



HIDDEN THREADS

Reweaving a divided urban & social fabric in a post-conflict zone





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2020



Hidden Threads

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2020

A master's thesis at Chalmers School of Architecture

Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering

MPDSD _ Architecture and Planning Beyond Sustainability program

Urban Challenges Direction

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ABSTRACT

As the reconstruction debate is being held in Syria to rebuild what years of conflict have destroyed, no attention is being given to the role of architecture in reconstructing what was vandalized within the social fabric. Moreover, the disregard for the social-spatial justice in the newly planned projects may create a ticking time bomb for a new conflict in such a vulnerable community.

In a hope for a reweaving of what the conflict has torn in Damascus, the thesis will look at the indicators of the conflict in the past, and hidden in the urban growth of Damascus and its social colorful fabric. It will investigate how the conflict had, simultaneously, 'victimized and weaponized' the city, and how the fear could detach people from their own city and from one another.

The thesis will be developed through a 'Weaving' design; as an artistic methodology, representing a metaphor of the city, and bringing multiple different and complicated aspects into one element. This Weaving will be utilized iteratively; telling the story, analyzing, deconstructing the city's complicated layers (inputs), reading the story, understanding and exploring the complexity, concluding the relationships between the components, and extracting information; and then re-telling the stories again.

A weaving toolbox with instructions is developed based on chosen tangible and intangible elements from the context analysis, which open up the possibility for this medium to be customized to fit in answering other research questions in the same framework, and for other contexts and cities.

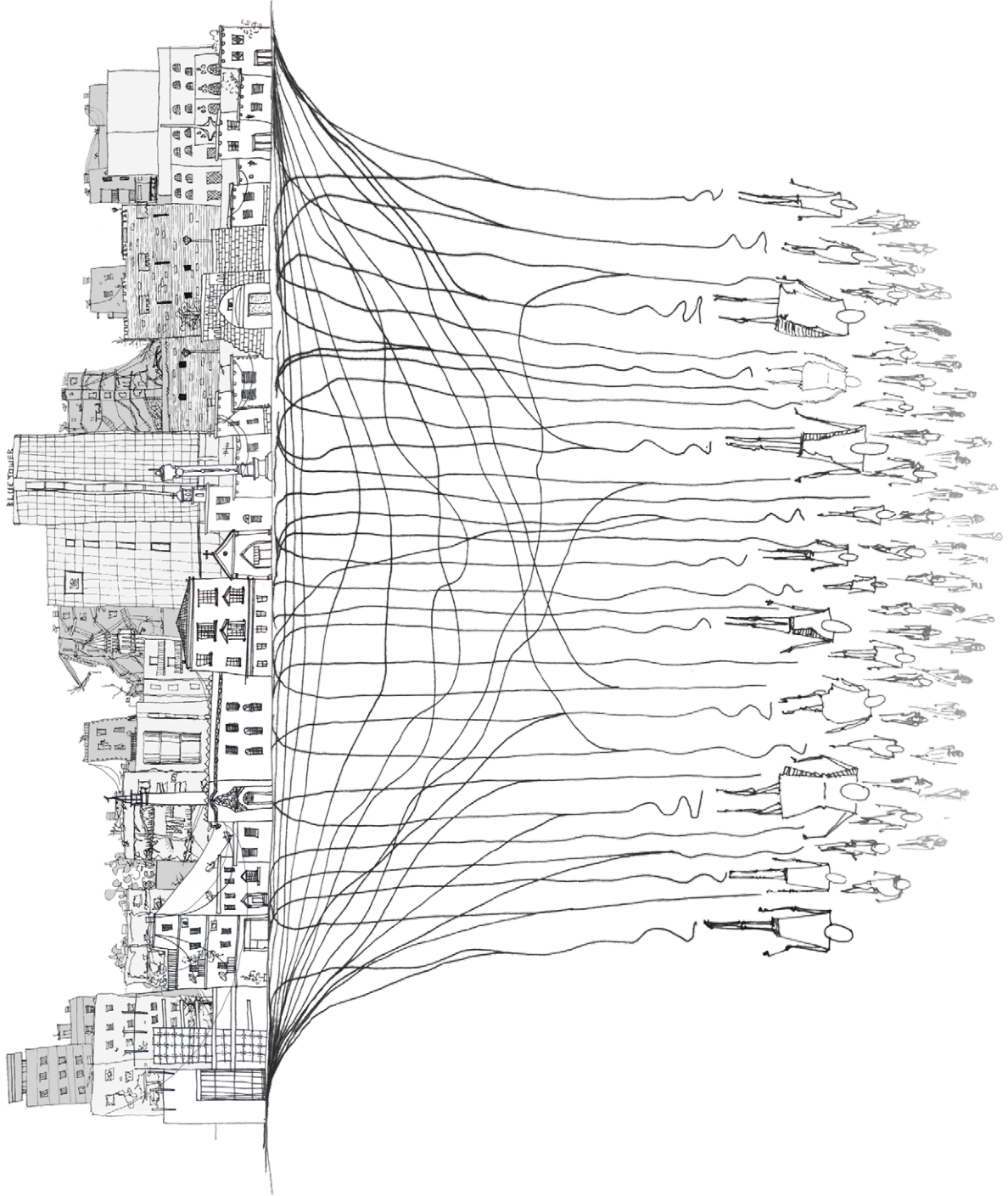
Have we lost our Damascus?

Will the homogeneous organic multidimensional fabric stay torn forever?

The weaving, the visual storyteller will show us, hopefully, how to reveal the hidden threads that will reweave Damascus.

Keywords

Damascus - Conflict - Post conflict- Social division - Urban development - Public space - Fear - Weaving .



MANIFESTO

People who belong to different political attitudes,
backgrounds, ethnicities, ideologies,,
have the right to use, enjoy and be safe in their cities;
The thesis will be for them

Cities and people
are interconnected and interlaced...
The threads between them may get tensioned,
The thesis hopes that they can be rescued before getting cut

The thesis deems that cities and their public spaces have an
essential role in exceeding the social division
Some people will consider that a thesis concerns about
people reconnection in Syria is unrealistic,
the thesis argues that giving judgments
without trying to ease others' misery is in-humanistic

The thesis does not claim that architecture or public spaces design,
is an urgent need in Damascus,
or that it is the only solution to reconnect people
But it also argues that projects should be
the response for actual people's needs,
It believes that good design may motivate people
to realize the importance of restoring their interconnections

History and news are told by people who represent their
interpretations, perspectives and agendas
The history and news, should not be ignored,
but definitely, they cannot be taken for granted
Try to listen to the low whispers and grasp the shy expressions,
consult your mind... and heart

People who belong to different political attitudes,
ethnicities, ideologies, backgrounds.....,
were observing the things from different angles,
the truth is never seen complete, nor told,
anyone can be right or wrong,
the thesis is not judging anyone.

Listen to the stories
and find out the hidden threads...

MIND-SET

Can you ever imagine being in a situation where people are afraid
of their city and everyone else around them?

Feeling that their ordinary relationships with other people
are becoming very tense!

When they are expecting something to happen,
but everything related to this thing is so abstract, that it can't be predicted!

A threat, that may come in any moment, from anyone, anywhere.

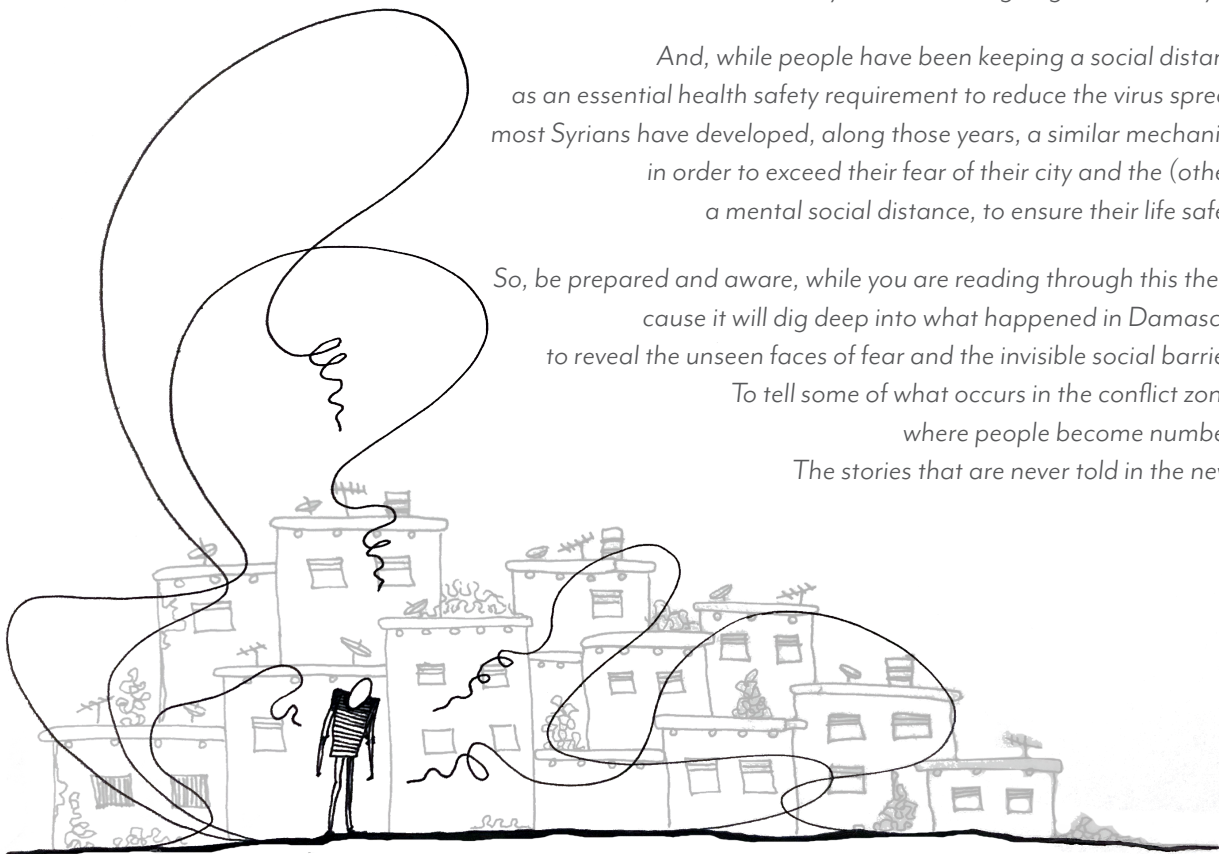
Being unable to move freely!

Being afraid of harming themselves or their beloved ones!

I am not talking here about the spread of Corona virus pandemic,
all around the world in 2020, I am talking about
more than nine years of the (ongoing) conflict in Syria.


And, while people have been keeping a social distance
as an essential health safety requirement to reduce the virus spread;
most Syrians have developed, along those years, a similar mechanism
in order to exceed their fear of their city and the (other),
a mental social distance, to ensure their life safety.

So, be prepared and aware, while you are reading through this thesis,
cause it will dig deep into what happened in Damascus;
to reveal the unseen faces of fear and the invisible social barriers,
To tell some of what occurs in the conflict zones,
where people become numbers;
The stories that are never told in the news.



EYE - SET

Layout: Each main chapter starts with a loom weaving the content in between.
The background threads will interact with the content when they can.

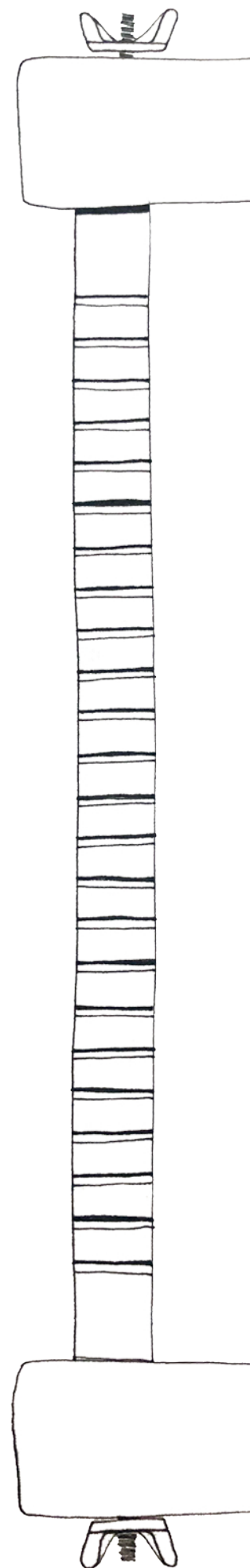
Text Style:  Facts and others' voice, research content that is collected
from references, literature reading.



Personal, my own living experience, thoughts,
observations & reflections
... like the justification in Arabic, my mother Language

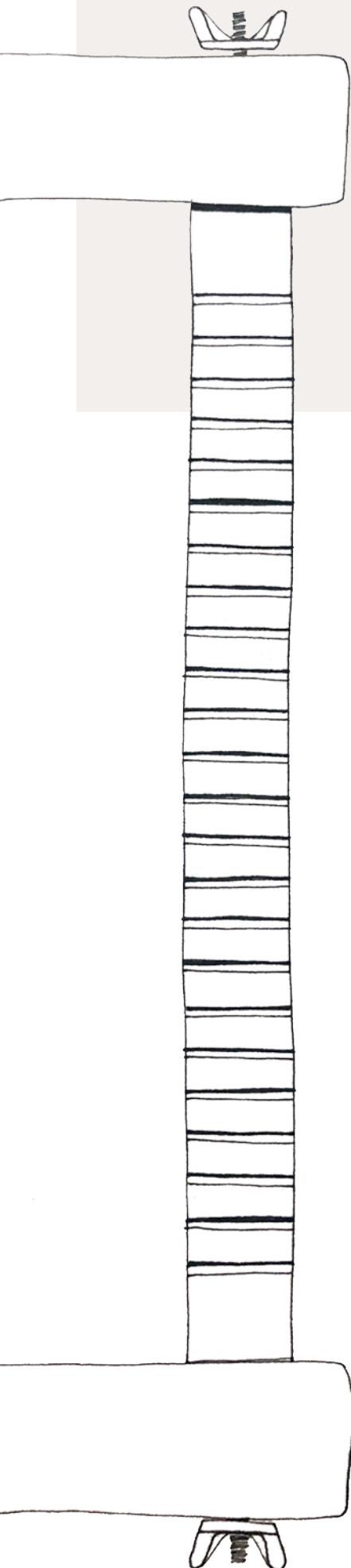
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INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines the orientation of the thesis, in addition to the delimitations and glossary



Background

When people hear about a country that is witnessing a war or conflict, it is hard for them to imagine that there is still life there and how it has been before that, the imported images of destruction and suffer makes a sort of perception that is very hard to be changed or revised.

In 2011, Syria has started witnessing one of the most horrifying conflicts of the 21 century, a conflict that has affected all the aspects of the rich life there, and even destroyed some.

Each city in Syria, has had a different share of this conflict, and a different story. However, they all share the damage that affected people relationships with them (people - city), and they have played a major role in the division between people (people-people).

This thesis will take place in the Syrian capital, Damascus city.

Aim

It is to understand how the city can be used as a tool for social recovery, by taking in consideration the complicated and interconnected layers that compose it. And to analyze how can the public space that was one of the division promoters, become the medium for creating a dialogue in this divided society and promote the recovery of the connection between communities and their cities.

Thesis question/s

How can public space hinder/facilitate social reconnection in post conflict cities?

To investigate the answer, other questions need to be addressed

- *How does the city become [contributor in/ victim of] division of people?*
- *How can we tell the city story?*
- *Can we weave the city fabric?*

Relevance

Nowadays, in Syria, many projects are being announced on the agenda of reconstruction. There are indicators that the reconstruction phase will be a political and normative process, following big agendas. But how to demand people's right to the city during and after the transitional period? Studies on the newly planned residential projects, show statistics about the impact of reconstruction and new planning, revealing their disregard to the social and spatial justice, which may create a ticking time bomb for a new conflict in such vulnerable communities.

What about the reconstruction of people? What about restoring the social homogenized fabric? What about investing in what we have, to restore what we lost?

In such critical circumstances, architecture and urban planning processes should have a critical role in comprehending and responding to people needs.

By emphasizing on the role of public space as a representative component of the public life in cities- in the social healing and recovery process during the recovery phase in post conflict zones, the communities can be empowered and actively participate in the reconstruction.

Delimitations

About
Slightly about
Not about

Context-specific

Damascus- Syria

History

Heritage

Hand-crafts

Identity

Economy

Post conflict

Conflict

Resilience

Reconnection

Recovery

Politics

Urban Fabric

Built environment

Public space

Reconstruction -as promoted in Syria-

Spatial morphology of the public space

Bridging spaces

Social presence

Space affordances

Housing

Social fabric

Syrians

Community

Division

Diversity

Political parties

Storytelling

Collective memory

Fear

Public life

Events

Activities

Communication

Daily life

Theoretical framework

Resilience

In literature, Resilience can be used in two ways, first as a goal to achieve, the objective here in the resilience of the city; the second considers resilience as an analytical and conceptual framework to help in thinking about certain issues and find adapted solutions. The benefit from the second approach is understanding the how the shock [in the thesis: The conflict] and the stress, are related to the systems responding. (Béné, C., Cannon, T., Gupte, J., Mehta, L., & Tanner, T. 2014).

To build an urban resilience, a holistic look at the city to understand the systems behind making it as we know it now, and the interdependencies and risks that can face it. Then to fix and strength the underlying city fabric by taking in consideration the potential risks that may happen in the future; Doing this will enable the city to improve its development trajectory and its citizens well-being (IRC, n.d.).

The right to the city

Considering the right of all people that lives in a city, regardless of their different affiliations, to participate in shaping their city. (Lefebvre, H. 1996 [1968]).

When realizing the connection between what kind of city people want, to what kind of people they want to be, and the dynamics that connect them to shaping their city. The right to the city can be seen as the right to change themselves by changing their city (Harvey, D. 2008).

Glossary

Public spaces

In this thesis, refers to the outdoor spaces, like squares, streets, markets, and parks. The places where people move and interact with their city and with each other.

Urban fabric

Is used to refer to the built environment, the physical aspect of the city, and the relationships between the solid and the void. This fabric threads refer to buildings, neighborhoods, areas, in addition to their public spaces.

Social fabric

Refers to people, and the relationships and interaction between them. The threads refer to individuals and groups.

City fabric

In this thesis refers to both the urban and social fabric, it is the combination of the threads together.

Uprising

Used to refer to the civil opposition movement against those who are in power in the government

Conflict

Besides referring to the clash between the incompatible parties.

It is used to refer to the subsequent violent armed conflict between the armed opposition -when some of the oppositional groups became weaponized- and the governmental forces. The term is decided with a full intention to make a clear statement that what happened in Syria is not a civil war, as considered in some references.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter talks about the methodology that will be designed to investigate the research question

“Human creativity is a multifaceted, vague concept, combining undisclosed or paradoxical characteristics. As a general notion, creativity adheres to the ability to move beyond traditional and established patterns and associations, by transforming them to new ideas and concepts or using them in innovative, unprecedented contexts and settings.”

(Boden, M. A. 2004)

Research through Design

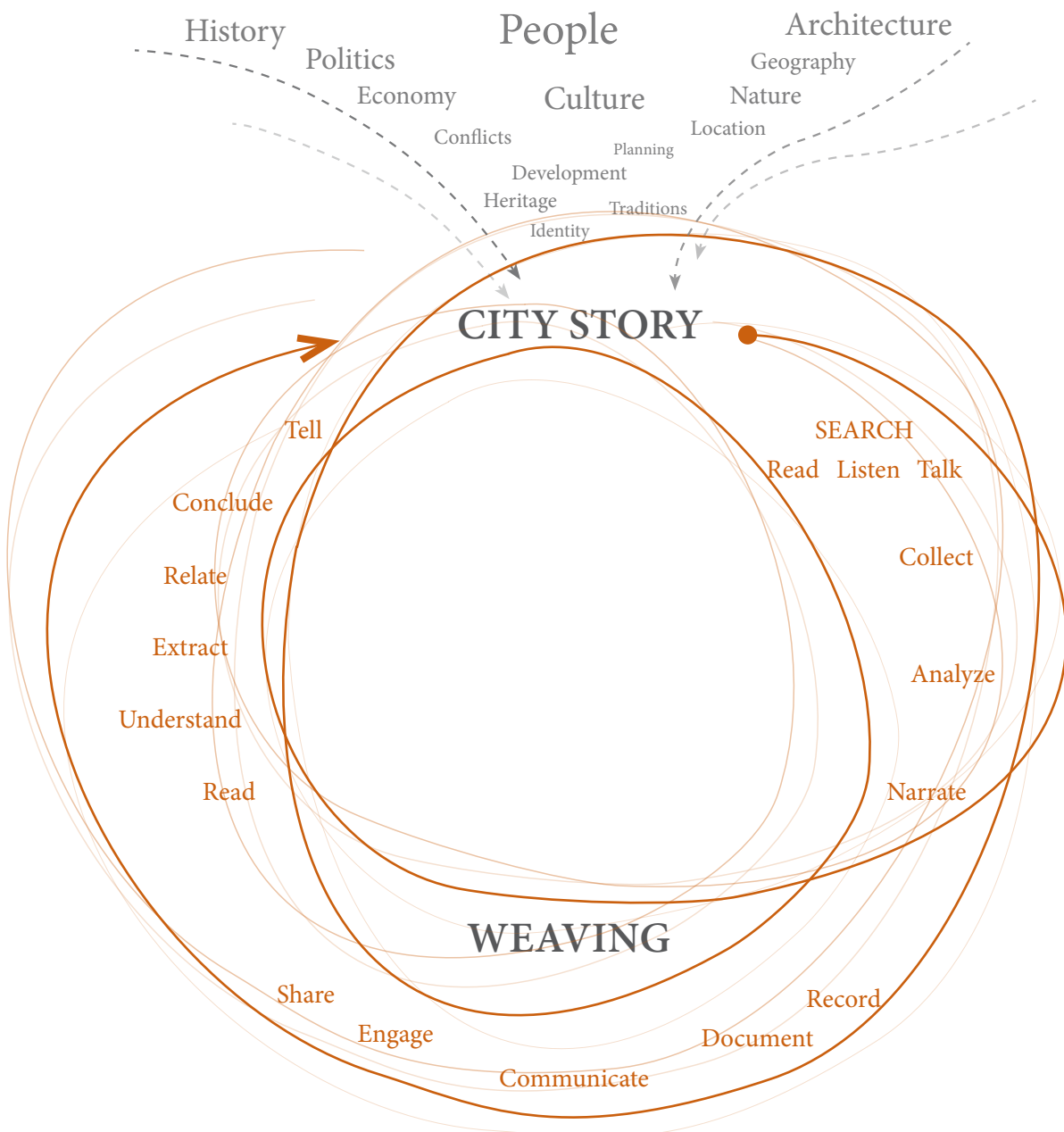
This thesis will be developed by designing an artistic medium that is weaving. The weaving is used as a metaphor of the city, bringing different and complicated aspects into one element, that will be utilized iteratively; Telling the story, analyzing, deconstructing the city complicated layers (inputs), then reading the story, understanding and exploring the complexity, concluding the relationships between the components and extracting information. Telling the stories again, [The play within the play].

*"More relative than this The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King"*
Hamlet, Act 2 Scene 2 - William Shakespeare

[the play within the play], the inputs and outputs are not separated, it is a paradox, the weaving created here, is the storyteller and listener at the same time

The weaving is designed as a visual story teller and a weaving toolbox with instructions or guidance is developed based on chosen elements from the context analysis.

The research in the thesis will be conducted for designing the methodology, that hopefully, can be customized to fit in answering other research questions in the same framework, and for other contexts and cities.



Research Methods

Autoethnography

I left Damascus, my home town, in April 2016. Before that I used to write my diaries, to keep a record of what I witnessed and lived there. I used my architectural background to observe the city, focus on the emergence of changes in the built environment, and in people's behavior.

I was also writing about my perception of the city as a whole, and try to describe it conceptually, not only to simplify it but also it was to comprehend the massive irreversible change, that has turned my life upside down.

The research will be using the Auto-ethnography approach as a basic method . An analysis of my diaries will be conducted, besides including my own knowledge about the context, experience, and reflections throughout the work.

“Autoethnography is a research method that: Uses a researcher's personal experience to describe and critique cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences. Acknowledges and values a researcher's relationships with others.... Shows 'people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles'” (Adams, T. E., Jones, S. H., & Ellis, C, 2015).

Conversations

Friendly conversations are conducted with Syrian people, both who were and who are still in Damascus, to broad the understanding of the context, and discuss the different perspectives of certain events and the daily life in general in Damascus. And of course, to collect more stories.

It is amazing how different people are, when telling stories about the same thing, being affected by one event, or dealing with their city.

Content collecting and analysis

Data will be collected to analyze them, extract information and stories that will be used in context analysis, and later in the weaving. The targeted content is the following:

- Publications related to the Syrian conflict
- Selected materials from the social network platforms
- Television series, movies, documentaries related to the Syrian conflict.
- Selected materials from the social network platforms.
- Articles and newspaper about Damascus.

The focus of analysis will be on understanding the perspective of the writer -or characters-, and the interconnected topics that are covered. (See next diagram).

Literature reading

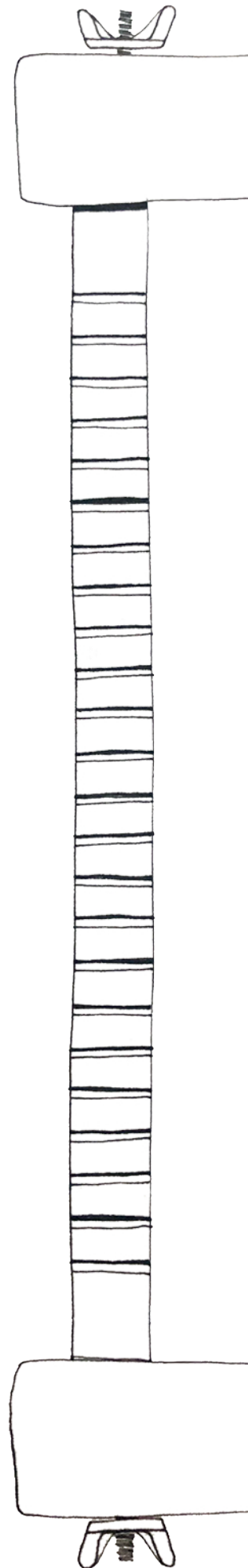
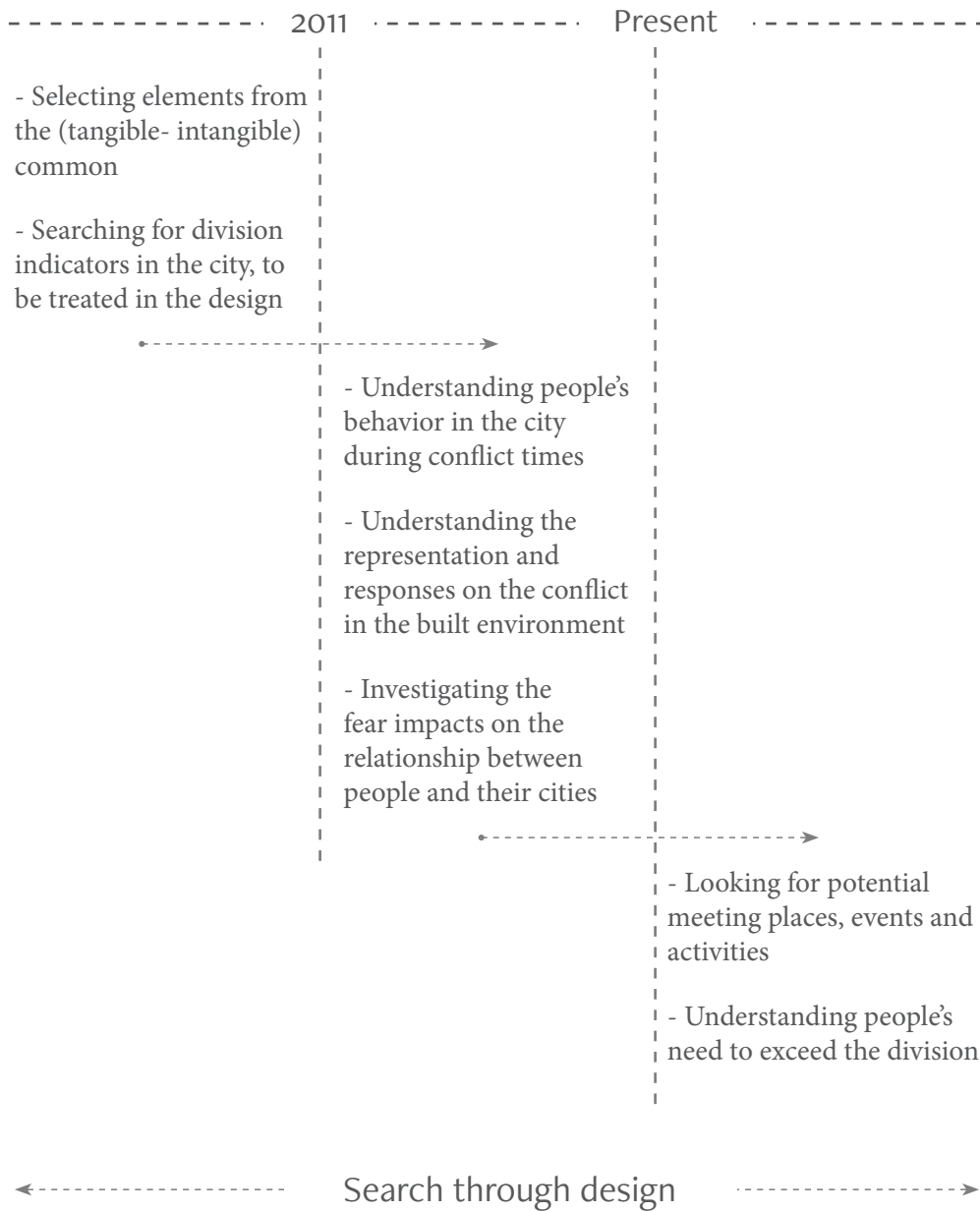
Reading literature to get knowledge and deeper understanding about the relevant topics that the thesis will deal with or touch upon. The conflict is a main topic in this thesis, a background about the impact on the built environment, social fabric and mental health is crucial. Another topic is understanding the expression of fear in cities. In addition to literature about collective memory, using storytelling in design.... etc.

Writing Style

Since the thesis focuses on stories and storytelling, the writing style will be purposely, when possible, written like a story. The text will aim to create a balanced combination between the expressive flowing language and the academic thesis writing style.

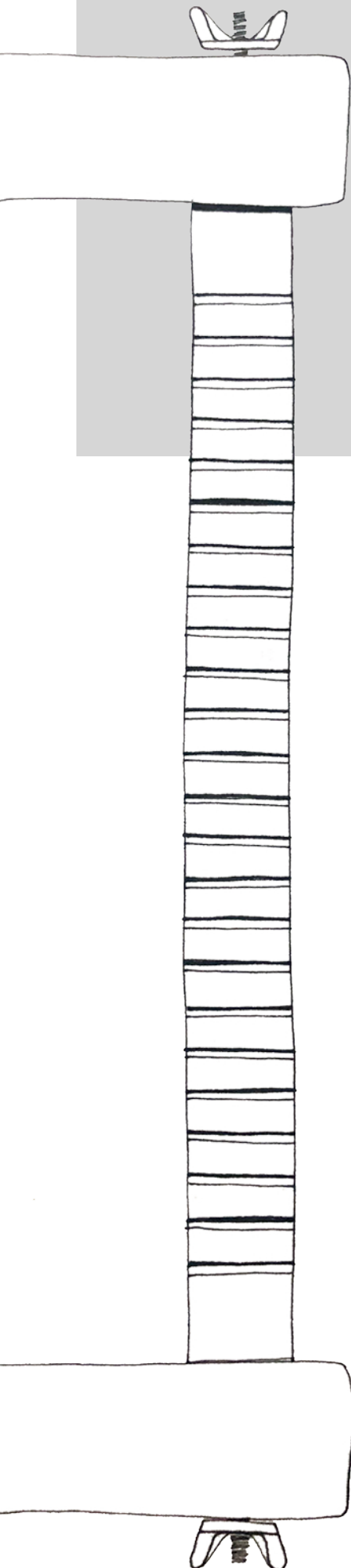
“The qualitative researcher is involved in this artistic activity because he or she must describe and explain the living experience of participants in his or her study” (Janesick, V, J. 2016)

Content collecting in relation to time



THE PAST

This chapter introduces Damascus before 2011, examines the urban growth, and described the social harmonized fabric



D

In Damascus

*The sky walks on the ancient streets
Barefoot, barefoot
So what need does the poet have for inspiration,
metre and rhyme?*

E

In Damascus

*The stranger sleeps in his shadow
Standing like a minaret in the bed of eternity
Not longing for anyone or any place.*

F

In Damascus

*The present tense continues its Umayyad works
And we walk toward our tomorrow, confident
of the sun in our past
We and eternity are the residents of this land.*

.

.

T

In Damascus

*The traveler sings silently to himself and I
return from Syria
Neither dead, nor alive
But as clouds easing the butterfly's burden
From my fugitive soul.*

*"The Damascene Collar of the Dove" Poet
- Mahmoud Darwish
(Darwish, M. n.d/2014)*

Introducing Damascus

Laying in the center of Al-Ghouta, the large oasis in the desert created by Barada River, overlooked by Qassioun mountain; The devotedly guard castle leans on the ancient walls, the walls stretch and embrace the old city leaving it only reachable through ten gates which eight of them still exist. The old alleys take the visitor smoothly in a maze of beauty and charm, to lead him/her to the doorstep of an old Damascene house where the Damascenes were competing to bring heaven to the earth. The scented streets by white jasmine and lemon tree flowers, the crowded markets, the Azan call to prayer, the churches bells, the Aghabani and Damask fabric, the spirit in every handcrafted piece.

Damascus is all these tangibles and intangibles...

