

PART 1: DEFINING THE DISCOURSE OF INTERSTITIALITY

DEFINITIONS



CHAPTER I. TERMINOLOGIES AND DEFINITIONS

a. Multidiscipline terminologies

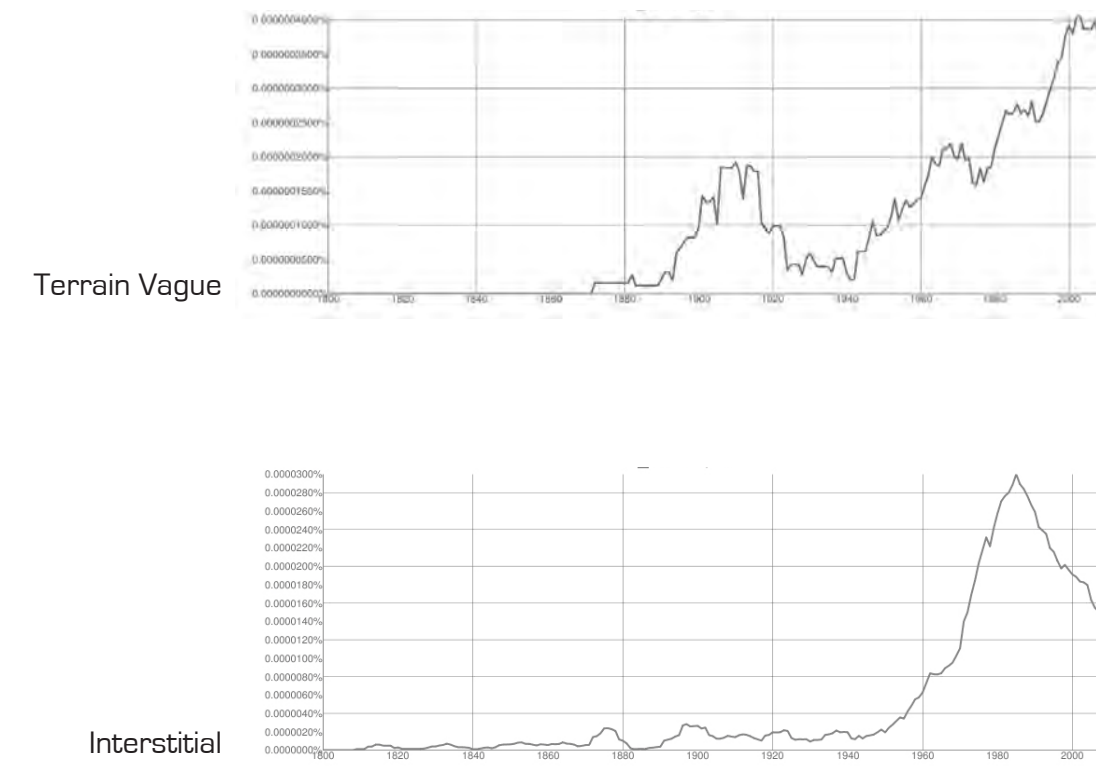
Through focusing on the two main terminologies, there are many ways in which the word 'interstitial' and 'liminal' are used in different contexts. These different meanings confer to the interstice and the liminal their inherent qualities and characteristics as interdisciplinary multifaceted notions. By understanding their different usages, one can conceive a well rounded understanding of both terms.

In fact, in tandem with architectural definitions, the notion of interstitiality has been an emergent subject in the sciences to define vital networks within larger systems, such as nutritive and waste systems in between cells and tissues.

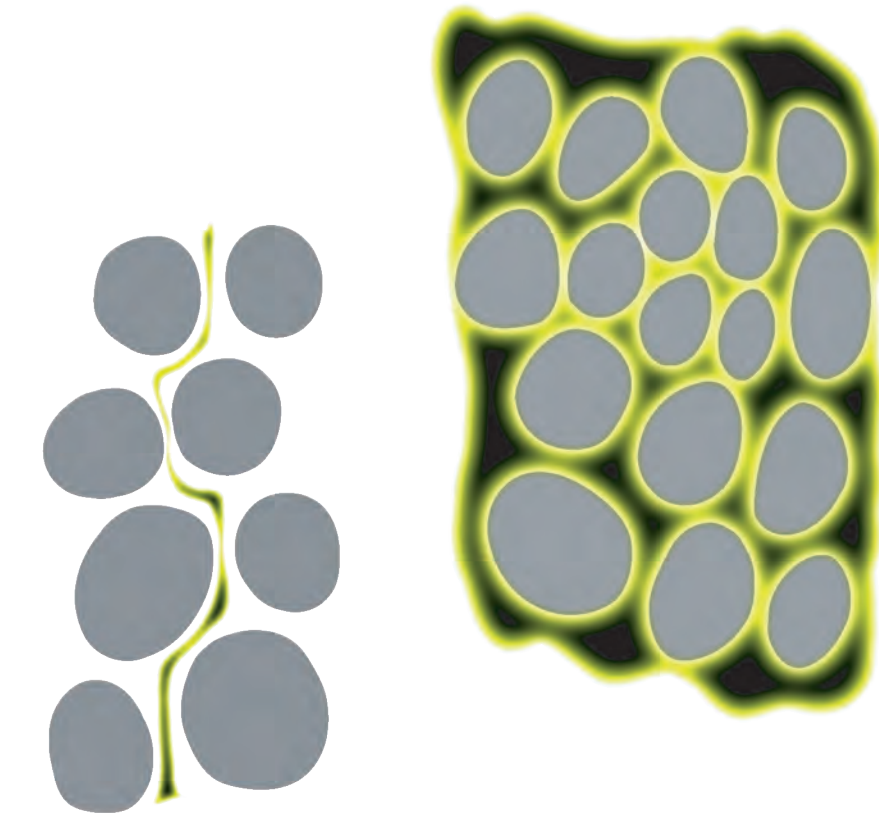
Interstitiality is becoming increasingly a new mode of intervention in the scientific realm, whereas in the architectural realm it is becoming an alternative mode of analysis and urban involvement beyond the scope of formal modes of production. Medical treatments are subsequently heading towards making use of interstitiality in order to prevent incision based operations.

