and which are being marginalized. In Lebanon, traditionally it is difficult to conceive of the collected citizens of the Republic as one "public," due to the entrenched sectarian divisions that are consistently reproduced by the confessional political system. This issue is compounded by the

¹ Seyla Benhabib, "Feminist Theory and Hannah Arendt's Concept of Public Space," *History of the Human Sciences* 6, no. 2 (1993): 97-114.

² Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy (1990)," In *The Public Sphere*, Vol. 4, 249. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011.

³ Ibid.

presence of approximately 450,000 Palestinian refugees, who despite their presence in the country since 1948, are not granted citizenship. Class divisions are also significant in the Lebanese case, as class is another very significant factor to questions of who the “public” is, especially when it comes to public spaces: who they are intended for, and who is allowed to access them freely. In this paper, we refer to “public” as spaces which are open to the Lebanese people at large, although there are many spaces which can only be considered public to a certain degree due to security measures which may target specific demographics for exclusion; entrance fees that can be prohibitive to those with very limited income; or unspoken norms about who is welcome in which spaces.

In general, the issue of public spaces has often been left out of discussions of the public sphere, although recent a recent spatial turn in the social sciences has sought to remedy this.⁴ Public spaces are shaped by their publics, and by the relationship between the state and its citizenry. In turn, public spaces shape the public, the relationship between publics, and public or civil society relationships with the state.⁵ They are often the sites of public contestation between these groups, and even when movements do not explicitly deal with spatial issues, the contours and regulation of public space play important roles. During the Arab Spring of 2011, for example, demonstrators filled streets and public squares to demand political change, causing regimes to respond with increased securitization and regulation of such spaces (see: the cases of Tahrir Square in Cairo, the Pearl Roundabout in Manama, and many others).⁶ While the presence

⁴ Setha Low and Neil Smith, "Introduction: The Imperative of Public Space," in *The Politics of Public Space*, edited by Low, Setha and Neil Smith. New York: Routledge, 2005.

⁵ Marina Peterson, "Patrolling the Plaza: Privatized Public Space and the Neoliberal State in Downtown Los Angeles," *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 35, no. 4 (2006): 355-386. <http://www.jstor.org/proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/40553528>.

⁶ See: Ursula Lindsey, "The Anti-Cairo," *Places Journal* (2017). <https://placesjournal.org/article/the-anti-cairo/#.WN5cN4kpc2a.twitter>, Josh Sanburn, "Square Roots: How Public Spaces Helped Mold the Arab Spring," *Time*, May 17, 2011. <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2071404,00.html>,

of public space alone is clearly not sufficient for democratic participation and contestation to flourish, it is clear that such spaces are seen as threatening to states for their potential as sites of dissent and collective action. Other social and political movements both in the Middle East and beyond have explicitly focused on the right to public space, responding to securitization, privatization and other hallmarks of neoliberal policy that characterized many urbanisms in the latter half of the 20th century.⁷

Neoliberalism can be understood as a set of economic attitudes and practices that affect the production and development of urban space, with particular implications for public space. As a concept that encompasses a philosophical orientation or worldview, a discourse, and a set of specific policies, neoliberalism dominated the global scene particularly from the 1980's on, partially in the form of structural adjustment programs prioritizing privatization and global capital flow that were exported to "developing" countries by the "developed" core through organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Ideally, neoliberalism seeks to create a society "...organized around self-regulating markets, and free, to the extent possible, from social and political intervention."⁸ Neoliberalism results in uneven geographic development that privileging some spaces over others, and its related policies and practices take unique forms across space. Geographers and other academics thus focus on

Matt Ford, "A Dictator's Guide to Urban Design," *The Atlantic*, February 21, 2014.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/02/a-dictators-guide-to-urban-design/283953/>.

⁷ See: Pedro Levy Bismarck, "Architecture and the Aestheticization of Politics," *Places Journal* (February, 2014); Scott Berzofsky, "Reclaiming the Commons : Art and Activism in the Neoliberal City," Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015; Simon Springer, "Violence, Democracy, and the Neoliberal "Order": The Contestation of Public Space in Posttransitional Cambodia," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99, no. 1 (Jan 8, 2009): 138-162.

⁸ *Dictionary of Human Geography* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gwu/detail.action?docID=437431>.

“actually existing neoliberalisms” rather than one amorphous and overarching concept.⁹

Generally speaking, however, neoliberal urbanism can be characterized by concurrent privatization of space through “accumulation by dispossession;”¹⁰ processes of “inside-outing” in which those such as the urban poor who have been dispossessed of space by privatization and securitization utilize formally public space for “private” practices such as dwelling or earning a living; and “enclosure” in which elites respond to this encroachment by securing and surveilling space, and creating segregated spatial enclaves for the wealthy.¹¹ Securitization in the modern context is typically characterized by restriction of access, increased surveillance, both of which are often utilized in Beirut’s “public” spaces. Modern understandings of enclosure are understood as integral to the accumulation of wealth, and can often usher in a complex process of reclamation of public space.¹² Neoliberal attitudes and practices go hand-in-hand with reduction of public space and the securitization of those public spaces that remain.¹³

Many movements that have emerged around the globe to combat these restrictions engage in the discourse of “the right to the city,” a concept first introduced by Henri Lefebvre and elaborated on by Don Mitchell that frames public space as a human right and fight against growing privatization, securitization, and neoliberal development of urban space.¹⁴ Marxist geographer and theorist of neoliberalism David Harvey has also written about the right to the city, arguing that this is a “collective” human right that can be called upon in struggles against neoliberal urbanism, specifically the accumulation of capital in the hands of the super-wealthy

⁹Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of Actually Existing Neoliberalism." *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (Jul, 2002): 349-379. doi:10.1111/1467-8330.00246.

¹⁰ David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *New Left Review* no. 53 (Sep 1, 2008): 23. <https://newleftreview-org.proxygw.wrlc.org/II/53/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city>.

¹¹ Asef Bayat, "Politics in the City-Inside-Out," *City & Society* 24, no. 2 (2012): 110-128.

¹² *Dictionary of Human Geography*, 2009.

¹³ Setha Low and Neil Smith, *Introduction: The Imperative of Public Space*.

¹⁴ Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City*. New York [u.a.]: Guilford Press, 2003.

few and the dispossession of the masses.¹⁵

We will deal at greater length with these details of Beirut's postwar development in a later section, but it is important to note here that ever since the early 1990's, Beirut has witnessed a frenzy of destruction of the "old" and the ushering in of capitalist construction of the city as an aspiring cosmopolitan capital for world finance, investment and tourism. Urban development from this period until today has favored the privatization of space and seemingly endless large-scale luxury projects, the contracts for which are often granted to private companies with direct financial ties to government officials. Beirut's postwar urban development has also been marked by the spatial legacies of the civil war, and struggles over the identity of the city in the wake of large-scale inter-communal violence. In *Heart of Beirut: Reclaiming the Bourj*, author Samir Khalaf uses the term "spatial identities" to describe how the struggle over rebuilding Beirut is not solely material or physical; rather, it is intrinsically linked to the identities over those making claims over the space.¹⁶ Khalaf describes the fear and anxiety that Beirutis experienced in the postwar era, and the tension that played out between neoliberal development, including the inflow of capital and local imperatives for communities to carve out and shape their own spaces.¹⁷

The struggles over public space in Beirut, and the particular case of Horsh Beirut which we take up in greater detail, are taking place within a specific historical and political context. However, they and the practices of privatization and restriction which they are fighting against clearly figure into regional and global trajectories and arguments. The following sections will elaborate on the particular context and current status of public space within Beirut, as well as the

¹⁵ Harvey, "The Right to the City."

¹⁶ Samir Khalaf, *Heart of Beirut: Reclaiming the Bourj*. London: Saqi, 2006.

¹⁷ Ibid.

ongoing struggles over the character and identity of those spaces.

Post-War Development and Public Space in Beirut

After the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1991, the city of Beirut was in shambles. Rafiq Hariri, who became the country's first postwar prime minister in 1992, founded a construction company named The Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of the Beirut Central District, known more commonly as Solidere, specifically for the purpose of rebuilding and developing Beirut. Solidere, owned partly by the government and partly by private investors (including Hariri himself), embarked upon a mission of remaking Beirut as a cosmopolitan global capital that would attract foreign investment and tourism and serve as a core around which the Lebanese economy could be rebuilt.¹⁸ At the core of this mission was the (demolition and) reconstruction of downtown Beirut into a neoliberal urban center, a reimagined "central suq" to serve, in Najib Hourani's words, "as the urban expression of Lebanon's regional and global role" as a gateway and "center for financial services, trade, and tourism-between West and East."¹⁹ Solidere constructed a new downtown that paid some homage to the Ottoman and French architectural styles that prevail in the city, side-by-side with high-end luxury fashion and automobile stores, hulking bank buildings and skyscrapers, and a massive top-of-the-line cinema, thereby replacing a pre-war central district that had served as a bustling hub of interaction and exchange into a space of consumption for tourists and the wealthy.

However, this neoliberal ethos did not end in downtown Beirut, rather, it characterized development throughout the city in the 1990's and 2000's. Many municipal officials have

¹⁸ Najib B. Hourani, 2015. "People or profit? Two post-conflict reconstructions in Beirut.," *Human Organization* 74, (2) (Summer): 174-184, <http://proxygw.wrlc.org/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.proxygw.wrlc.org/docview/1688055059?accountid=11243> (accessed February 9, 2017).