A story that started a long time ago

.... And the story is to be continued



(i)

Known as The oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, had its early urban form unfolding as early as 3000 B.C (UNESCO, n.d.). Damascus is the capital of the Syrian Arab Republic, and one of its 14 governorates. The country that has a strategic location at the crossroads between Asia, Africa, and Europe to the north, which has historically made this land an attractive point for successive civilizations and cultures, as well as a passage for trade routes, the most famous of which is the Silk Road (Collelo, T. 1987).



(ii)

Main Damascus

It is the headquarter of the central Syrian government where all the buildings of ministries, political bodies, as well as parliament and embassies, are located. The administrative Damascus governorate area is 105 km², out of which 77 km² is urban, planned in two main typologies, old and modern city, and divided into 16 municipal districts. The ancient city of Damascus-which is one district- had been inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979 in the decision : CONF 003 XII.46 (UNESCO,1979).



(iii)

The Great Damascus

It is center of a large metropolitan area called the Great Damascus, which, in addition to the administrative Damascus, includes the adjacent residential suburbs. These suburbs follow Damascus Countryside Governorate administratively, but they form an economic and geographical unit with the city.

(i) *The strategic location of Syria*

(ii) *Damascus location in Syria*

(iii) *Main Damascus & the adjacent suburbs*

The urban growth

The -ancient- city that most of its area is protected by the wall, continued surrounding itself, by residential neighborhoods with an extraordinary organic dense urban fabric, each civilization that governed or occupied this land left its traces in the city architecture (UNESCO, n.d.).

French mandate (1920-1946)

During the French mandate (1920-1946), the urbanism, architecture, and social structure of Damascus city were massively affected (Stockhammer D, 2009; as cited in Alsabouni M, 2016). They started forming the city as a part of modern France, ignoring the city identity and local needs.

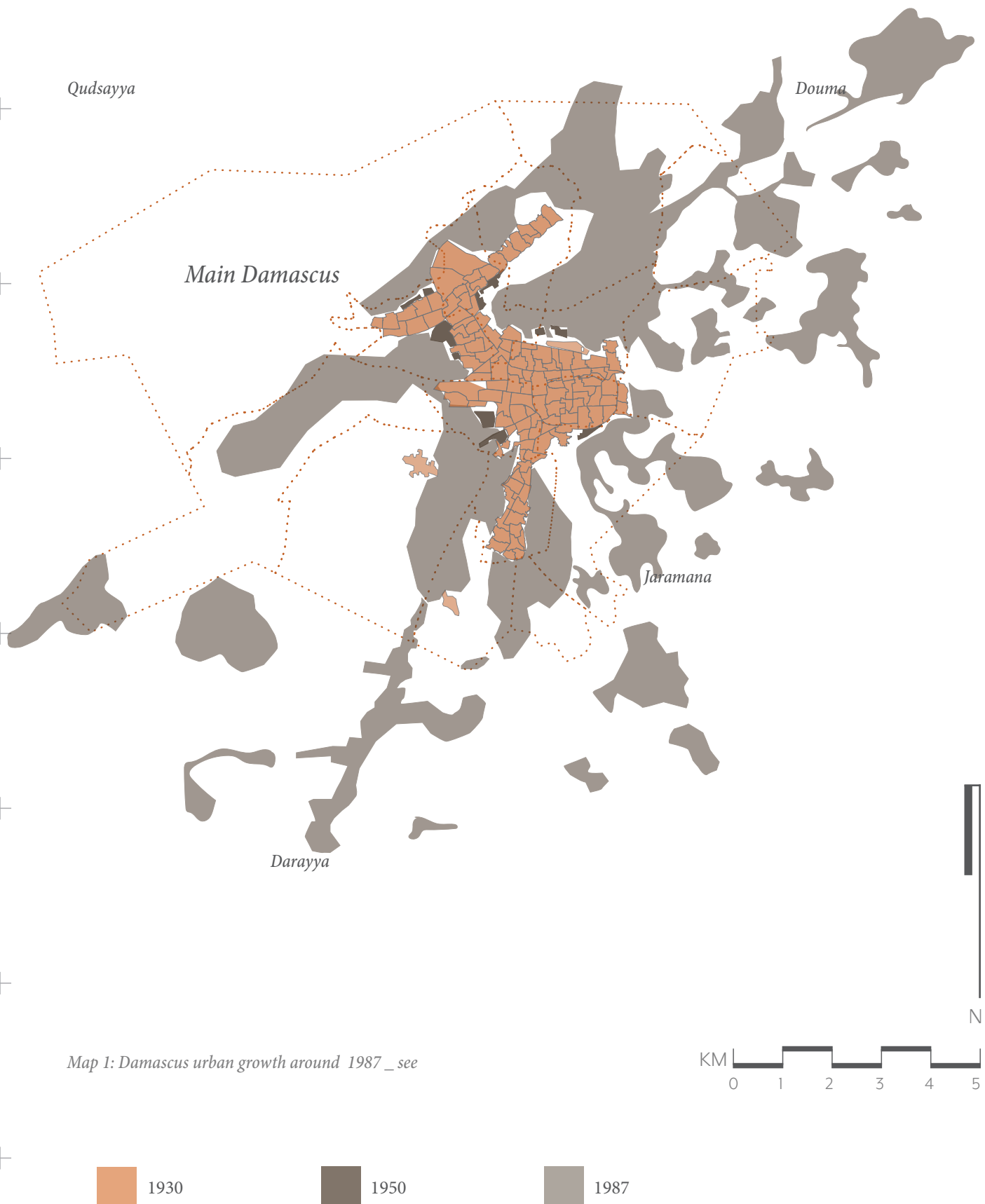
A masterplan of Damascus was prepared by the urbanist Rene Danger between 1925-1937, who was concerned with hygiene, infrastructure, and embellishment of the city. (Fries, 1994; as cited in Lababedi Z, 2008), and even though it was resisted by the organically grown city, the French planners continued modifying the city according to their troops' needs, they were the first to cut the city off from Al Ghouta, and to blow up wide city streets to make alterations in the fabric of the old city. (Alsabouni M, 2016) . The following plan was developed by Danger and by Michel Ecochard, with further isolation to the old city - the walled part- fabric, and destruction to surrounding homogeneous neighborhoods.

The fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties

In the early fifties, with the economic prosperity, Damascus had a rapid urbanization. The city began to density and expand into new residential areas to accommodate the increasing population of its residents, the coming people from the countryside and other cities, displaced Syrians from Al-Golan Heights, and Palestinian refugees due to the Nakba in 1948; Later, some of these areas like Al-Yarmouk district were added to the districts of Damascus. This expansion was accompanied by an emergence of random informal housing settlements that were considered later as slums(Jabbour S, 2002).

Once again, Ecochard was missioned by the Syrian government in 1968 to extend Danger's plan. "65% of the plan had been realized by 2009, resulting in infrastructure problems, urban slums, economic deficiency, and social ills, leading at last to war" (Alsabouni M, 2016).

In the seventies, new modern residential suburbs were constructed and the city growth increased and reached more areas. Synchronously, the informal housing settlements were destroying the oasis, Al-Ghouta area, since the landowners were selling them to the newcomers, who in turn were building there cheaply. Thus, the market's need for the rapid building did not consider the agricultural value of the land, which affected the ecological balance that was served by Al-Ghouta all over the years. (Lababedi Z, 2008). Later, the building process in the oasis area was prohibited in 1977, but no real procedures were applied.



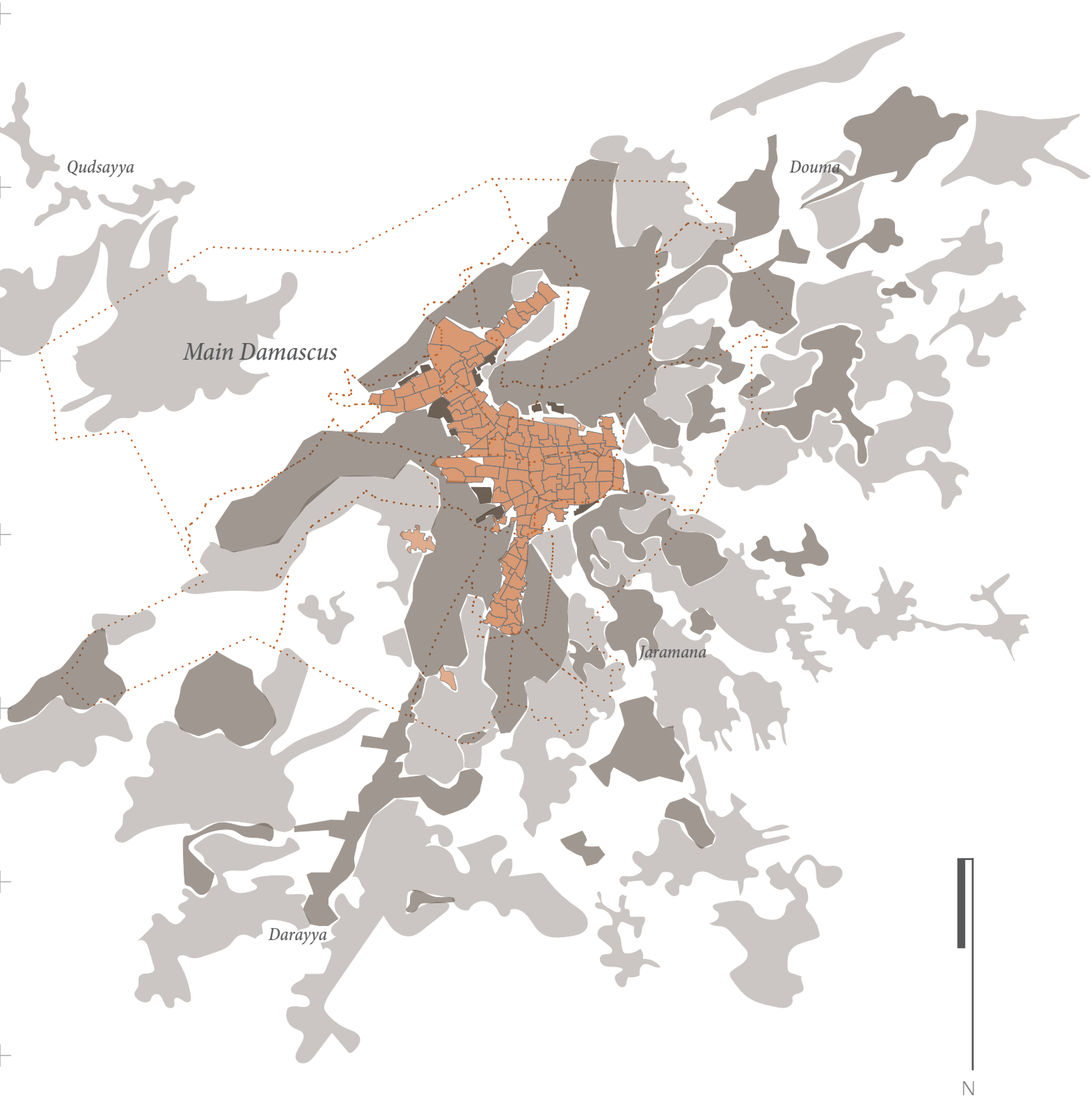
Map 1: Damascus urban growth around 1987 _ see

The end of the 20th century

After the nineties, Damascus continued its strive to become a modern capital. A massive construction movement was expanding and joining the close suburbs that were administratively following the countryside (Jabbour, S. 2002). On the other hand, the building violations or random illegal buildings continued in the form of the slum areas or adding parts to the existed buildings. The slum areas were considered by the Syrian government as a collective violation, even though the services and infrastructures often reached them. On the other hand, the existing buildings were extended by additional floors and rooms, or by building over the leftovers and in-between spaces. As a result, the city became more densified, and the service and infrastructure sector suffered from the additional loads. Moreover, the government announced several gentrifications and Land acquisition projects and began executing some (Lababedi Z, 2008).

The ancient city did not survive urban growth or building violations. In May 2011, the World Heritage Committee documented the threats affecting the property of the Ancient city of Damascus. The document; whc11-35com-7Be, mentioned the poor status of conservation, the lack of a buffer zone, and the development projects threatening the significant historic fabric. (UNESCO, 2011)

To conclude, the urban city growth in Damascus has undoubtedly been -like any other city's development- driven by complex forces and interests (political-economic... etc). By its turn, this growth has led to other complexities that controlled the future change. In Damascus, the changes in the social fabric, have been among the most notable changes.



Map 2: Damascus urban growth until 2011



1930

1950

1987

2011

The social harmony

“As an ancient world trade center, Damascus knew how to embrace ‘colors’, how to speak tongues, and settle differences.”

(Al-Sabouni, M. 2016)

[A colorful homogeneous fabric] this is how Syrian people used to describe their historic unique mixture of cultures, religions, and ethnicities; that shared the land and the vibrant tangible and intangible heritage.

The true colors

People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city’s layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba - which means the catastrophe as a word- in 1948; All were welcomed and integrated with the city.

However, this did not mean that no classification was happening; For example, Some [original] damascenes born to a damascene family, were competing on how much closer , their families reregistration place, was to the walls of the ancient city; Being from within the walls for them or from the close neighborhoods to it was a privilege for them.

The layers of classification were deeply constructed in their mentality under categories like the person’s economic level, education, origin, religion; But this interest in classifying people, did not -often- conflict with showing kindness and hospitality.

The population growth

The urban growth was a response to the population increasing, damascenes had to find new places to settle and the suburb was their destination, since the houses there were less expensive, so they gave their proximity to the city center in exchange to bigger cheaper houses. The social fabric grew and merged with the extended city.



People relationship to the public space

The culture of walking

Damascenes enjoyed walking in their city, it was a social habit, a person will normally call friends for a walk, just hanging out and sharing stories and enjoying the city.

The markets -before the appearance of commercial malls- are streets or allies with rows of shops, so walking in the city also includes wandering in the markets.

The culture of picnic

When mentioning picnic in Damascus, people will probably think about Al-Ghouta, the oasis where they used to have their spring and summer picnics, picnic meant the people will call as many relatives or friends as they can, to join them. Even though, for those who do not own a car, it was not an easy trip. Parks were also a destination for short picnics

The culture of annual fairs

The book fair, the flowers fair, the international fair were events that most of Damascus residents people appreciate and wait for. They were also an attraction to people from other cities.

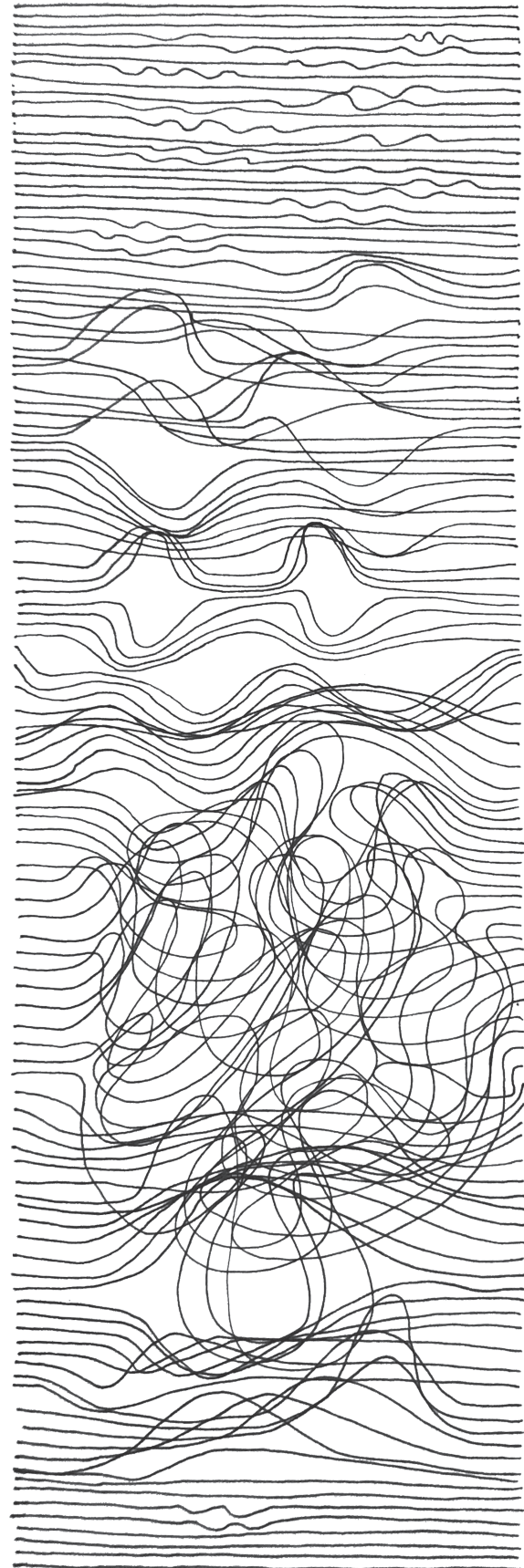
The cultural events

After the nineties, people were more familiar with the cultural events that take place in the open public space. Some Syrian youth bands started to have musical concerts in the parks, the cultural organizations started to encourage artists to have an open art exhibition and performances.

The Capital of Arabic culture

According to the festival archived website (Damascus Arab capital of culture. 2008), The festival was an initiative taken by the Arab League under the UNESCO Cultural Capitals Program, for promoting and celebrating the Arab culture.

This festival was so special for people in Damascus, and Syrians in general. In that year, Damascus became a playful city, and cultural events were held throughout the year.



THE CONFLICT

This chapter is about Damascus as an Armageddon of the conflict; it describes how the public space was both involved and victimized, then delves to unfold the hidden layers of fear

نحن لا نتعود يا أباي إلا إذا مات شيء فينا، وتصور
صبحم ما مات فينا حتى تعودنا على كل ما حولنا

"We don't get used, dad, unless a part dies in us; and imagine how big is what died in us, till we got used to all what's happening around."

*" Human Animalism" Book
- Mamdouh Adwan
(Adwan, M. 2003)*

An overview

In March 2011, the civil movement started in Syria as sporadic demonstrations across the country, and together with the governmental response on it, they evolved tremendously into a brutal armed conflict affecting all the life aspects imagined there (BBC, 2016). Syria has become a battlefield, where complex and variant layers of the conflict confronted, starting from the global political poles, and ending up between a person, and the next-door neighbor.

Each city in Syria, involved in the uprising, and then suffered from the conflict in its way. Political interests, sectarianism, economic disparity, social structure and many other aspects, were the driving forces to the conflict, and were existing in different levels in each city.

Damascus share of the conflict

As in other Syrian cities, Damascus started witnessing the beginning of the uprising in Syria. On 15 March, people protested in Al-Hariqa square to call for democratic reform and the release of all political prisoners, (BBC News, 2011). But unlike other cities, Damascus is the capital, the center of the Syrian government, and containing the situation is not for negotiation. *“The conflict in Damascus did not take a sectarian shape, nor was the targeting of civilians there based on revenge. The conflict was, rather, about putting pressure on the ruling authorities.”* (Al-Sabouni, M. 2016)

Damascus was accused, by other Syrian cities, of being the government’s pampered child, despite its involvement in the accelerating conflict. Several massive explosions occurred, shelling was happening on a daily base, hand-made bombs were spreading panic in the city, the Eastern Ghot, Daraya and many other suburbs were besieged and bombed, people from the suburb and countryside displaced to the city, the parks became shelters, the traffic network changed completely, the whole borders were controlled strictly by military check points distributed in the whole city, the power was cut for long hours everyday, and access to the basic services became a luxury.

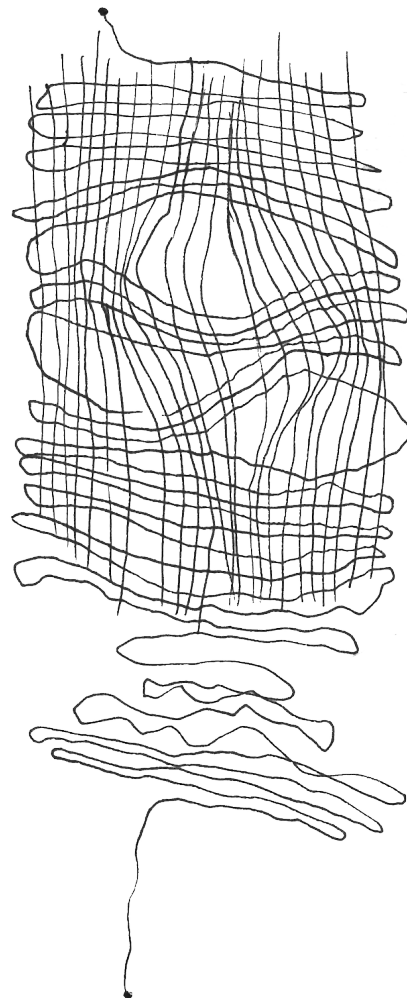
Old Damascus as a danger zone

Starting from 2013 until the present, Damascus had been inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (UNESCO, 2013), for the partial damage that followed some of the properties there.

The end of the conflict in Damascus

On 21 May 2018, the Syrian authorities announced that they are officially controlling Damascus area. The announcement was stated on the state television *“Damascus and its surroundings... are completely secure”* (BBC, 2018)

After that, the explosions happened less often in the city, the majority of the military checkpoints were dismantled, and the security situation became almost calm.



The representation in the city ≈ [2011- 2013] *

“Aspects like liveness, staging a scene, personal connection, suspense, interaction, narration, and influence were needed to replace the mediatized and pixelated, yet uncertain, images of the Syrian uprising.” (Adwan, Z. 2017)

The representation of the uprising in 2011 went through commensurate levels with the government response. People involved in the uprising were representing the opposition. Different approaches were invented to avoid confrontation with security men. Most of them were created and executed by youth, they were more hit-and-run actions.

Visual identity: A different flag, that had been one of the Syrian flags before the current official one, was used to symbolize the uprising. Green-white-black, and three red stars ("Syrian civil War", 2020)

City as a meeting space

- **Demonstrations:** The organized protests with permission, in the main city, were only allowed for some political parties after following certain criteria, that did not meet the uprising needs, in general, no opposite demonstrations were allowed in Damascus. On the other hand, they were happening in some surrounding suburbs areas following to the countryside, they were not permitted, but the government was paying more attention to the city center.

- **Flying demonstrations:** A term that was used by the opposite youth activists in Damascus, it describes the alternative invented method to avoid the confrontation with the governmental forces. They were gathering in neighborhoods, in small numbers, for few minutes, chanting and then running away when security men arrive. *“Certainly, safety was one of the major reasons, but I found other attractions in the impulses of interaction, influence, and humor” (Adwan, Z.2017).*

- **Funerals:** For several months, opposites found a way to protest by following the funeral of killed opposite activists with a large protest, that was finishing every time by security men.

- **Evenings:** Participants were gathering in an open space of a neighborhood in the suburb and often beside open fields. They were mostly residents in those neighborhoods who are familiar with the area. They were chanting and singing until the arrival of security men when they run away and finish the event.

City as a tool

- **Pop-ups:** Surprising and planned activities to create unrest in the public space, they were often targeting the main squares. Examples are: pouring a red dye the fountains in the city squares by red to symbolize the wasted blood, putting speakers with songs and chants on animals like street cats that are hard to catch by security men, agreement on wearing certain color and walking in agreed areas.

- **Burning cars wheels:** two to four people suddenly cut the street and put flaming wheels in the middle of a street to block the movement of cars for a while before the security men arrive and removed the burning wheels.

City as a record

Walls were used for writing statements, they were sprayed during night.

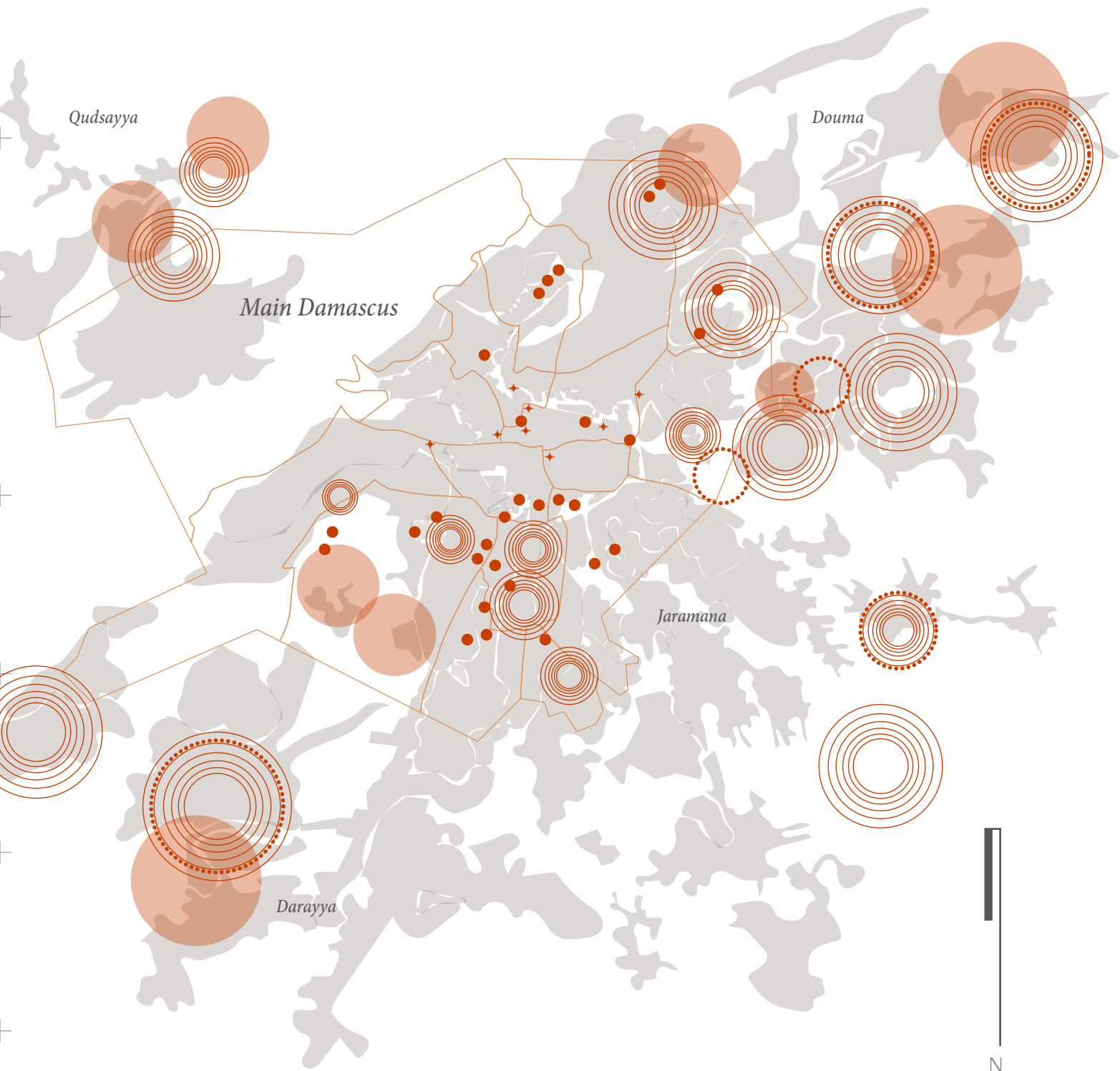
The virtual common space

All the previous uprising methods were organized on Facebook secret groups, where people used nicknames to hide their identity, a place where they were certainly feeling more comfortable.

Fear spreads, Fear dominates

- All the previous methods were done with risking of getting killed, detained, physically damaged by security men.
- People involved in these activities were making sure to stay anonymous by keeping their faces and names hidden.
- People, who chose not to take any side, faced another sort of fear because of these activities, which will be explained later.

* This part (text and map) is based on both personal knowledge and collected data from Syrian and International news agencies and platforms.



Map 3: The uprising representation in Damascus



The responsive transformation ≈ [2011- 2018] *

To contain the spread of the uprising and prove the ownership of the city, to control the deteriorating security situation due to the explosions, hand-made bombs, and many other threats; The Syrian authorities worked on tightening its security and military control. These actions were taken against the uprising, and the following armed conflict.

Visual identity: The official current flag, [Red-white- black, and two green stars] ("Syria", 2020). With the army symbols and colors .

City as a meeting space

- **Pro-government rallies:** An official march in the city center, often in the main squares and streets. Hundreds of supporters to the government were gathering, chanting while being protected by security men.
- **Cars march:** people were wandering the city center, honking or playing loud national songs.
- **Musical celebrations and concerts:** were held by the government in the open public spaces, whether in the parks or in the main squares.

City as a maze

- **Changing the traffic network:** Full or partial closure of the city's main squares (roundabouts), streets, and the majority of the sub-roads in the residential neighborhoods by concrete barriers.
- **Closed doors, Open door:** Installing heavy metal doors in old city that can be closed and opened in specific hours.

City as a fortress

- **Securing borders:** Monitoring all entrances to the city by military checkpoints, to control the movement from and into the suburbs. The periodic closure of the leading roads to the capital, especially during holidays and national events which prevented the residents in the neighboring suburbs from accessing to the main city.
- **Security walls:** Building thick Concrete walls around some of the governmental buildings, the embassies, and the security branches buildings, since they were targeted by most of the occurred explosions. They were one of the added architectural elements to the city.

City as a record

Walls were painted with Syrian flags or supportive statements. Also, some were resprayed to wipe out the opposite writings of the opposite groups.

City as a weapon, the checkpoints

The clearest architectural response to the conflict; The checkpoints were added as a result of the fear, but they constituted a fear source later. They were either mobile or fixed units that blocked the movement of vehicles and/or people unless they follow a certain criterion. The whole traffic movement in the city was slowed down due to the consequent check procedure. Checkpoints were reduced in Damascus since May 2018 (EASO. 2020).

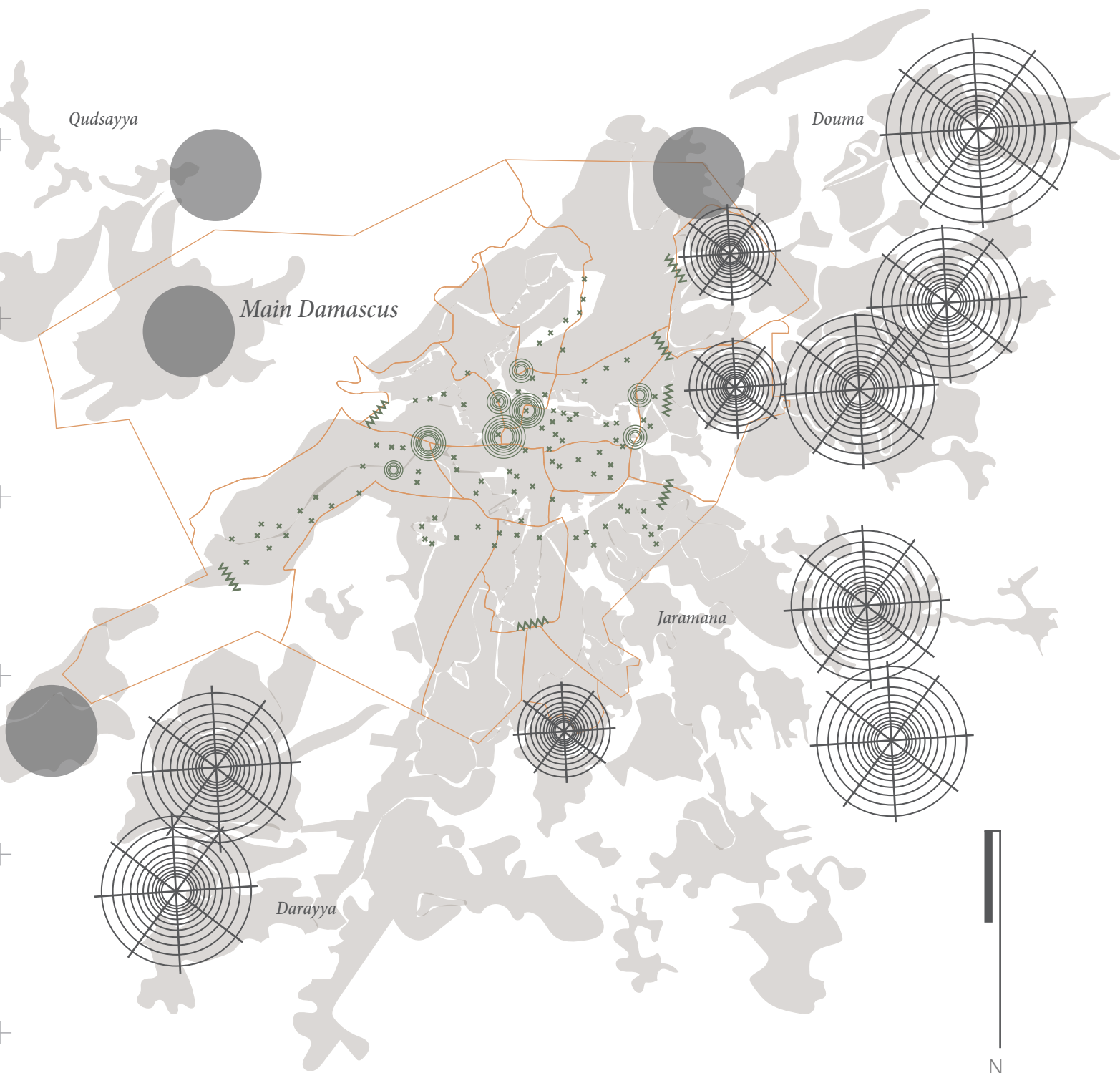
City as a victim

- **The Besiege:** The response on the uprising in the nearby suburb and countryside was besieging them temporarily or permanently, Prohibiting the movements whether into or out from the area.
- **Attacks by tanks and Airstrikes:** The conflict at this point was in its peak which lasted for years, the violence was used against the armed opposition strongholds in the countryside. An entire neighborhoods were razed to the ground. (Jimenez, R. 2014).

Fear spreads, Fear dominates

- *These responses succeeded in containing the uprising in Damascus, around the end of 2012, almost none of the mentioned methods above was heard about in the main city of Damascus.*
 - *The pro-government marches and concerts were also avoided in order to prevent the risk of big gatherings.*
 - *The armed opposite groups in countryside, in their turn, responded to the bombing and airstrikes with shelling, the thing that the residents of Damascus had to live with for several years.*
 - *Check points, concrete wall and barriers were the main three elements that were added to the city due to the conflict.*

* This part (text and map) is based on both personal knowledge and collected data from Syrian and International news agencies and platforms.