b. Architectural and urban definitions

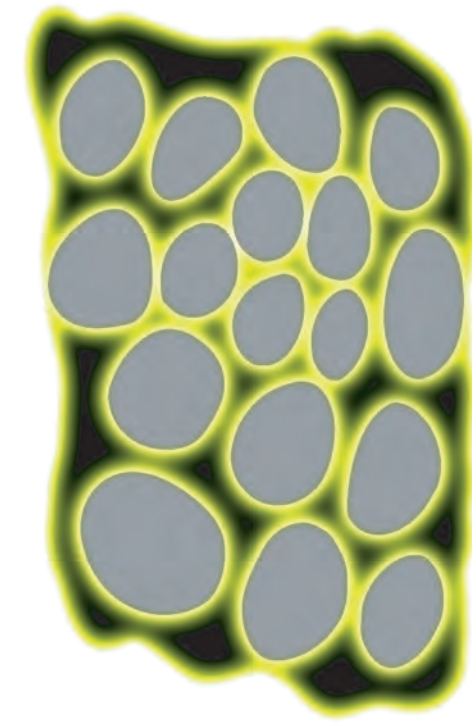
'Interstitial' and 'liminal' are few of the terms commonly used to describe the urban in-between spaces or terrain vague. Although the terms are erroneously used interchangeably, there is difference between intermediary space (experience of what grows in between things), interstitial space (prosperous for the emergence of ephemeral situations), fluid space (flux of knowledge of numeric culture, mobility between local and global, center and periphery), public space (related to political connotations), liminal space (place of transition on the threshold) etc.



Charts of Word recurrence in publications



Intervention mode



Condensed adhesive



Vital Network



Urban morphology

TRANSITION

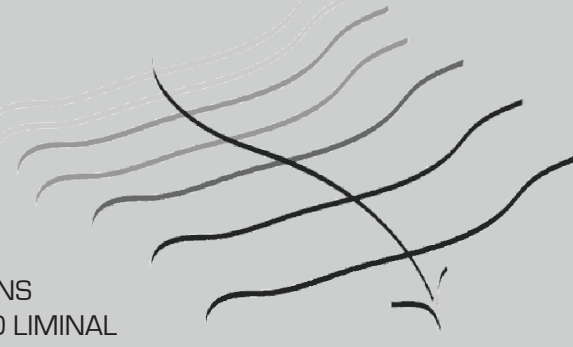


CHAPTER II. DIFFERENCES IN DEFINITIONS

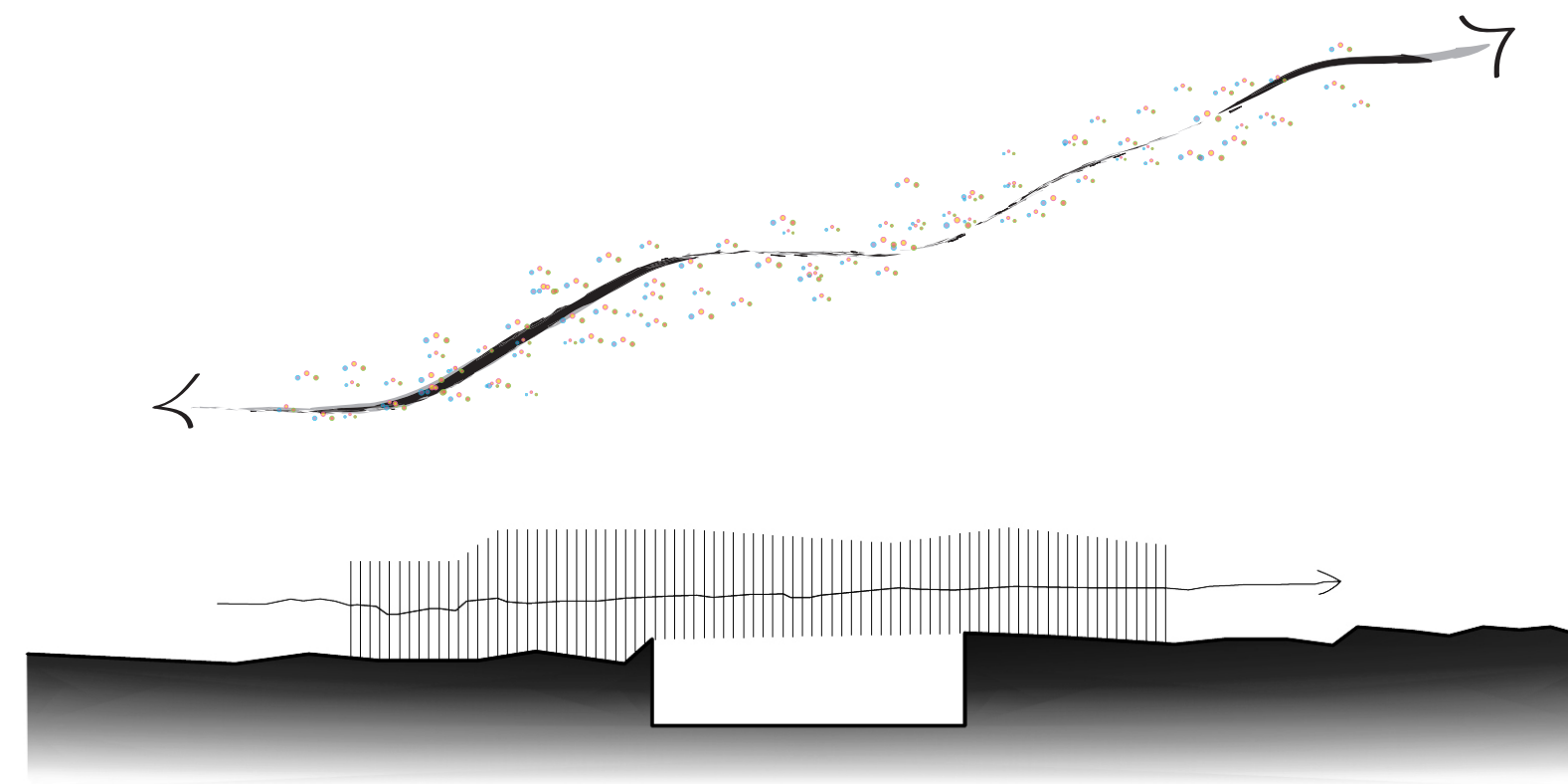
a. How transition shapes experience

The interest in the 'terrain vague' comes from a preliminary interest in understanding the event of 'transition' through different urban spaces and how the formal and informal contexts of city shape the urban fabric.

Understanding solely the built environment does not resolve the notion of dwelling in a city; it is more of a process of interchange and transition between public realms and private ones that generates ultimately networks of in-between spaces. The difference between liminal and interstitial is intimately related to the event of transition on architectural limits.