¹⁹ Ibid.

followed Hariri's example and maintained direct or indirect ties to construction and engineering firms that benefit from the privatization and development of areas such as the Beirut waterfront, raising accusations of corruption among Lebanese activists and the public at large.²⁰ In addition to entrusting the city's development to private or semi-private firms, officials gave priority to capitalist projects like malls and luxury condos over those that would benefit the public or the lower classes, such as affordable housing or public spaces.²¹

The rush to privatize space in the city and maximize profits coincided with a desire to construct urban space to prevent threatening inter-sectarian mingling, which was considered a threat with the potential to reignite tensions and even lead to a return to armed conflict.²² These tendencies have all converged and have resulted in, among other things, a lack of urban public space in Beirut. Abir Saksouk-Sasso refers to this situation as one "in which the usual provider of public space, namely the sovereign, is either disinterested in or openly at war with such spaces."²³ In order to understand just how few and far between truly public, open spaces are in Beirut, and thus the importance of Horsh Beirut as one of the only remaining examples of such a space, it is helpful to review the main public spaces of the city one by one. We will review here the most relevant spaces: the reconstructed Downtown Beirut, the Corniche, Sanayeh Gardens, and the public beaches. The vast majority of the public spaces that do exist, as we shall see, are either highly secured and regulated, subject to threatened or actual impingement by neoliberal

²⁰ Reinoud Leenders, *Spoils of Truce : Corruption and State-Building in Postwar Lebanon*, 1st ed, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012.

²¹ Saksouk-Sasso, Abir . "Making Spaces for Communal Sovereignty: The Story of Beirut's Dalieh." *Arab Studies Journal* 23, no. 1 (2015): 296.
<http://search.proquest.com.proxygw.wrlc.org/docview/1791001585>.

²² Mona Fawaz and Hiba Bou Akar, "Practicing (in)Security in the City," *City & Society* 24, no. 2 (Aug, 2012): 105-109. doi:10.1111/j.1548-744X.2012.01070.x.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxygw.wrlc.org/doi/10.1111/j.1548-744X.2012.01070.x/abstract>.

²³ Saksouk-Sasso, *Making Spaces for Communal Sovereignty: The Story of Beirut's Dalieh*.

development, or inaccessible for reasons of class or sectarian identity (or a combination of these factors).

The space constructed by Solidere's downtown reconstruction project can only be considered performatively rather than substantively public for both class-based and securitization reasons. In the first case, the luxury shops and expensive cafes that line the downtown area are clearly intended for the upper class, rather than for the majority of the Lebanese public for whom such goods and experiences are out of reach. Ever since the assassination of Rafiq Hariri in 2005 and the subsequent Cedar Revolution, during which an estimated 150,000 Lebanese demonstrated in downtown Beirut to protest the assassination and Syria's continued presence in Lebanon, Solidere's downtown space has been subject to further and further securitization.²⁴ This only intensified after the area saw yet another wave of protests in 2015, as part of the "You Stink" movement (discussed in the next section). Prior to these protests, ID checks and other security measures were performed upon entrance to Nejme Square, an iconic Art Deco-style square in the heart of downtown Beirut; however, after the 2015 protests, according to some reports, Lebanese nationals were denied access to the square completely, while foreign nationals (or those who were perceived to be) were allowed to enter, a practice that we will see yet again in the policing of Horsh Beirut.²⁵ Downtown Beirut and especially Nejme Square, which houses the Lebanese parliament building, continues to be policed and its boundaries secured by armed guards, with security increased during times of political change or turmoil.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ "Lebanese are Forbidden from Accessing Nejme Square in Downtown Beirut, but Foreigners Can," Accessed March 6, 2017. <https://stateofmind13.com/2016/03/18/lebanese-are-forbidden-from-accessing-nejme-square-in-downtown-beirut-but-foreigners-can/>.

²⁶ "Security Tightens Up as Lebanon Tries Once More to End the Presidential Vacuum," *Al-Bawaba News*, October 31, 2016. <http://www.albawaba.com/news/security-tightens-lebanon-tries-once-more-end-presidential-vacuum-898976>.

The most recognizable and well-used public space in Beirut is the Corniche, or the long strip of paved area that stretches along Beirut's coastline. The Corniche was established in the early 20th century, and modernized in the early 2000's, lined with palm trees and a number of benches. It is a lively space, with people from all different segments of Beiruti society carrying out a variety of different activities along the sea at any time of day. On warm afternoons, it is common to see young joggers, old fisherman, young boys, and women of all ages and in all varieties of dress sharing the space. Laleh Khalili describes the Corniche as "the last truly public space in Beirut," an open space with fresh air and sea breeze that provides a welcome contrast for many residents of Beirut and its suburbs to the city's crowded streets and exhaust-filled air.²⁷ The Corniche, however, can become overcrowded at times, especially during public holidays and on the weekends. In our interview with Mona Fawaz, she explained, "The Corniche especially in the Sunday evenings, during Eid especially, [one] can't walk" because of the crowds.²⁸ It is also important to note here that the Corniche is not especially threatening as a public space from the perspective of political elites, as the structure of the space itself, as a long, narrow, winding stretch of sidewalk, does not lend easily to purposeful mass gatherings or demonstrations.

Aside from Solidere's downtown and the Corniche, there are a few public gardens in Beirut, many of which are too small to constitute significant public space. One of the largest of these gardens, Sanayeh Garden, is located in the Hamra neighborhood, and features playgrounds, a track for walking and jogging, a large fountain, and more. The garden underwent significant renovation and was reopened to the public in 2014. However, it was the Azadea Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of retail giant Azadea Group, not the Lebanese government or

²⁷ Laleh Khalili, "The Politics of Pleasure: Promenading on the Corniche and Beachgoing," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34, no. 4 (Aug, 2016): 583-600. doi:10.1177/0263775815623538.

²⁸ Interview with Mona Fawaz.

even Solidere, who funded this renovation.²⁹ The park is surrounded by a fence, its entrance and entrants monitored by private security guards, revealing once again how most public spaces in Beirut are not fully public, and how the Lebanese government applies a neoliberal attitude toward the development of public space. Sanayeh Garden has also seen controversy surrounding which activities are allowed and forbidden within the park. Initially, it was forbidden to consume food or drink within the park, to sit on the grass, to smoke, or engage in a number of other activities that might be considered typical in other public spaces. Nominally, these rules exist to prevent Beirutis from using the park “irresponsibly” and causing harm to the plant life or others around them, a similar argument to that advanced by the mayor in justifying the continued closure of Horsh Beirut. However, some have speculated that the rules and the security guards are in place not only to protect the park and the people in it, but also to prevent or dissuade members of certain groups, namely the lower classes, troublesome youth, and refugees, from entering.³⁰

There is only one remaining stretch of official public beach in Beirut, called Ramlet al-Baida. The rest of the coastline that falls within the city limits has been developed into privatized spaces, mostly reserved for luxury consumption practices. In addition to a number of high-end beach clubs and resorts, Solidere completed a massive coastal development project called Zaitunay Bay in 2014. The complex includes a yacht marina, several high-end restaurants, and other sites for elite entertainment and consumption. Ramlet al-Baida itself has been subject to recent threats of private development. Despite being a state-recognized public space, plans have been drawn and construction is underway to build a massive resort by the name of “Eden Bay”

²⁹ Yazan Al-Saadi and Laura Bitar, "Sanayeh Garden: The Privatization of Public Spaces," *Al-Akhbar English* (Beirut, Lebanon), Jun 6, 2014. <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/20077>.

³⁰ Ibid.

on the South side of this stretch of beach.

Although it is not technically public property, there is another spot on the coast of Beirut that has been treated as a public space for many years. Dalieh is located near Beirut's famous Pigeon Rocks, and served for many years as one of the few places in which Beirutis could gather for leisure without paying an entrance fee or paying for goods.³¹ Saksouk-Sasso writes,

...although Dalieh is neither a park nor public property, it is one of the main spaces for the public in the city. The area boasts a number of informal seashore kiosks and a steady stream of visitors enjoying the sea, picnicking, swimming, bathing, and strolling. Dalieh is also a prime destination for divers, who come from different parts of Beirut to exercise their passion for jumping off high cliffs into the Mediterranean waters... Today Dalieh includes a variety of social groups, such as Beirut fishermen, corniche visitors, suburban dwellers, Iraqi refugees, Syrian migrant workers and refugees, and others. It is also site of grand Nowruz festivities of the Kurdish community.³²

The land that makes up Dalieh is owned by three private real estate companies, all of which were owned by Rafiq Hariri when purchased in the mid-1990's.³³ In 2014, after years of negotiations with the fishermen who had been living in informal settlements on the land over compensation for their displacement, these companies began the process of developing Dalieh, fencing it off with barbed wire and establishing security guards to monitor the area.³⁴ The case of Dalieh is important in part because it illuminates an important point about what makes a public space. Focusing only on state-sanctioned public spaces is limiting in a city like Beirut, where people may repurpose what spaces they can for unintended uses. For instance, the poor regularly build and inhabit informal settlements on the periphery of the city,³⁵ and youth repurpose empty

³¹ Yazan Al-Saadi, "Daliyeh and the Ongoing Struggle for Beirut's Public Spaces," *Al-Akhbar English* (Beirut, Lebanon), May 7, 2014. <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/19679>.

³² Saksouk-Sasso, *Making Spaces for Communal Sovereignty: The Story of Beirut's Dalieh*.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Mona Fawaz, "Neoliberal Urbanity and the Right to the City: A View from Beirut's Periphery." *Development and Change* 40, no. 5 (2009): 827-852.

lots and other spaces into informal soccer fields.³⁶ Asef Bayat has shown how members of the public shape space and take it over through practices of necessity and daily life, calling this phenomenon the “quiet encroachment of the ordinary.”³⁷ While our study deals primarily with “official” public spaces (and lack thereof), the issue of Dalieh is highly relevant in that it inspired one of the earliest and most significant popular contestations over public space in the city.

