

THE LABORATORY & THE CITY

Critical Approaches in Urban Studies

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VILNIUS

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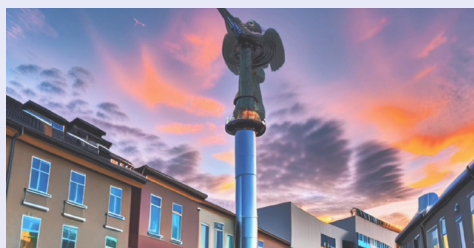
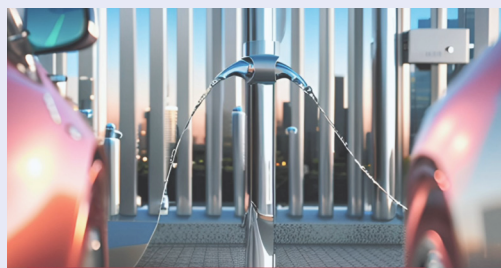
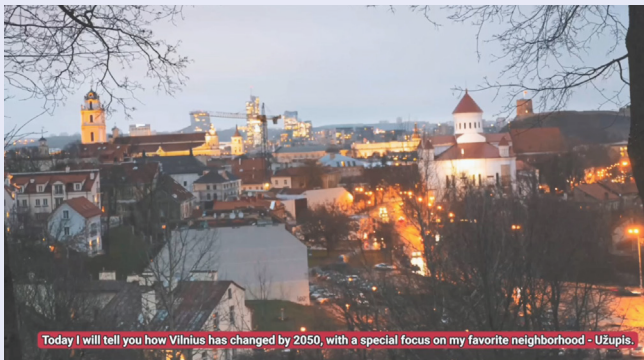
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Vilnius 2050: A Vision of a Smart and Sustainable City: Why We Should Use AI in Urbanism

Video



Vilnius is committed to sustainable urban development, focusing on balancing economic, social, and environmental goals. The city has made significant progress with initiatives like expanding green spaces, using drones for air quality monitoring, and participating in international environmental programs. However, challenges such as informal settlements and social inequalities still need to be addressed to achieve inclusive growth.

To enhance its sustainability efforts, Vilnius can learn from other cities that use AI to tackle urban challenges. In Toronto, AI optimizes energy use in buildings, reducing emissions. Vilnius could implement similar AI-driven systems to improve energy efficiency. Singapore uses AI to manage water resources efficiently, preventing waste. Adopting these technologies could help Vilnius better manage its water supply. Stockholm uses AI and sensors to monitor air pollution, providing real-time data to improve air quality. Vilnius could introduce similar systems to protect public health and enhance its environmental goals.

Experts highlight the importance of context-specific AI solutions for urban issues. For Vilnius, this means developing AI applications that optimize resources and improve sustainability tailored to the city's unique needs. By embracing AI technologies and learning from global examples, Vilnius can advance as a smart, sustainable city, reducing environmental impact and enhancing residents' quality of life.

Eivalina Karneichyk, Aryna Bokach

Evaluating the Impact of Preserving Old Houses vs. Building New Structures for Economic Development and Safety in Vilnius by 2050. Šnipiškės as a Case Study.

Collage

Urban centers attract international companies, investors, financial institutions, leading to the presence of crimes such as financial fraud, identity theft, data breaches, security breaches, attacks on building management systems.

UPCOMING → Top City, Vilnius Airport reconstruction, Vilnius Central, Anipolis Vilnius, City City, Heli, Anipolis, Metelis, Vilnius Star Station, reconstruction, the Forum and Stadium

By becoming one of the safest cities, Vilnius can gain international recognition as an innovative and stable center. This can attract the attention of investors and strengthen its leadership in the region, its status as a safe, healthy city provides a competitive edge. Preservation of old houses is impossible due to the fact that modern solutions are not a novelty but a planned strategy. Modern solutions are impossible, the only question is whether it will be enough resources to preserve and operate the existing buildings, to control them fully and to ensure the safety of a sufficiently high level.