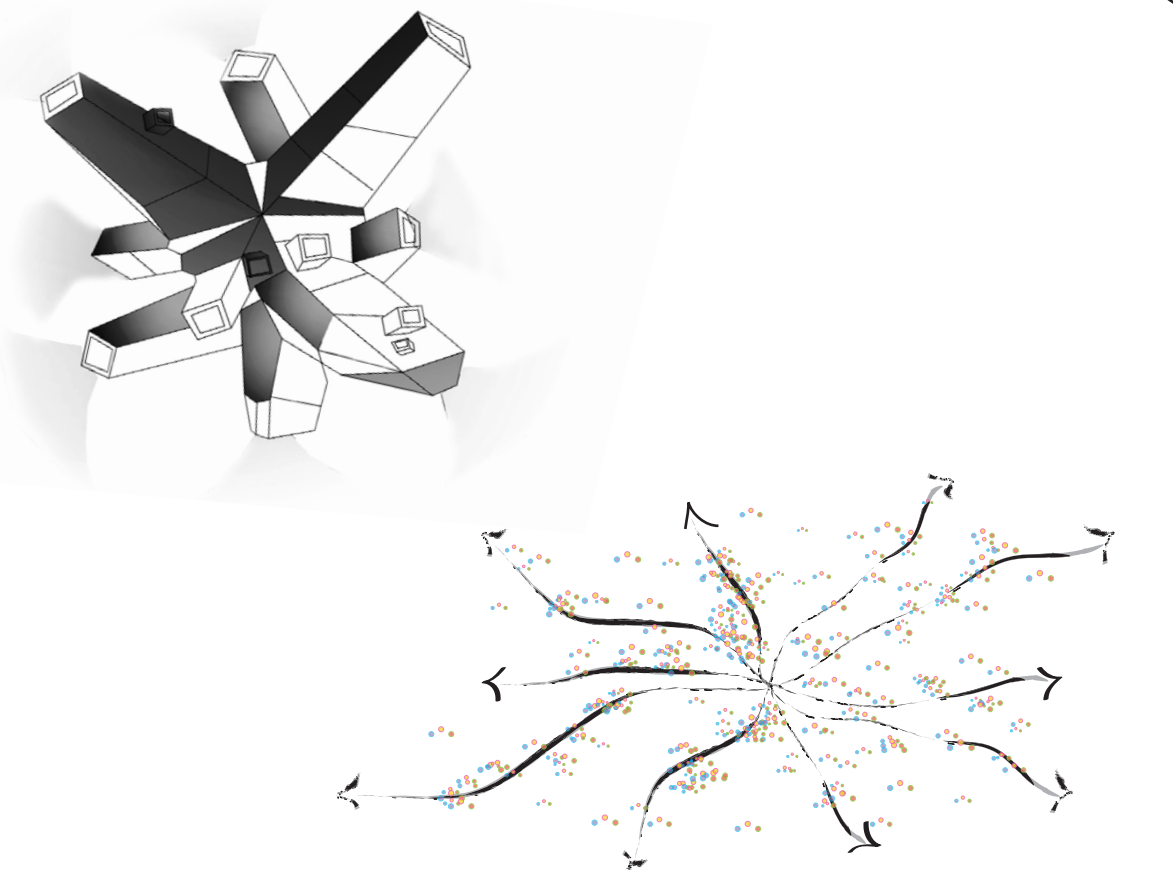


GRADUAL TRANSFORMATIONS BETWEEN INTERSTITIAL AND LIMINAL



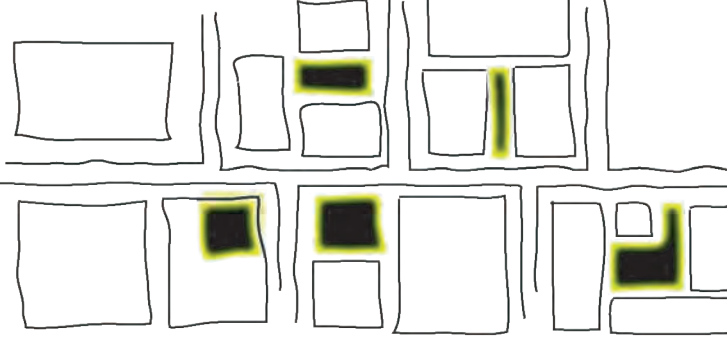
LINEAR TRANSITION

VERSUS.