Contestations over Public Space

Recent years have witnessed an increased interest in and struggles over public space in Beirut. These struggles have played out most prominently along the city’s seashore, beginning with the contestation over the privatization of Dalieh. Fishermen and other members of the public launched demonstrations against plans to build a large resort and mall on the property, and activists launched the “Civil Campaign to Protect the Dalieh of Raouche” campaign in late 2014. In addition to demonstrations and lobbying efforts, two NGOs, NAHNOO and the Green Line Association (also key actors in the campaign to reopen Horsh Beirut, who will be discussed at length below) launched a lawsuit against the municipality on grounds that the privatization of Dalieh violates citizens’ legal rights to access the beach.³⁸ In March of 2015, the Ministry of Environment in Lebanon announced that it had drafted a decree to name Dalieh a “national protected area,” which would prevent its commercial development.³⁹ Even this was not enough to guarantee Dalieh’s protection, however, and its final status is still unclear, though construction has been halted and activists successfully tore down the barbed wire fence around the area in

³⁶ Nadine Bekdache and Abir Saksouk-Sasso. "Al-La'B Wa Al-Medina: Mejhud Jema'i L-Suna' Mel'Ab Kurat Al-Qadam Al-Sha'biyya." *Mumarisat Al-'Am 'an Al-Mesahat Al-Mushtarika Fi Beirut*, Al-Safir Newspaper, 2016.

³⁷ Bayat, “Politics in the city-inside-out.”

³⁸ Catherine Moughalian, "The Dalieh of Raouche, Lebanon," Accessed April 8, 2017. <https://ejatlas.org/print/the-dalieh-of-raouche-lebanon>.

³⁹ "Ministry Announces Decree to Protect Dalieh Coast," *Beirut Report*, March 24, 2015. Accessed April 3, 2017. <http://www.beirutreport.com/2015/03/ministry-announces-law-to-protect-dalieh-coast.html>.

September.⁴⁰ Ali Darwish, Director of the Green Line Association, considers this campaign a success.⁴¹

A similar campaign is currently underway, as of this writing in spring 2017, to save Ramlet al-Baida from capitalist development in the form of a luxury resort called Eden Bay. Activists, NGOs, and members of the public have responded with public demonstrations and lobbying, attracting a significant amount of press coverage.⁴² Recently, the Green Line Association submitted request for review of this project to Lebanon's Shura Council, which responded by temporarily halting construction due to the lack of any environmental impact study on the project.⁴³ However, the Council reversed this decision in April 2017, allowing the construction of Eden Bay to continue.⁴⁴ The official discussions of the project have focused less on the demands of the public for their right to public space as enshrined in Lebanese law, and more on specifics of land deeds, titles, and building regulations.⁴⁵ This is very much in line with typical tactics used by officials to appropriate space for private development, as recounted to us by Ali Darwish. Darwish described how the ownership and legal status of land is often changed over time through a series of legal amendments and title changes for the specific purpose of turning public land into private lots that can be sold and built upon.⁴⁶ As of this writing, the future of the Eden Bay project, and Ramlet al-Baida as a whole, is unclear, and activists and

⁴⁰ "How Activists Reclaimed Beirut's Coast and Why it Matters," *Beirut Report*, September 13, 2015. <http://www.beirutreport.com/2015/09/how-activists-reclaimed-beirut-coast-and-why-it-matters.html>.

⁴¹ Interview with Ali Darwish

⁴² Claudette Sarkis, "Li Hadha Al-Asbab Turaj'a Mejlis Al-Shura 'an Qirari Waqf Tenfeedh Rakhsat "Eden Rock,"" *Annahar*, April 11, 2017. <https://www.annahar.com/article/569025>.

⁴³ Nadine Mazloum, "Shura Council Temporarily Halts Construction of Ramlet Al-Baida Luxury Beach Resort," Accessed April 11, 2017. <https://newsroomnomad.com/shura-council-temporarily-halts-construction-ramlet-al-baida-luxury-beach-resort/>.

⁴⁴ "Al-Mukhalifat Mustamira Fi Mashroua "Eden Bay,"" Anonymous Beirut: Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International, 2017. <http://bit.ly/2q4u1UD>.

⁴⁵ Mona, Fawaz. "Charting the Beirut Seafront's Future: an Open Letter to the City Council." Accessed March 30, 2017. <http://lcps-lebanon.org/featuredArticle.php?id=111>.

⁴⁶ Interview with Ali Darwish

academics continue to speak out against encroachment on public space.

Rising Tide of Civic Engagement and Activism: the Impact of “You Stink”

These struggles over public space in general, and the campaign to reopen Horsh Beirut specifically, can be situated as part of a growing trend in Lebanese politics over the last several years toward cross-sectarian, often youth-led, movements that emphasize provision of civic services and an end to government corruption over traditional identity and sect-based politics. These groups have often articulated their grievances and demands in a “rights-based” frame, positioning themselves as citizens of a state (i.e., as participants in their own governance and members of a body politic in which they have a stake and a say⁴⁷), rather than members of an identity group such as Sunnis or Christians who are demanding better services in exchange for votes, as is more typical in Lebanon.⁴⁸ A number of NGOs have been working on the issue of public space, especially public green space, in Lebanon for many years, but it was only recently that urban public space became one of the most prominent issues spurring mobilization by Lebanese civil society at large.⁴⁹ Certainly what Mona Harb refers to as “the emergence of new young voices actively concerned about their rights to the city, to spatial practices and experiences”⁵⁰ dates back at least to the mid-2000’s, but several interlocutors of this project pointed to the 2015 “You Stink” protests as a point in which many of these energies coalesced and activism based on rights and civic issues reached a height. These protests emerged in 2015 after the government closed the local landfill without identifying an alternative method of

⁴⁷ This is a simplified explanation of a concept that has been subject to vigorous debate, including in recent years. See, for example, Shafir, Gershon, *Citizenship Debates: A Reader*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

⁴⁸ See, for example, Daniel Corstange. *The Price of a Vote in the Middle East*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

⁴⁹ Mona Harb, "Public Spaces and Spatial Practices: Claims from Beirut." Accessed April 5, 2017. <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/14710/public-spaces-and-spatial-practices-claims-from-be>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

dealing with garbage, leading to a pileup of approximately 22,000 tons of garbage on the city streets within just one week.⁵¹ Marwan Kraidy argues that the “You Stink” movement was led primarily by seasoned activists who drew upon prior experience and rhetoric that echoed that of the Arab Spring to generate mass mobilization. According to Kraidy, this mobilization was, as of 2016, “the latest in a string of movements—all short-lived—that have claimed a secular-progressive mantle in a country with a deeply entrenched sectarian political system.”⁵² In July and August 2015, tens of thousands of protesters occupied the streets of downtown Beirut demanding a solution to the trash crisis and an end to government corruption, which they saw as the root cause of this situation.

Corinne Deek of the Heinrich Boll Foundation (another important actor in the “Together to Reopen Horsh Beirut campaign) sees these 2015 protests as a turning point in public interest in and mobilization around public space in Beirut. “We had a little demonstration...” she said, and “the people who were in the garbage demonstrations suddenly heard that, for example, there was this public space in Raouche that was going to be closed, and those people demonstrating there went down to Raouche and started cutting the fences and started demonstrating there.”⁵³ She connected the mobilization around the garbage crisis to an overall increase in participation in public space-oriented protest activities, stating, “we had a lot of demonstrations [in Raouche], we had maybe 20, 30 people, and when this garbage crisis started, and when people started being aware, we would get 500 people going down to these things.”⁵⁴ Finally, Deek sees this mobilization as directly related to the growing interest in the reopening of the Horsh since 2015.

⁵¹ Josh Wood, “Beirut's Trash War Pushes Lebanon to the Brink.” *The National*, Jul 23, 2015.

⁵² Marwan M. Kraidy, “Trashing the Sectarian System? Lebanon’s “You Stink” Movement and the Making of Affective Publics.” *Communication and the Public* 1, no. 1 (2016): 19-26.
<http://journals.sagepub.com.proxygw.wrlc.org/doi/full/10.1177/2057047315617943>.

⁵³ Interview with Corinne Deek

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

“These people that were demonstrating about the garbage crisis,” she explained, “started also talking about Horsh Beirut, and now you have all the people on all the different bodies and institutions, all talking about these things.”⁵⁵

Mona Fawaz emphasized that the garbage crisis was an important moment for engaging members of the middle and upper classes on civic issues. According to Fawaz, this crisis was significant because “suddenly [the upper classes] could not take care of their trash... suddenly they realized that there are some things that, no matter how rich you are, you cannot just say ‘abracadabra’ [and they are solved]. No one was willing to come take it. It is not a coincidence that the trash becomes a place where you see a shared demand from the people.”⁵⁶ Out of this context of piqued public interest in and outrage over the lack of public services in the country grew a larger movement, one which is still impacting the country’s political life and will likely continue to do so in coming years. The most public and concrete manifestation of this movement is Beirut Madinati.

Beirut Madinati came into being in 2015-2016 as a collection of politically-engaged activists, intellectuals, and citizens who were motivated by the garbage crisis and resulting mass mobilization. The group organized a political list around non-sectarian issues such as “affordability, mobility, waste management, air quality, public spaces, basic services, and municipal governance”⁵⁷ for the 2016 Beirut municipal elections. Beirut Madinati’s list performed very well, winning 40% of the vote and losing out only to a coalition of politicians from a number of traditionally competing political groups led by Saad Hariri, the son of late (and

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Interview with Mona Fawaz.