However, to ensure higher efficiency in combating offenses, more surveillance cameras will be installed, and a pilot project for drug use detection in schools will be launched.

Vilnius

Delft
FIRES IN VILNIUS
ANOTHER FIRE IN ŠNIPISKĖS

The Central Business District is rapidly developing, but the leadership of Vilnius, Lithuania's most important business district of its kind in the Baltics.

2007-2008
The crisis rapidly spread, resulting in an economic worldwide

World crisis led into a global economic and bank failures. Followed during this period and international trade risks suffered and resulting crimes.

Administrative...
Tada spraga...
galinga...
Vilnius...
darbai...
sprendimo...
patraukia...
bet...
tada...
bet...
tada...
bet...

Car thefts

Public reported thefts of motorized land vehicles per 100 000 inhabitants

| Year | Public reported thefts of motorized land vehicles per 100 000 inhabitants |
|------|---|
| 2018 | 10.0 |
| 2019 | 10.0 |
| 2020 | 10.0 |
| 2021 | 10.0 |
| 2022 | 10.0 |
| 2023 | 10.0 |
| 2024 | 10.0 |

Key crimes:
Thefts from vehicles
No severe health impairment
Crimes related to drugs

Our project «Evaluating the Impact of Preserving Old Houses vs. Building New Structures for Economic Development and Safety in Vilnius by 2050» explores the question of safety of the future Vilnius based on the data of the current and past criminal situation, particularly in Central Business District. Our analysis is performed on the basis of Šnipiškės district and future urban projects of the area.

We discussed the underlying causes and reasons for the development of events and crime in Šnipiškės. We identified the current situation—a decrease in crime rates based on 2024 data. We examined the transformation of the criminogenic system, shifting the criminal landscape towards online cybercrime, and highlighted the risks associated with this transition.

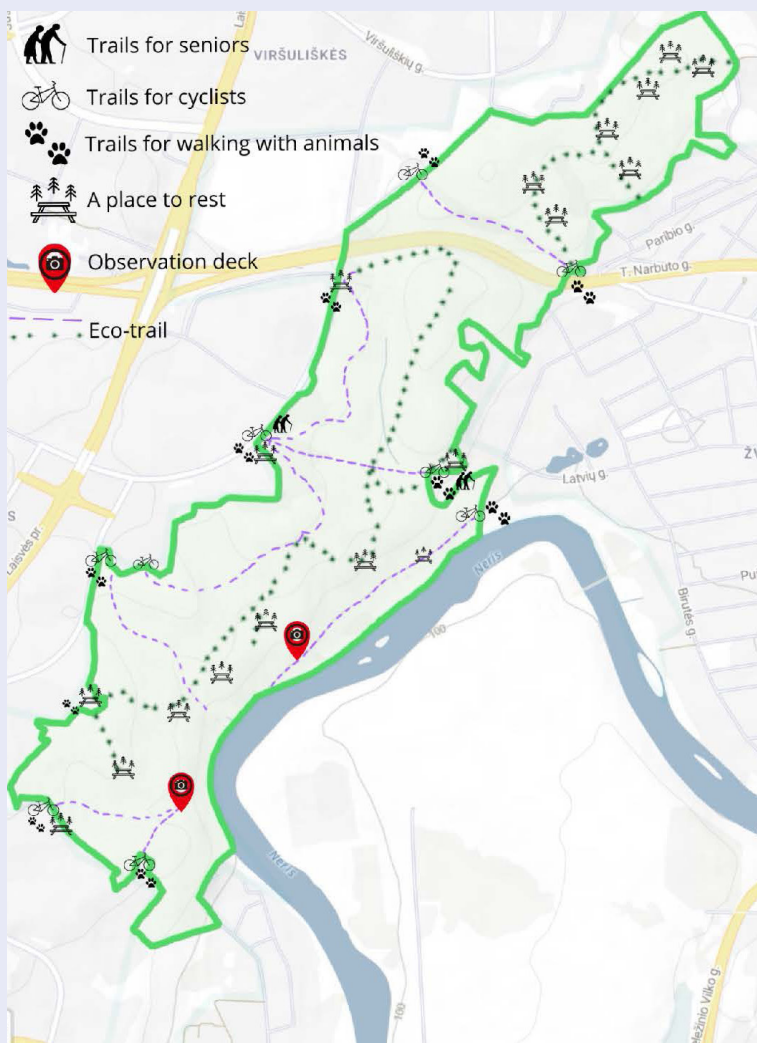
The main question of our research: Should we preserve the old houses or follow the trend of shiny skyscrapers? Here is what we found out: We have no choice, as planned projects for the future of Vilnius have already begun construction. Everything is predetermined; the landscape of Vilnius is changing and has already started to change.