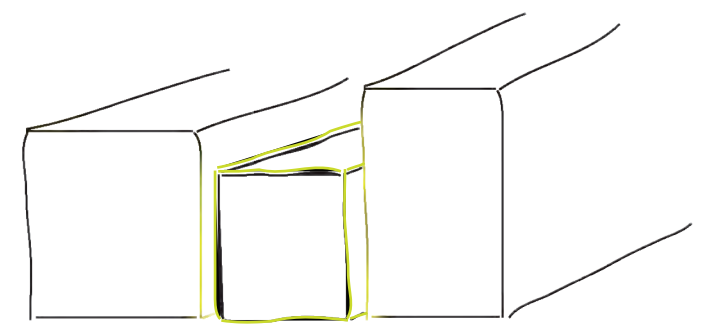


NETWORK OF TRANSITIONS

DIFFERENTIATIONS



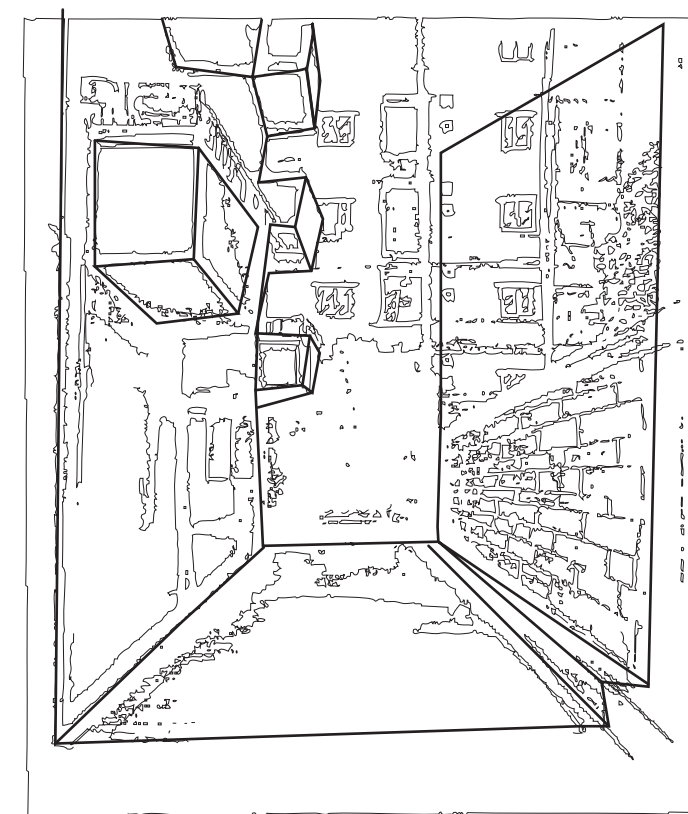
Urban level



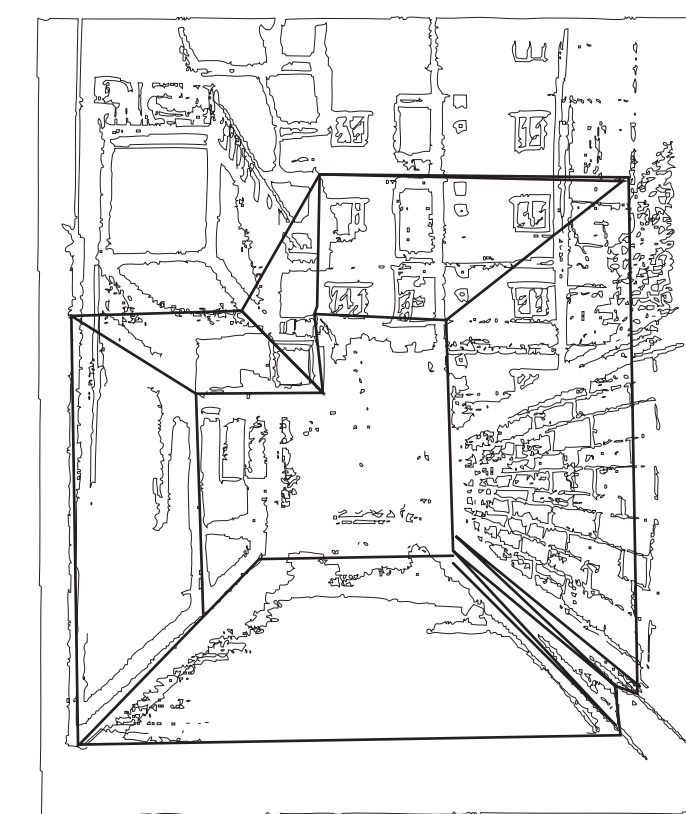
District level

b. State of being and becoming

The difference between interstitial and liminal is a difference between a state of being and a state of becoming. (One important condition of a intermediary space is twofold: it is a figured or articulated presence, and second, this articulation is figurative, since it already embodies its functional contents as a container which encloses, shelters and has an aesthetic.)* Peter Eisenman



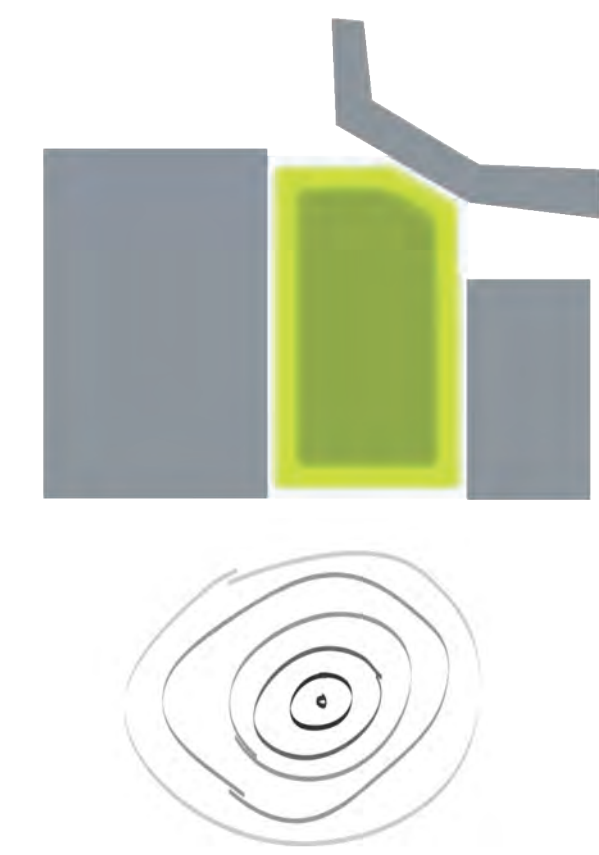
THE LIMINAL blurred limits of uncanniness on the threshold



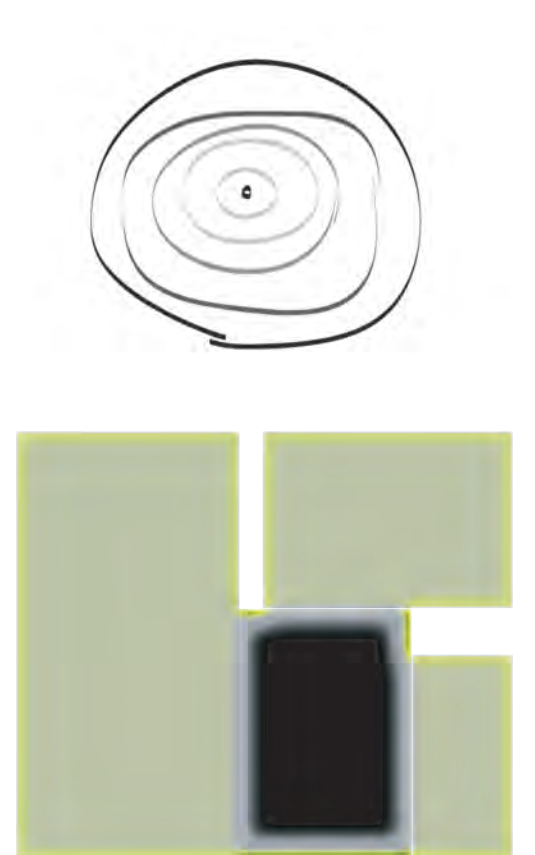
THE INTERSTITIAL fragments of urban freedom within - extracting privacy space