⁵⁷ Beirut Madinati, "About Beirut Madinati," Accessed February 1, 2017.
<http://beirutmadinati.com/about-beirut-madinati/?lang=en>.

beloved) Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.⁵⁸ The inclusion of the right to public spaces in the organization's platform, and the admirable performance of their electoral list, demonstrates the rising importance of public space (among other civic issues) to the Beirut public. Although the campaign to reopen Horsh Beirut to the public, discussed in detail in the next section, began officially in 2010-2011, it is no coincidence, then, that demonstrations and public interest increased in 2015, resulting finally in the partial reopening of the Horsh.

Case Study: Horsh Beirut

A Brief History of the Horsh

Though the exact origins of the Horsh al-Sanawbar, Arabic for "forest of the pines" are contested, the park has undoubtedly been a constant throughout the major periods that trace out the history of Lebanon. In fact, Anis Freihat claims that the name "Beirut" is derived from the Phoenician word "Beriet", which translates to the Arabic word for "pine,"⁵⁹ giving a sense of the legacy and significance of the pines to the city. Part of the legend of Horsh Beirut derives from its long history in which the Crusaders, Mamluks, Ottomans, and Allies of both world wars that have used timber from the forest to construct various structures.

Regarding the Horsh itself, the vast green space was officially established by Druze leader Emir Fakhreddine during the 17th century, supposedly to contain the incoming sand that was flowing into Beirut from the wind, which caused health and sanitation issues. At that point, the area was estimated to be around 1 million square meters. Some postulate that the forest existed in some form during the Phoenician era (circa 1500 to 300 BCE). Fakhreddine cultivated the forest carefully, planting new trees in methodical ways that enabled a clear look to the

⁵⁸ "Beirut Shocks its Old Guard," *The Economist* (Online), May 11, 2016.
<http://search.proquest.com.proxygw.wrlc.org/docview/1788391802>.

⁵⁹ Fadi Shayya, "Enacting Public Space: History and Social Practices of Beirut's Horch Al-Sanawbar." The American University of Beirut, 2006.

horizon.⁶⁰ During the Ottoman era, the Horsh was known as a central meeting location for families and friends celebrating Eid holidays. In fact, there was even a “Horsh el-Eid” celebrated on Eid al-Adha to welcome back Muslims who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca, which further popularized the Horsh in Beirut culture.

The role of the Horsh was amplified further when the walls of what is known today as Riad el-Solh were eventually torn down, causing Beirutis to relocate their Eid celebrations to the Horsh.⁶¹ In 1917, the Ottomans built a casino inside the Horsh, which would later become the French ambassador’s official residence during the mandate period (1923-1946). Though the area is no longer part of the Horsh because of dramatic downsizing of the area, it remains the residence of the French ambassador. This construction project reduced the size of the Horsh significantly. A horse racetrack, known as the Beirut Hippodrome, was built in 1921 on the property of the Horsh, and remains active to this day. These various construction projects that came as a result of Beirut’s massive urban sprawl dramatically reduced the size of the Horsh, reducing it from an area of over 1,250,000 square meters to 255,000 square meters today.

Under the French, the Horsh was officially made into a “park” during the first half of the 20th century. Following Lebanese independence, ownership was transferred to the nascent Lebanese state. The 1950’s ushered in an era of further development in Lebanon state planning, causing the development of major roads and highways, which significantly decreased the size of the Horsh further. In 1958, a cemetery, Al-Shohada, was built that also reduced the size of the Horsh. It was not until the 1960’s when park was officially recognized as such by former Prime Minister Sami al-Solh, which led to the fencing of the park to protect it from “harm and abuse”,

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Taha Wali, *Bayrūt Fī Al-Tārīkh Wa-Al-Ḥaḍārah Wa-Al-‘umrān*, Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm lil-Mala'yi'n, 1993.

including theft of the park's timber⁶² which was a widespread issue at the time. These development projects also resulted in the uprooting of a habitat that many different animals lived in for decades. Following this deforestation, many of the animals were forced to migrate to the north of Lebanon. In the years leading up to the civil war, the park went through a series of reimaginings for its potential, including ideas for a "thematic garden", a park with various cultural and recreational activities, and even as a space for a tower spanning over 400 meters tall designed in the likeness of Paris' Eiffel Tower.⁶³ In the 1970's, another cemetery, Rawdat al-Shahadeen, was built.

The civil war would put an effective halt on further development plans. During the war, the park became a central area for exchange of weapons, primarily due to its location next to the Green Line, the demarcation area that separated Christian East and Muslim West Beirut.⁶⁴ It also became a de-facto area of refuge for those displaced during the war. Consequently, it was a target for Israeli airstrikes following its invasion in 1982, and approximately three-fourths of the forest was burned down, leaving only around 320 trees left in the entire space.⁶⁵

The war represented a significant turning point in the park's history, signaling an effective end to the Horsh as a public space. From the Ottoman era up until the war, the Horsh was a well-known attraction in Beirut; many had a positive perception of the park, and could recall visiting and playing in the park. Because the park closed in 1982, the generation that was born during and after the war were not likely to know much about the green space because of the 30 year closure. In the initial fieldwork done to prepare for the campaign to reopen Horsh Beirut, NAHNOO interviewed youth and young adults to determine which kinds of spaces they would

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Shayya, "Enacting Public Space: History and Social Practices of Beirut's Horch Al-Sanawbar."

⁶⁴ Interview with Joana Hammour.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

most often meet in. The youth reported that they would use public streets to play, which of course has massive safety implications. Older youth would cite hookah cafes as their primary meeting spots. As confirmed by numerous secondhand accounts from our interlocutors, and from our personal experiences discussing our research on the park with Beirutis of many different generations, Horsh Beirut's extended period of closure created a generation of Lebanese who were simply unaware of this public space that should be available to them, theoretically⁶⁶.

It was not until the 1990's when attention was once again turned to Horsh Beirut. Because of the long-vested interest of France in the Horsh area as the site of the residence of the French ambassador to Lebanon, the Regional Council of the Ile-de-France (the administrative body of the Paris municipality) was heavily involved in replanting and designing the park following its destruction during the war. The Council sponsored the 9,000,000-Franc project, which was organized and managed by the 'Conseil d'Aménagement Urbain de la Région d'Ile – de-France', and the 'Agence des Espaces Verts de la Région d'Ile-de-France,' both organizations associated with the Paris municipality. The new design was drawn up by Lebanese architect Pierre Nehme, executed by a Lebanese company, and supervised by the Lebanese 'Council for Development and Reconstruction.'⁶⁷ Ile-De-France's significant interest in the restoration of the park can be understood as a colonial remnant of the relationship between France and Lebanon during the mandate period, beginning in 1923 and spanning two decades until Lebanon's independence in 1943.

Nonetheless, former Mayor of Beirut Mohammad Ghaziri lauded the park's reconstruction as "symbolically essential of Beirut restoring its past glory."⁶⁸ This interpretation

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Shayya, "Enacting Public Space: History and Social Practices of Beirut's Horch Al-Sanawbar."

⁶⁸ Ibid.

of the Horsh reflects its significance and place in Beirut and Lebanese history. It was during this project when the park transitioned aesthetically more into a park rather than simply a forest. This was accomplished through the installation of grass areas and the creation of hills. Some trees were planted, and the Ile-de-France claimed that they needed undisturbed time to fully root, estimating 10 years. In 1999, part of the Horsh on the western side was reopened following this project. This created two separate areas within the wider Horsh: one which is open to the public, in which residents of adjacent neighborhood Tarik Jdeideh play soccer and basketball, have picnics, and take walks, which is separated by barbed wire, steel bars, and wire mesh from the wider open space of the park [see Appendix B for a map of the Horsh].

For years after the park was deemed fit to be reopened, up until the official reopening in 2016, Horsh Beirut was kept closed to the majority of the Lebanese public unless they were able to acquire a special permit from the office of the Governor of Beirut. The reasons for this requirement vary, but many have sensed a palpable lack of desire on behalf of the Municipality of Beirut to fully reopen Horsh Beirut as a public space. The park lies between three neighborhoods of different class and sectarian makeup: Tarik Jdeideh, Tayouneh, and Badaro. As mentioned earlier, the park is situated directly on the Green Line, what used to be (and in a way, remains) a contentious wartime divider of the city. Its location is thus imbued with meaning and memory, a significant reason explaining why the park's status as a public space has been contested (we will explore issues of access from this and other angles in another section below). Up until 2016, the main entrance to the primary space of the park, located on the Badaro side, a wealthy and predominantly Christian area, was guarded and the park remained largely unused and unknown. It was in this context that several NGOs began a sustained campaign to reopen the Horsh to the Lebanese public as a free public space.

“Together to Reopen Horsh Beirut”

In 2010, five years after the trees and grasses of the park were said to be ready to receive visitors, Horsh Beirut remained closed to the public. It was in this year that a number of NGOs came together and to formed a coalition that would focus on reopening the park. On their website, www.horshbeirut.com (inactive at the time of this writing), the coalition states that they:

... believe that the presence of suitable public spaces is a basic right for all people. We believe that all Lebanese citizens, tourists, and people living in Lebanon should be given the chance to benefit from the public places present on all levels. Moreover, we believe that our government has a legal and ethical responsibility to set up the present public spaces in accordance to its usage by people.⁶⁹

Founded in 2009, an NGO called NAHNOO (meaning “we” in Arabic) was a driving force behind the organization of this coalition. NAHNOO focuses on youth empowerment through civic engagement and advocacy, and has taken an organizational interest in issues of public space and privatization from its inception. A total of 19 additional organizations of various sizes and types joined the campaign. Among these were the Green Line Association, an organization that was among the first NGOs to form and begin working on environmental issues in the early post-war years.