Anastasia Germanovich, Vadim Lemantovich, Ivan Martsev Ksenia Chyzhevich, Lizaveta Yehrashyna

Guide to Accessibility of Places in the Karoliniškės Reserve

Brochure

The student project aims to make the Karoliniškės Reserve more accessible and enjoyable for everyone. It focuses on adding features like tactile sensory gardens, which offer a variety of textures and scents for a rich sensory experience, and interactive play areas that engage visitors of all ages. To help people navigate the reserve, the project also includes eco-friendly signs and clear maps. By implementing these elements, the project seeks to create a more welcoming and inclusive space for all visitors.



KAROLINIŠKĖS LANDSCAPE RESERVE IS ONE OF THE PROTECTED AREAS OF LITHUANIA, LOCATED IN VILNIUS, NAMED AFTER THE NEIGHBOURHOOD IT IS A BIG PART OF — KAROLINIŠKĖS. THE RESERVE HAS AN AREA OF APPROXIMATELY 1.62 KM², WHICH MAKES 44% OF THE ENTIRE KAROLINIŠKĖS NEIGHBORHOOD. ESTABLISHED ON SEPTEMBER 27TH, 1960 TO PRESERVE THE UNIQUE NATURAL LANDSCAPE, FLORA, AND FAUNA OF THE REGION, IT FEATURES

A VARIETY OF LANDSCAPES (INCLUDING FORESTS, MEADOWS, AND STEEP SLOPES) WHICH PROVIDE A HABITAT FOR DIVERSE WILDLIFE. THE RESERVE IS A POPULAR SPOT FOR HIKING, BIRD-WATCHING, AND ENJOYING NATURE, OFFERING A GREAT GREEN RETREAT OPTION WITHIN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT OF VILNIUS.

DISCOVER THE BEAUTY OF THE KAROLINIŠKĖS LANDSCAPE RESERVE BY FOLLOWING THIS SIMPLE GUIDE

ECO-BANNERS

OUR BANNERS, MADE FROM ECO-FRIENDLY MATERIALS, TELL YOU ABOUT THE RULES OF THE RESERVE AND THE AMAZING FEATURES OF THE LOCAL FLORA AND FAUNA. THEY ARE PLACED THROUGHOUT THE PARK SO YOU CAN LEARN MORE WITHOUT DISTRACTING YOU FROM YOUR WALK

INFORMATION BOARDS

WOODEN BOARDS WITH MAPS AND SIGNPOSTS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED THROUGHOUT THE RESERVE. THEY WILL HELP YOU NAVIGATE WITHOUT DISTURBING THE HARMONY WITH NATURE

ARCHES AND ENTRANCE AREAS

ENTRANCE ARCHES AND WELCOME AREAS, CREATED FROM NATURAL MATERIALS, EMPHASIZE THE BEGINNING OF YOUR JOURNEY THROUGH THE SPECIAL AREA OF THE RESERVE

BENCHES AND SEATING AREAS

WE HAVE PLACED BENCHES AND SEATING AREAS MADE OF NATURAL STONE AND TREATED WOOD IN VARIOUS CORNERS OF THE PARK. THIS ALLOWS EVERY VISITOR TO FIND A SECLUDED PLACE TO RELAX