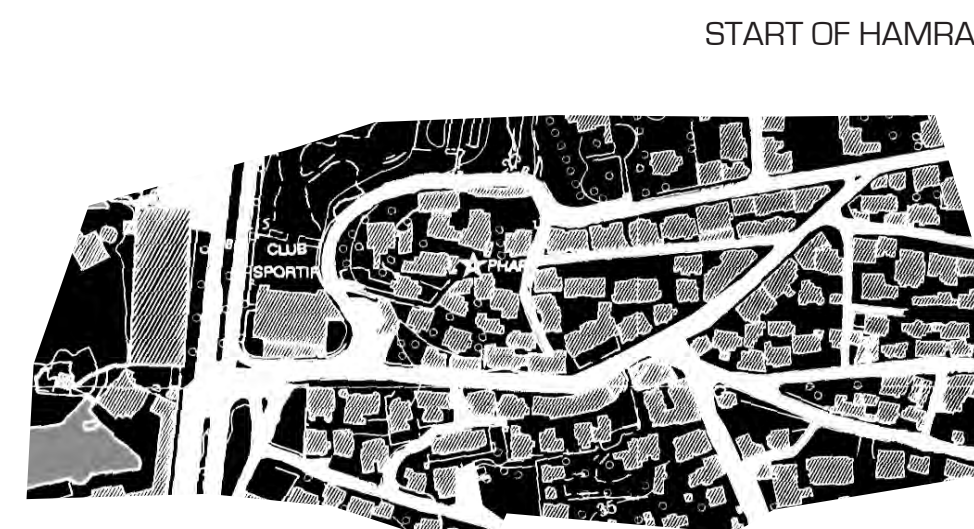
Terrain vague



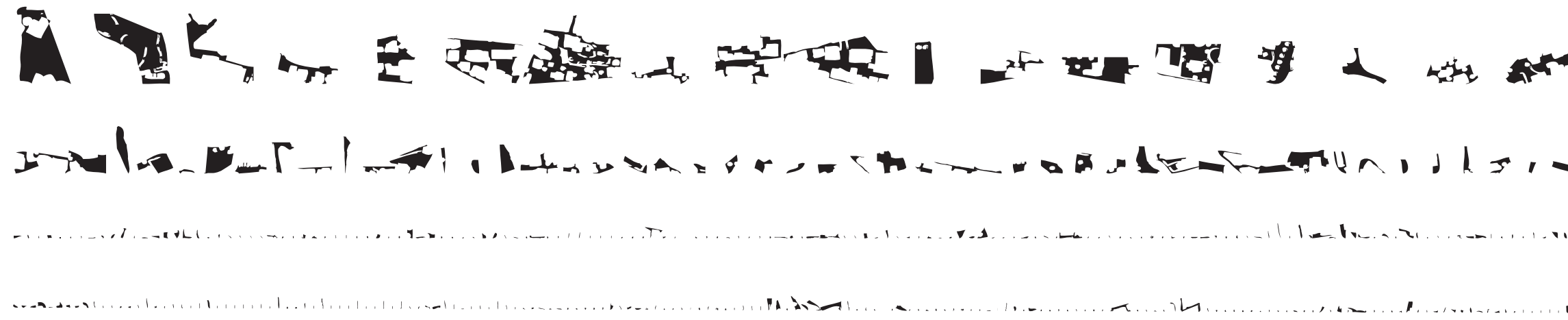
Interstitial



Liminal



CORNICHE - SEA SIDE



PART 2: THE INTERSTITIAL, A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR OF URBAN LIFE QUALITY

CHAPTER I. CITY: A MOSAIC OF INTERSTITIAL SPACES

a. Urban formulation according to interstices

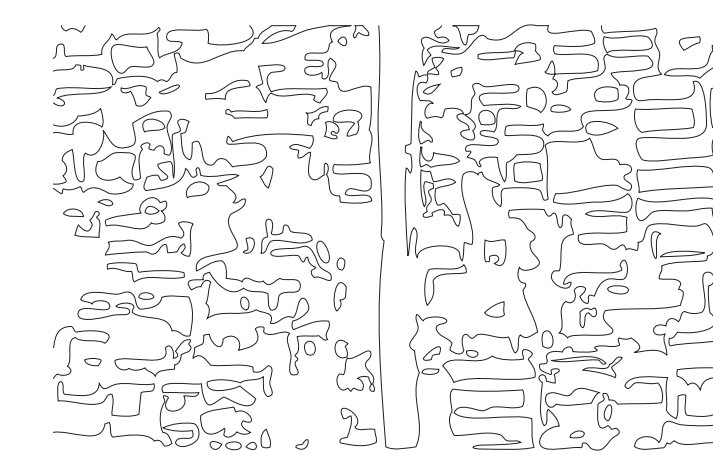
The experience of noticing and accepting the place of the in-between within the urban fabric is as important as understanding the white parts within a black and white picture: if you do not take into consideration the white areas you cannot visualize the content of the picture. However, there is a difference between the white void within a two dimensional black and white picture and the terrain vague within a three dimensional city: the in-between urban space is not necessarily empty, it can be full, occupied, even well functioning, yet its occupants or functions fall outside the traditional norms of the city. Interstitial spaces participate in the continuum of urban scales and play as a social support between city, neighborhood and building. They are hence rarely functioning as a scale on its own, clearly defined in the sense where interest is more on the forms of sociability rather than on the architectural scale. Otherwise, it is a notion of in between where a potential of freedom, disorder, chaos, resistance, green space can come to be. This notion of in between is not only a physical in between. It is also one that is metaphorical, social, political, 'paradigm'...



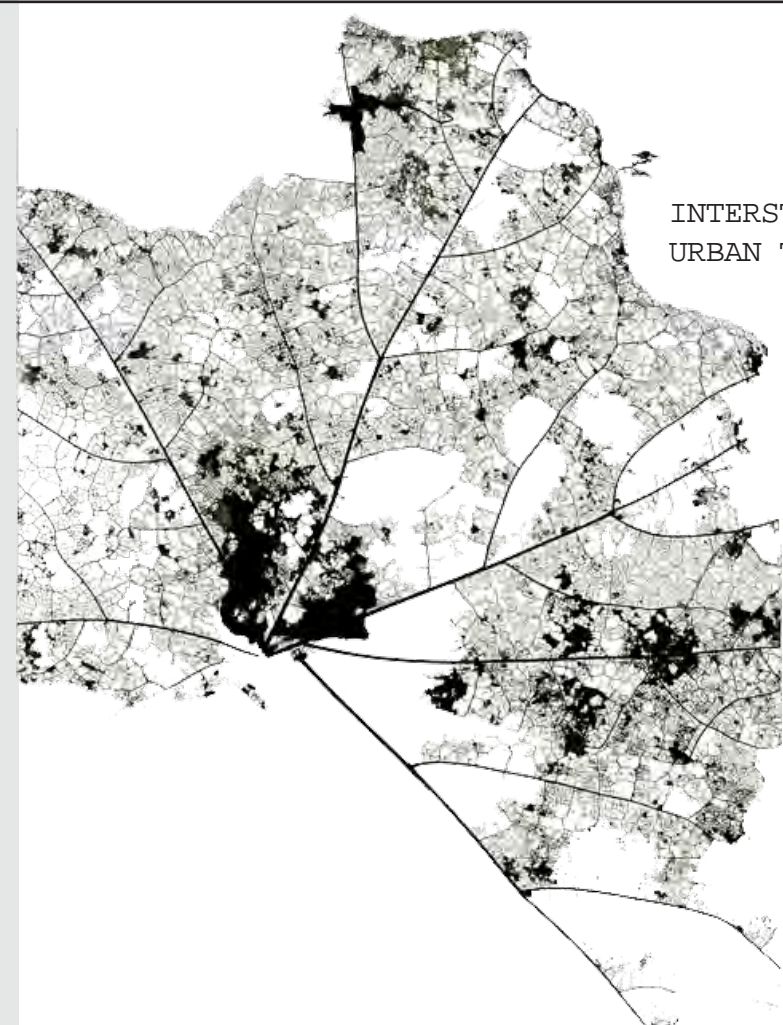
CARACAS
IN-BETWEEN SPACES DEFINING THE CITY-SCAPE