Map 4: The governmental responsive transformation



-  Bombing & Airstrikes
-  Temporary besiege
-  Strict control
-  Areas with Check points (The spread areas, not the actual location)





Image 1: The destruction in Douma in 2018. A city located to the northern east of Main Damascus. It was one of the areas that witnessed the beginning of the uprising in 2011, then became an area for armed opposition factions. The siege of Douma started in 2012 and ended in 2018 with the return of government control (Al-Jazeera. 2018)

The urban division

The urban growth during the conflict time

At the beginning of the conflict, and because the government had its focus on containing the uprising and secure its crucial issue, some people found it a proper time to build or modify their properties without seeking building permission.

Later, The government decided to execute its regulatory plan and sent warnings to the owners to prepare themselves to leave, they found themselves powerless and had to face their fate. (Alsabouni, M. 2016)

Different measures were applied among areas. In some areas it was land acquisition and evacuation, in others it was improvements.

In Al-Mezzah 66, Marota, a residential project is being constructed after the evacuation of its inhabitants. Stated in Maruta Project's website: "Marota .. *The New City That Will Contribute To The Dawn Of A New Damascus Has A Long Tradition And History And Puts It On The Map Of Modernity And Globalism*".

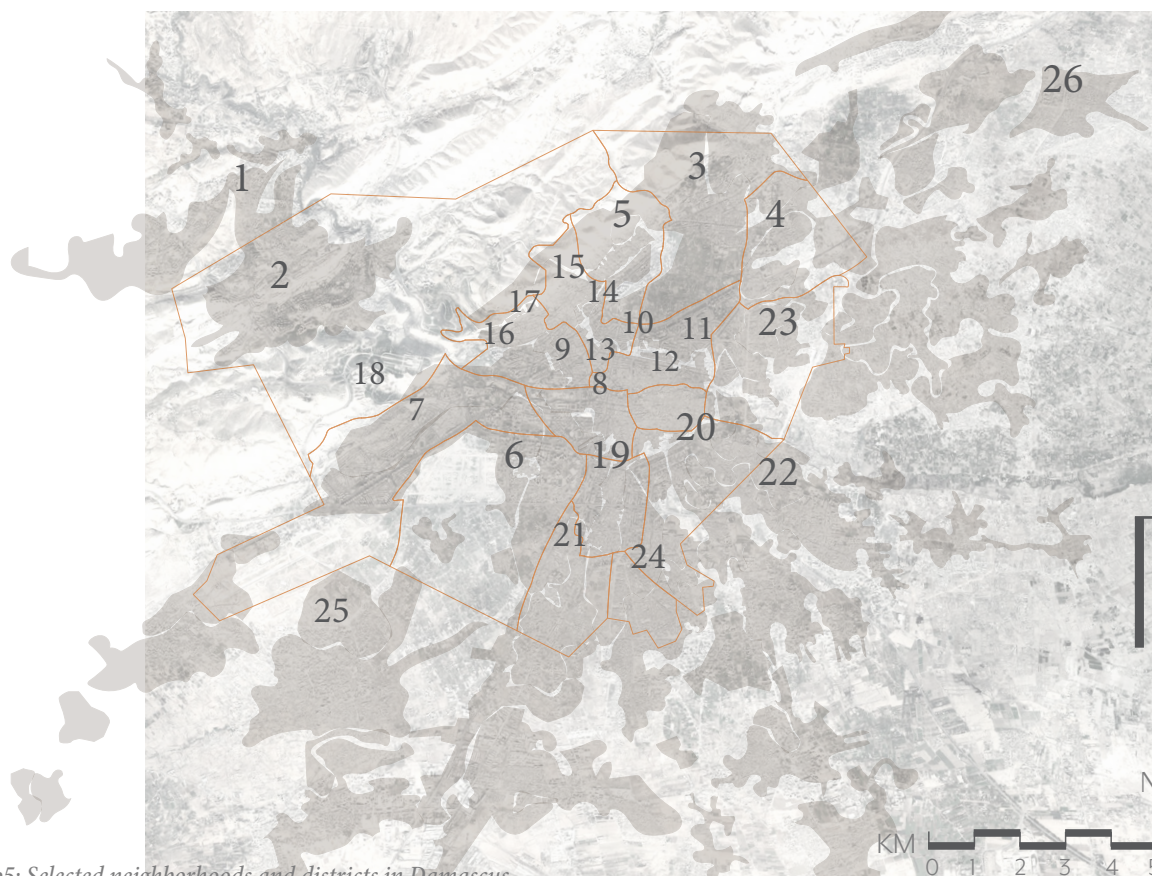
Areas differentiation

It was not equal, the areas were distinguished, each one has its share, some areas were not included in the regular power outage plan, on the other hand, other neighborhoods were spending days without electricity. Some areas, nearby the city's southern eastern borders, were attacked by the mortar shells on a daily base. Some areas were vandalized by the explosions due to their proximity to the government or security building.

These divisions created a hidden ignorance and increased hatred, it was related to aspects like the neighborhoods' relative location to the suburb, their function, the affiliation of groups that inhabit them (Jimenez, R. 2014). Even the ratio of the informal settlements, the slums, was taken into account.

Is it easier to remove a slum by bombing it? yet, there is neither a convincing nor real answer.

The table aims to create an understanding of the relationships between some chosen aspects and subsequent differentiation.



Map5: Selected neighborhoods and districts in Damascus

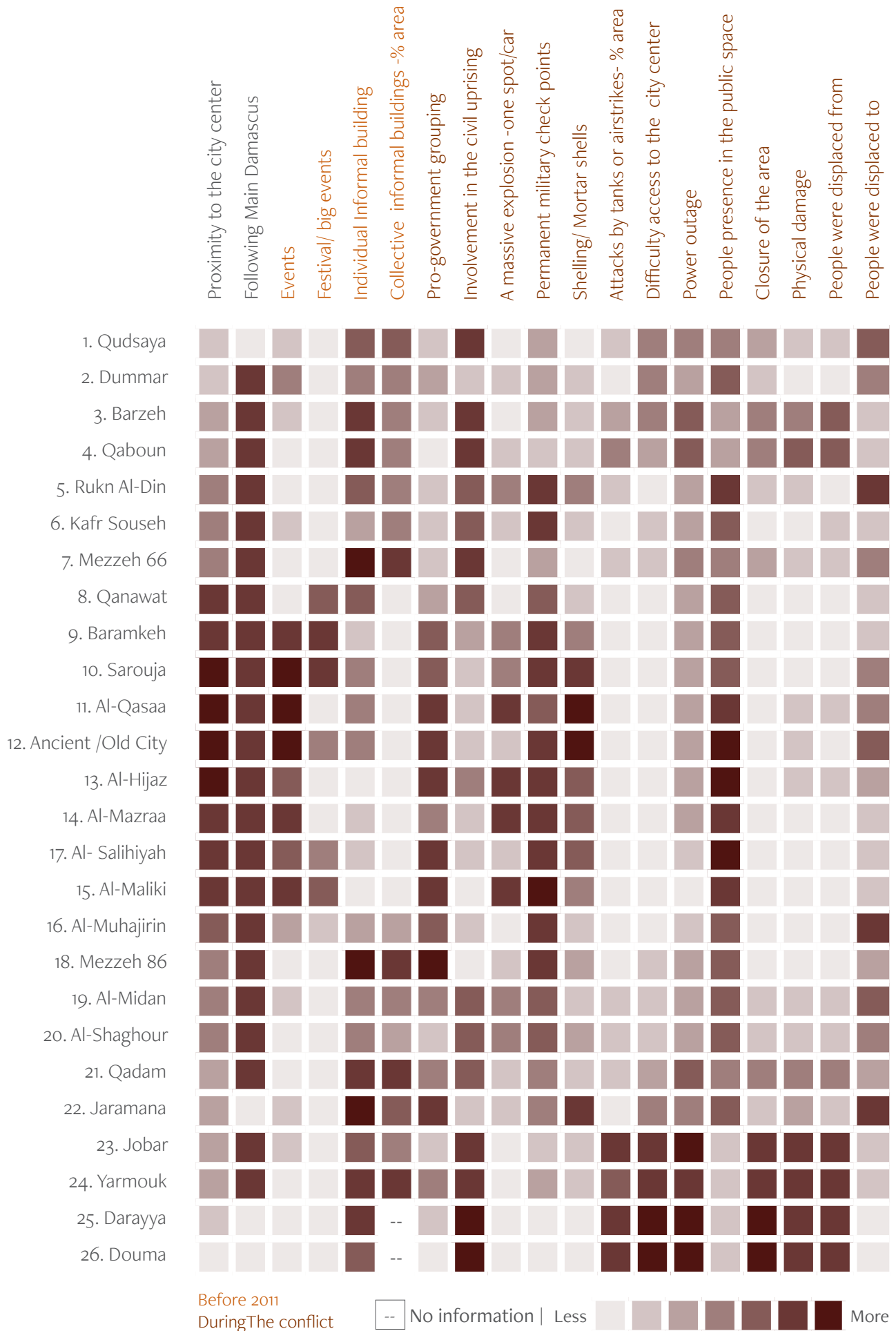


Table 1: A comparison between different areas in Damascus,
 - The data is collected from reading some articles and news, in addition to personal knowledge

The social division

Attitudes towards the uprising

The majority of people chose one of three rows:

- with the government, Supporter
- against the government, Opposed
- neutral, Gray (as people were calling).

In the beginning, people were asking each other a direct question which was hard to be avoided, the question was simply [Are you with or against?] Under these words, people were suspended, accused, and excluded. The (other) became everyone. Symbols related to each row played a major role in dividing people.

Ready-made position

People were stereotyping others, depending on aspects like their affiliation to religion, ethnicity, educational level or place of origin or residence.

People behaved in a violent way toward each other, and only a few were able to keep the wisdom and empathy. Areas were classified too, entire neighborhoods were [with] or [against], and as a result some people were avoiding even to pass through them.

Freedom against freedom

(Freedom حرية) was the main demand for the opposes when the uprising was as a civil movement and before the dominance of weapons, but sometimes when they were asking for this, they were taking other people's freedom. Being in a place when a flying demonstration or a pop-up action occurs, means that everyone existed there is, from the security men's perspective, suspected to be a participant that should be detained. For people who chose to not take aside, it was the wrong place at the wrong time. As a result, Opposed youth became hatred and rejected not only from the supporters, who considered them as vandals, but also from the neutrals.

Self- distancing

When someone was suspected to be from the other row, he/she might be exposed to detention, kidnapping, death, depending on the affiliation of the (other) that did the report, and for whom is the report sent.

It was a life threatening, people had to watch their words, behaviors, reactions. For their life safety, people had to distance themselves.

Collective self - distancing

Another layer of stereotyping was people's residence area, certain neighborhoods had a reputation with or against, although this was not the fact at the beginning, and many people had conflicted with their neighbors. This was a reason for some people moving out. Later, clusters with one affiliation were created, and people from the (other) affiliation were avoiding to go there or even pass through.

The displaced

To protect from the bombing and air-strikes, people fled to the main city; The government responded by transforming the public schools into shelters and allowing them to stay, for a while, in the parks. Although a lot of people volunteered to help them, they felt neglected and discriminated by others.

Gated communities

Residents of the suburb were daily checked up when coming to/from the main city. Which made them feel that they were not treated fairly, comparing to the inhabitants of the main city.

What was left to share

The same suffering: tough daily life conditions, long waiting hours in the cars to be checked, electricity outage especially in the streets and public spaces during the evening, emptiness of the streets because of the mortars fall or explosions, lack of public transportation, economy collapse, insecurity, beloved people and belongings loss.... etc. Their life has not been a life anymore, it has become an endless nightmare.

Fear spreads, Fear dominates....

The conflict created a vulnerable community, People were not only divided from each other, people were also divided from their city.

The mentioned points above are very general and integrated in people daily life in Damascus in the conflict years. There were other painful aspects that are avoided.



Image 2: Different symbols, the adopted flag by the opposition



Image 3: The official Syrian flag, representing the government



Image 4: An Unauthorized demonstration in Jobar, 2012



Image 5: Pro government rally in Damascus center, 2012



Image 6: A bombed neighborhood in Jobar, 2016



Image 7: Al-Hamidiyyah souq in old Damascus



Image 8: People in a destroyed neighborhood in the suburbs



Image 9: 'I love you Syria' Marathon in Damascus, Dec 2016

Interview with the fear

One of the most frightening things in the public space in main Damascus is randomness. The unpredictability of when or where a dangerous, subversive, or even fatal thing may occur.

At any moment, in the years between 2012 and before the announcement of Damascus as a secure area in 2018, a mortar shell may fall, a bike left beside a wall may be carrying a hand-made ticking bomb, an explosion of a car may kill and harm tens of innocent people. Being outdoor became life-threatening, maybe not at the same level everywhere, some places were considered safer than others, but again, nothing was predictable.

The atmosphere.

Even during the considered calmer days, there were things reminding people of the conflict, even though people got used to living with them. The background airstrikes and bombing sounds, the smoke columns following a mortar shell strike or bombing far away, gun shooting... etc

Age-related fear

Each age group faced a certain level of fear in the public space, which caused different consequences on their presence in the city. The seniors' group were, in general, fearing to be outdoor during the day hours, when shelling and explosions were more probable to happen, because of their inability to run in an attempt escape the danger; Also, during the evening, they avoided to be outside because of the power outage which increased the difficulty of seeing and thus the chances of falling off and slipping .

Gender-related fear

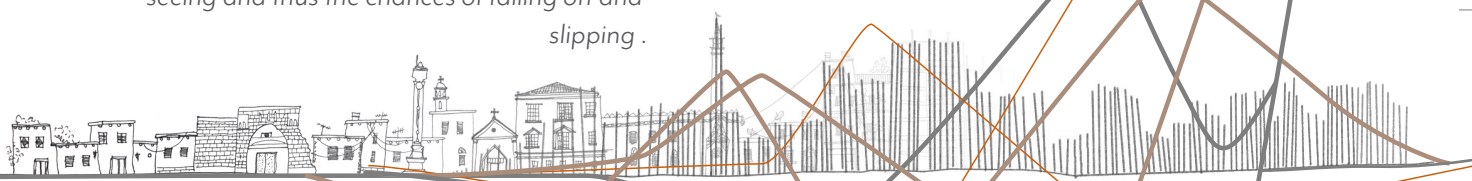
In general, both genders were almost under the same threats in Damascus; Except before the checkpoints where males, especially in the age range for obligatory military service, were facing the most difficulties to pass. After 2011, the government focused on providing manpower, which caused an increase in the number of men who avoided the military service. The checkpoints were checking men military service status, and the level of scrutiny was dependent on factors such as their ethnicity, place of birth or residence. Men were more exposed to the risk of being withheld or detained. Therefore, a large number of males in this age, fled the country or went into hiding (DIS.2019; EASO. 2020)

Impact on activities and picnics in the public space

People were afraid of being in big gatherings. In general, there were not any cultural activities held in public space.

While for the picnics, after a while, people started heading to the nearby greenery areas, closer to the city center.

Regarding the parks, for several years, some of the parks in Damascus were transformed into shelters in the form of fabric tents, people avoided passing through parks because they feared the displaced, in their turn, the displaced feared to see a [stranger] passing between their temporary shelters/houses.



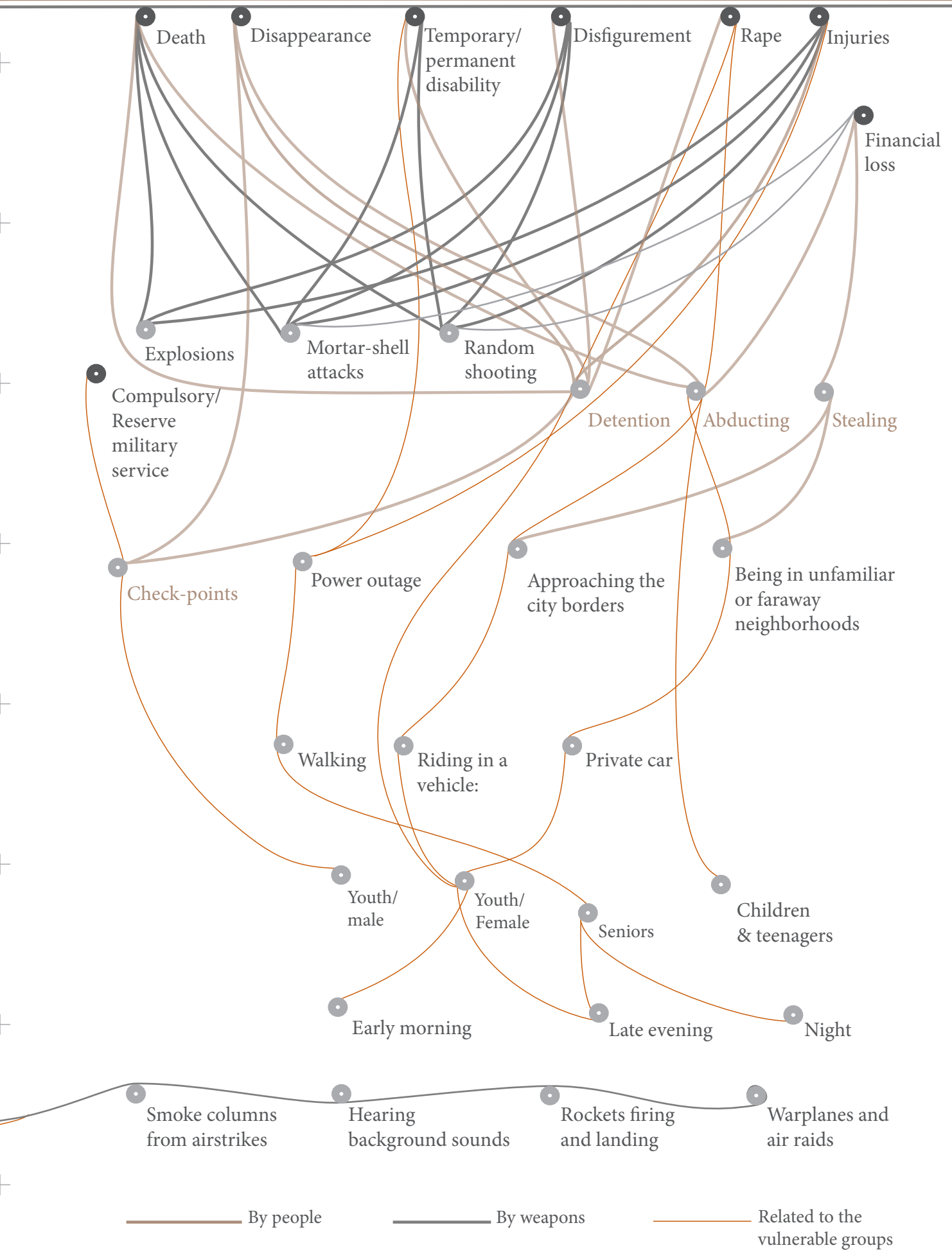


Diagram : Fear in the main city's public space

Social division

The fear effect



Urban growth

The conflict effect

أنا والاحتمالات الجديدة

كل مرة أقرر الإصغاء جيداً لصوتي الداخلي ... لاستجداء نص ما ... يعبر
الوقت بجاني متجاهلاً ... مستهزئاً بحجم الفراغ المتزايد في رأسي
أسمع صدى الأصوات حولي ولا أقدر على تفسيرها ... ولا أحاول تفسيرها
تصبح تلايف دماغي مسطحة ولا تفارقني الابتسامة البلهاء ... وكأنني
... ورقة شجر يابسة تسير مع مجرى نهر

أن أكون إنسانة مجهولة في مدينة مقنولة ... يعني أن الوقت إن مضي بشن
فالشن لا يعني سواي فهو عمري المهدور ... يعني أنني مرشحة في أية لحظة
لأصبح إضافة على صرير ورقم ما ... أو يصبح اسمي كلمة لا محل لها
/من الإعراب/ كانت قبل بضع لحظات: أنا بضميري المستر
يعني أن أفهم بالتطبيق المباشر مبادئ الفيزياء في القذف والسقوط الحر،
و كأنه لم يكن عبثاً تكرار جملة (انطلقت قذيفة بسرعة...) على أجيال
درست الفيزياء الميكانيك في منهاج الثانوية العلمي منا... ولكن على
الأرض... بعيداً عن الأوراق المسطرة والأرقام والرموز تختلف الحلول
مع احتمالات النتائج لاحصر طوله هنا تستبدل تلك الجملة المشهورة
بصغير /الفراغ/ ويكون الوسيط بين عصبية المعطبات الرياضية لإطلاق
القذيفة وبين خوف البشر وأرواحهم صوتاً هائلاً من رعب وشظايا

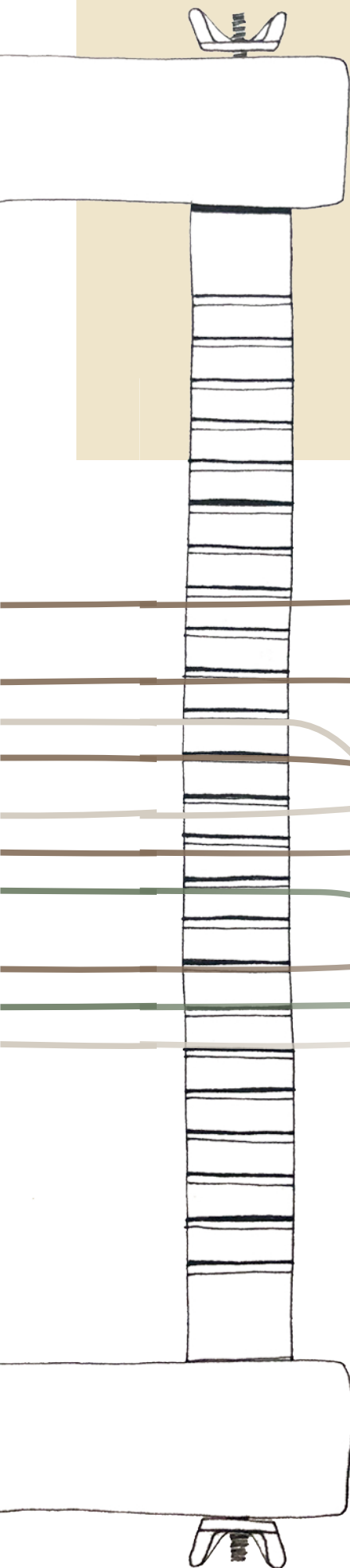
مدينة تحت القبة الزجاجية

... منذ سنتين ونصف
معظم سائقي السرفيس في المناطق السكنية الخائبة للغة طرقتوا يخبرون
الراكبين أن بإمكانهم الوصول بهم للجسر فقط... لم أستطع فهم ما يجري
حول هذه المواقف كما ساقطت الدالك بدا لي في بلد أو حتى في نفس محتلف
الذي يرى بعيني ولكن سمعت في وطني والآخر بعض الأصوات البعيدة
حيث مدينتي تحت قبة زجاجية وتحت محيطها الدائري محمولاً على
جدار يلتف حولها يوازيه منحلق تخرج منه بعض الطرق الفرعية تتوقف
عنها السيارات عن العبور أو تحتمي خارجاً
لون ضوء من الداخل يتبدل مع ساعات النهار والليل كسماء كل الأيام السابقة،
فراغها ملوء بالهواء الاعتيادي، لم يتغير داخلها شيء بوضوح/ ولكن كل ما
تبقى خارجها يشبه لوحة موت بالوان ترابية وسوداء مع ضربات من الخنجان
والأشجار اليابسة ومباني البيوت ذات البلاطات المهدامة، أما البشر المختبئون
هناك فكانوا خيالات سوداء تتحرك بسرعة لتقادي الأجسام الطائرة بكل
الاتجاهات على مسارات منحنية بانصاف أقطار أكبر من نصف قطر القبة
حينها بدت الفكرة مقبولة لي ومناسبة لأستطيع الاستمرار بالتنفس، اقتنعت
حينها أنني أعيش في المساحة الآمنة من قدر تحتمل وإن كل شيء يحدث
حول وفوقي، وأنه إن حدث وأصاب أحدهم خطأ أو عمداً القبة الزجاجية
... فتتبدل ويدخل دخان كثيف رمادي يخنقنا جميعاً

Reconstruction

THE WEAVING

This chapter is about the design of the research methodology design, as a visual story teller



*O you who master the loom work,
it is about doing rather than saying .*

(يا متفنين بالنول، الشغل مر بالقول)

(Ye metfannin bel nool, el-shaghle ma bel ool)

This Syrian proverb refers to the difficulty of the profession and that it requires work rather than words

(Shahla Z, 2018)

Why weaving

Let us begin with the city fabric, the urban fabric, the social fabric; all these terminologies use fabric to describe the one cohesive unit created by the interconnected elements. According to the Oxford dictionary, the fabric is cloth produced by weaving or knitting textile fibers (Lexico, n.d.).

Weaving is an analogy of the city, it is not only the piece of fabric, but it is the details and the process, it is the unseen tools, the loom, the effort, the time, the development, the balance, the inherited knowledge, it is the interlaced threads and the in-between spaces, it is the tension, the added stitches, and the weaver intentions.

And as the fabric can be torn, Damascus was torn by the conflict; and as the threads can be used to restitch a fabric, the weaving- in this thesis- will be the visual storyteller that will tell, hopefully, how to find out the hidden threads that will reweave Damascus.

Weaving as heritage

Damascus, everywhere, is well known for its textiles' manufacturing and trading, as far back as the silk road, traders were treasuring the beautiful silken textiles like the Damask, Brocade and Aghabani (Rock, D. 1876).

[See Page 51]

“and thus, as often happens, traders fastened the name of Damascen or Damask upon every silken fabric richly wrought and curiously designed, no matter whether it came or not from Damascus” (Rock, D. 1876).

However, the textile industry was one of the vastly damaged crafts due to the conflict (Saldana, S. 2016).

... Looking at the plan of the ancient city and the spread of the modern city around it, I can only see a piece of beautiful fabric.



Inspirational projects

Weaving as cartography

The Cartographer Tries to Map her Way to Deptford

Amanda Lwin
London. 2017

This Macrame' map, as the artist describes it, is about invisible systems and complexity that surround us and we depend upon but barely think about. The artist mapped out the location power network in Deptford area by the lines and knots. This canopy is made of glow-in-the-dark threads, as the darkness creeps over, the web will glow and matches the location of the constellations above the courtyard where it is installed. (Lwin, A. 2018)

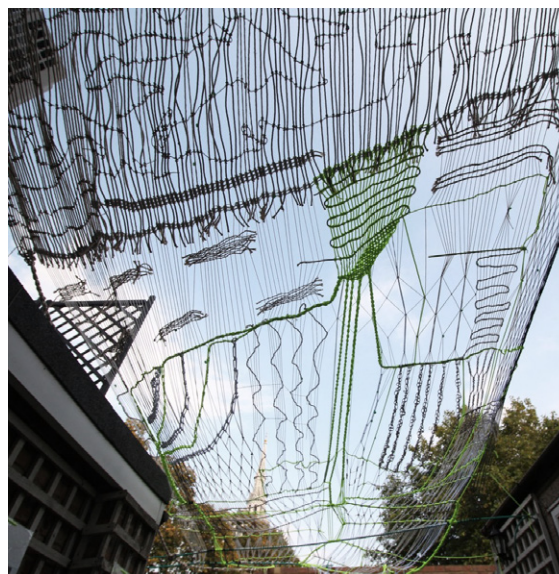


Image 10

A Worldwide Web of Somewheres

Amanda Lwin
London. 2019

This map is inspired by fishing nets woven by Polynesian seafarers, who were mapping sea currents and wind within their nets to help them in their journey. The map is about the subterranean infrastructure and the topography of London city, which form a twisted invisible fabric that defines the life above ground. It was produced as a part of "Sculpture in the city" initiative in London in 2018. (Lwin, A. 2019)



Image 11

Weaving as collective storytelling

Woven seeds

Kacie Lyn Martinez
Rutland. 2019-2020

People were asked to respond on four oral history themes. The stories were written on pieces of compostable paper and woven with natural fibers and vegetable seeds on four tapestries, where as each one represented a theme. This was an oral history and story collecting project for "Vermont Farmers Food Center" which will plant the tapestries in the ground, to let each theme grow and harvest the vegetables later for a community meal. (Martinez, K. L. 2019).



Image 12

Weaving as participatory public art

The hopes we wear on our backs

Kacie Lyn Martinez
Muncie. 2018

In this project, the weaving was a form of public art, human connection, and repetitive healing flow. The recycled fabric stripes evoke a personal medium that carried people written hopes. Hundreds of stripes were woven by the artist and other participants on six grates, used as looms. This participatory public art project, engaged various Muncie communities in fabricating a wall of hope; as process of collectively envisioning Muncie's future and creating physical place for dialogue and collective dreaming.

(Martinez, K. L. 2018 a, 2018 b)

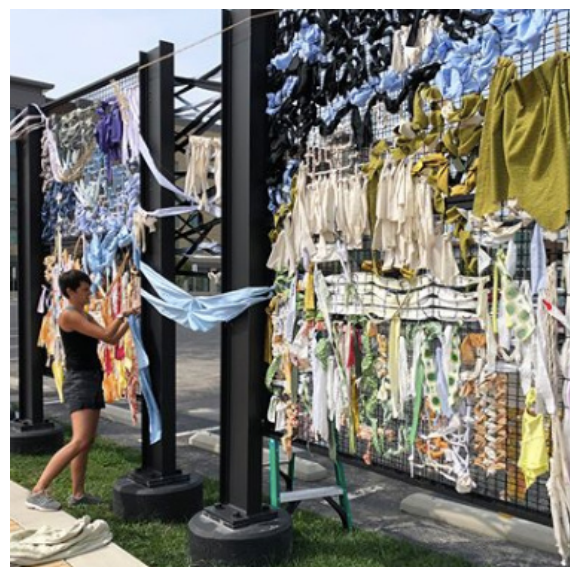


Image 13

The Catalogue

By extracting the threads of both the urban and the social fabric of Damascus city, the threads will be used to weave a new fabric that will tell be used to tell and communicate the story of Damascus. Selected elements from the context analysis will be included, however, the design is aiming to keep the weaving as an interactive medium, which means, if it is installed somewhere, people can contribute, choose another elements and add to the weaving

The technique:

A combination of different weaving techniques: plain weave, twill, adding stitches, and sometimes knotting -hitching knots- like in the Macramé.

The loom setting:

- The longitudinal threads:

Represent the physical aspect of the city, the built environment of selected neighborhoods from Damascus, in addition to two significant elements from Damascus, the parks, and Mount Qassioun. The threads will not represent buildings typologies, age, or historical value.

- The lateral threads:

Will represent the social aspect in the city, it is mainly about people's presence, movement, and interaction with the city. The aim is to observe people's behavior in/with the city.

-The Stitches and knots:

A selection of elements that had a direct visible impact on the interaction between people and the public spaces in Damascus through time.

Pattern/Weaving guide : The story

-The main **characters** are the threads that represent the built environment and people, but consider how static and dynamic they are, do you want to focus on certain group. Choose the secondary characters.

-Choose the story's **setting**: the city, area or place, and the time frame.

- Select the **theme**, what is the story's argument? Is it about the painful impact of conflict on people behavior in the city? Will it focus on happiness? Fear? Displacement?

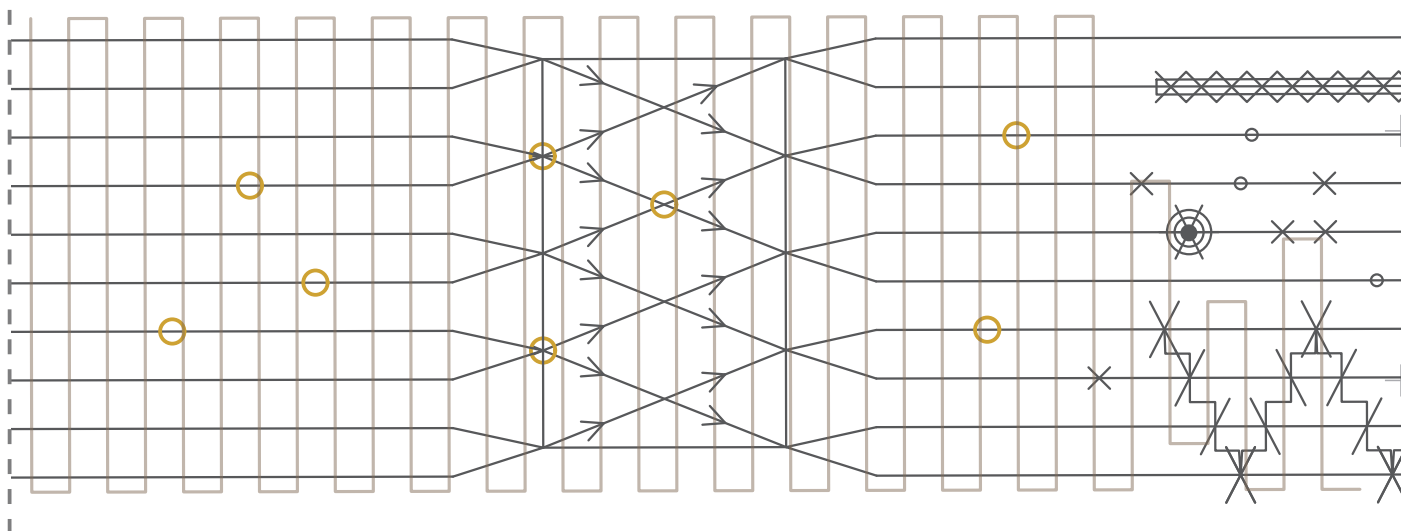
-Select the visual **style**: colors and stitches

-Set the timeline scale







-Select areas, significant places and physical aspects of the city (River, mountain ...)

- Fix the longitudinal threads, take in consideration the historical evolution difference.


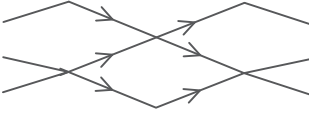




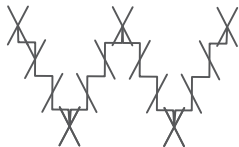

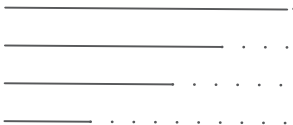
- Weave people in the lateral direction, insert the stitches. The weaving process is the **plot**.