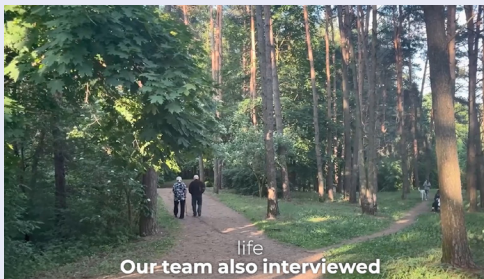
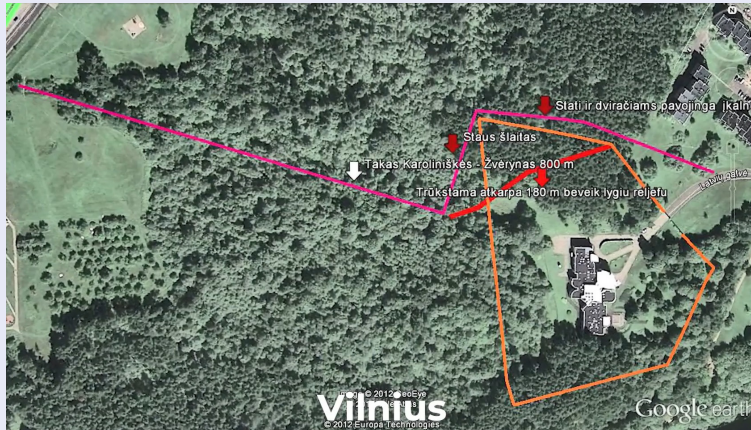
MAPS FOR DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF VISITORS

WE HAVE DEVELOPED DIFFERENT AREA MAPS FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS, DISABLED PEOPLE, FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND VISITORS WITH ANIMALS. CHOOSE THE ROUTE THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU

**Elizaveta Zhukova, Dariia Tolmacheva, Alina Sadouskaya,
Ivan Tsyhankou, Alexandra Drigailo**

Vilnius Forest: Nature Inspiring Culture


Promo video



The promo video for the Vilnius forest is a compelling advertisement aimed at attracting tourists and travelers to discover the natural beauty and unique charm of the forested areas surrounding Vilnius, Lithuania. The video emphasizes the close connection between the forest and the local lifestyle, showcasing how the natural environment is integral to the identity of the city's residents. It includes a historical overview of Karoliniškės, highlighting its role in Vilnius's development and its significance to the community.

Through interviews with local citizens, the video reveals the various activities they enjoy in the forest, from recreational pursuits to more reflective practices. This narrative invites viewers to delve deeper into the meaning of the forest in the context of urban life, portraying it as a vital element of the city's cultural and natural heritage.

BEIRUT



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Waste Collection
Points in Hamra

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Mobilities Map
in Beirut

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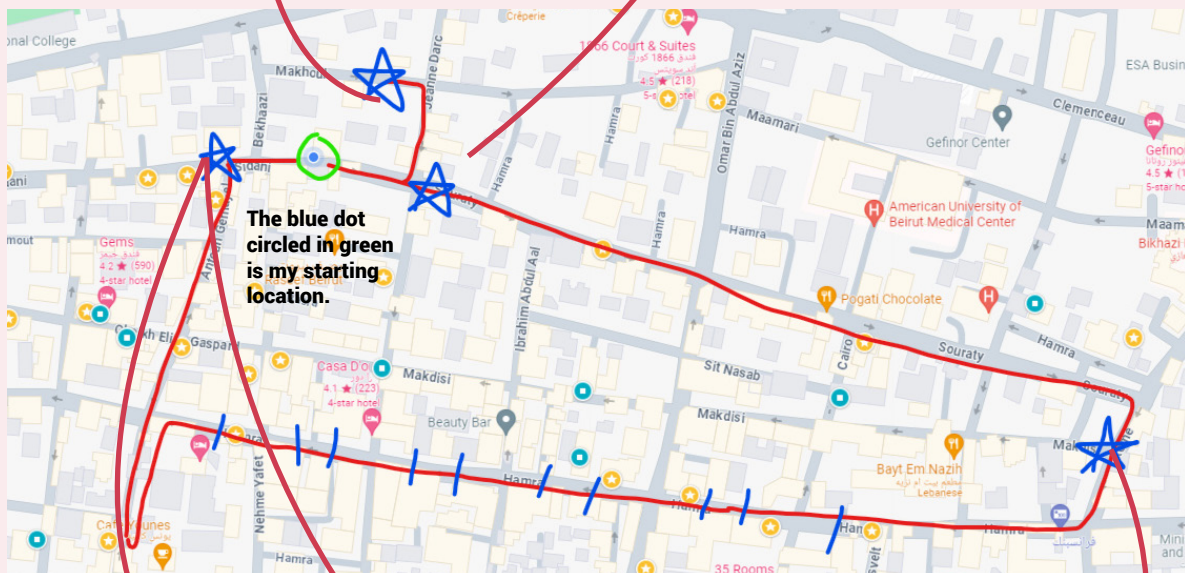
Waste Collection Points in Hamra