CITY THROUGH ITS INTERSTITIAL



MORPHOLOGY/TIPOLOGY



INTERSTITIAL MORPHOLOGY
URBAN TYPOLOGY

COMMUNITY

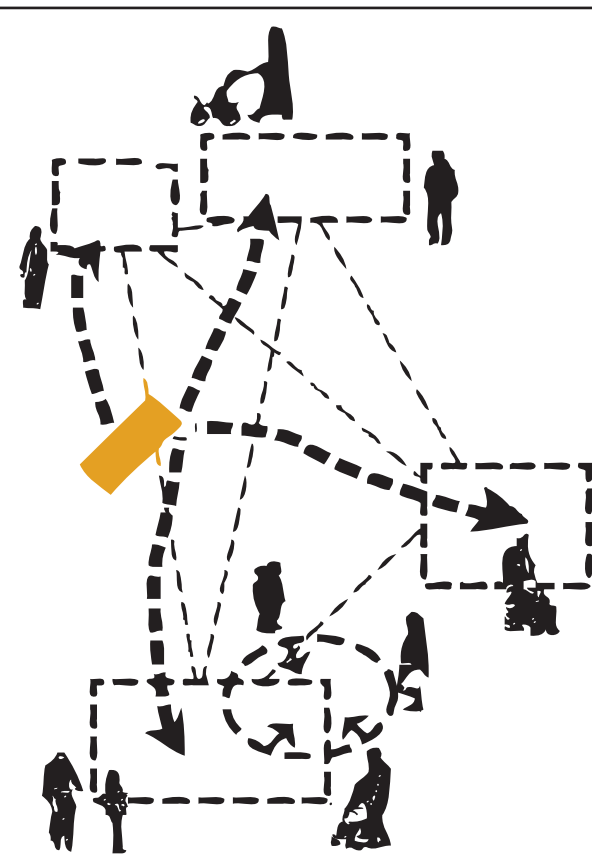


b. Making of public not simply accessing

The interstitial is not the public space but it has a potential to be one, or something else. This potential has inherent value as related to the context, as no interstitial is so without a context. In Berlin for example, holes play the role of open connective secret places, their connective quality should be extended, offered to citizens as usable. The design process of the interstitial becomes hence similar to the creative process of montage: is a design procedure used to intervene on the interstice while some of the fragments (or gaps) of these montages are left for the users to fill, modify, design. Yet, intermediary spaces are not always spaces of linkage. They are sometimes considered spaces of disjunction/ dysfunction. Hence, they become synonyms to spaces of trouble, squats of young people in the entrance 'halls', violence in the 'caves' and 'alleys', traffic of all kind in the parking space.

c. Notion of neighborhood

When discussing the notion of 'quality', examining public spaces and private ones within a district or a city does not supply enough information to understand the development of the area and attribute to it quality characteristics. One should also understand the quality of space between buildings, the quality of left-over spaces, empty lots, to count but few examples in order to have a clearer view of the area's quality. Thus, when speaking of interstitial we often hear of the relation individual-collective. The main statement was that such spaces are mandatory to create a home, a sense of 'inhabiting' rather than 'habitat'. Spaces of transition through the liminal interstice become hence interesting for researchers, then architects.



THE INTERSTITIAL
fragments of urban freedom from
within - extracting privacy space



INTERSTITIAL
AND LIFE QUALITY

versus

INTERSTITIAL
AND LIFE QUALITY



GAPS/FRAGMENTS

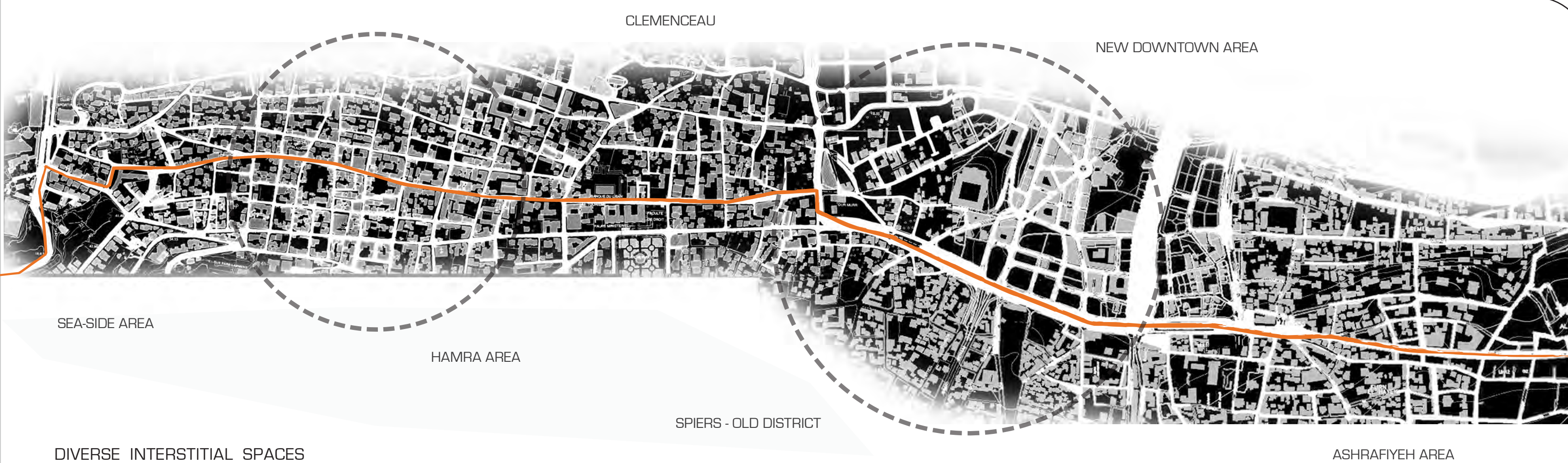


CHAPTER II. MISSING GAPS OR BREAKING MORTAR

Two different views of the role of the terrain vague in the contemporary city. On the one hand, liminal becomes associated with the different urban limits existent in the city and a vision of a 21st century urban fabric made out of borders. On the other hand, interstitial becomes linked with a vision of a city formed out of a network of fragments where the missing pieces are the terrain vague.