The Green Line brought with it two decades of experience navigating the Lebanese political system and advocating specifically for the preservation of nature and green spaces in the country; they were, according to our contact within the organization, aware of the Horsh for many years, but had been too focused on other issues, such as the threats to public beaches, to concentrate on reopening the park. The Heinrich Boll Foundation, an international NGO associated with the German Green Party, also joined the coalition. This Foundation’s core interest and programmatic areas are “ecology and sustainability, democracy and human rights,

⁶⁹ Horsh Beirut’s official website: www.horshbeirut.com. See Appendix C for materials produced by the consortium describing their mission.

[and] self-determination and justice,”⁷⁰ and the issue of Horsh Beirut fit their under each of these categories. The issue was seen not only as an ecological issue, but one of citizens’ access to their basic rights to public space. In fact, the Heinrich Boll Foundation had already been working on the Horsh for many years prior to officially joining this coalition, co-organizing a yearly festival inside the park since 2010 to raise awareness of the space, and publishing a volume called *At the Edge of the City*, edited by Fadi Shayya, in which contributors presented studies of Horsh Beirut and its history, photographic essays and creative writing about the site, plans for potential futures of the park, and more.⁷¹ All three of these organizations also played (and continue to play) important roles in the struggles over Dalieh and Ramlet al-Baida. Assabil Friends of Public Libraries, Beirut Green Project, Save Beirut Heritage, the Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union, and the American University of Beirut’s Environment Club are a few of the other NGOs who participated, showing clearly how the issue of public space appeals to activists and others with a diverse range of identities and interests.

NAHNOO’s first step in this campaign was to draft scientific and social scientific studies on Horsh Beirut and its status as a public space that, as such, falls under the protection of Lebanese law. Between 2010 and 2011, they also worked with the Ile-de-France to create a “Roadmap for the Reopening of Horsh Beirut,” which presented the argument to reopen the park and provided specific details on how this could be accomplished. The Roadmap includes specific guidance for the Municipality on accessibility, behavior and entrance control, facilities and infrastructure, zoning, equipment, visitors’ facilities, and park management.⁷² The Roadmap was

⁷⁰ "Heinrich Boll’s Mission Statement," Accessed January 25, 2017. <https://lb.boell.org/en/mission-statement>.

⁷¹ Shayya, *At the Edge of the City: Reinhabiting Public Space Toward the Recovery of Beirut’s Horsh Al-Sanawbar*.

⁷² NAHNOO, *Roadmap for the Reopening of Horsh Beirut*, Beirut, 2010.

integral to NAHNOO's overall strategy of "becoming experts" on the park, and presenting a rational argument for its reopening. "What makes the strategy," explains NAHNOO's Joana Hammour, "is that a lot of NGOs go to the streets and yell, etc...Sometimes it is good to show that, but it is not enough. If you have nothing behind that, you cannot succeed. Studying the case, studying anything related to it, urban-wise, legally, etc., to understand the case and the challenge, to anticipate any challenges, and based on these studies, to build a strategy [is key]."⁷³ NAHNOO submitted this Roadmap to the Municipality directly.

The campaign also increased its awareness-raising initiatives in 2011, organizing tours of the Horsh for school children and holding a poster design competition to advertise the existence and closure of the space. In 2012, NAHNOO began to hold public dialogues with the Municipality about the Horsh,⁷⁴ another key part of their strategy. NAHNOO emphasized the importance of not only holding discussions with the authorities, but also of allowing citizens to attend and participate in these meetings, reiterating the importance of the matter at hand to the public at large. These discussions were open to all, and were videotaped, with the videos posted on NAHNOO's YouTube and other social media accounts after the fact. The members of the campaign to reopen Horsh Beirut also began to engage in more direct action related to opening the park in 2012. NAHNOO began painting signs on walls throughout the city, using graffiti stencils and spray paint, with the campaign's logo and the name of the campaign in Arabic ("*Horsh Beirut Li Kul En-nass*"), along with website and social media information for the campaign, to raise awareness. They also staged a public picnic inside the park, an action for which the Municipality granted a permit. Also in 2012, following a town hall meeting on the issue, the Municipality first announced their decision to reopen the park, although they stated

⁷³ Interview with Joana Hammour.

⁷⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/user/NahnooVideos>

that they would need at least a year to prepare their own studies of the Horsh and create their own plan for the reopening process.⁷⁵

Despite this statement, NAHNOO continued the campaign, raising awareness and increasing pressure on the Municipality by staging further direct actions. The most prominent and publicized of these actions was a “guerrilla picnic,” in which activists laid out squares of grass in patches of empty ground or sidewalk throughout the city, staging miniature picnics in these public areas with signs and information about the existence and continued closure of Horsh Beirut. The intention of this action was to turn citizens’ attention to the relative absence of accessible public space in the city, especially green space.⁷⁶ The action did successfully garner media attention to the park and its closure, but this was not sufficient to pressure the Municipality to take any significant action toward reopening the park.

In 2013 the Mayor of Beirut at that time, Bilal Hamad, renewed his promise to reopen the Horsh after a member of the campaign challenged him on the issue on a television show. However, the Municipality refused to set an exact date for the reopening. After two years without any sign of progress, NAHNOO and the other NGOs felt they were delaying the process, so “[they] went back to the streets,”⁷⁷ organizing protests outside the Municipality building to demand the reopening of the park. In 2015, NAHNOO publicly requested the partial reopening of the Horsh at the earliest possible time, resulting in a meeting between NGO officials and the governor of Beirut. When this meeting did not lead to immediate action, NAHNOO and the Green Line Association together threatened to sue the government for preventing access to a public space protected under Lebanese law. Ali Darwish of the Green Line Association views

⁷⁵ Interview with Joana Hammour.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

this step as the most important in terms of forcing real progress on the issue. Darwish, as a long-time veteran of Lebanese civil society, does not have much faith in the potential of dialogue with those in power, seeing public discussions primarily as a means for officials to make promises that they did not intend to keep. Instead, he emphasized the importance of legal action to the ultimate success of this (or any) campaign. Corinne Deek of the Heinrich Boll Foundation echoed the sentiment that many tactics in conjunction were necessary for the campaign to succeed, and that legal action may be an especially effective measure. Deek stated that,

...we had a lot of [media appearances], and in parallel there was also awareness[-raising], there was demonstration, there was research being done, also there was legally some steps being taken in order to challenge the municipality or... just to have some change in the country. Actually our partners decided to start doing it lately because they thought this is the only way, if we've been fighting for ten years and nothing is changing maybe this is the only thing that will trigger a change.⁷⁸

The coalition accompanied their legal threat with another large-scale demonstration outside the gates to the Horsh. This protest highlighted a policy that prevented Lebanese citizens from entering the park without a permit from the governor, even as those with foreign passports, or, according to some reports, those who “looked” foreign, were allowed to enter freely. Protesters wore brightly-colored wigs to caricature the idea of “looking foreign,” and made fake “visas” to allow them to enter the Horsh.⁷⁹ This event garnered significant media attention⁸⁰ and increasing pressure from the public, leading Governor Ziad Chebib to finally announce the date on which the Horsh would be partially reopened. It is worth noting that Chebib, rather than Hammad, was the one to make this announcement. In fact, this reflects the contentious dynamic between the offices of the governor and the head of Municipality (mayor) which also had an

⁷⁸ Interview with Corinne Deek.

⁷⁹ See Appendix C for a call to attend this protest [Arabic].

⁸⁰ “*Taharruk amam madkhal Horsh Beirut lil-mutallaba bi fetah-hu amam al-jamia*” (Video), *Elnashra*, May 16, 2015. <http://bit.ly/1d6M6Yf> ; “*La teqta'ou 'anna hawa' Horsh Beirut.*” *Al-Safir* Newspaper, May 16, 2015. <http://assafir.com/Article/1/419969/RssFeed>.

impact on the campaign to reopen Horsh Beirut and its success. The tension and competition between the offices appears to be a result of both specific personalities within each office during the time in question and elite manipulation of political power for personal and financial gains. Darwish stated that by the end of his term as mayor, Hammad had “made a political mess,”⁸¹ alienating fellow political elites across party lines (particularly the governor), and even those within the Future Party, the political party from which he himself hails. Darwish believed that, despite the appointment of Ziad Chebib as a new governor with a relatively “neutral” political background in 2014, Hammad’s “mess” and desire to maintain his reputation prohibited a smooth working relationship between the two offices. For this reason, Darwish indicated that Chebib’s desire to “shame” mayor Bilal Hamad, who had stalled on the issue for three years, and to look good himself, played an important role in his decision to reopen the park.

A story told to us by Joana Hammour of NAHNOO illuminates another way in which the self-serving nature of elite maneuvering in Beirut, and inter-elite competition, impacts urban development of the city and the Together to Reopen Horsh Beirut campaign specifically. As the story goes, Hammad removed benches that NAHNOO installed in the Tarik el-Jdeideh neighborhood, along with a number of new trees, as part of a campaign to bring more greenery to the neighborhood and increase awareness of the benefits of natural beauty and public space in the city. According to Hammour, this was because the provision of such new benches made him look bad in a neighborhood that was his own home and that of his political party, the Future Party. Hammour explained that in the end NAHNOO could not complain too much about the disappearance of the benches, as they mysteriously reappeared inside Horsh Beirut a few weeks later.⁸²

⁸¹ Interview with Ali Darwish.

⁸² Interview with Joana Hammour.