For my map, I wanted to walk around my usual routes in Hamra and see what dumpsters/trash receptacles/trashcans I could find. The purpose of this was not just to document the infrastructural availability of waste disposal in Hamra, but to begin conceptualizing community organization and engagement around waste. We often think of trash and its associated receptacles at the 'end' of something... However, trash and trash receptacles take on a new life when analyzed within the daily routines and habits of the Hamra communities. One man's trash becomes another man's livelihood - groups of men and women routinely sort through trash each night, transforming lifeless dumpsters into hubs of microeconomic production and casual socialization. Trashcans on the street become synonymous with private business groups, granting a new layer of interpersonal relationships to their maintenance and/or destruction. By mapping out these trash receptacles, we can begin to geographically map these community relationships.

There's a set of small trash receptacles here. My friend lives in an apartment across from them, so when I visit at night I often see rats, cats, and people rifling through the trash.



At this corner, there are a few dumpsters that are always overflowing with garbage by evening, so I often cross the street to avoid the smell. I sometimes watch to see who crosses the street and who doesn't. In the afternoon and evening, people come to sort through the trash for sellable items. Somehow, these dumpsters have become a sort of community gathering place.



The new home for the dumpsters. This place was unwalkable anyway due to the construction blocking the sidewalk.



The dumpsters here were moved from their old spot that was closer to my dorm. I'm not sure why they were moved, but as a result, the sidewalk next to my dorm is now clear.

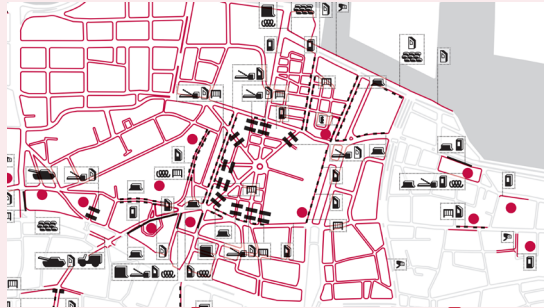


Today was the first time I noticed these dumpsters. The area around them seemed less crowded than other parts of Hamra, and so it was less messy.

Nour Fawaz

Mobilities Map in Beirut

Beirut, as a bustling urban center, experiences diverse forms of mobility. From its vibrant streets and bustling markets to its network of highways and public transportation, the city is constantly in motion. Pedestrians navigate busy sidewalks, cyclists weave through traffic, and public transportation serves as a lifeline for residents and commuters alike. Understanding the dynamics of mobility in Beirut is essential for navigating its streets and exploring its rich cultural heritage.