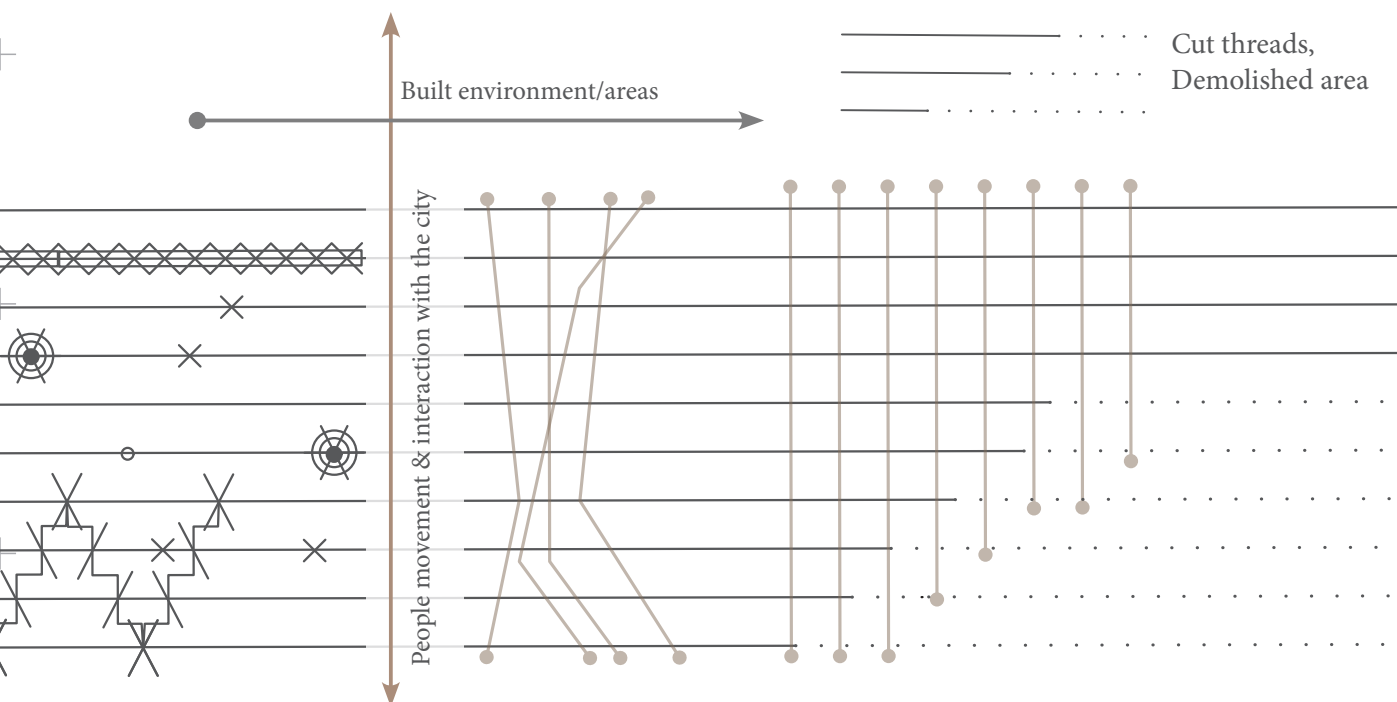
Color codes

Fear triggers/consequences	
Events	
Greenery	
Terrain	
Social - People	
Urban - Built environment	

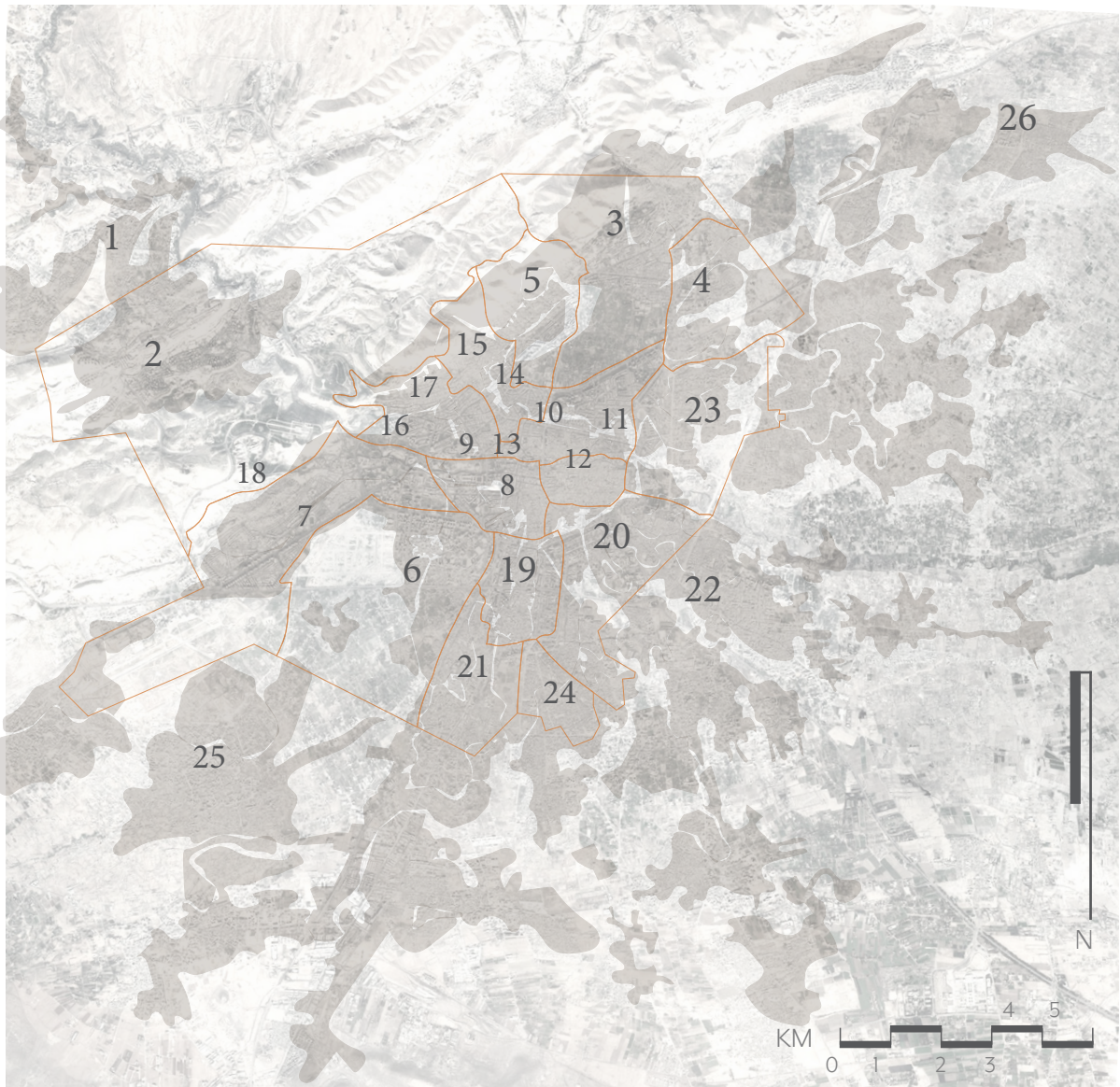
Stitches & Threads

	Event / Activities
	Festival/Big events
	Mortar shell attack
	Checkpoint
	Explosion
	Strict control on borders
	Besieged area
	Weaving direction change: People behavior change in the city
	Cut threads, Demolished area

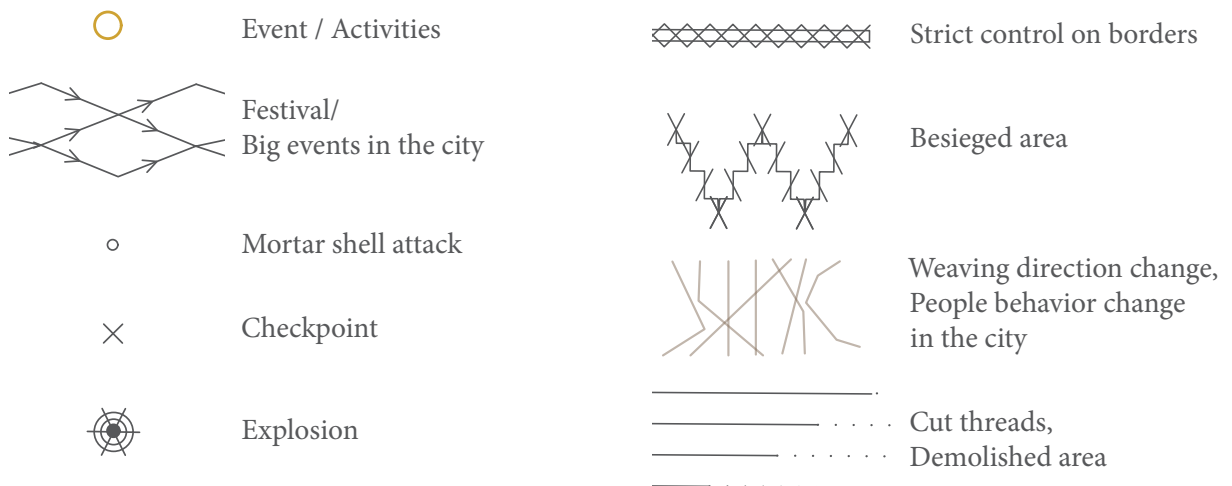
Weaving direction

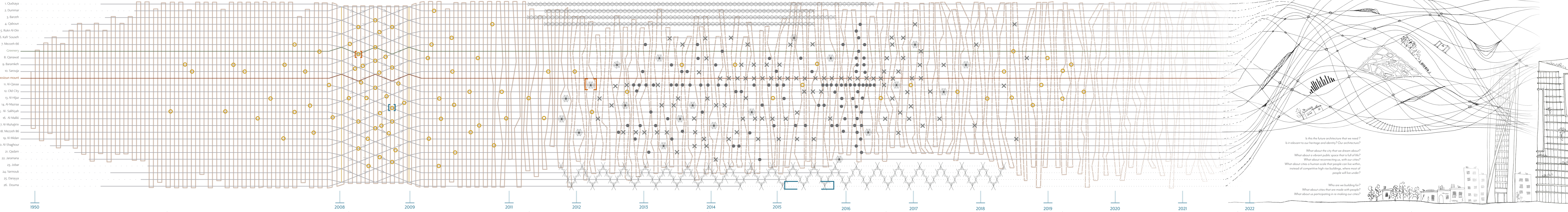


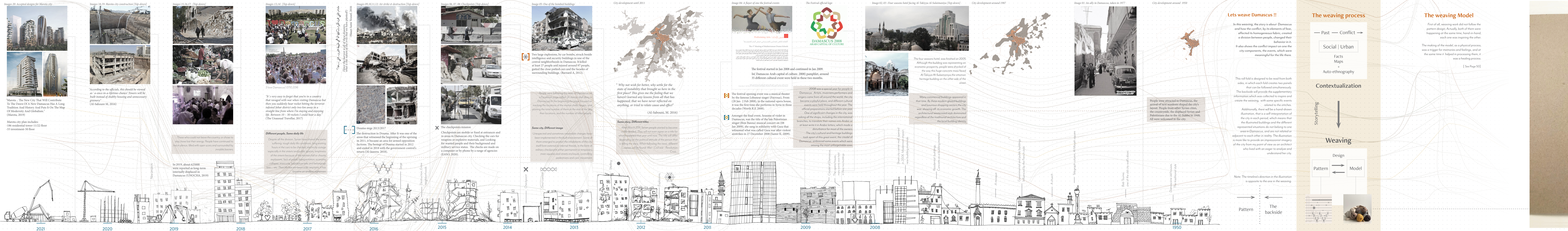
The weaving pattern



* For information about the chosen areas, look at (Table 1), Page.33







Marota... The New City That Will Contribute To The Dawn Of A New Damascus Has A Long Tradition And History And Puts It On The Map Of Modernity And Globalism." (Marota, 2019)

Marota city plan includes:
-186 residential tower-11/22 floor
-33 investment-50 floor

2021



"According to the officials, this should be viewed as 'a once-in-a-lifetime chance'. Towers will be built instead of shabby housing and unnecessary greenery" (Al-Sabouni M, 2016)

Those who could not leave the country, or chose to stay, have lost their energy. People have continued to live in silence, filled with open scars and surrounded by invisible barriers

2020



Two large explosions, by car bombs, struck beside intelligence and security buildings in one of the central neighborhoods in Damascus. It killed at least 27 people and injured around 97 people, gutted the close parked cars and the facades of surrounding buildings. (Barnard A, 2012).

People were following the news of Damascus on a Facebook page called: 'A mortar shell diary in Damascus'. In the beginning the page focused on tracking the locations of the mortar shells targets, and posting the total number of them at the end of the day, their locations, and the number of killed people.

2019



The festival started in Jan 2008 and continued in Jan 2009. In Damascus Arab capital of culture. 2008) pamphlet, around 35 different cultural event were held in these two months.

2008 was a special year for people in Damascus. Artists, musicians, performers and singers came from all around the world, the city became a playful place, and different cultural events were held throughout the year. The official preparations started before one year. One of significant changes in the city, was asking all the shops, including the international branches, to translate their names into Arabic or at least write it in Arabic letters, which made a disturbance for most of the owners. The city's cultural and heritage buildings took apart of this great event, the citadel of Damascus embraced some events which were among the most unforgettable ones.

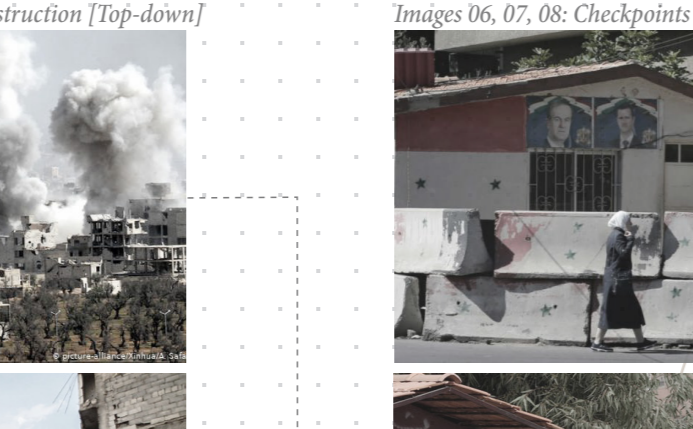
2018



The four seasons hotel, was finished in 2005. Although this building was representing an economic prosperity, people were shocked of the way this huge concrete mass faced Al-Takiyya Al-Sulaimaniya, the ottoman heritage building on the other side of the street.

Many commercial buildings appeared in that time. By these modern glazed buildings and luxurious shopping centers, the city was showing off its economic growth. The architectural westernized style dominated regardless of the traditional architecture and the local building identity.

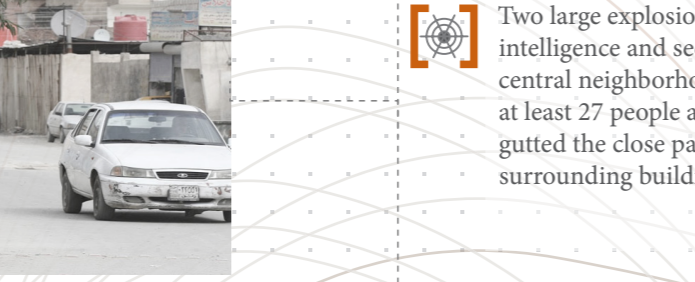
2017



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

This roll fold is designed to be read from both sides, in which each fold creates two panels that can be followed simultaneously. The backside will provide the supplementary information which was collected to inspire and create the weaving, with some specific events related to the stitches. Additionally, there will be a hand-drawn illustration, that is a self-interpretation of the city in each period, which means that the illustrated buildings and the different represented situations do not belong to one area in Damascus, and are not related or adjacent to each other in reality. The illustration is more like to provide an impressionist imagery of the city from my point of view as an architect who lived with an eager to analyze and understand her city.

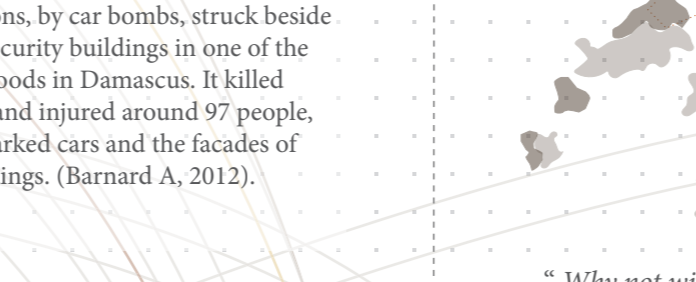
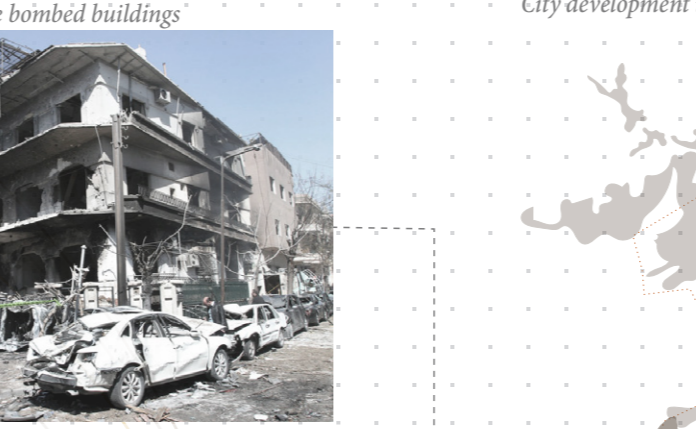
2016



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

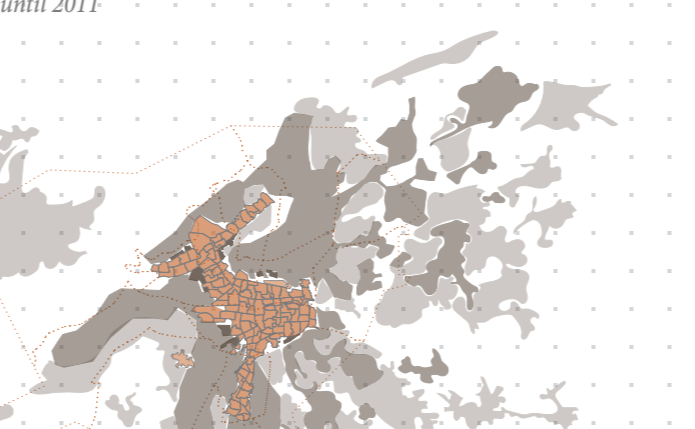
2015



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

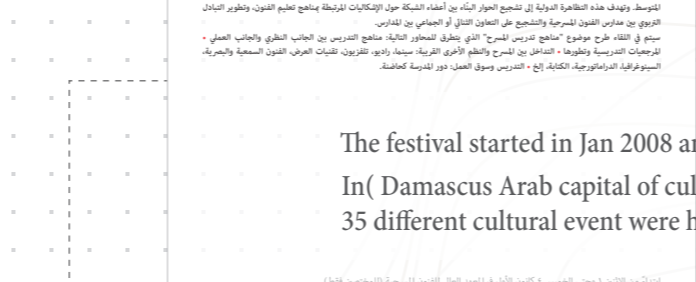
2014



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

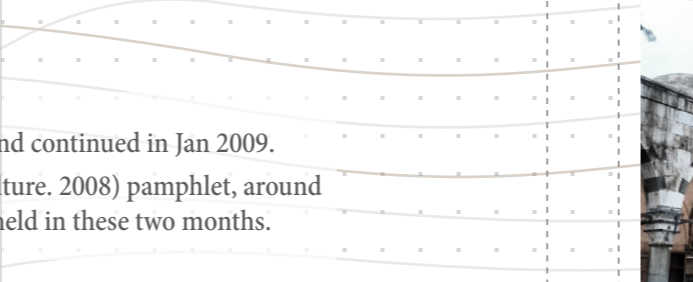
2013



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

2012



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

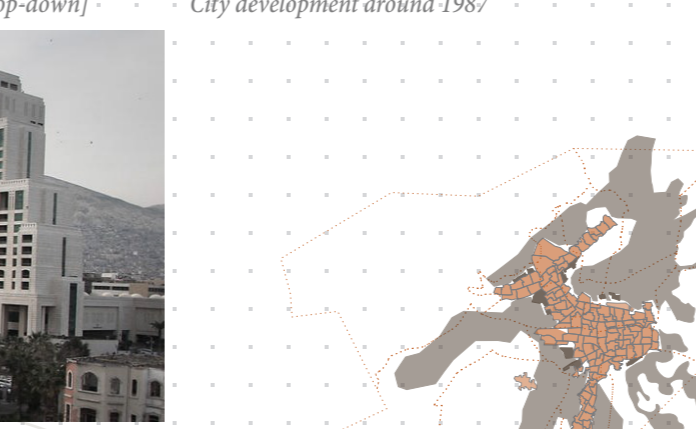
2011



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

2009



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

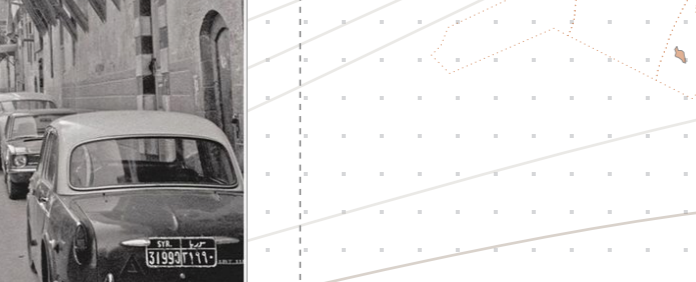
2008



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

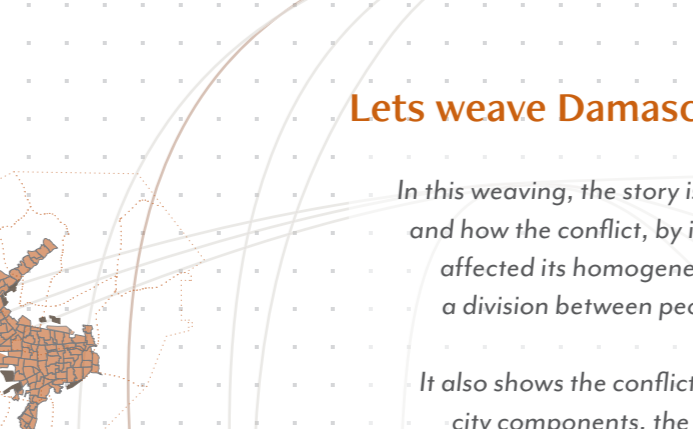
1950



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

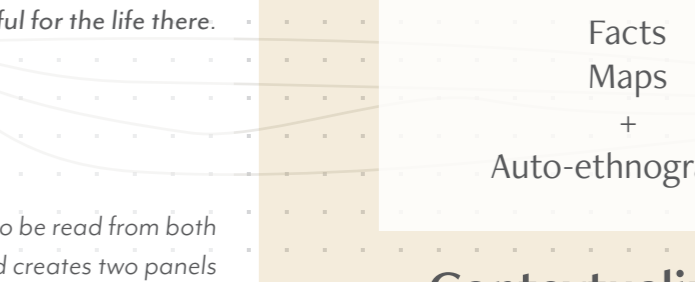
1950



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

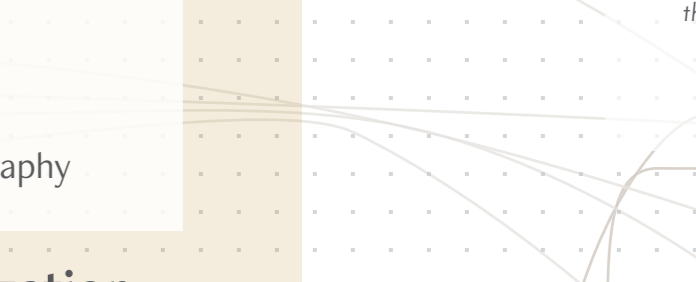
1950



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

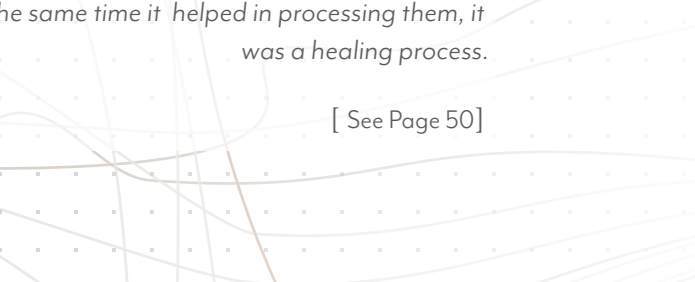
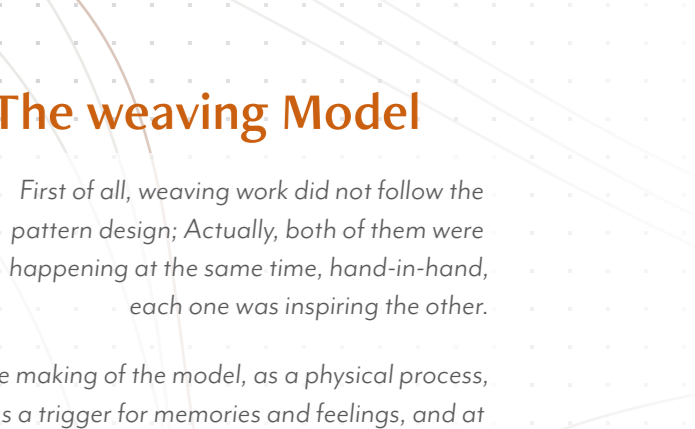
1950



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

1950



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

1950



People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.

1950

Lets weave Damascus !!

In this weaving, the story is about Damascus and how the conflict, by its elements of fear, affected its homogeneous fabric, created a division between people, changed their behavior in it. It also shows the conflict impact on one of the city components, the events, which were meaningful for the life there.

Social | Urban
Facts
Maps
+
Auto-ethnography

The weaving process

Past — Conflict —>

Contextualization

Storytelling

Weaving

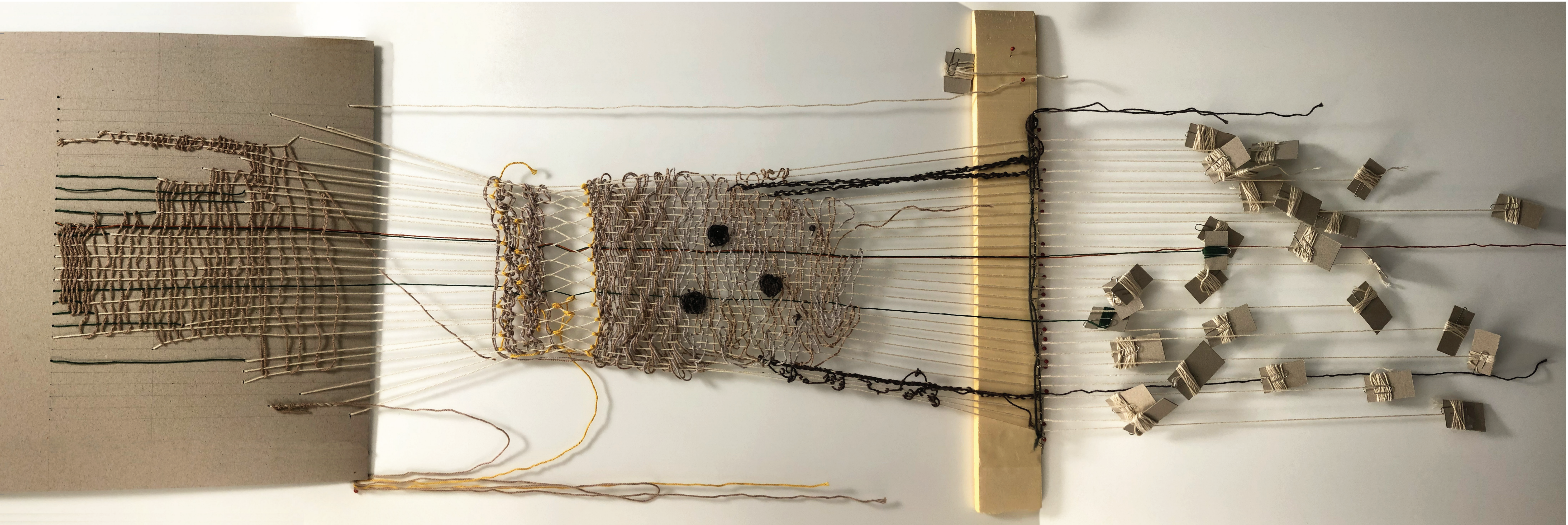
Design
Pattern —> Model

Pattern ← The backside

The weaving Model

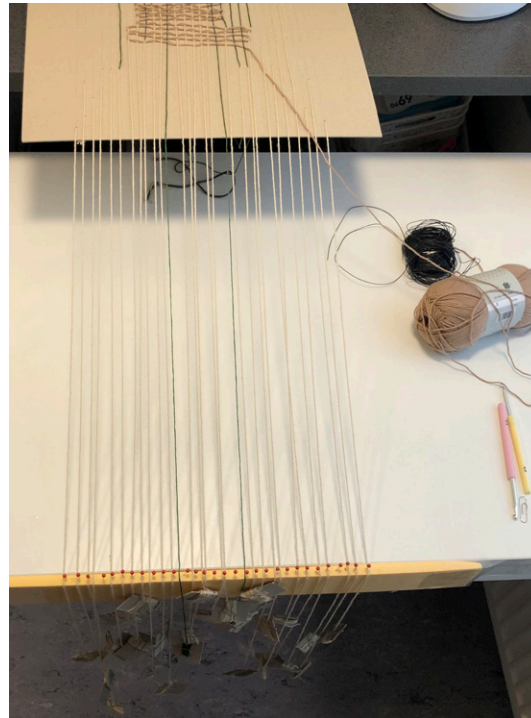
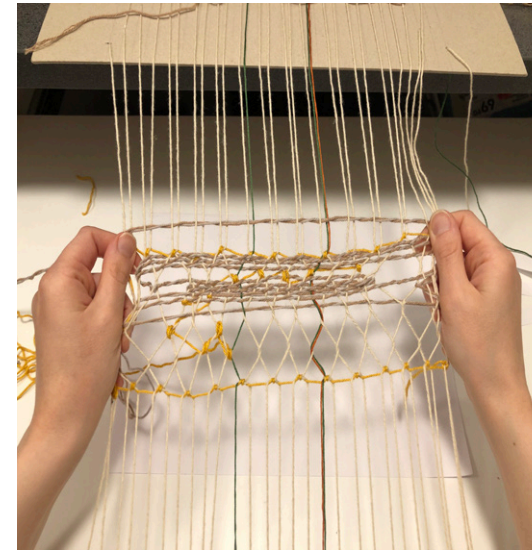
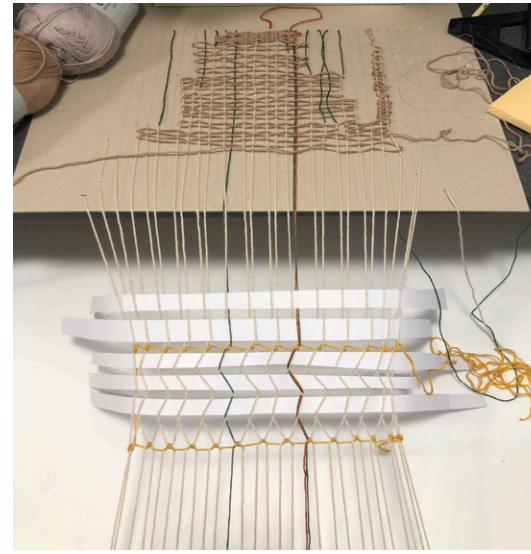
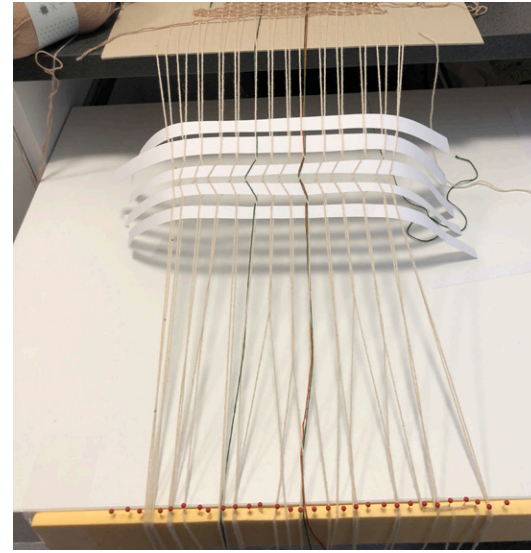
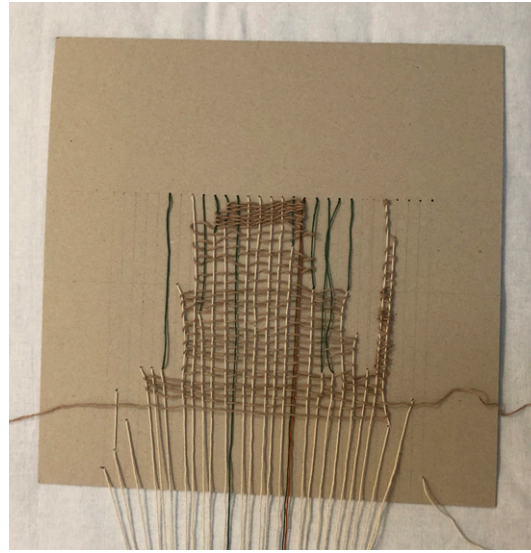
First of all, weaving work did not follow the pattern design; Actually, both of them were happening at the same time, hand-in-hand, each one was inspiring the other. The making of the model, as a physical process, was a trigger for memories and feelings, and at the same time it helped in processing them, it was a healing process.