In September 2015, Horsh Beirut was opened to the public one day per week, and it finally was opened every day for a limited number of hours in June 2016. As of this writing, the opening hours of the park are from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 7 a.m. to sundown on Saturday and Sunday. However, the campaign did not cease there. In the fall of 2016, two construction projects were announced that threaten the existence and accessibility of the Horsh. The first is a field hospital that was promised to the Lebanese by the Egyptian government as part of a medical aid package following the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, during which large portions of Beirut's southern suburbs were razed by bombs.⁸³ According to Hammour, the Lebanese government has been searching for years for a place to put this hospital, and only recently decided that they would build it on the land of Horsh Beirut, despite the fact that construction on public space is a violation of Lebanese law. Specifically, the hospital will be (and is being) built on the section of the park that is currently being used for sports and socializing specifically by working class residents of Tarik Jdeideh. Construction of this hospital began in early 2017, and has been met by renewed protest, lobbying, and a flurry of media attention, in international media sources such as Al-Jazeera as well as in numerous Lebanese outlets.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, the construction has continued unabated, and according to an image published on Facebook on April 7, 2017, the structure is nearing completion.⁸⁵ The Municipality has also proposed construction of a new soccer stadium on the grounds of the park, a project which they claim will not impact the ecological health or public use of the park.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ "Lebanese Rally to Save Beirut's Last Green Space" (video), Al-Jazeera English, March 5, 2017. <http://video.aljazeera.com/channels/eng/videos/lebanese-rally-to-save-beirut-last-green-site/5348160733001>.

⁸⁵ Horsh Beirut's Facebook Page, accessed April 10, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/HorshBeirut/photos/rpp.109633709095626/1374387402620244/?type=3&theater>.

NAHNOO and the Green Line Association refute this claim, stating that the Municipality has not conducted an environmental analysis of the project, and that it is clear that building a hospital and a stadium on public land is both illegal and a serious threat to the existence of the Horsh. They also point out that, while a hospital that serves refugees and poorer residents of Beirut would be beneficial, there are other existing buildings that currently sit abandoned that could be renovated and used for this purpose instead of undertaking a new construction. In an interview, Joana Hammour suggested that the financial interests of governing elites are largely behind these projects, noting that the current mayor of Beirut, Jamal Itani, is the head of Solidere,⁸⁶ constituting a blatant conflict of interest.

Clearly the struggle over Horsh Beirut is not over. While we consider the campaign to reopen the Horsh a success in that the NGO coalition was able to pressure the government into opening the park to Lebanese people, the new phase of the campaign must work to protect that newly public space from the threat of new construction. Finally, there is some question as to the substantive publicity of the Horsh as a space, even now that it has been opened. Full access to the park, as we explore below, depends on a number of factors beyond the removal of the requirement to hold a permit to access the space.

Assessing Access: Is Horsh Beirut truly a public space?

The accessibility of public space is influenced by a variety of factors. In particular, the Horsh's accessibility to the public has shifted over time and continues to evolve. The park's location plays a major role in its access to different members of the nearby neighborhoods and Beirutis in general. More generally, class also determines the use and availability of the Horsh. Another important factor, and one which is perhaps unique to this case, is the way in which

⁸⁶ Interview with Joana Hammour.

citizenship has been used as a criteria by which Lebanese people have been prevented from accessing the space. This phenomenon is not uncommon in Beirut, primarily around commercial and tourist areas, but is especially notable in the case of the Horsh. The role of gender and sexuality is significant as well, especially as it relates to how the Lebanese government perceives the public, and how public morality is monitored by the state.

It has been widely reported that the Municipality of Beirut kept the Horsh closed to the public due to the concern that the people would not know how to “properly” treat a public space. A former director of the Horsh preferred the permit system because it created a bureaucratic barrier, limiting access. According to one of our interviewees, she claimed that the Horsh was designated for sports, yoga, and other activities, and that by fully opening it to the public, the Lebanese would “ruin” it.⁸⁷ The former Mayor of Beirut, Bilal Hamad, listed a variety of “undesirable” activities he claimed would take place in the park if it were to be opened to the public: picnicking, walking on the grass, smoking water pipes, kissing, and engaging in political violence. A desirable public space, in Hamad's portrayal, would be an uninhabited park, sterile, devoid of surprises, and marked by a narrow definition of appropriate behavior.”⁸⁸ A representative of NAHNOO explained this rationale from their perspective:

“Another reason why they closed it [Horsh Beirut], according to the director...what I heard...was that it was “too pretty” to open to these people...they didn't know how to behave, they'd trash it, and [they're] savages...can't be educated, etc. So it's [Horsh Beirut] just made for sports and joggers, in her opinion.”⁸⁹

This paternalistic attitude was couched in a language of concern for the park and its ecological environment. It is clear that Beirutis were expected to pose a fire hazard through smoking, to throw trash in the park, or to otherwise harm the grass or trees. It is important to note, however,

⁸⁷ Interview with Joana Hammour.

⁸⁸ Saksouk-Sasso, *Making Spaces for Communal Sovereignty: The Story of Beirut's Dalieh*.

⁸⁹ Interview with Joana Hammour.

that this paternalistic attitude was directed to a very particular segment of Lebanese society: the poor and uneducated. This reveals a classist mentality in which the poorer Lebanese citizens living around the park are seen as uncivilized and “unready” for the space which should belong to them. This narrative evokes the question of ownership and public space: to whom does public space belong? In the view of the Beirut Municipality, the limited hours and accessibility to the Horsh was ideal because it was available to a certain type of Beiruti, i.e. the upper class.

When designing the project, we thought it important to explore gender as it was applicable to the case of Horsh Beirut. Aseel Sawalha, in her work *Reconstructing Beirut: Memory and Space in a Postwar Arab City*, challenges the common binaries of public/private and men/women that is often used when analyzing public space in the Middle East. Instead, Sawalha asserts that in the context of Beirut, public spaces are more powerfully influenced by class rather than gender, citing examples of upper-class men and women mingling in cafes during the pre-war era. In this case, Sawalha argues, the more substantive barrier to overcome was class, not gender.⁹⁰

After conducting interviews, it became clear that the gendered aspect of uneven access to public space was only emphasized by one of our interviewees. Despite this, it is an important factor to take into consideration. Some female visitors to Horsh Beirut have reportedly experienced sexual harassment, even by the guards who are supposed to be protecting visitors and the park. This introduces the necessity for better trained guards, and perhaps the integration of female guards to make female patrons feel more secure. Additionally, one interviewee expressed that better lighting is needed to make female patrons, who often bring their children, feel more safe and comfortable when utilizing public space, especially on weekends when the

⁹⁰ Aseel Sawalha, *Reconstructing Beirut*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010.

park is open until later hours. In terms of gender, it is also important to consider the perception of men, especially young men, as potential threats to security and public order. According to reports, security guards will prevent groups of young men (especially those who appear to be from the lower classes) from accessing Sanayeh Gardens due to an expectation that they may cause trouble with other men, harass women, or otherwise create a climate that was intimidating to women, tourists, or members of the upper class. While we did not hear of specific practices mirroring this one in the Horsh, it demonstrates that gender and class are linked when it comes to thinking about securitization of public space.

Public morality has been a subject of contentious debate with Lebanon and the Middle East in general. Horsh Beirut has the potential to serve as a public space available to both men and women, which can engender concern amongst officials and others, who have expressed concerns that this space for mixing genders away from watchful eyes could lead to “immoral” acts. This fear is reflected in a video that was covertly recorded and published on NAHNOO’s YouTube page, in which one of the park’s security guards bluntly states that Lebanese people are not allowed to access the park without a permit because they are expected to use the space primarily for sexual activity, as opposed to foreigners, who might be interested in exercise or other sanctioned park activities.⁹¹ In the recording, the security guard states clearly to an English-speaking woman (who identifies herself as Irish) who seeks to enter the park that she would be able to enter without a permit, but her companion, who is Lebanese, would need special permission. This was the norm before the park’s full reopening in 2016, prompting the protest discussed above in which Lebanese activists created fake “visas” granting themselves entry to

⁹¹ NAHNOO, “Horsh Beirut: The Forbidden Green.” YouTube video, 2:21 minutes. Posted [May 2015]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXfm93OFGNQ>.

their own public space. This recording published by NAHNOO clearly represents a prevailing perception of the Lebanese people and their intentions in using public space, despite the fact that the guard was likely Lebanese as well. Further, it is a tangible example of the ways in which race and citizenship have served as criteria that impact people's access to the Horsh.

It is important to note is that this rule restricting Lebanese from entering was often enforced in a way that equates to profiling based on physical appearance. If a person "looked" foreign enough, they were often granted entry without producing any official documentation. However, it is clear from our interviews that not just any kind of foreigner was allowed to enter the space freely. For instance, Lebanon's economy is heavily dependent on the labor of migrant workers, most notably from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa; these kinds of foreigners are not the "right" type who would have easy access to the park. Rather, it was those who appeared European or otherwise Western who would be allowed access to the space without further questioning.

This practice reveals one aspect of the ruling elites' relationship to and perception of the public to whom this park supposedly belongs; instead of serving the Lebanese people and protecting their rights, the government feels a need to protect this space against the people. Westerners are not considered a threat to the space itself or to the public order in the same way as Lebanese people are. Additionally, this dynamic highlights the state's consistent pressure to cater to its tourists because of how heavily the country's economy relies on tourism.