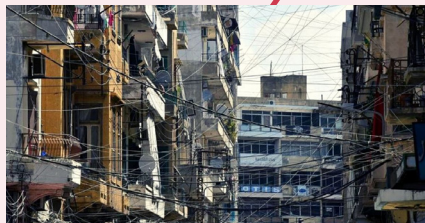
Public Transportation Routes



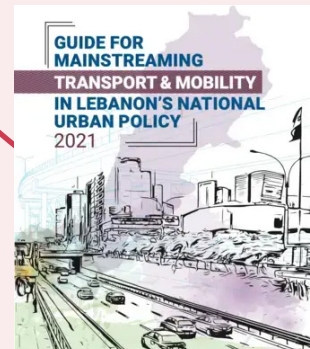
Pedestrian Zone:
- Branch representing
- pedestrian-friendly



Branch Lane Zone:
- Corniche Area: Bike lanes along the Beirut Corniche.
- Neighborhood Lanes: Bike lanes within residential areas.



A continuously battered infrastructure



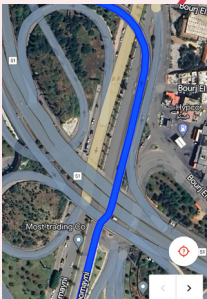
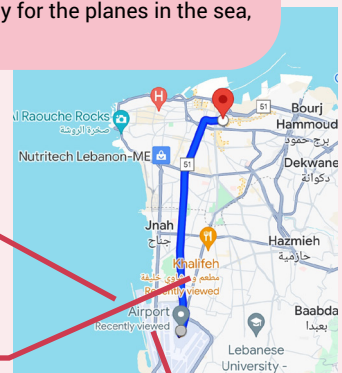
Lack of mobility
Safety concerns

Rawan Hammoud

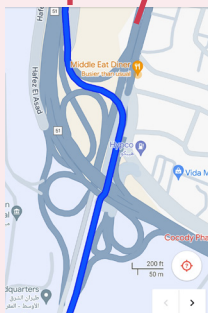
Tourism Gentrification

This topic came to mind as I was passing through Gemmayze. I was observing the area taking everything in: the vibrant colors, the vintage renovated buildings, the cafes and restaurants, the people, the cars...etc. It was quite different from where I reside. Gemmayzeh, along with Mar Mikhael, Saifi Village, Downtoun, Monot, etc, is one of the cosmopolitan areas in Beirut. It is one of the areas with the highest concentration of tourists and non-Lebanese residents.

1. Airport Alterations: Alpha 21 is the Beirut airport's takeoff runway, while alpha 18 is the landing runway, or so it used to be. However, Rafik Hariri, ex-Prime Minister of Lebanon, demanded changes to that. The Alpha 18 runway used to go over Ouzai, which is one of the poorest areas in Beirut, thus to avoid the scenery, as well as for 'safety measures', Hariri built a new landing runway for the planes in the sea, and named it Alpha 16.



The bridge over Beirut's old airport road avoids poorer neighborhoods and Hezbollah areas, shaping what tourists see and what is hidden. This reflects how infrastructure choices cater to certain audiences, impacting social visibility and perpetuating divisions.



Anthropologically, roads are more than pathways; they symbolize power, aspirations, and social dynamics, revealing the cultural and political landscapes of societies and the hierarchies they enforce or challenge.



2. The Ouzai Project: Ouzai happened to fall on the coastline next to the airport, particularly next to the landing runway of airplanes in the Rafik Al Hariri Airport.

Roads, rooted in colonialism, now support capitalist ventures like tourism, often displacing marginalized communities. They reflect ongoing social inequalities and reshape urban spaces based on power dynamics.

This picture reflects the aspirations and vision leading to the project.