[See Page 50]



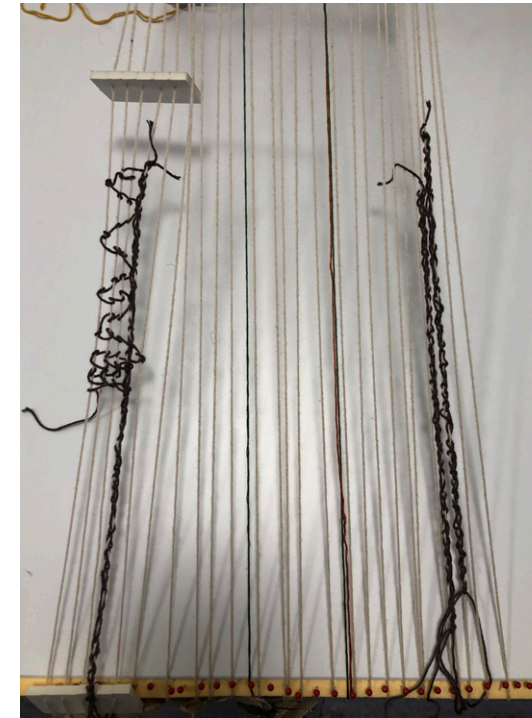
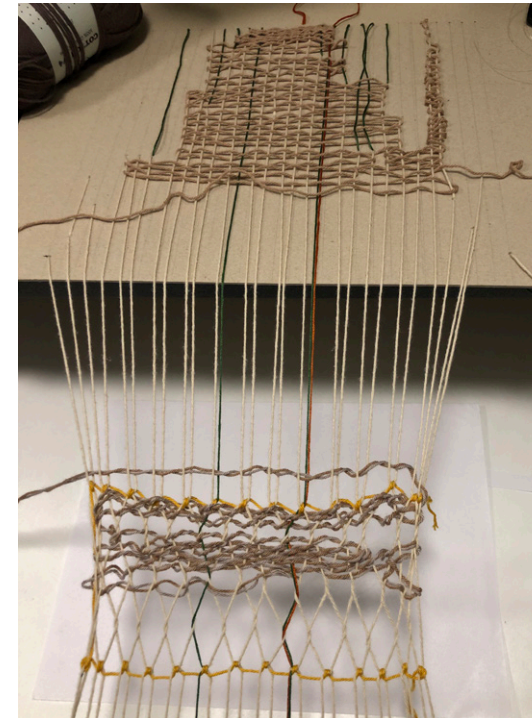
The model process

The process began with selecting colors and tools, besides searching for different methods of weaving and understanding the required techniques and tools. Regarding colors, to create a homogeneous tone that can relate to Damascus, earthy colors were chosen. The loom is an essential tool for weaving, thus, a simple mobile loom was made.



← I used a piece of cardboard to help me in starting the (Urban environment) threads from different distances, this represented how they were created and developed through time. Then, I created a very simple loom from pins, I needed it to move easily along the threads.

The (Social- people) threads, were woven using the basic weave, the plain weave.

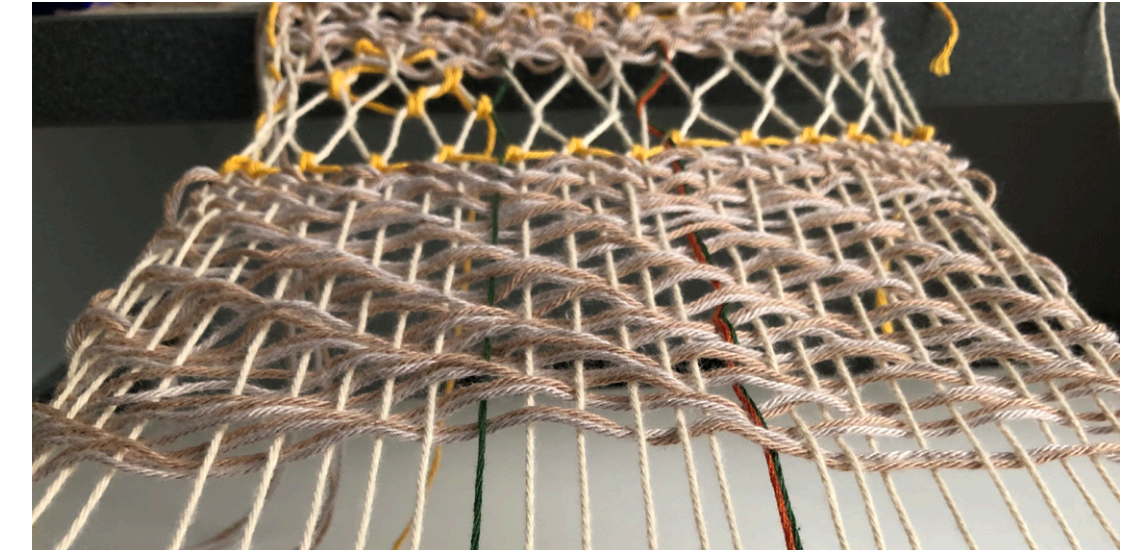


← Interlacing the threads to create the vibrant playful city impression, was taken from Macrame', I used pieces of paper to help me in setting the same spaces between them, then crossed the threads.

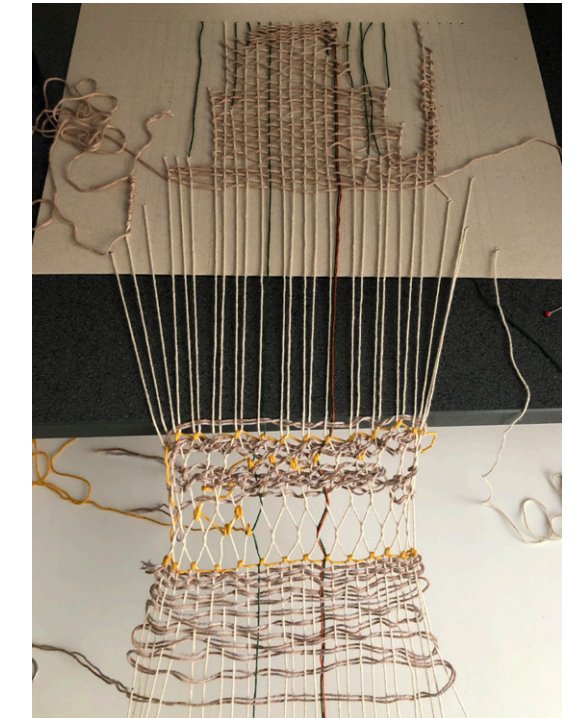
Note: In this part, it became hard to keep the threads stretched, their weight was not enough to maintain the required tension that is necessary to weave in the lateral direction.

↘ I added the threads that present the strict control on the city borders, and the besieged areas.

I was planning to cut the threads that represent the destroyed areas, after I finish from weaving the social threads.

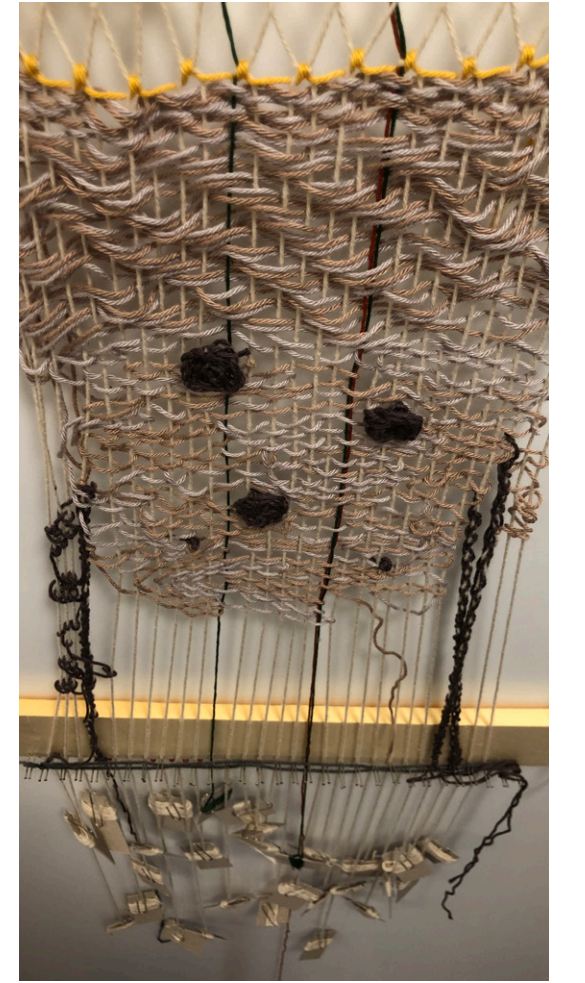


↑ When choosing the (Social - people) thread color, I hesitated if I should use different colors to symbolize people different affiliates; Then I decided to use one neutral color that presents the harmony, and emphasized on this in the weaving pattern; I decided to add a new color to present the different and the subsequent division, two main groups, that became in 2011, the group that later supported the government, and the opposed one. The used weave was the twill weave, to create some vibrancy in their relationship to the city.



↑ As seen in the threads spreading, the weaving pattern became out of rhyme, this was to represent people behavior change, and how they were trying to group themselves, but at the same time they were sharing the city, especially in the center.

I added some stitches and Little crochet pieces. → Note: It took a long time to create this pieces, I should have tried another way, or practice more.



... The endless threads

Weaving industry in Damascus

Weaving and textile industry in Damascus is deeply related to the Damascene identity. Like everything else in Damascus, the well known textiles' manufacturing and trading [See page 41], were affected by the outbreak of the conflict.

Many workshops were destructed, production machine were damaged and raw materials are difficult to find. Additionally, People immigration, displacement and death have resulted in the loss of professionals. One of the major current challenges that are facing the workers, is the lack of qualified people who wish to learn these crafts. However, in order to spread the awareness about the Syrian heritage and help in protecting and learning it; It is recommended to consider linking these crafts to other sectors such as schools and higher education, besides creating marketing strategies to support it, and finally document these crafts (Shahla, Z. 2018).

Can we use (The weaving) methodology as a part of the revitalization of the local textile industry?

Can we, in addition to protecting the cultural heritage in weaving the textiles' threads, consider adding the memory of the conflict? Since this period of time cannot be taken away from our history, whether we accept it or not.

The next chapter, will include a reflection and speculation on the possible and/or potential role of the weaving as a story teller in the revitalization of the local textile industry.



Images 14: Weaving the Syrian silk on a primitive loom



Images 15: The Damask



Images 16: The Brocade



Images 17: The Aghabani

FINAL WORDS

أي هرب ما دامت الأشياء تسكننا؟ وما دما هي
نرحل هرباً منها، نجر أنفسنا وهيرين معها ومجالوجه

"What escape, as long as things live within us? As long as whenever we attempt to flee, we find ourselves alone with them, face to face."

*"Your eyes are my destiny" Book
-Ghada Al-Samman
(Al Samman, G.1962)*

While I was weaving, looking for the hidden threads, I restored memories and emotions; that was tough but very true. During my work, I found one of the powerful hidden threads categories, powers that can take over the scene and decide the city's fate. Threads that can change the city fabric, connect, divide, support, or loose. But that is obvious somehow, that is why they are called powers.

However, that was not my aim, since I wanted to find the hidden threads that will treat the conflict wounds and bring hope to the future. At some point, I guess I found my way. Can we reweave the city fabric without the true weavers' intentions? Without the dedication of people to rise their city from its deep fall?

Learning from the weaving

It is not about creating a beautiful piece at the end, it is about bringing all the different aspects of reality into a piece of truth. While developing the weaving methodology, I realized and felt a great thing about storytelling. Telling stories is both an input and output process, it is iterative; Every time you tell a story, you do not tell the same things; Every time, unintentionally, you will be adding the conclusions of the previous time you told this story, thus, you will understand it more. This process is like talking to a trusted person, while telling and narrating your thoughts, you find yourself unrevealing and understanding yourself better. In fact, accordingly to my experience, weaving is a great listener, and healer. Which leads me to the following reflection.

Weaving as an art therapy

The common ground for art therapists is focusing on non-verbal communication and creative processes at the same time with providing a safe environment where people can express strong emotions. (Payne H, 1993)

Art therapy sessions can be run by therapists, facilitators, and community workers. The reason for using group-work lies in the fact that people with similar needs can provide mutual support for each other. (Liebmann M, 2004).

Arts, whether in the form of performing art or creative arts are included in the art therapy, but in my reflection I am focusing on the methodology that I have developed, the weaving, as a non-verbal communication medium, and the weaving action that enable people of expression in both conscious and unconscious state.

What if we ask people to weave the city story or apart of it?

I had to call out my memories while I was the weaving, but the weaving helped me to objectively distance my self and process my feelings and thought, and I would argue that such group art sessions can really help people, in such a traumatic context, to distance themselves from this tough topic. And maybe such activities in the public spaces will help them to reconnect with the city.

Art can provide an activity where all can engage in, that is helpful when some people in the groups find it hard to talk. (Liebmann M, 2004).

That is to be called, telling without talking.

Weaving as steganography

Steganography, the practice of hiding information in plain view. It has been suggested that historically, textiles like knitting, embroidery, quilting, crochet, and other, were a tool for women's communication, to hide sensitive information (Kuchera, S. 2018).

In a sensitive context, like post conflict zones, people need to tell their sensitive stories, maybe in a way that they only can understand, I would argue that the process of weaving will help them to dig deep and process their emotions towards these stories.

What if we ask people to weave the story of their city, the city where they have been threatened, checked regularly, lost a beloved person... etc?

Weaving as stories holder

The human race has evolved some forms of transmitting information by weaving across generations. Incas, are amongst the cultures that used weaving as a language. The Q'eros indigenous people know how to see more than a beautiful art in their woven fabrics. They learn how to record and read their traditional knowledge, stories, agriculture practices, mythic history and world view in the textiles, by using the motifs and repetitive patterns as symbolic representation. This practice is taught and transmitted across generations.

(Heartwalkfoundation. 2017)

So, What if we ask people to weave their untold city stories and keep it for future generations, as a meaningful symbolic piece of art, whether it is understood or open for speculation?

On weaving process

It is not about becoming a weaving expert or mastering the weaving techniques. It is more about working in an explorative way to see the potential of using it to deal with a complex topic.

Obstacles

- It was hard to decide which elements to include in the weaving.
- I tried to learn about the different techniques, and create my tools, but maybe a prior knowledge could have helped me in finding easier ways to do the work.
- Unfortunately, I did not have the chance to test the weaving with people and see if they will interact with it.
- The workspace did not help me to work on three-dimensional direction, which could have added other layers and aspects.

Suggestions

- If given the chance to develop the methodology, I suggest trying to create different themes and maybe intersect them with each other.
- Considering working on 3D instead of 2D model.
 - Using another types of threads.

How can public space hinder/facilitate social reconnection in post conflict cities?

The thesis question, was a starting point for exploring new questions along the thesis process. These question can give an opportunity for new discussions, and testing the methodology in different contexts.

In the beginning, the question was investigated through the following questions:

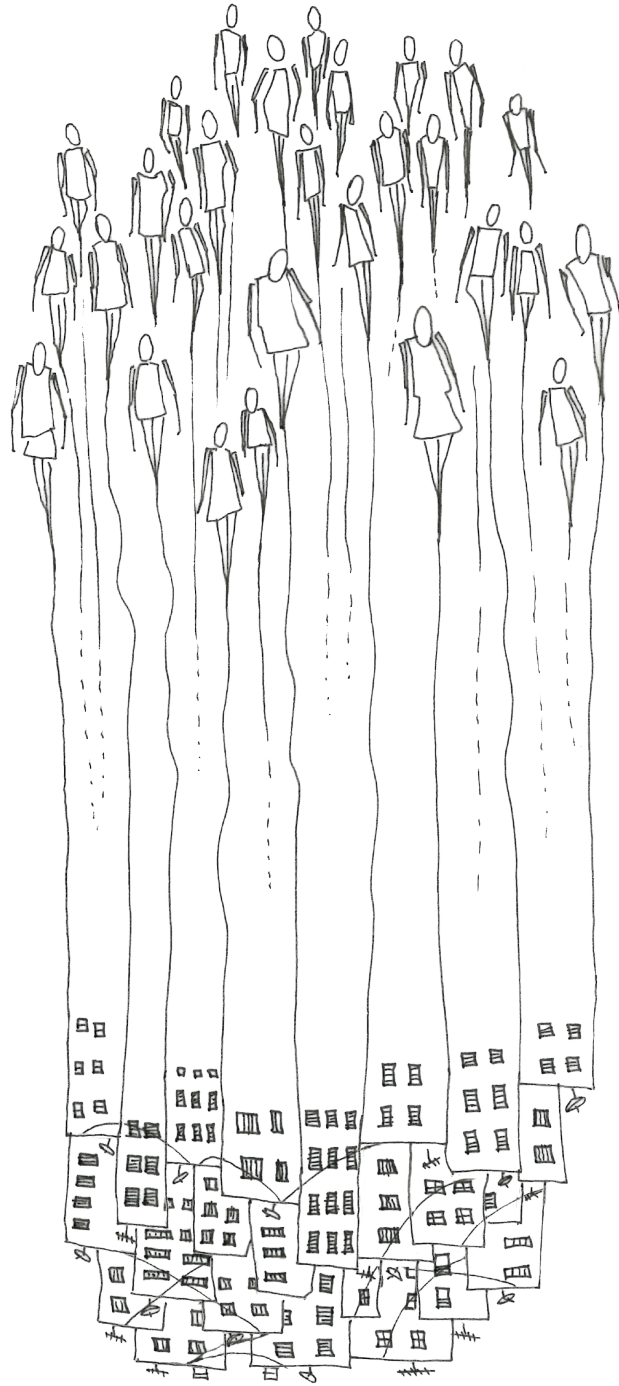
- **How does the city become [contributor in/ victim of] division of people?**
- **How can we tell the city story?**
- **Can we weave the city fabric?**

New questions emerged along the process:

- **What is the storytelling importance for cities?**
- **How to deal with extremely destroyed post conflict zones? Both physically and socially.**
- **How to use the weaving methodology to create a dialogue between people?**
- **Would this methodology help traumatized people, in a post conflict zone, to reconnect with their cities?**
- **When using this methodology for another contexts, how to select the elements that represent a city? Or a specific theme about it?**
- **Can we use this methodology as a part of the revitalization of the local textile industry?**

Very personal reflection:

Writing about an open scar and calling back those stories, was a real drain.



*... and cities will be revived by people,
the true city fabric's weavers.*

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Images*

- *Image 1:* Samlenses (2018). Douma, Damascus. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3jvrLhA>
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- *Image 10:* Lwin, Amanda. (2017). The Cartographer Tries to Map her Way to Deptford. London.U.K. Retrived from <https://bit.ly/36vn5ob>
- *Image 11:* Lwin, Amanda (2019). A Worldwide Web of Somewheres. London.U.K. Retrived from <https://bit.ly/33uDc3o>
- *Image 12:* Martinez, Kacie. L. (2019-2020). Woven seeds. Rutland.U.K. Retrived from <https://kacielynmartinez.com/woven-seeds>
- *Image 13:* Martinez, Kacie. L. (2018). Muncie hopes. Muncie.U.S. Retrived from <https://kacielynmartinez.com/muncie-hopes>
- *Image 14:* OAC Online Archive of California. Weaving the finest of Syrian silk on a primitive loom. Mt. Lebanon district. Syria. Keystone-Mast Collection, UCR/California Museum of Photography, University of California at Riverside . Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3l8zDpF>
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- *Image 16:* [Google images search: Brocade, Syrian]. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/36wvQOI>
- *Image 17:* [Google images search: Aghabani, Damascus]. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/36uHVE5>

* All images in the list were Available at 30.09.2020

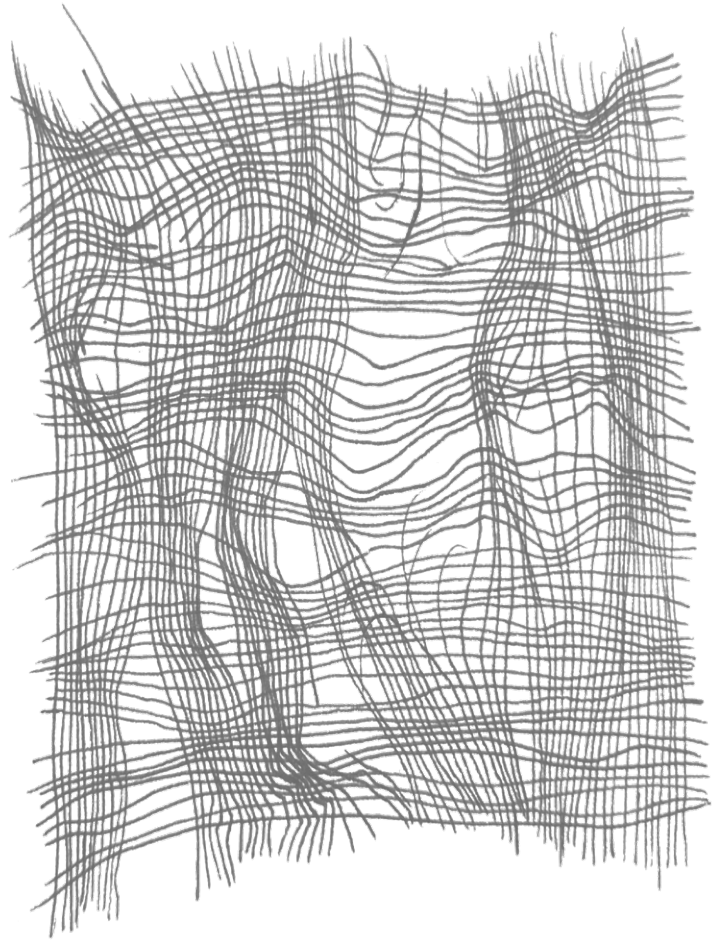
*Flip roll's back side images**

- *Image 1:* [Google images search: 1950, old photos, Damascus]. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/34CU47F>
- *Image 2:* Malla, I. (n.d.). Damascus. Retrived from <https://bit.ly/3lozZJ1>
- *Image 3:* Marjeh, O. (2014). Damascus, where cultures meet. Damascus. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/34mmMcB>
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* All images in the list were Available at 30.09.2020

Chapters quotes:

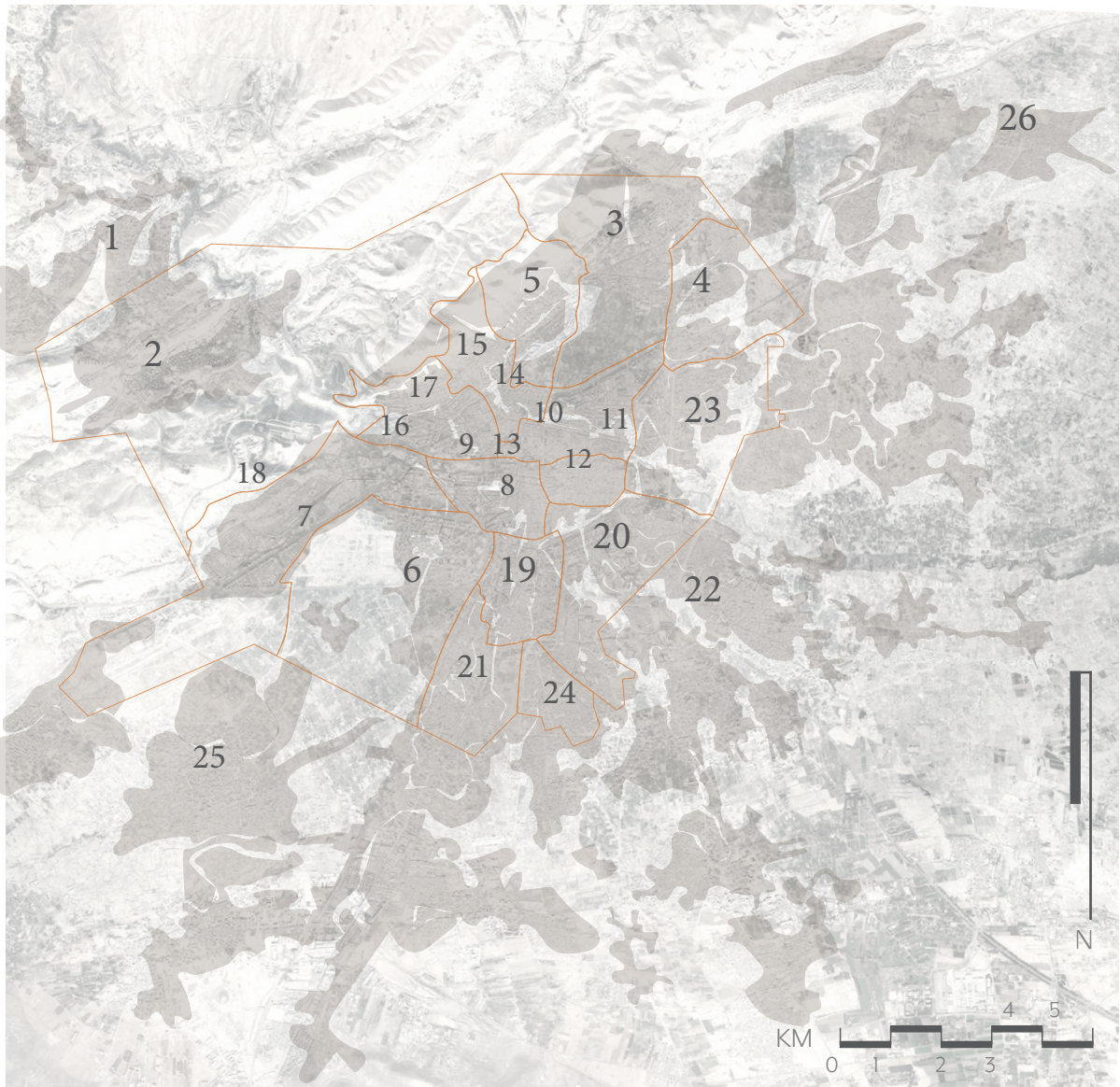
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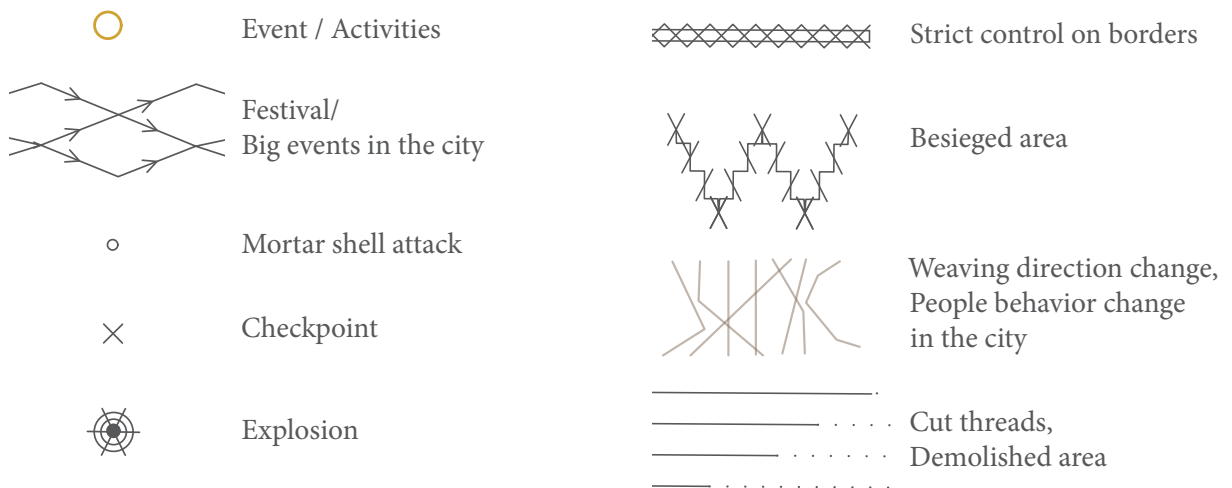
Appendix

THE ROLL FOLD PANELS FOR DIGITAL READING

The weaving pattern



* For information about the chosen areas, look at (Table 1), Page.33



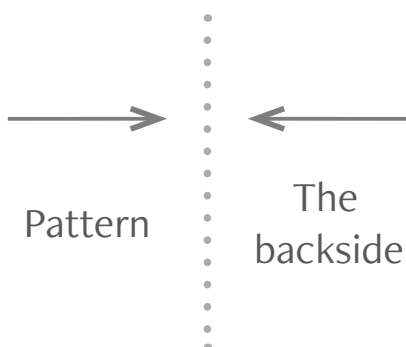
Lets weave Damascus !!

In this weaving, the story is about Damascus and how the conflict, by its elements of fear, affected its homogeneous fabric, created a division between people, changed their behavior in it. It also shows the conflict impact on one the city components, the events, which were meaningful for the life there.

This roll fold is designed to be read from both sides, in which each fold creates two panels that can be followed simultaneously. The backside will provide the supplementary information which was collected to inspire and create the weaving, with some specific events related to the stitches.

Additionally, there will be a hand-drawn illustration, that is a self-interpretation of the city in each period, which means that the illustrated buildings and the different represented situations do not belong to one area in Damascus, and are not related or adjacent to each other in reality. The illustration is more like to provide an impressionist imagery of the city from my point of view as an architect who lived with an eager to analyze and understand her city.

Note: The timeline's direction in the illustration is opposite to the one in the weaving.