The contemporary urban fabric becomes hence metaphorically similar to an ancient Greek vessel where one can either focus on the missing elements within the composition or on the adhesive that bonds the remaining of the pieces together.

CHAPTER III. BEIRUT: A CASE STUDY



SEA-SIDE AREA

HAMRA AREA

CLEMENCEAU

NEW DOWNTOWN AREA

SPIERS - OLD DISTRICT

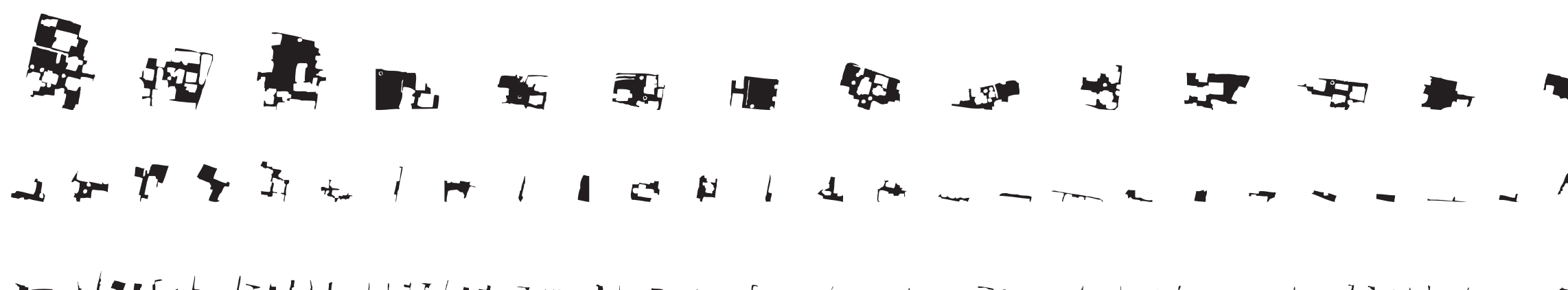
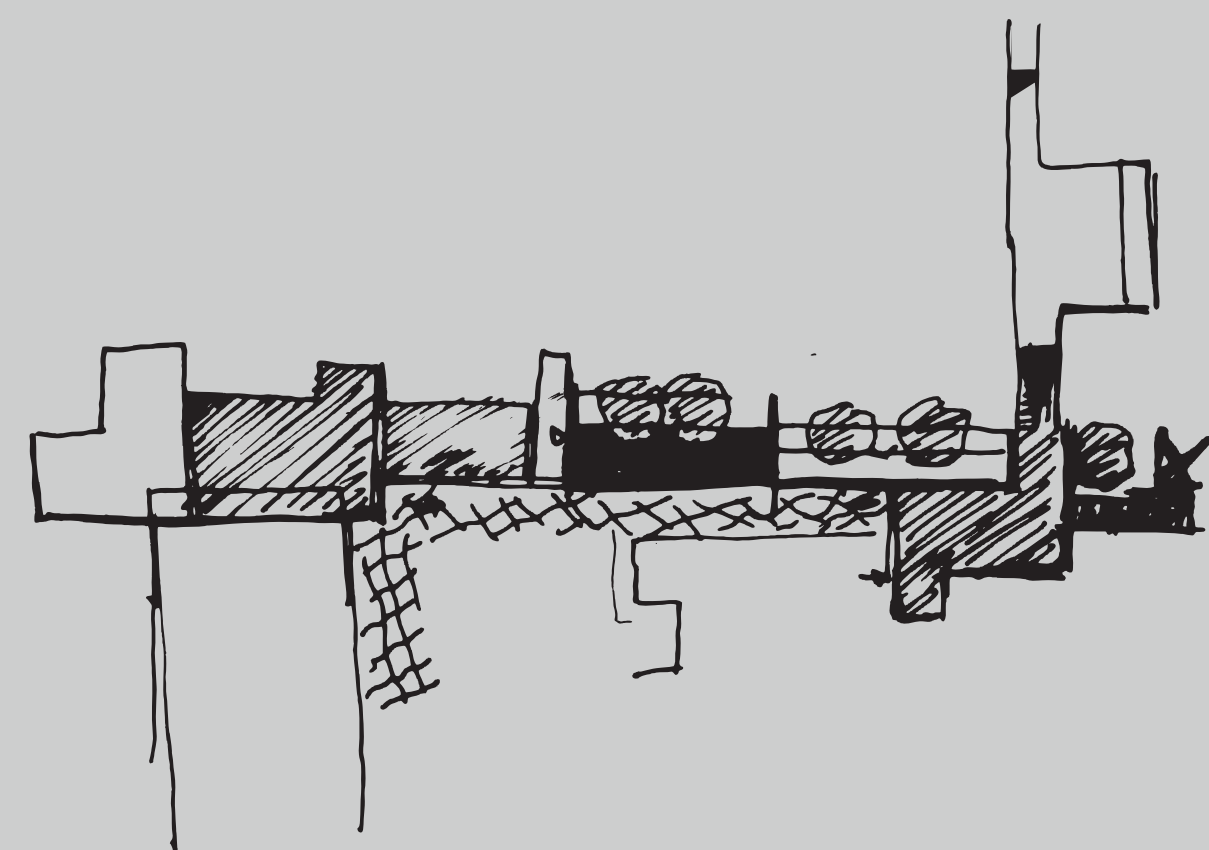
ASHRAFIYEH AREA