More often than not, the topic of sectarianism is unavoidable when discussing Lebanon, and the campaign to reopen Horsh Beirut is no exception. Within the context of the park, the sectarian angle can best be understood spatially and temporally. These two aspects intersect particularly strongly when discussing the Lebanese civil war. Notably, the Horsh is located

between three neighborhoods of different sectarian affiliations. As mentioned earlier, the park's western side is bordered by a neighborhood called Tarik Jdeideh, a historically Sunni area. Adjacent to the southern end of the park the neighborhood of Tayouneh, which was historically Shia but now is more mixed. The eastern side borders Badaro, a historically upper-class, Christian neighborhood. Significantly, the park is enclosed by a tall fence, and the primary entrance is located on the Badaro side instead of by the poorer Sunni and Shia neighborhoods bordering it on the other sides. On the side of the Horsh facing Tarik Jdeideh, there is a separate fenced-off section of the park which features basketball courts, a parking area, and a picnic area. This area is used quite a bit by the local population, especially for smoking since smoking is forbidden within the confines of the park. There is a major informational disconnect regarding the parks' accessibility; according to our interviewees, many residents of Tarik Jdeideh are under the impression that only this small smoking section is available for use. Because of the park's large size, they are not aware of the entrance on the Badaro side where they would be able to access the entire area.⁹² If they are aware of the entrance, many are unwilling to travel a relatively long distance just to enter the park, or may feel unwelcome in that upper-class neighborhood.

The lack of an official entrance to the park on sides bordering the lower income neighborhoods clearly demonstrates a fear of the public that operates at the nexus of class and sect. The political elites put forth a narrative of fear in which they warn against the mixing of sects for "security reasons." The undercurrent of inter-communal tensions that many Lebanese believe has been repressed, but not eradicated, since the civil war, is cited as justification for securitization throughout the city, including in Horsh Beirut. The prevalent idea is that it might

⁹² Interview with Joana Hammour.

only take a few instances of fighting between groups to spark a larger conflict and even a descent back into war. The addition of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees, many Sunni Muslims, to Lebanon since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011 has exacerbated some of these tensions and lent more urgency to the narrative of maintaining public order above all else. However, there is an emerging narrative that questions the true nature and the validity of the government's fear. Perhaps, on top of anxieties about conflict that have some legitimacy due to historical precedent and conflict in neighboring countries, ruling elites are operating based on another fear. Lebanon's political system is a confessional one, based on sectarian division; what would happen if the people who have spent so many years being divided were to come together? NAHNOO had their own angle when explaining the possibility of different sects coming together in the Horsh:

“This would be a great opportunity to have people mix and gather in the same place, [to] get to know each other. If you don't know the other, you fear the other...you won't understand them. In this place at least, they can communicate, whether indirectly or directly; even looking at someone is communicating. [The park] is big enough for you to not mix up directly if you don't want to, if you want your own space. But still be in an environment with different people. So for us, it was a great opportunity to have a socially mixed area that really represents Beirut, Beirut is a mixed city. It is very symbolic because also it's a peace symbol; you have all these communities who were fighting in the war gathering in one place, exchanging in one place. For us, having the space is important for people to releases frustration.”⁹³

It is clear that the Municipality's perception of the Horsh's location as a potential tinderbox for sectarian strife, compared to NAHNOO's perception of it as an opportunity for dialogue and improved social relations within Beirut, aptly reflects divergent trends in Beirut society. Though the Municipality's perceptions of the citizens are clear, the question remains: why? What incentive does the Municipality, as an extension of the Lebanese state, have in perpetuating the people's fear of one another?

⁹³ Ibid.

As mentioned above, the discursive linkages between public space and democracy lead to a dynamic in which some governments fear truly public spaces because of their potential as a site of collective organizing and dissent, and respond by enclosing, securing, or eliminating public space. In the case of Lebanon, the country's fragile consociational structure, which has been contested numerous times, serves as the basis on which governing elites to remain in power, and benefit directly from that power, without providing some of the basic services of a state or meeting citizens' demands. Undoubtedly, the Lebanese government and its constituent members benefit from a society that internalizes sectarian fear and operates with a measured tension. In this way, the status quo regarding the relationship between the political elites and the people is maintained and no serious challenge for reform or restructuring of society can materialize.

Conclusion

Overall, the campaign to reopen Horsh Beirut, in the context of Beirut's postwar urban development, a political system defined by confessional clientelism and plagued by corruption, demonstrates that public space is both an important site and a subject for contestations not only over the city, but the political future of the country as well. Both the Municipality of Beirut, as an extension of the state, and the Beirut citizens and activists who made up the campaign viewed the Horsh as a space with the potential to bring Beirutis from all societal levels together. However, their divergent perceptions of Beirutis and visions regarding how Lebanon should be governed partially explain why this struggle, and the general struggle over public space in the city, is a difficult one that is far from over. The government generally views public spaces as a threat, because it views the people as one public, rather than a collection of divided identity groups, as a threat to the status quo and to their power. The continued destruction and partition of public space in Beirut is justified by a narrative that paints the Lebanese people as either

underdeveloped and “unready,” or inherently violent toward one another. While the fear of resumed conflict may be real and somewhat legitimate, governing elites are both responding to and perpetuating this fear by using the “security” argument that we have described, out of a desire to preserve their own interests. Those interests are vested in the maintenance of a communitarian system and a system that lends itself to nepotism and corruption.

Another important lesson from the case of Horsh Beirut is that the struggle for civil society working for the preservation of open and public spaces against privatization and development is an uphill battle. When we began this project, we sought to explain how and why the campaign to reopen Horsh Beirut was successful. Over the course of our research, it became clear that it was still too early to deem the campaign a complete success. In the time it has taken to research and write this project, the threat of a hospital built on the grounds of the Horsh has gone from merely a possibility to a literal concrete reality. Legal action, considered by our interviewees an important and relatively effective tactic for achieving the goals of the campaign, ultimately was not successful in barring the construction of the hospital, nor against the Eden Bay development in Ramlet al-Baida. It remains to be seen what further development will threaten these vital and rare public spaces in the city in years to come.

Finally, we believe that the Horsh Beirut campaign, and the other contestations outlined here that have asserted Beirutis’ rights to public spaces and services, represent an important trend in Lebanese politics that has already shaped the country’s political landscape in significant ways. Movements like “You Stink” and Beirut Madinati demonstrate a growing unwillingness on the part of some Beirutis to remain apathetic in the face of corrupt and failing systems. Activists are coming up with an alternative vision of the city and of Lebanese society, and are willing to take action and challenge their government in order to make Beirut a better place to live.

Appendix A: Interviews

Joana Hammour, NAHNOO, Interview by authors conducted in English. January 5th, 2017. NAHNOO office, Beirut, Lebanon.

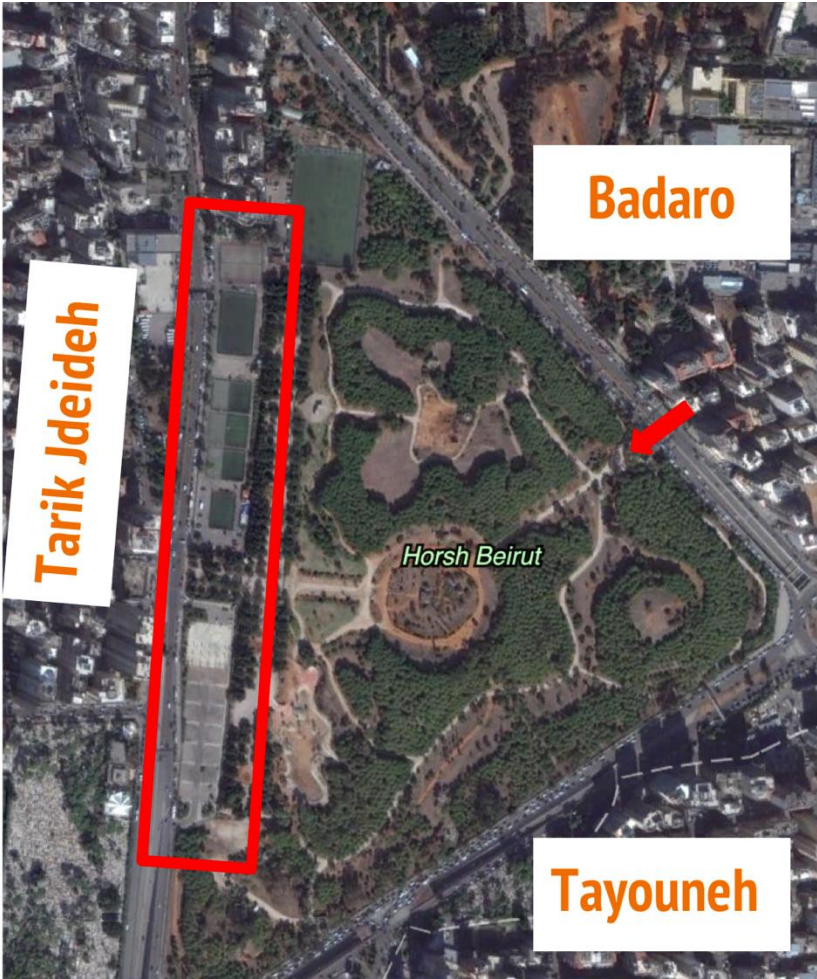
Ali Darwish, Green Line Association. Interview by authors conducted in English. January 6th, 2017. Green Line office, Beirut, Lebanon.



Corinne Deek, Heinrich Boll. Interview by authors conducted in English. January 10th, 2017. Heinrich Boll office, Beirut, Lebanon.

Ariane Langois, Heinrich Boll. Interview by authors conducted in English. January 10th, 2017. Heinrich Boll office, Beirut, Lebanon.

Ali Sabbagh, Heinrich Boll. Interview by authors conducted in English. January 11th, 2017. Heinrich Boll office, Beirut, Lebanon.

Appendix B: Maps of Horsh Beirut



-  = enclosed area
-  = public entrance

(created by the authors)



(courtesy of NAHNOO)

Appendix C: Materials from the Together to Reopen Horsh Beirut Cam

حملة فتح حرش بيروت

احرش لكلّ الناس

حرش بيروت، المساحة الخضراء الأكبر في بيروت،
ملك عام يحق للجميع الدخول إليه،
غير أنه مغلق أمام العامة منذ ما يقارب العقدين.