The weaving process

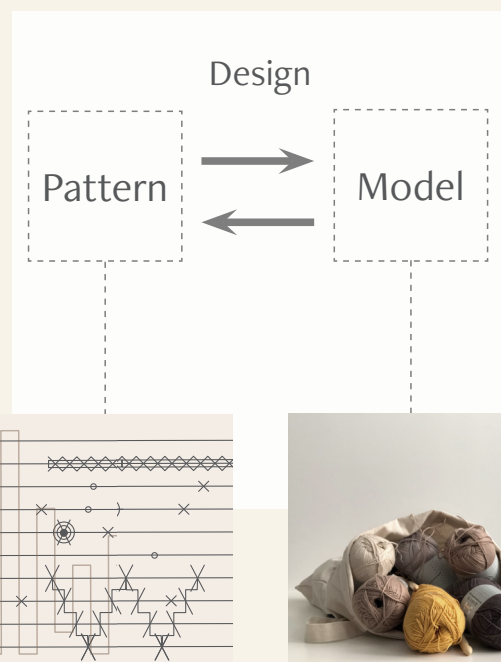


Contextualization

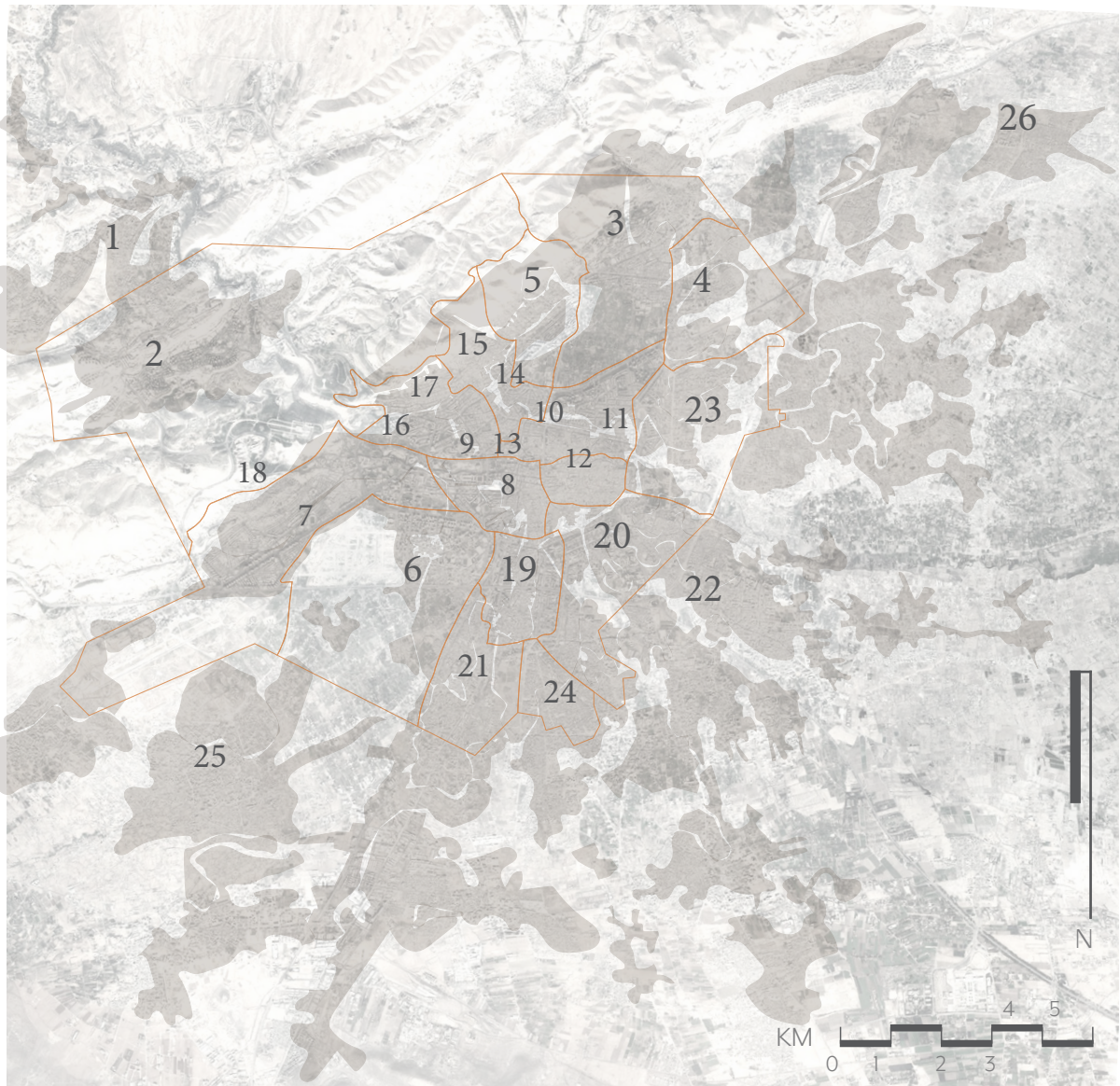
Storytelling





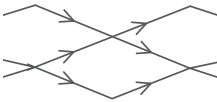




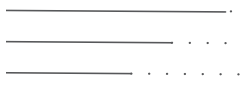

Weaving

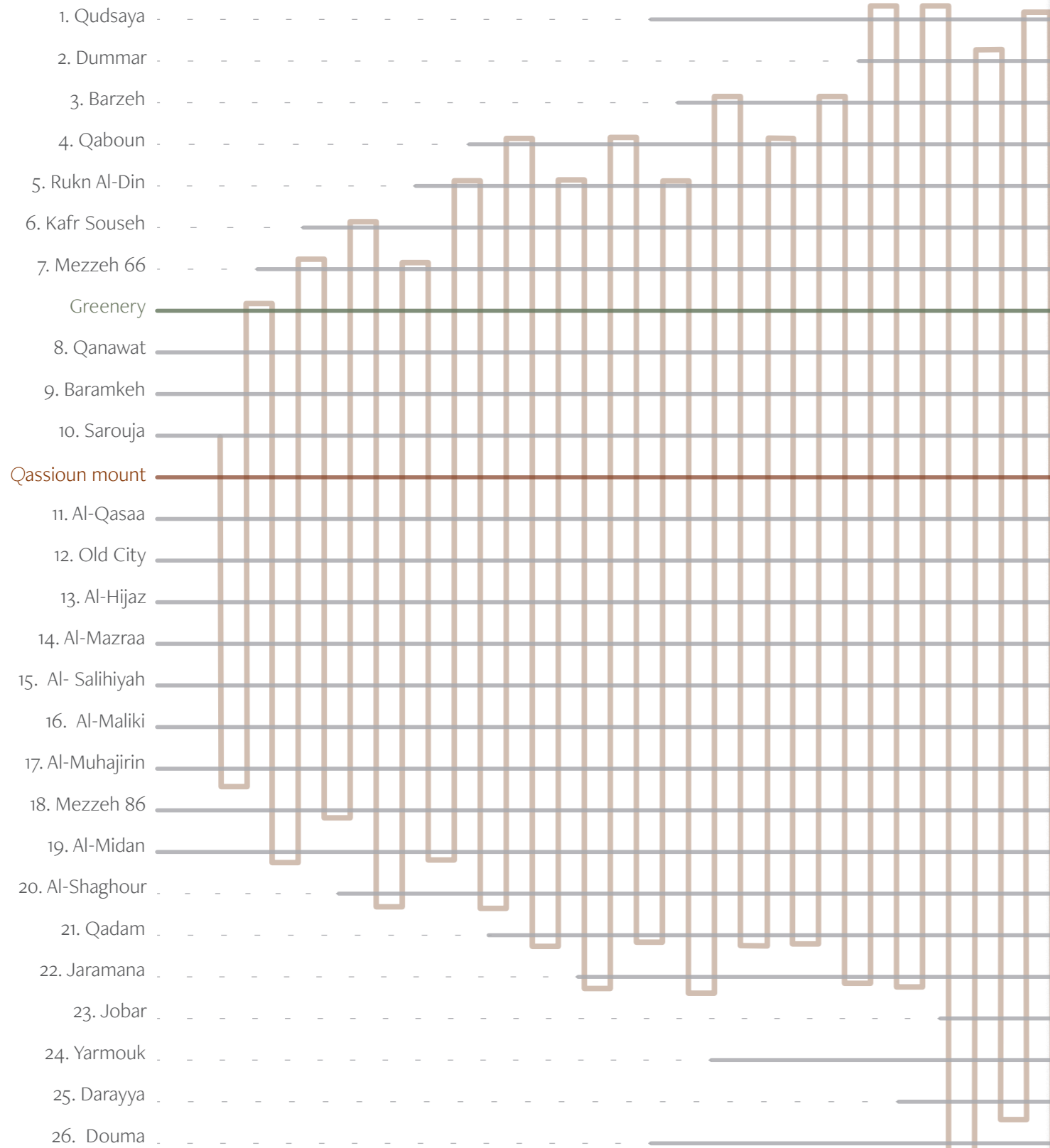


The weaving pattern



* For information about the chosen areas, look at (Table 1), Page.33

	Event / Activities		Strict control on borders
	Festival/ Big events in the city		Besieged area
	Mortar shell attack		Weaving direction change, People behavior change in the city
	Checkpoint		Cut threads, Demolished area
	Explosion		



1950

City development around 1950

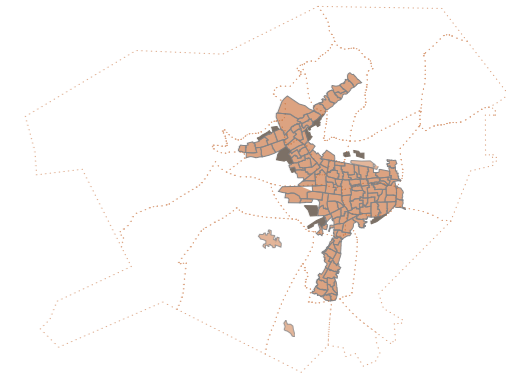
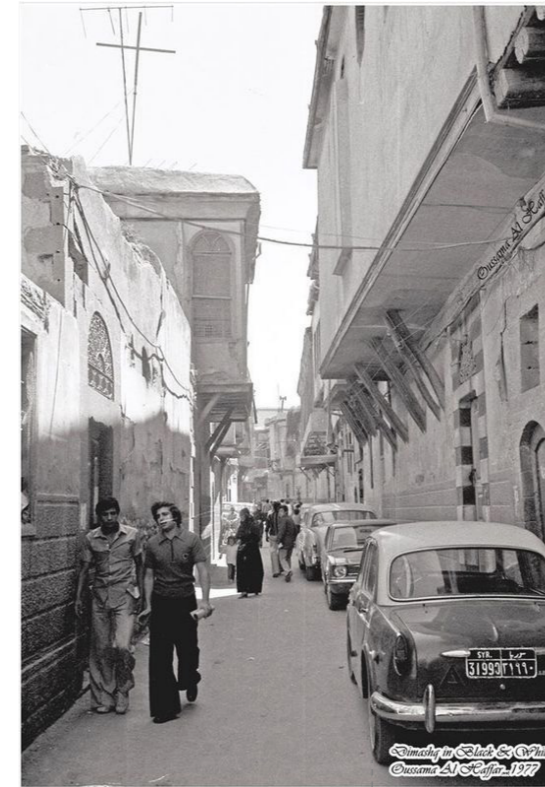
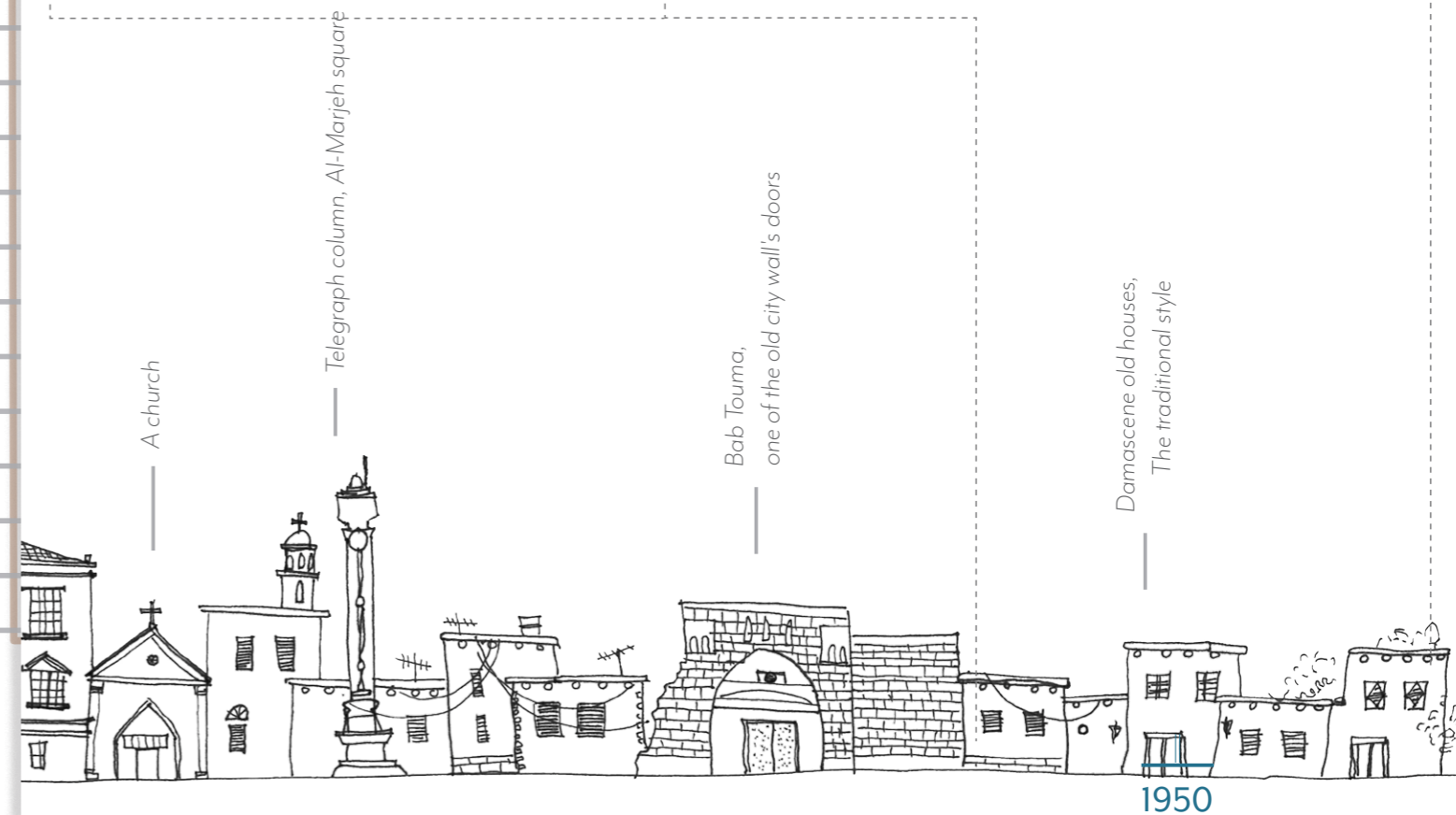


Image 01: An ally in Damascus, taken in 1977

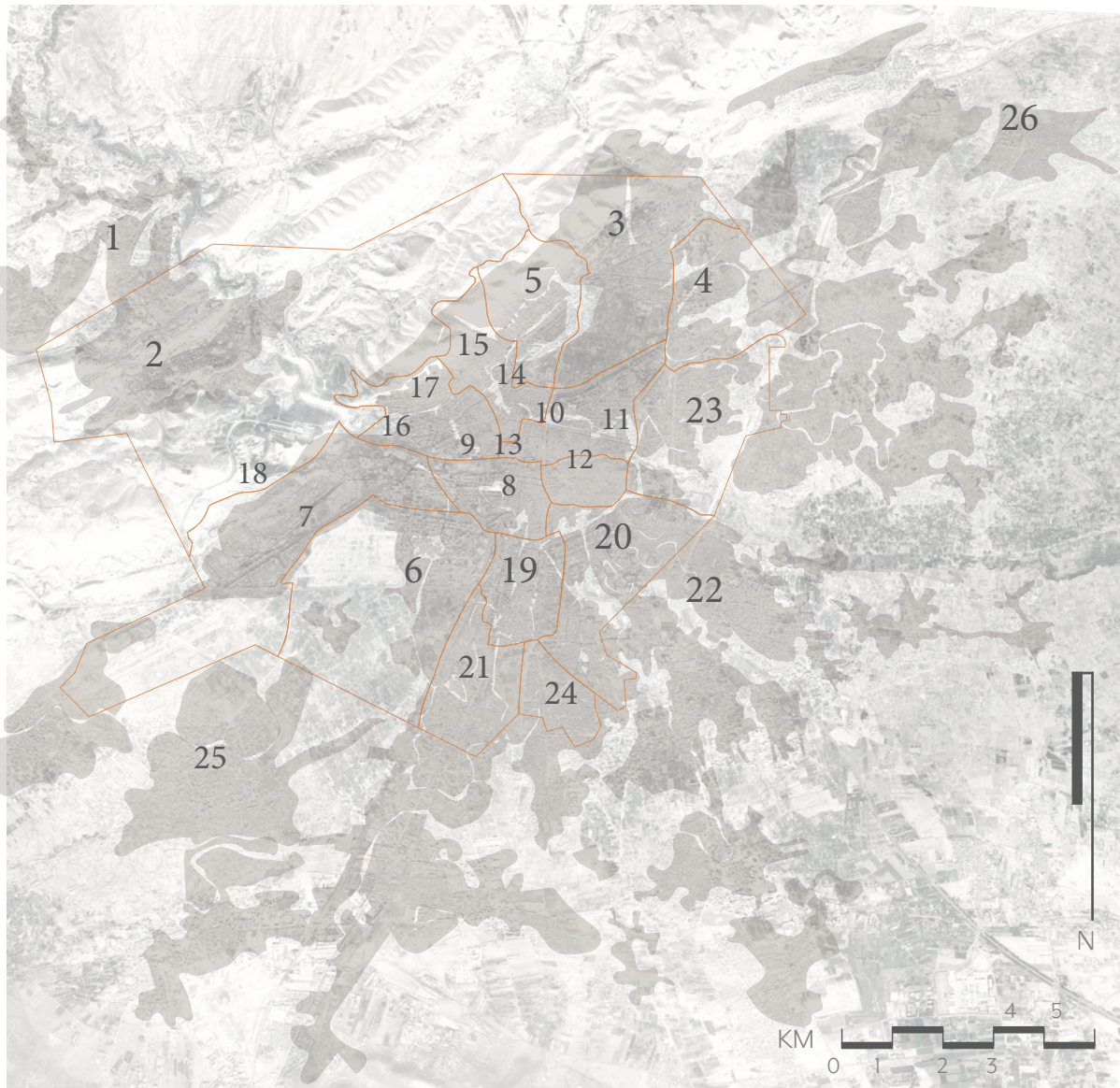


People were attracted to Damascus, the arrival of new residents shaped the city's layout. People from other Syrian cities, the countryside, the displaced Syrian and Palestinians due to the Al-Nakba in 1948; All were welcomed in the city.



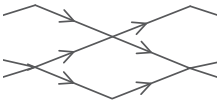




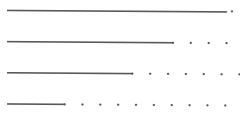



1950

The weaving pattern



* For information about the chosen areas, look at (Table 1), Page.33

	Event / Activities		Strict control on borders
	Festival/ Big events in the city		Besieged area
	Mortar shell attack		Weaving direction change, People behavior change in the city
	Checkpoint		Cut threads, Demolished area
	Explosion		

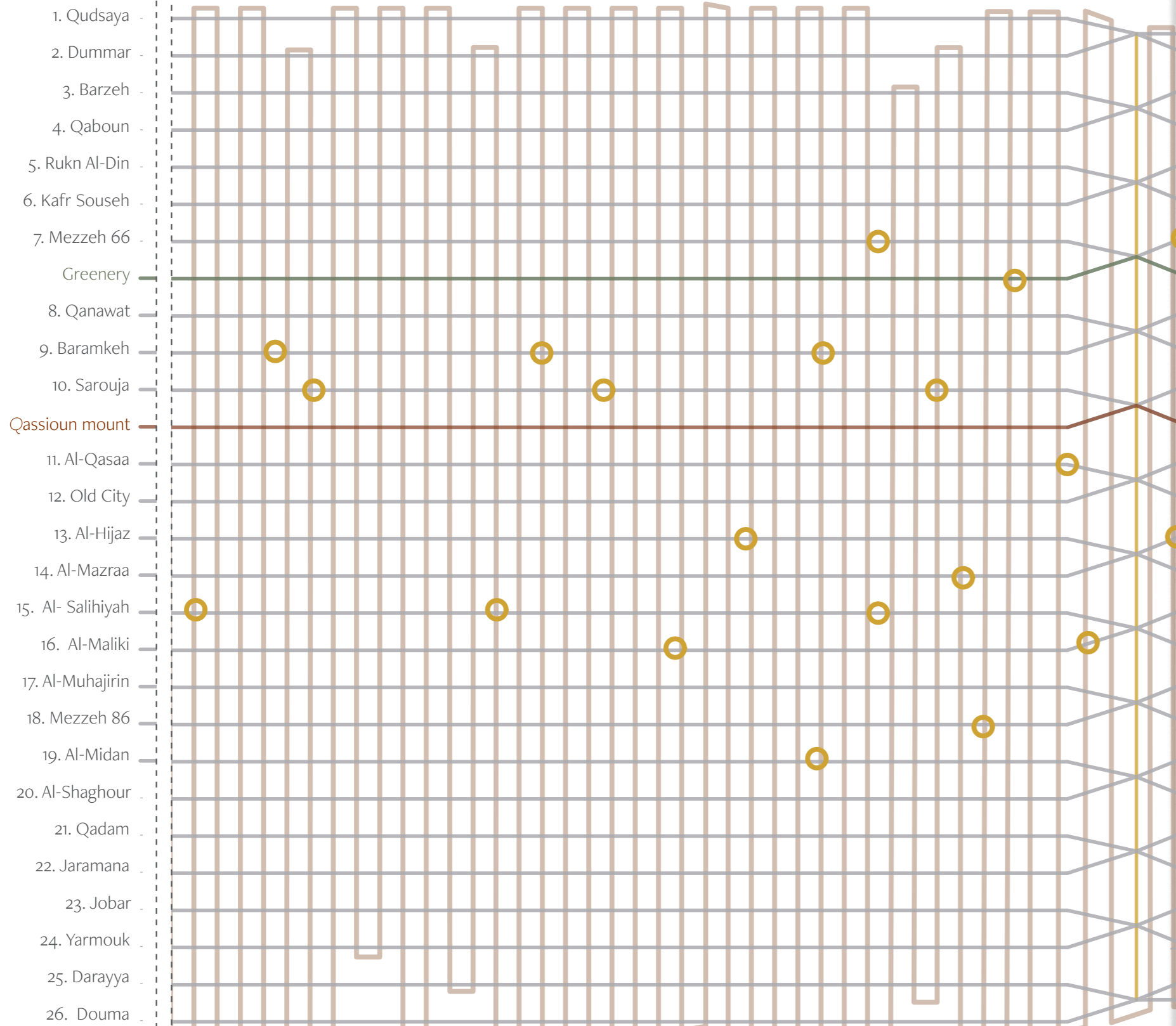
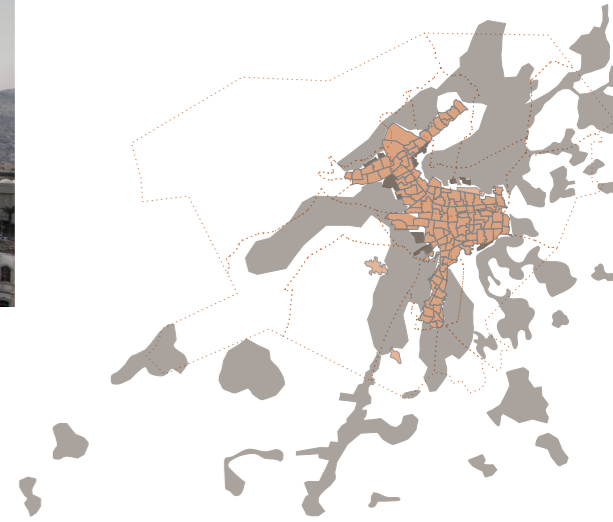


Image 02, 03 : Four seasons hotel facing Al-Takiyya Al-Sulaimaniya [Top-down]



City development around 1987

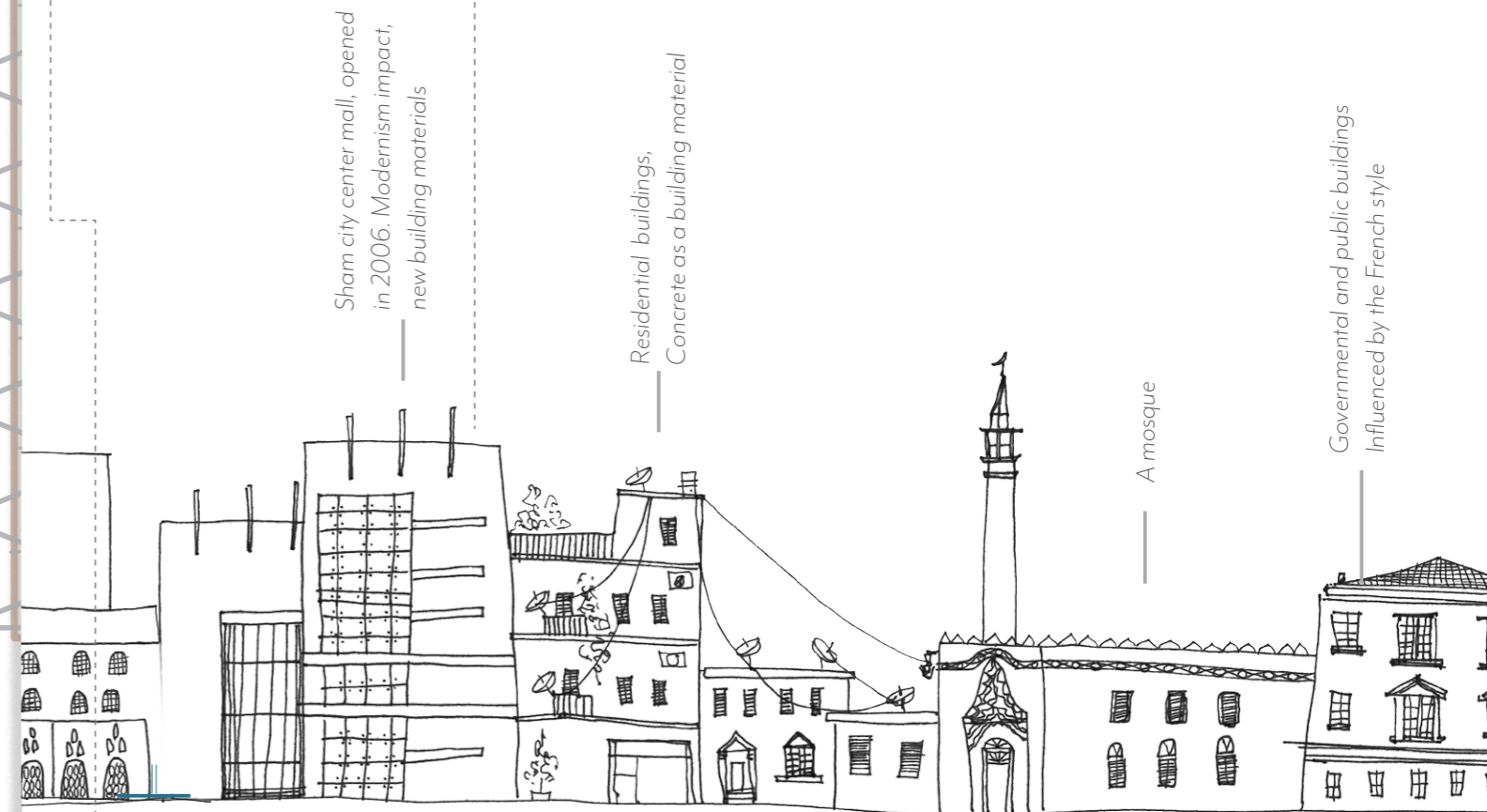


The four seasons hotel, was finished on 2005. Although this building was representing an economic prosperity, people were shocked of the way this huge concrete mass faced Al-Takiyya Al-Sulaimaniya, the ottoman heritage building on the other side of the street.

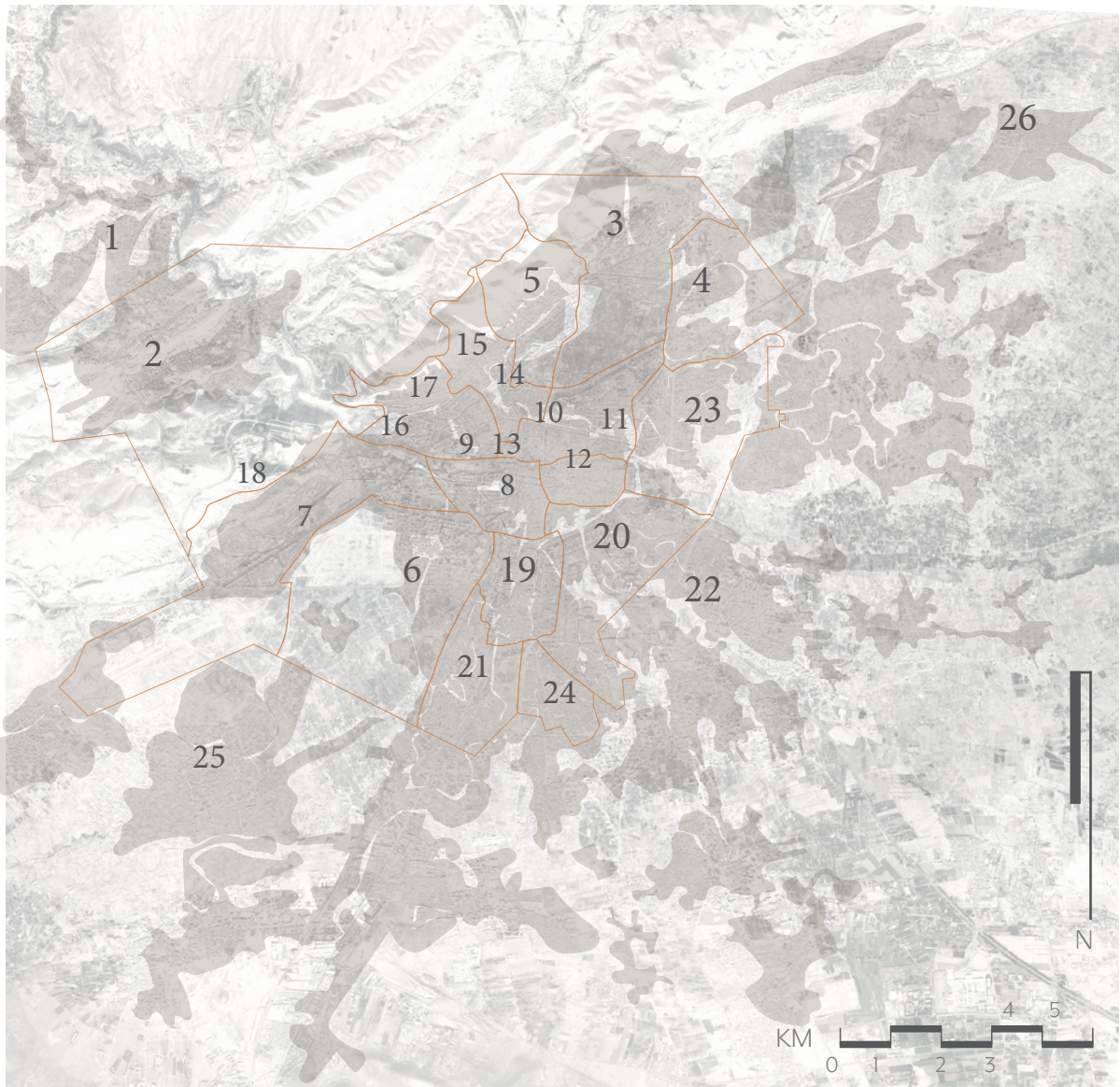
Many commercial buildings appeared in that time. By these modern glazed buildings and luxurious shopping centers, the city was showing off its economic growth. The architectural westernized style dominated regardless of the traditional architecture and the local building identity.

2008

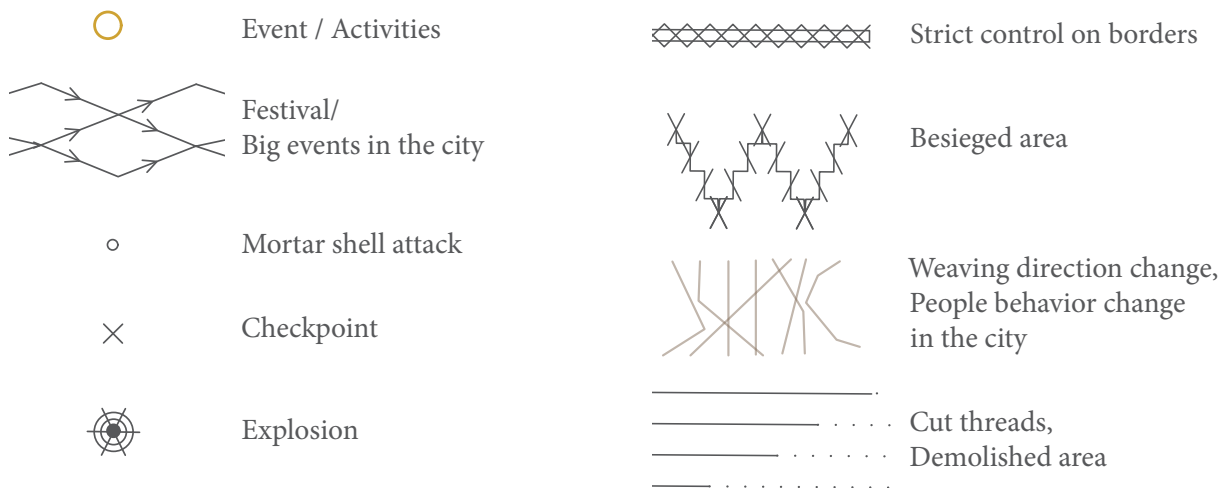
2008



The weaving pattern



* For information about the chosen areas, look at (Table 1), Page.33



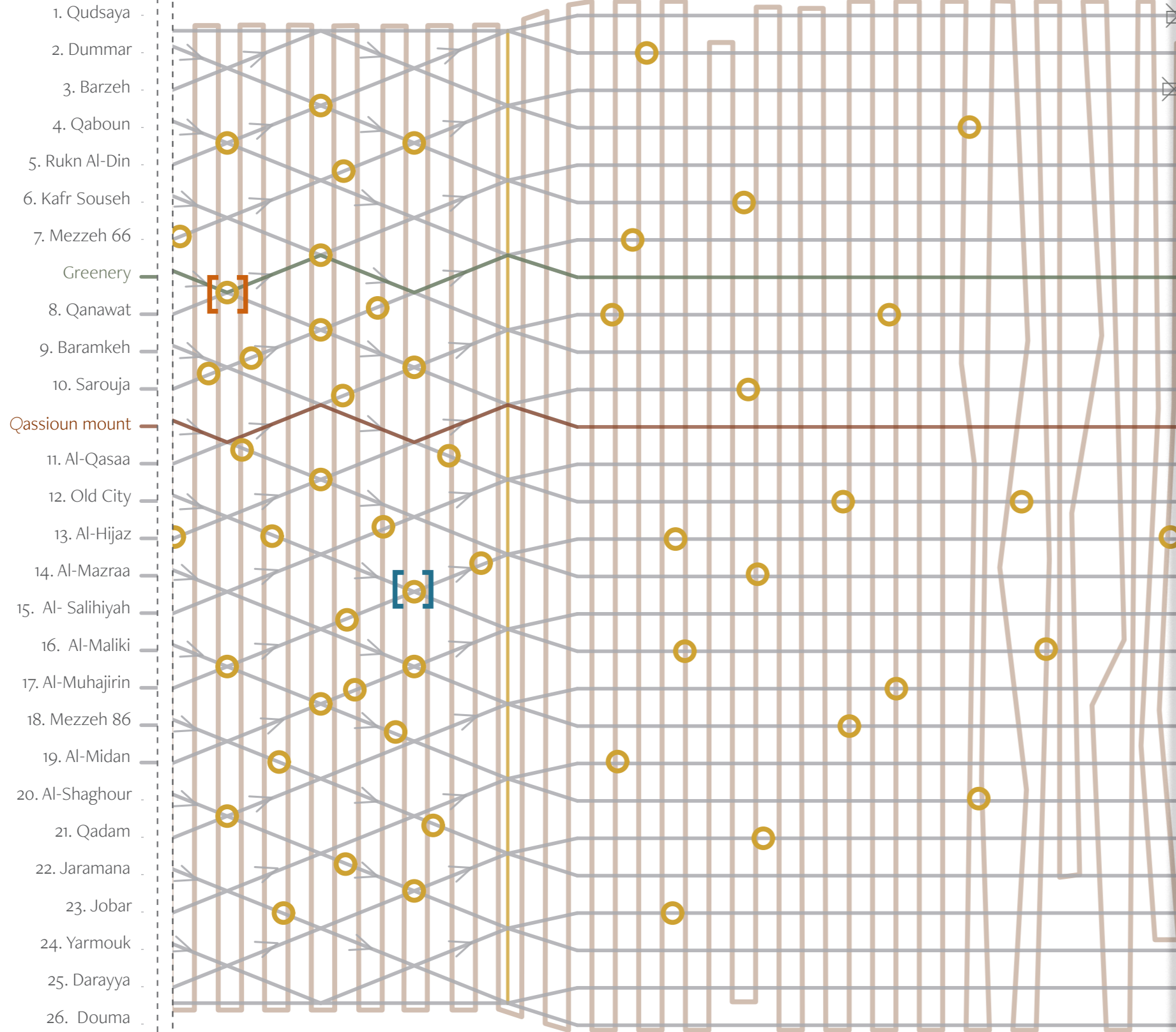


Image 04: A flyer of one the festival events



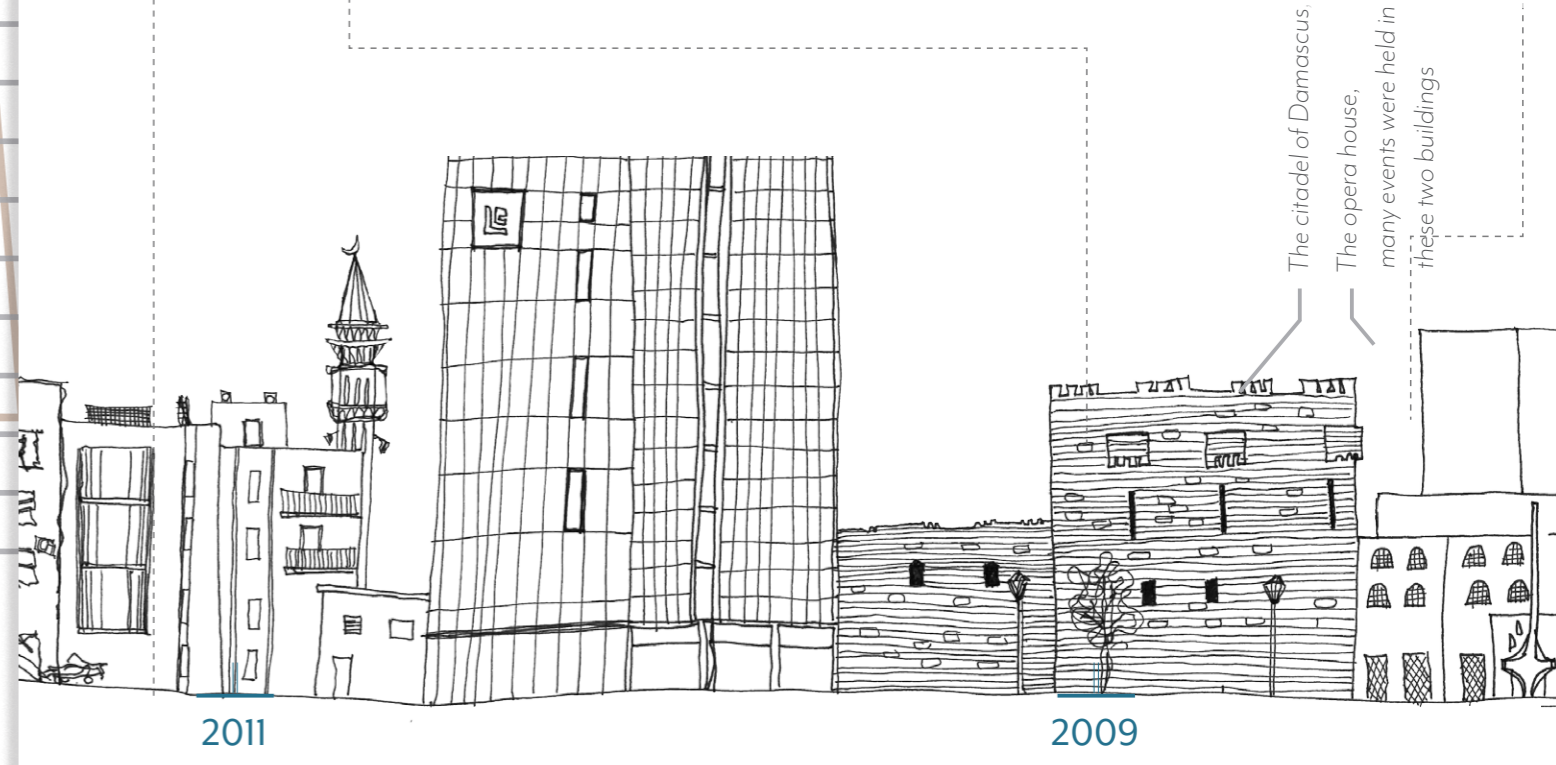
The Festival official logo



The festival started in Jan 2008 and continued in Jan 2009.
In (Damascus Arab capital of culture. 2008) pamphlet, around 35
different cultural event were held in these two months.