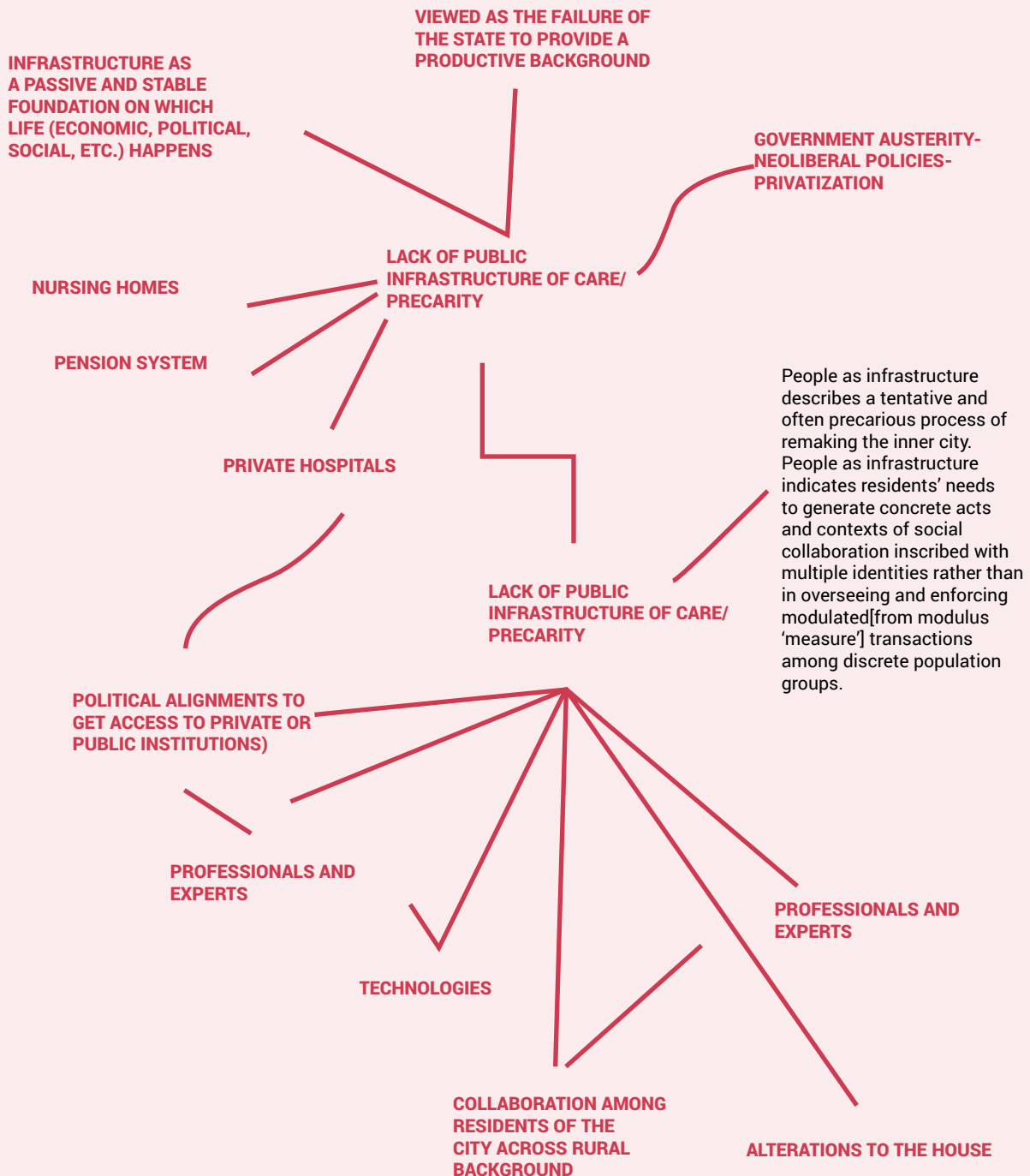
The project was to paint the buildings of this neighborhood vibrant colors, painting away signs of poverty and marginalization. The idea of the project is to 'beautify' Ouzai, and the way it looks from airplanes.

Sami Sbeity

Elderly Care as Infrastructure

I am interested in investigating care for the elderly as a kind of infrastructure working within the lack of a public one. The big question for this part is: what constitutes this infrastructure? I think of taking care of an elderly as processes of creating refuge or an infrastructure that engages their kin and the materiality of their houses and bodies and various social collaborations and alignments.

I wish to extend the notion of infrastructure directly to people's activities in the city: the ability of residents to engage complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices. These conjunctions become an infrastructure.