كان من المفترض أن تفتح بلدية بيروت الحرش منذ ١٠ سنوات،
خصوصاً بعد إعادة تأهيله وتجهيزه،
انما لا يزال الحرش مغلقاً أمام الناس
ولا يحق سوى لنخبة من الشعب اللبناني الدخول إليه.

نحن نطالب بلدية بيروت بأخذ قرار بفتح حرش بيروت أمام جميع المواطنين
وإعلان تاريخ محدد لذلك.
كماعتبر أنه لم يعد هنالك أي حجج تبرر إغلاق الحرش،
وعدم فتحه وتجهيزه ليس إلا تقصيراً من قبل البلدية.

إن حملتنا ليست سوى الحد الأدنى من المطالبة بالحق في المساحات الخضراء
العامة التي هي حاجة أساسية في أي مدينة.
يحق للجميع التمتع بهذه المساحات والاستفادة منها، لأنها حاجة
اجتماعية، وصحية ونفسية للمواطنين، ومساحة للإلتقاء لتعزيز التواصل الاجتماعي.

انضم الى الحملة عبر الإلتحاق بمواقنا

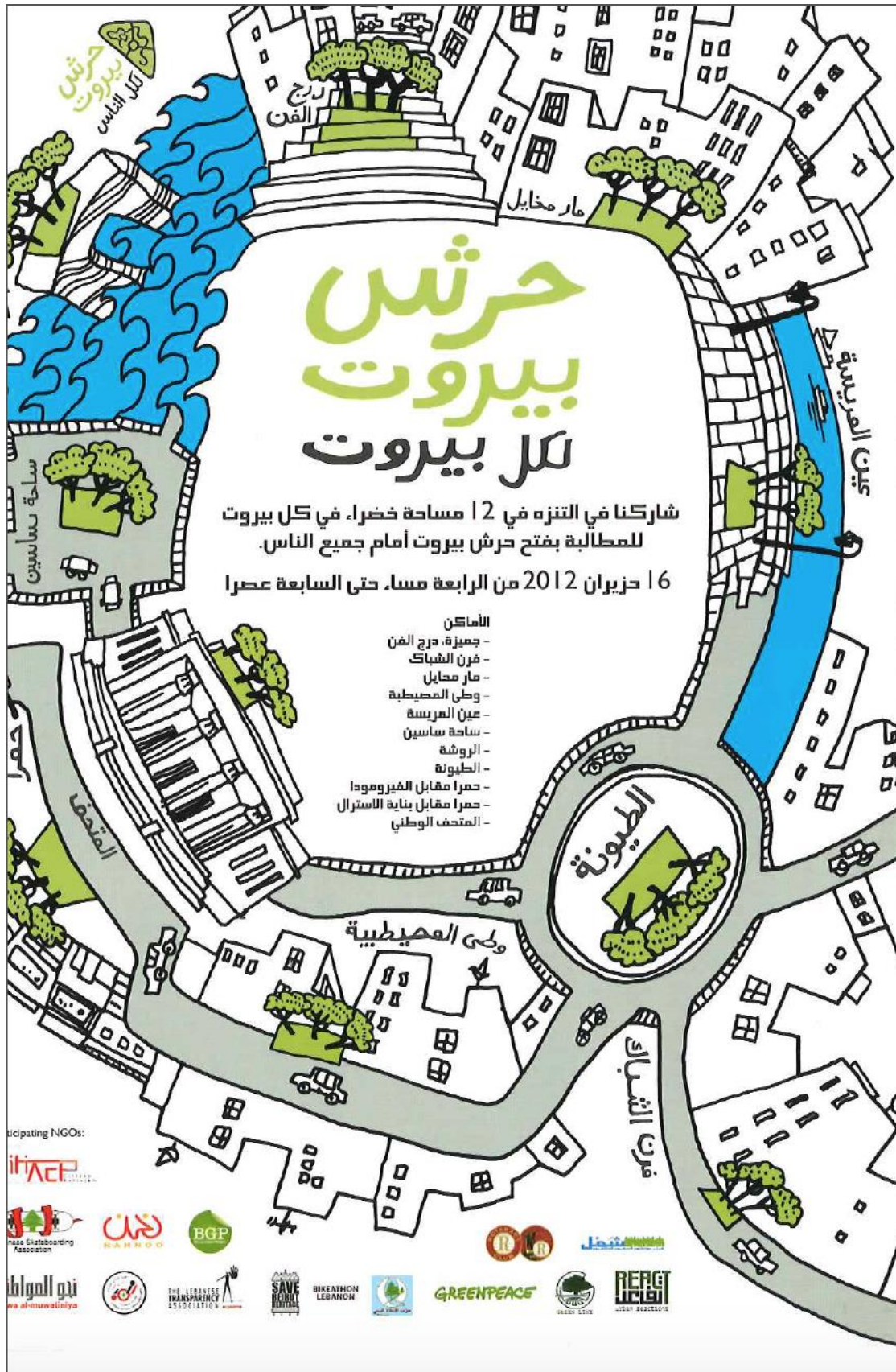
Horshbeirut.wordpress.com
www.facebook.com/Horshbeirut
[Twitter/Nahnooleb](https://twitter.com/Nahnooleb)

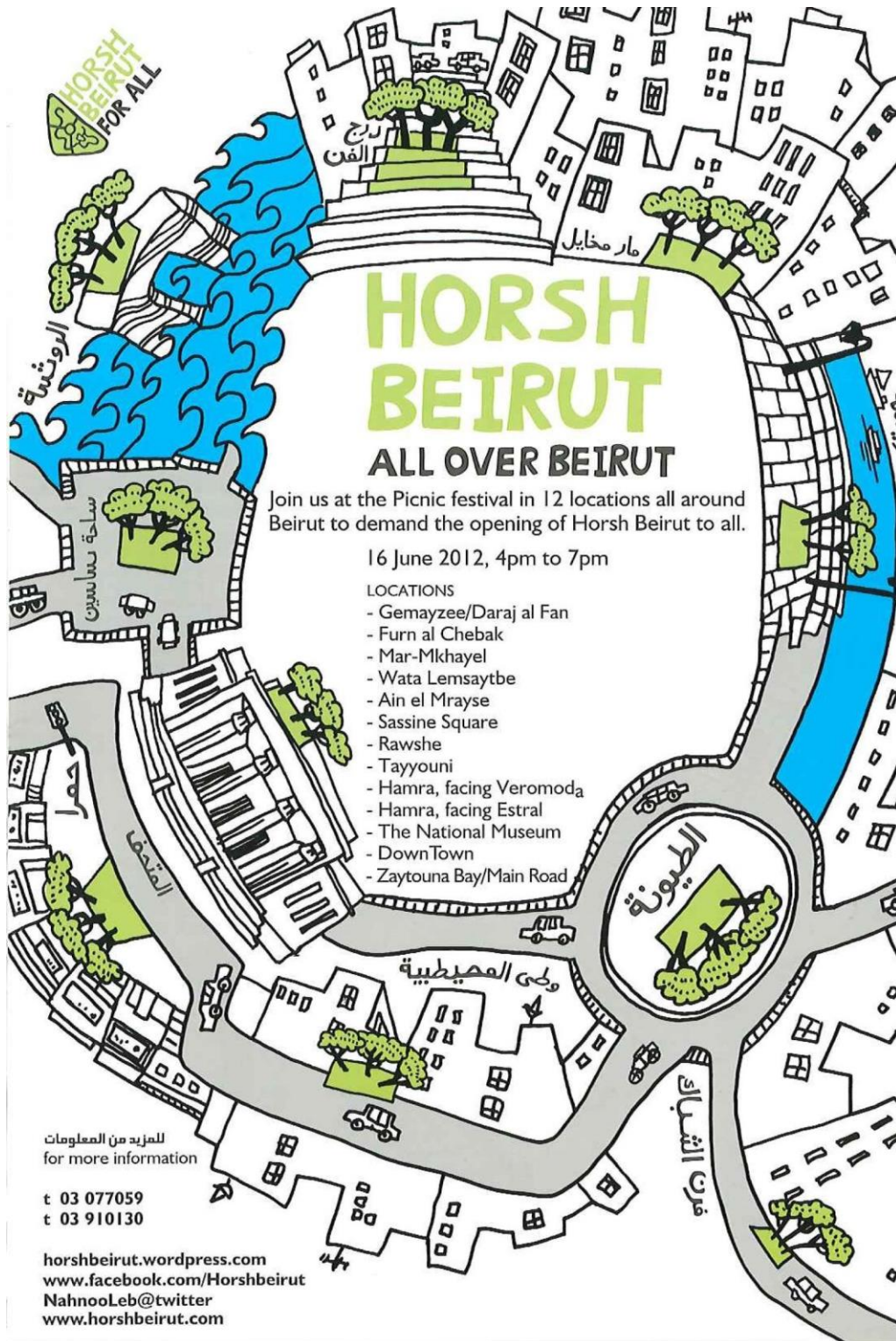


"نحن" هي جمعية شبابية تعمل من أجل تأمين مساحات مشتركة للشباب ذي الخلفيات المختلفة للالتقاء، التعبير عن انفسهم والضغط من أجل حقوقهم.

Nahnoo organization- Furn El Fhebbak, Sallm Khoury St., Awwad Building, 1st floor- Beirut, Lebanon
Info@nahnoo.org; www.nahnoo.org; 00961 1 280474; 00961 3 077059

(Brief pamphlet describing the Campaign and its goals)





(Pamphlet describing the “guerrilla picnic” action, 2012, courtesy of NAHNOO)

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