- The festival opening event was a musical theater by the famous Lebanese singer (Fayrouz), From (28 Jan- 2 Feb 2008), in the national opera house, it was the first time she performs in Syria in three decades (Worth R.F, 2008).
- Amongst the final event, Seasons of violet in Damascus, was the title of the late Palestinian singer (Rim Banna) musical concert on (08 Jan 2009), she sang in solidarity with Gaza that witnessed what was called Gaza war after violent airstrikes in 27 December 2008 (Samir K, 2009).

2008 was a special year for people in Damascus. Artists, musicians, performers and singers came from all around the world, the city became a playful place, and different cultural events were held throughout the year. The official preparations started before one year. One of significant changes in the city, was asking all the shops, including the international branches, to translate their names into Arabic or at least write it in Arabic letters, which made a disturbance for most of the owners. The city's cultural and heritage buildings took apart of this great event, the citadel of Damascus embraced some events which were among the most unforgettable ones.



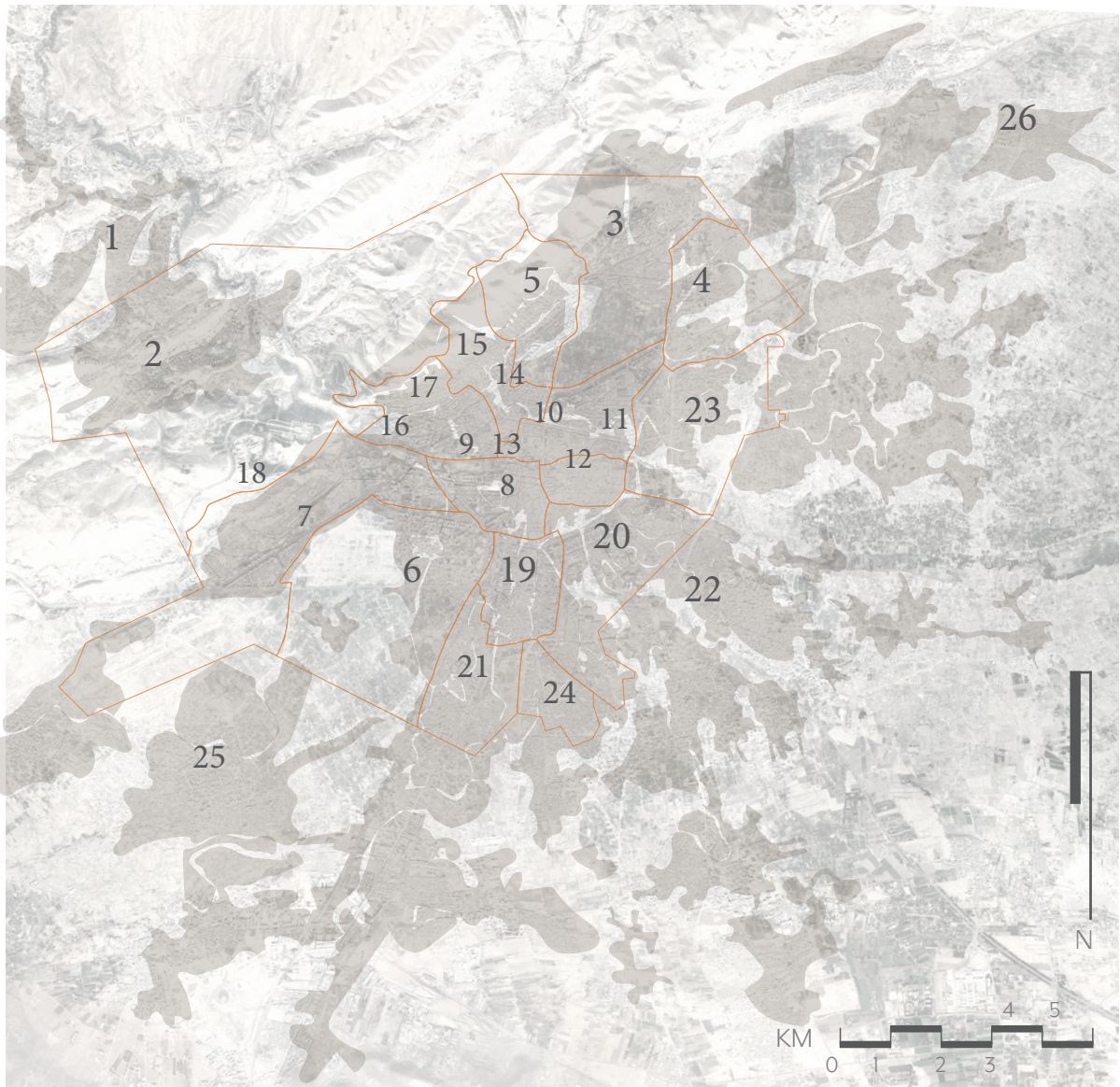
2009

2011

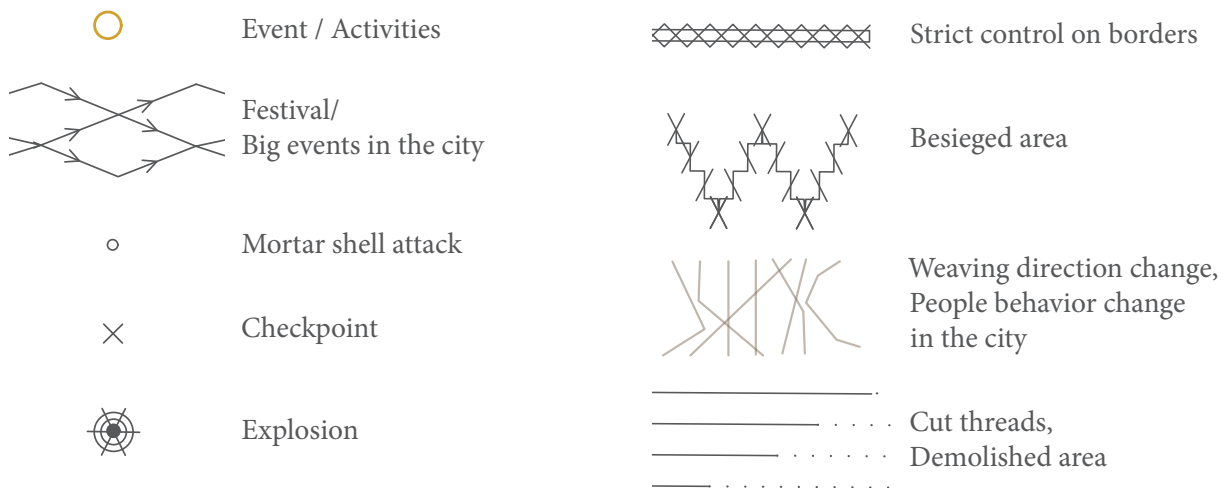
2011

2009

The weaving pattern



* For information about the chosen areas, look at (Table 1), Page.33



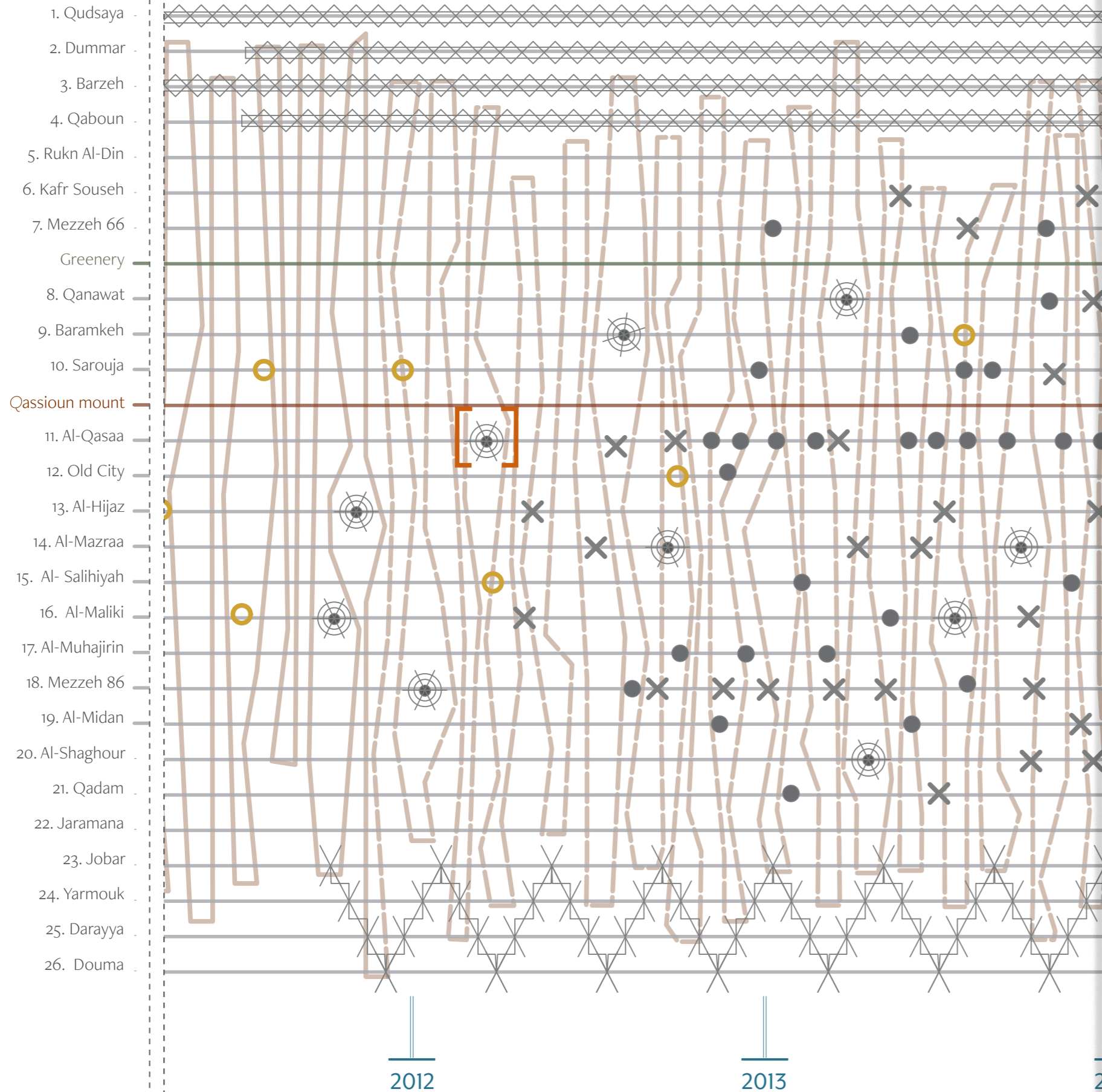


Image 05: One of the bombed buildings



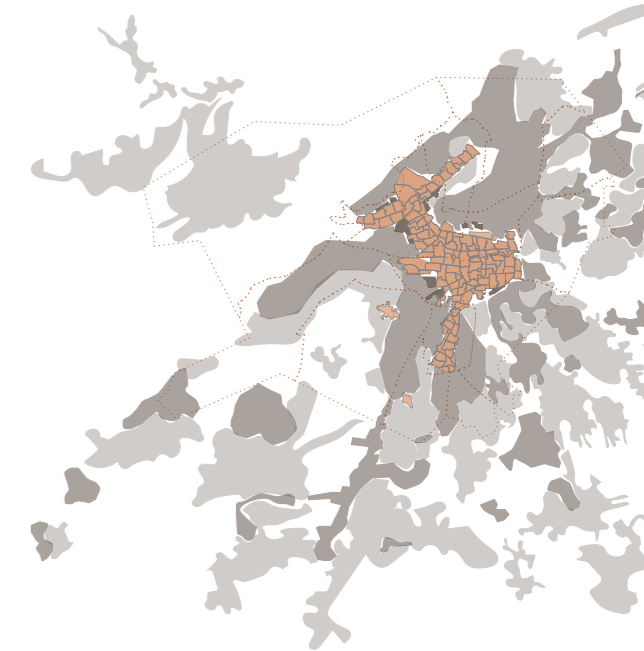
Two large explosions, by car bombs, struck beside intelligence and security buildings in one of the central neighborhoods in Damascus. It killed at least 27 people and injured around 97 people, gutted the close parked cars and the facades of surrounding buildings. (Barnard A, 2012).

People were following the news of Damascus on a Facebook page called: [A mortar shell diary in Damascus]. In the beginning the page focused on tracking the locations of the mortar shells targets, and posting the total number of them at the end of the day, their locations, and the number of killed people.

Same city, Different image

Unexpected and sometimes irreversible changes have been implemented in the built environment. Some of them emerged to protect the inhabitants of the city itself from external or internal threats, in the form of military checkpoints either permanent or temporary, main squares and streets enclosure, controlling pedestrians and cars' movement.

City development until 2011

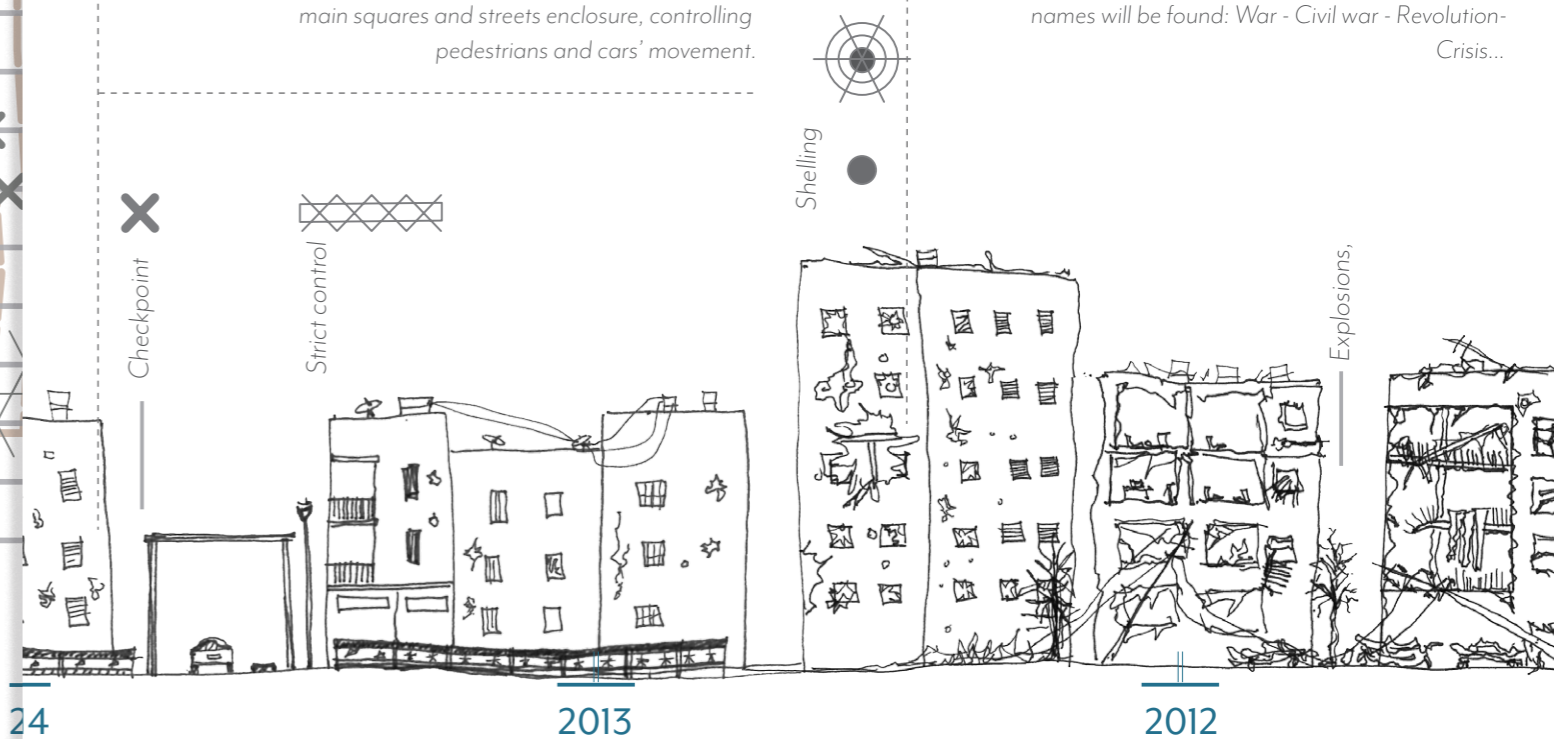


“ Why not wish for better, why settle for the state of instability that brought us here in the first place? This gives me the feeling that we haven't learned any lessons from all that has happened; that we have never reflected on anything, or tried to relate cause and effect”

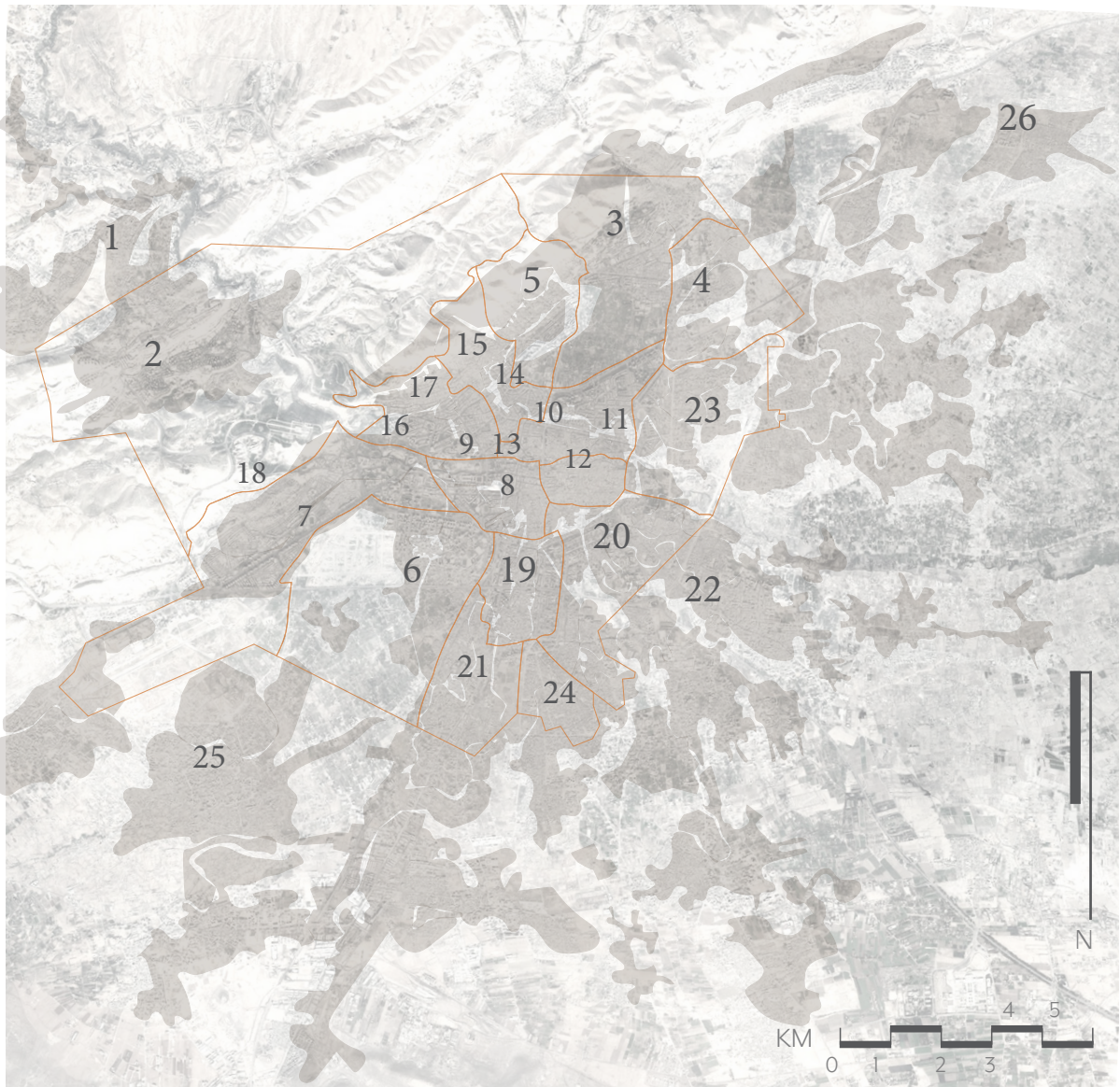
(Al-Sabouni, M. 2016)

Same story, Different titles

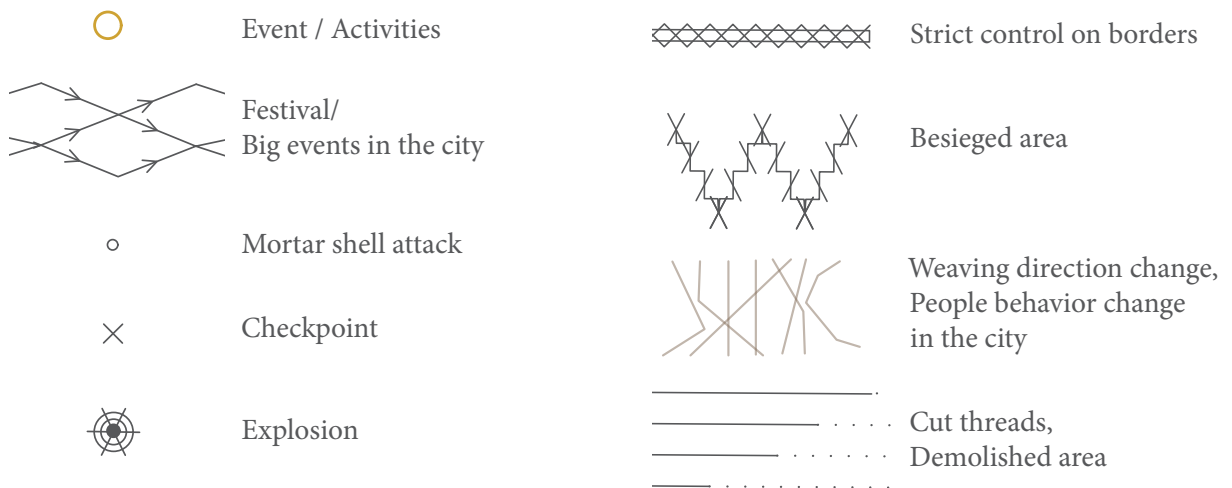
After March 2011, Syrian people started to become visibly divided. They will not even agree on a title for what happened that year until now. The title will differ depending on the political attitude of the person that is telling the story. When following the news, different names will be found: War - Civil war - Revolution- Crisis...

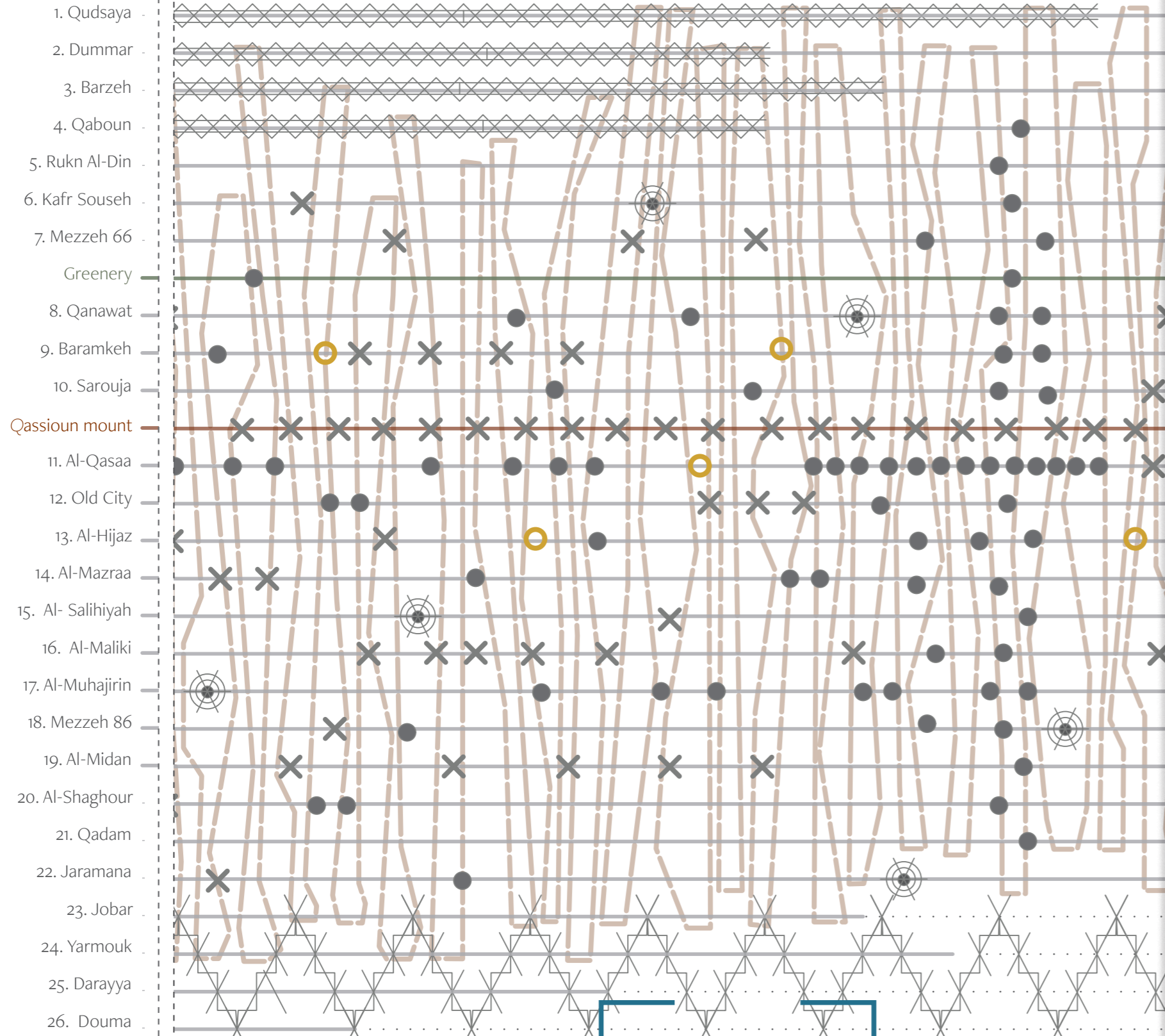


The weaving pattern



* For information about the chosen areas, look at (Table 1), Page.33





2014

2015

2016

مادام الجني هذه الكوارث كلها فما هي طبيعة الضرور التي زرعتها؟
 (Since the harvest is all of these disasters, what is the nature of the evils that we have planted?)
 -Hasan Sami Yousef, 2016

Images 09,10,11,12: Air strike & destruction [Top-down]



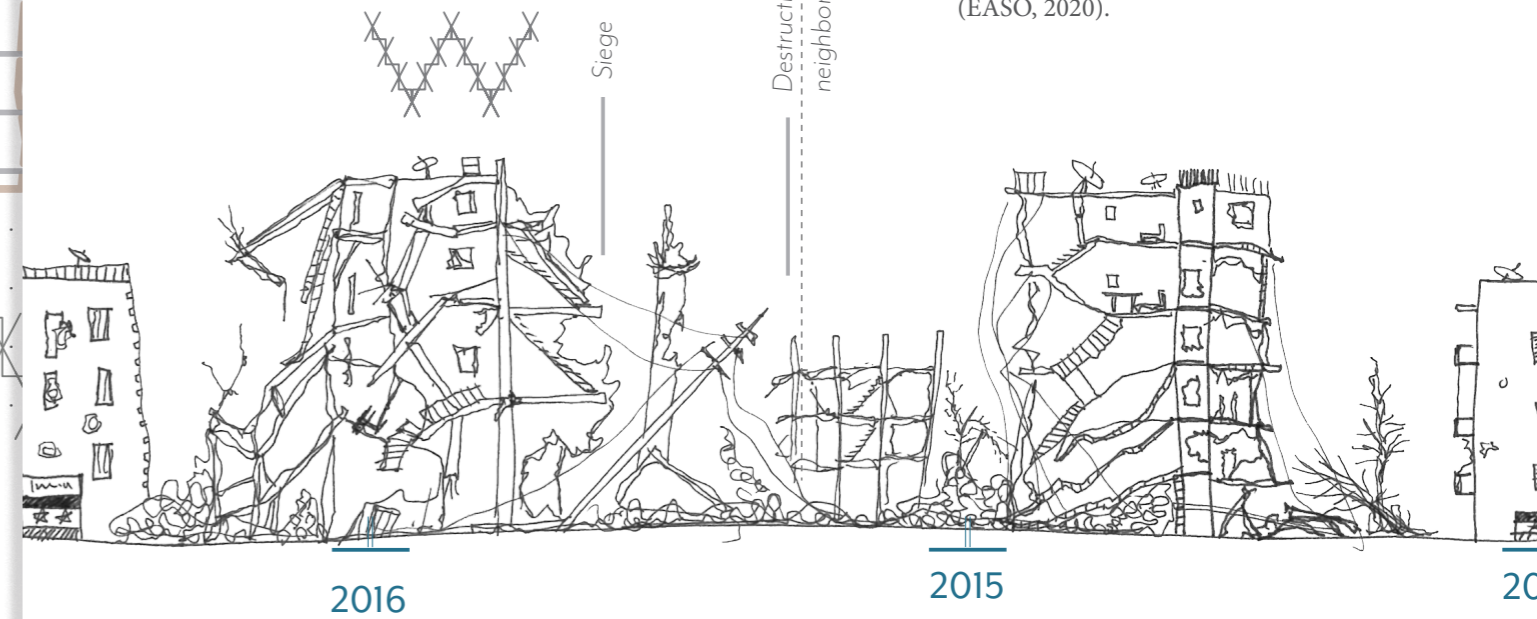
[- - -]

Douma siege 2013/2017
 The destruction in Douma. After it was one of the areas that witnessed the beginning of the uprising in 2011, it became an area for armed opposition factions. The besiege of Douma started in 2012 and ended in 2018 with the return of government control (Al-Jazeera. 2018).

Images 06, 07, 08: Checkpoints [Top-down]



X The checkpoints mission
 Checkpoints are mobile or fixed at entrances and in areas in Damascus city. Checking the cars for weapons or explosive materials, and Looking for wanted people and their background and military service status. The checks are made on a computer or by phone by a range of agencies (EASO, 2020).