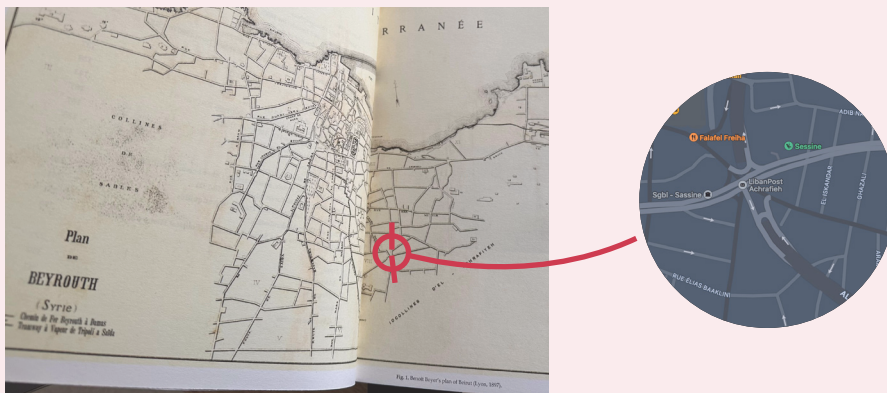


Jessica Khazem

Examining Zoning and Toxic Politics

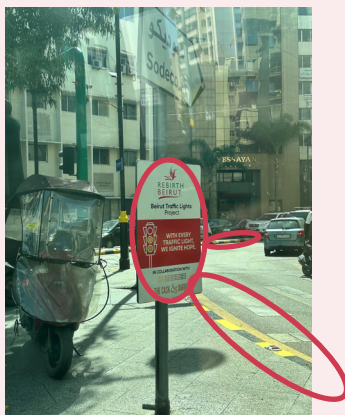
This mind map expands on the idea of zoning and zones from the text “Toxic Politics” which enables and maintains ways of life at different scales. Toxicity’s definition is provided as “stimulated, constructed, rehearsed and contested through a myriad set of social, epistemological, historical, economic, material, biological, and governance systems and structures” according to Max Liboiron, Manuel Tironi and Nerea Calvillo in “Toxic Politics”. Toxic politics in Beirut (seen according to district) allows us to understand the struggles that pertain to power, that when juxtaposed, can reveal which areas are strained or neglected, while others reproduce and flourish.

The example case of Achrafieh, Beirut features considerable availability of infrastructure not typical throughout Beirut as a whole, but as provided in select areas within Beirut. By interpreting this beyond the physical infrastructures, toxicity can be understood in terms of reproductions of power and justice (more abstractly).



This is a map plan of the city Beirut published in 1897 (during Ottoman Imperialism). I was able to locate Sassine Square in Achrafieh, indicating its early presence and establishment (with identifiable street names and road infrastructural layouts). This will later on contribute to its expansion and own designated zone.

Achrafieh, Beirut is provided with various publicly accessible infrastructures such as public water access, (comparatively) regular city water distribution to its population, readily available public transportation, traffic lights throughout the area as well as its 24/7 operating street lights, and traffic signs to name a few. This introduces the idea of toxic politics, its implications, and what they can reveal about toxicity and politics where they are simultaneously invisible and visible in a city like Beirut.



This is an example of the infrastructure initiative “Rebirth Beirut” traffic lights project, which features the slogan “With every traffic light, we ignite hope”. Although it says Beirut as a whole, this project spread from Achrafieh as one of the first being provided. In other words, Achrafieh receives the “hope” early compared to other areas in Beirut. The choice of beginning in such areas and not elsewhere speaks to the project’s priorities with the initiative.



Busy Mar Elias street. As we can see, the traffic light is not operating. Behind it, a newly placed billboard poster sponsored by an Islamic foundation promoting charity practice during Ramadan is placed. 10 minutes apart, comparing the Mar Elias area to the Achrafieh area within Beirut as separate zones helps contrast between their differences and begin questioning why this is possibly the case.



Publicly available water faucet, in a busy neighborhood of Achrafieh right off of Sassine Square. Implications of the infrastructure being offered and its religious ties that it refers to are placed aside; focusing on the infrastructural components behind providing access and distribution of water helps us look into zoning and resource access.