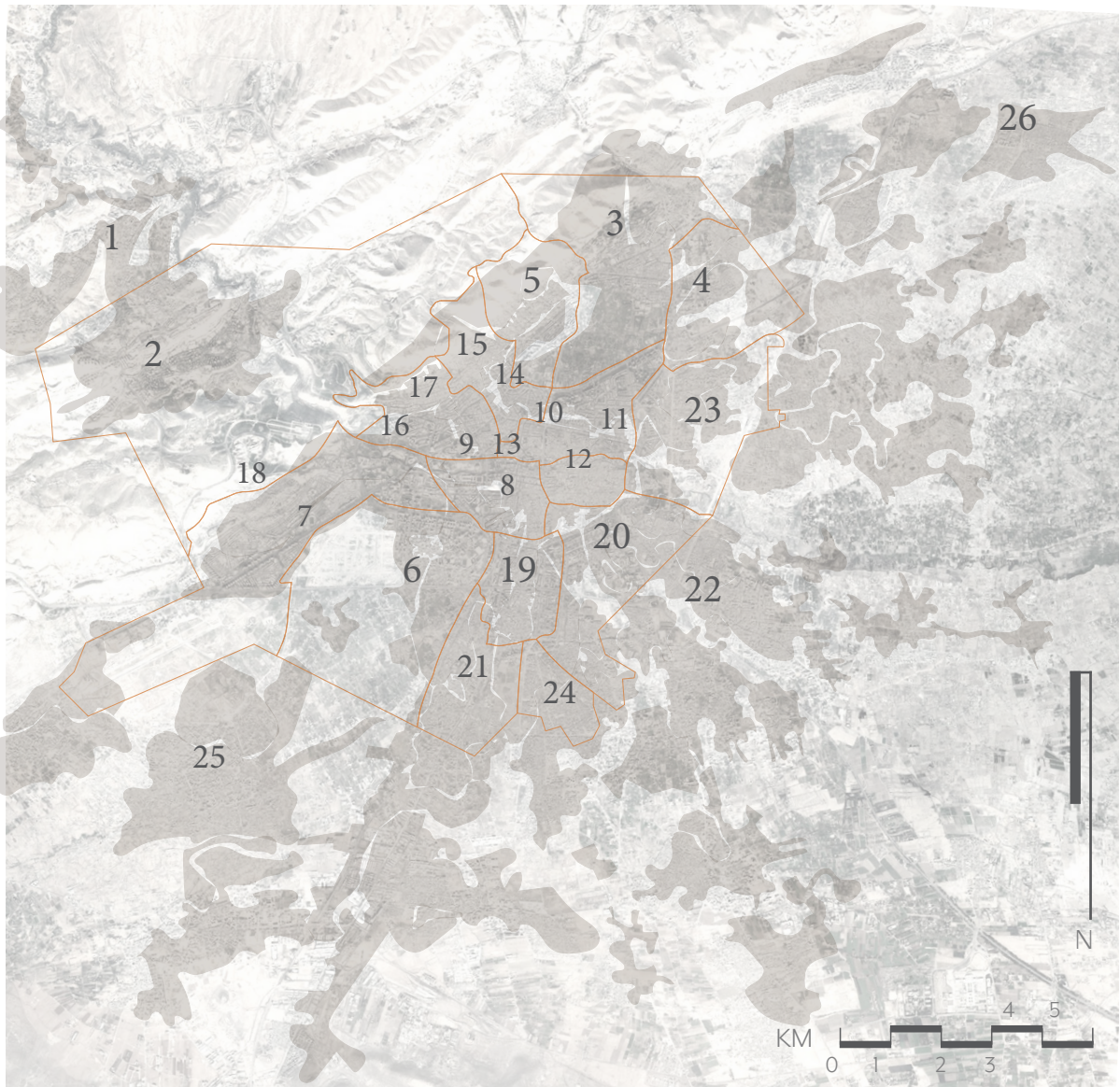


2016



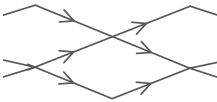




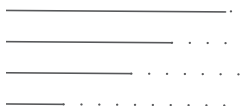

2015

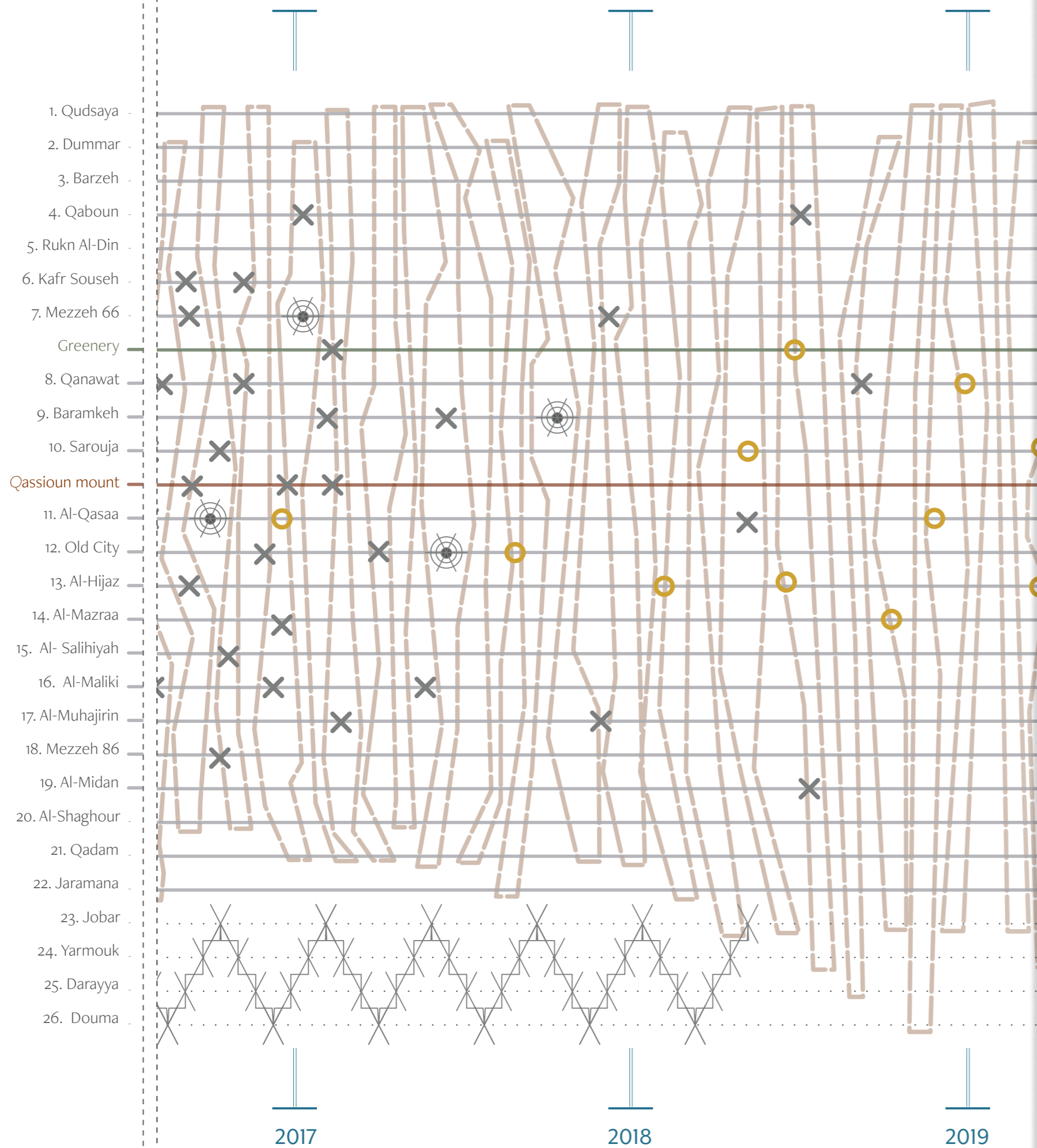
2014

The weaving pattern



* For information about the chosen areas, look at (Table 1), Page.33

	Event / Activities		Strict control on borders
	Festival/ Big events in the city		Besieged area
	Mortar shell attack		Weaving direction change, People behavior change in the city
	Checkpoint		Cut threads, Demolished area
	Explosion		

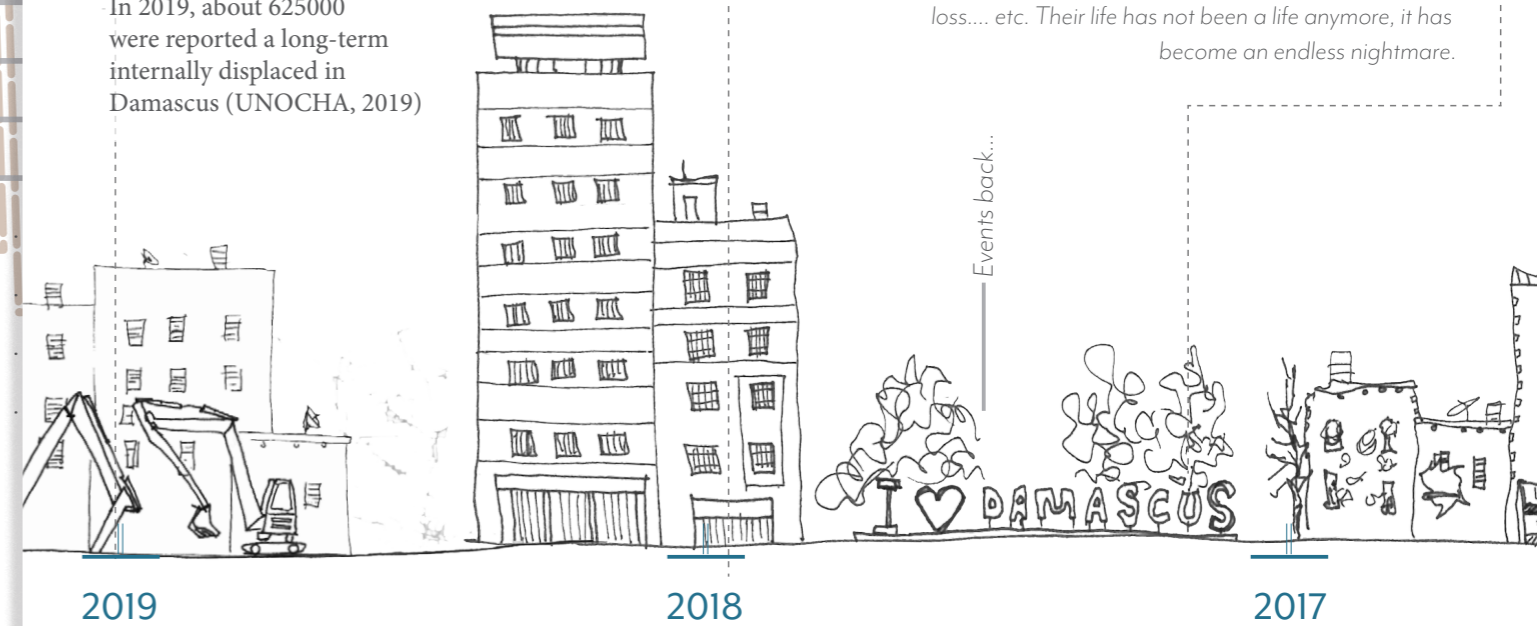


Images 15,16,17: [Top-down]



Those who could not leave the country, or chose to stay, have lost their energy. People have continued to live in silence, filled with open scars and surrounded by invisible barriers

In 2019, about 625000 were reported a long-term internally displaced in Damascus (UNOCHA, 2019)



Images 13,14: [Top-down]



[I love Damascus] 07.10.2016

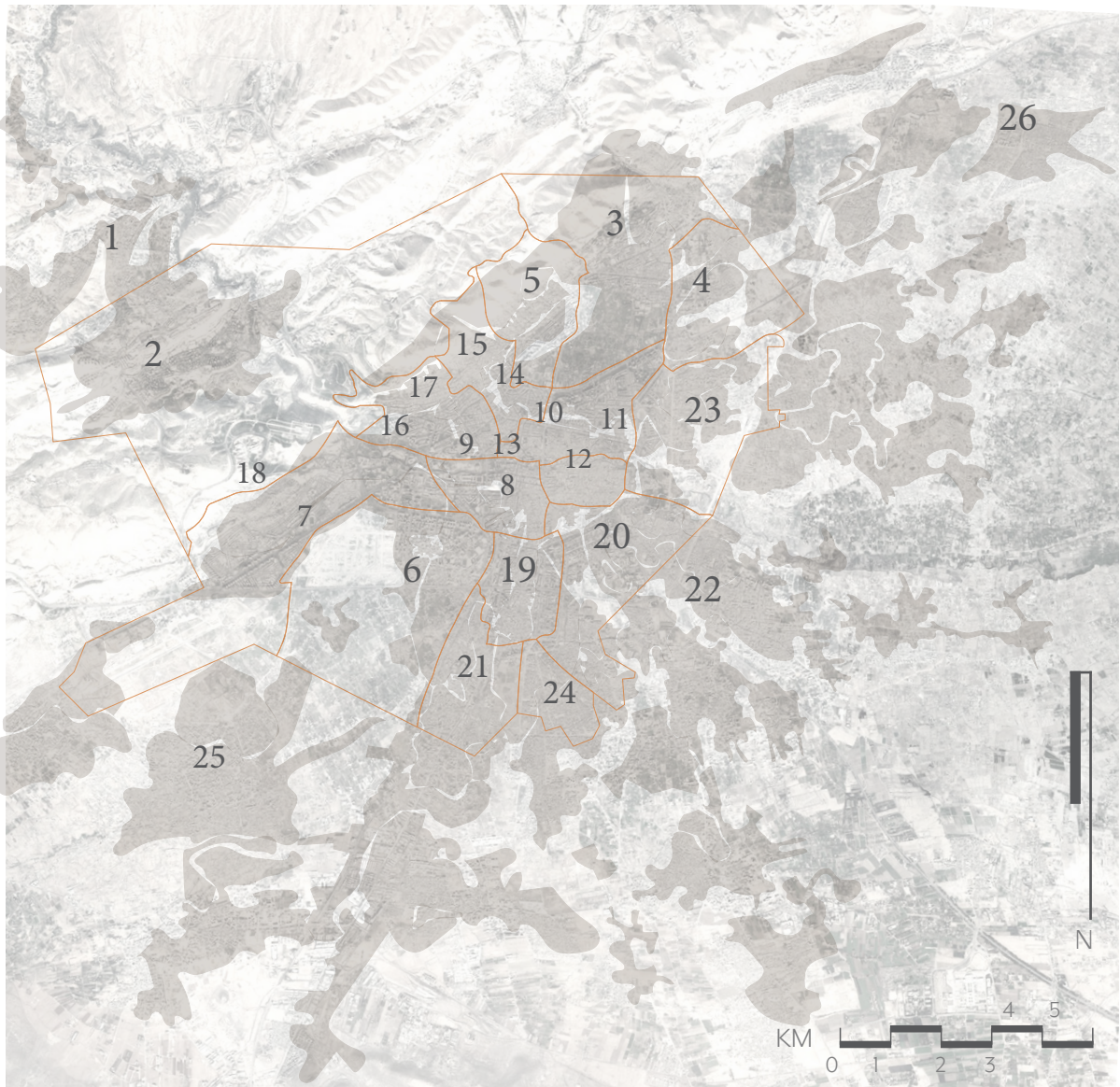
An event that does not relate to the Syrian culture

"It's very easy to forget that you're in a country that ravaged with war when visiting Damascus but then you suddenly hear rocket hitting the terrorist-infested Jobar district only two km away in a straight line from where I'm staying and enjoying life. Between 10 - 30 rockets I could hear a day." (The Unusual Traveller, 2017)

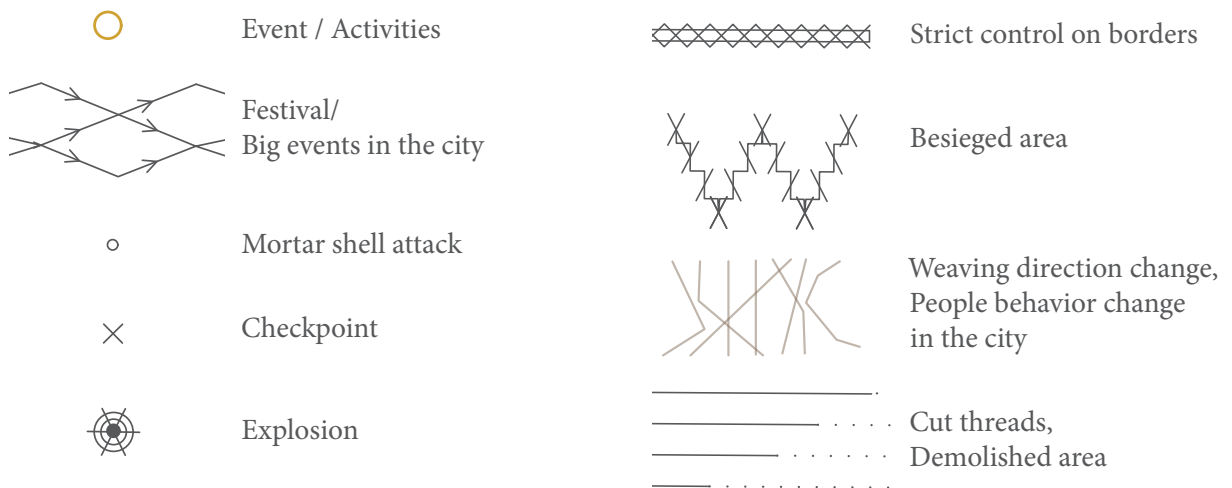
Different people, Same daily life

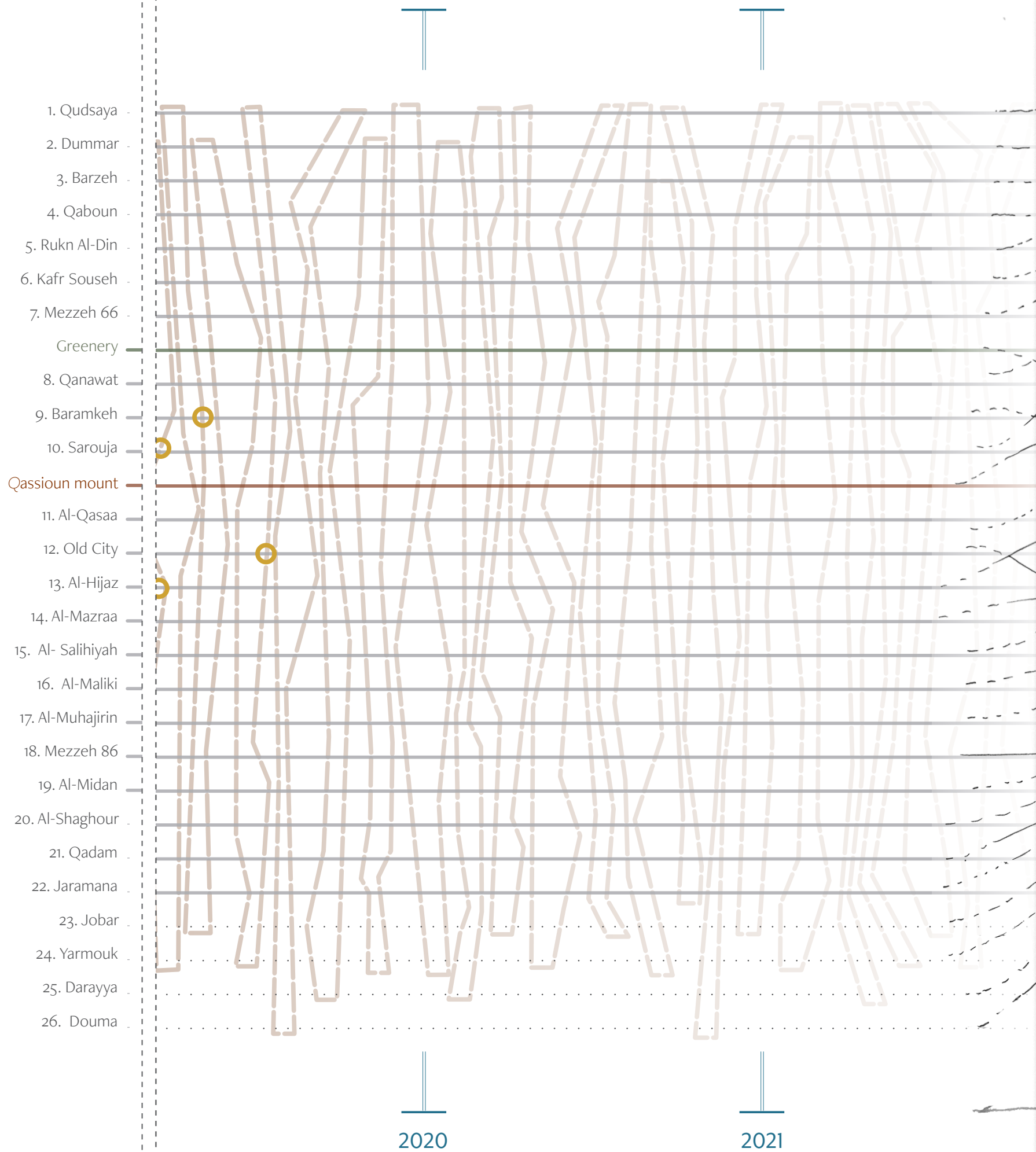
Despite all the division, Syrian have shared the same suffering: tough daily life conditions, long waiting hours in the cars to be checked, electricity outage especially in the streets and public spaces, emptiness of the streets because of the mortars fall or chaotic explosions, lack of public transportation, economy collapse, insecurity, beloved people and belongings loss.... etc. Their life has not been a life anymore, it has become an endless nightmare.

The weaving pattern



* For information about the chosen areas, look at (Table 1), Page.33





Images 20: Accepted designs for Marota city



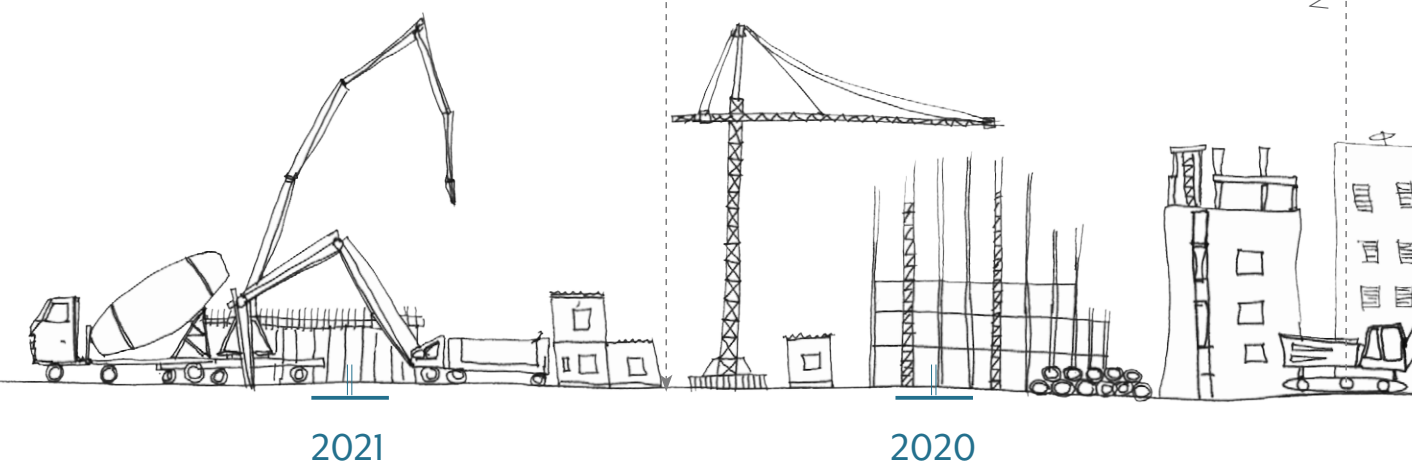
"Marota .. The New City That Will Contribute To The Dawn Of A New Damascus Has A Long Tradition And History And Puts It On The Map Of Modernity And Globalism."
(Marota, 2019)

Marota city plan includes:
-186 residential tower-11/22 floor
-33 investment-50 floor

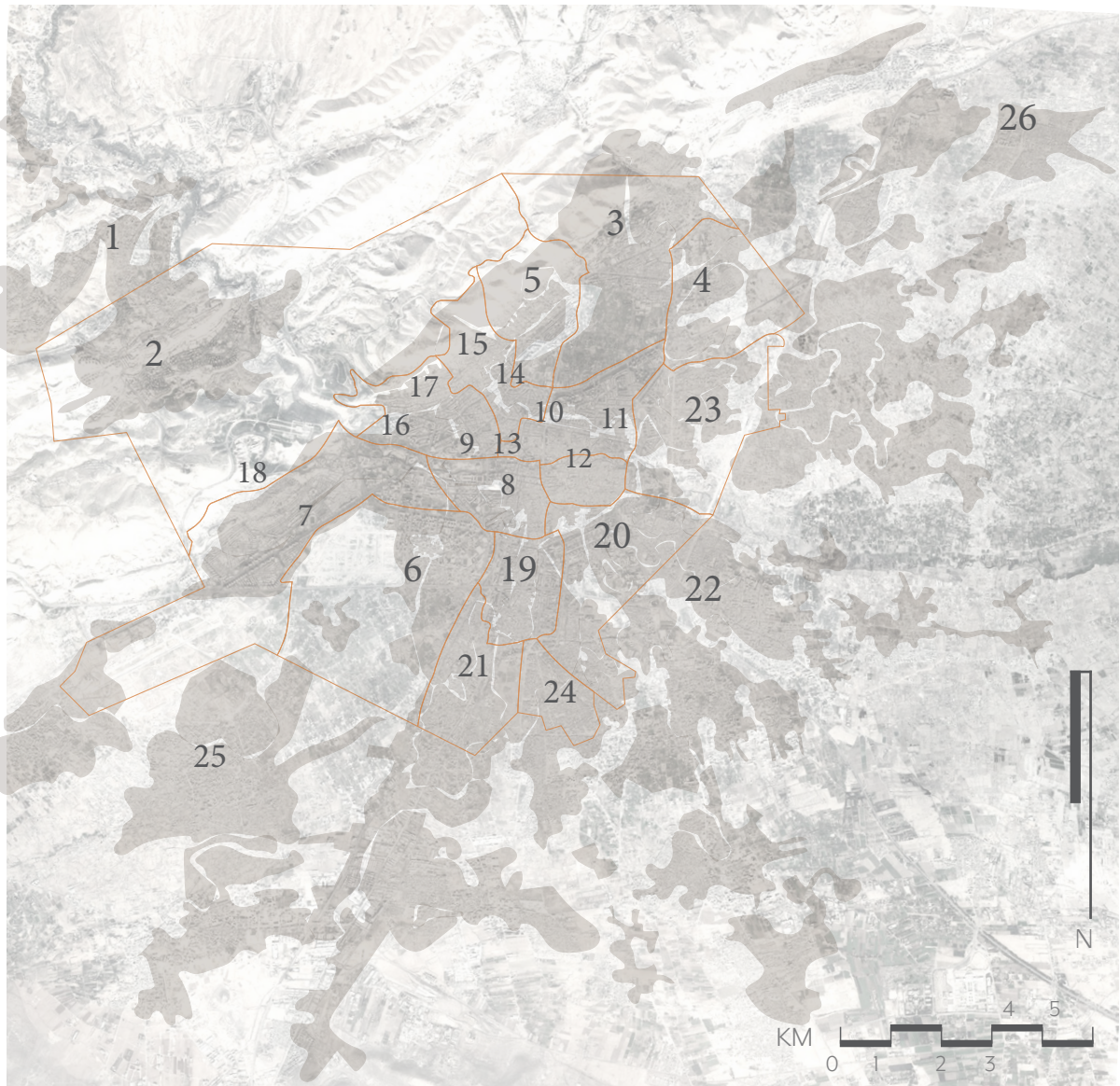
Images 18,19: Marota city construction [Top-down]



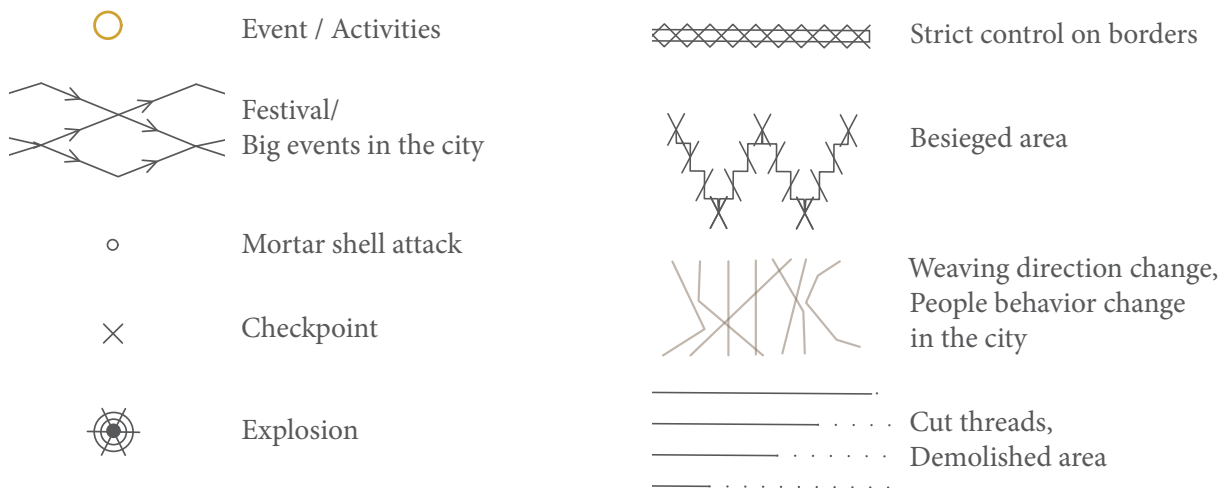
"According to the officials, this should be viewed as 'a-once-in-a-lifetime-chance'. Towers will be built instead of shabby housing and unnecessary greenery"
(Al-Sabouni M, 2016)



The weaving pattern

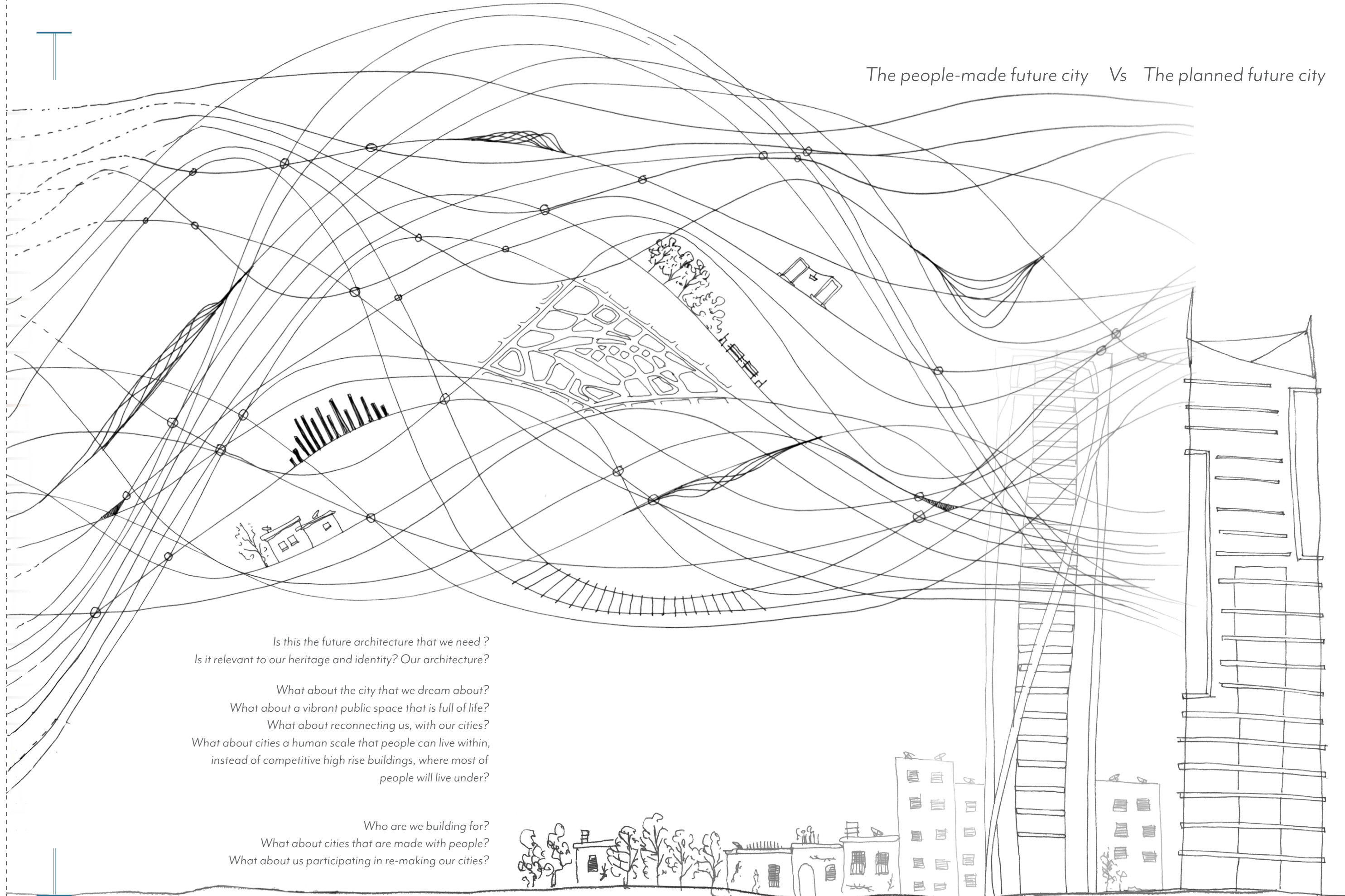


* For information about the chosen areas, look at (Table 1), Page.33



The people-made future city Vs The planned future city

- 1. Qudsaya
- 2. Dummar
- 3. Barzeh
- 4. Qaboun
- 5. Rukn Al-Din
- 6. Kafr Souseh
- 7. Mezzeh 66
- Greenery
- 8. Qanawat
- 9. Baramkeh
- 10. Sarouja
- Qassioun mount
- 11. Al-Qasaa
- 12. Old City
- 13. Al-Hijaz
- 14. Al-Mazraa
- 15. Al-Salihyah
- 16. Al-Maliki
- 17. Al-Muhajirin
- 18. Mezzeh 86
- 19. Al-Midan
- 20. Al-Shaghour
- 21. Qadam
- 22. Jaramana
- 23. Jobar
- 24. Yarmouk
- 25. Darayya
- 26. Douma



Is this the future architecture that we need?
Is it relevant to our heritage and identity? Our architecture?

What about the city that we dream about?
What about a vibrant public space that is full of life?
What about reconnecting us, with our cities?
What about cities a human scale that people can live within,
instead of competitive high rise buildings, where most of
people will live under?

Who are we building for?
What about cities that are made with people?
What about us participating in re-making our cities?