DIVERSE INTERSTITIAL SPACES



CLEMENCEAU

HAMRA



PART 3: A PRODUCT OF TRANSITION THROUGH URBAN LIMITS

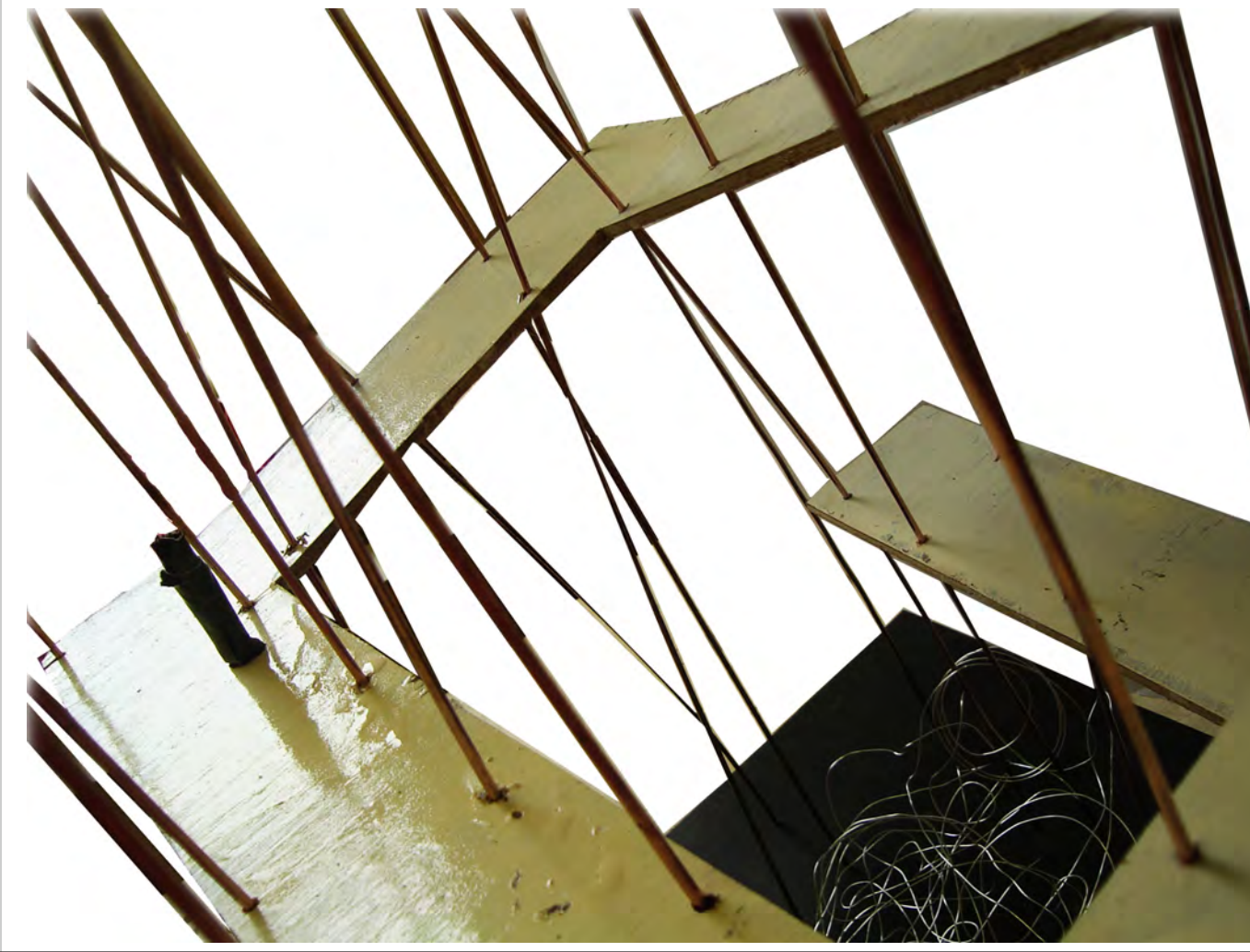
BORDERLINES



THROUGH LIMITS

CHAPTER I. IMPACT OF LIMITS ON THE URBAN FABRIC
 a. Borderline Intensities – Extensities
 b. Inversion of meanings

CHAPTER II. A VISUAL URBAN HISTORY
 a. Written events on urban fabric (different limits – different typologies)
 b. Different limits – different scenarios



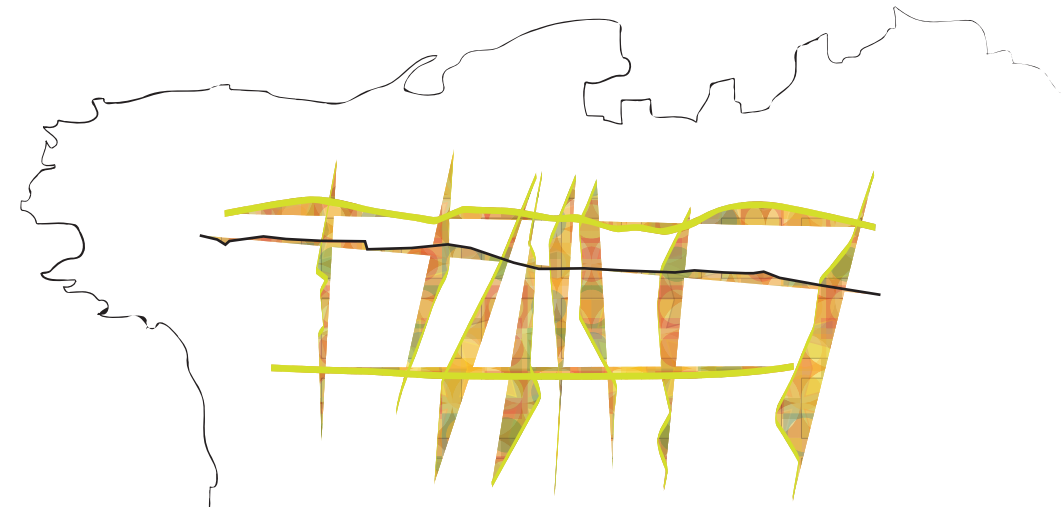
BORDERLINES INTENSITIES - EXTENSITIES

INVERSION OF MEANINGS

AN EDGE BECOMES AN INVITATION FOR TEENAGERS WHO WANT TO PLAY IN THE LEFT-OVER SPACE



LIMINAL BEIRUT



CHAPTER III. LIMINAL BEIRUT
 a. Defining the city's borderlines



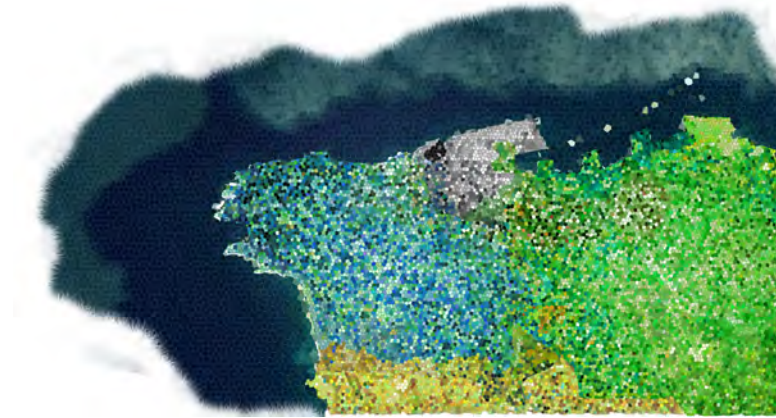
DIVISIONS OF MULTIPLE NEIGHBORHOODS

- Ashrafieh
- Bourj Hammoud
- Gharbieh
- Downtown
- Dahieh
- Marie Curie
- Corniche



SOCIAL URBAN DIVISIONS

- High Income
- Students sectors
- Middle Income
- Neutral - Mixed



A MOSAIC OF RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS

- Christian sectors
- Sunnit Sectors
- Chit Sectors
- Mixed
- Neutral

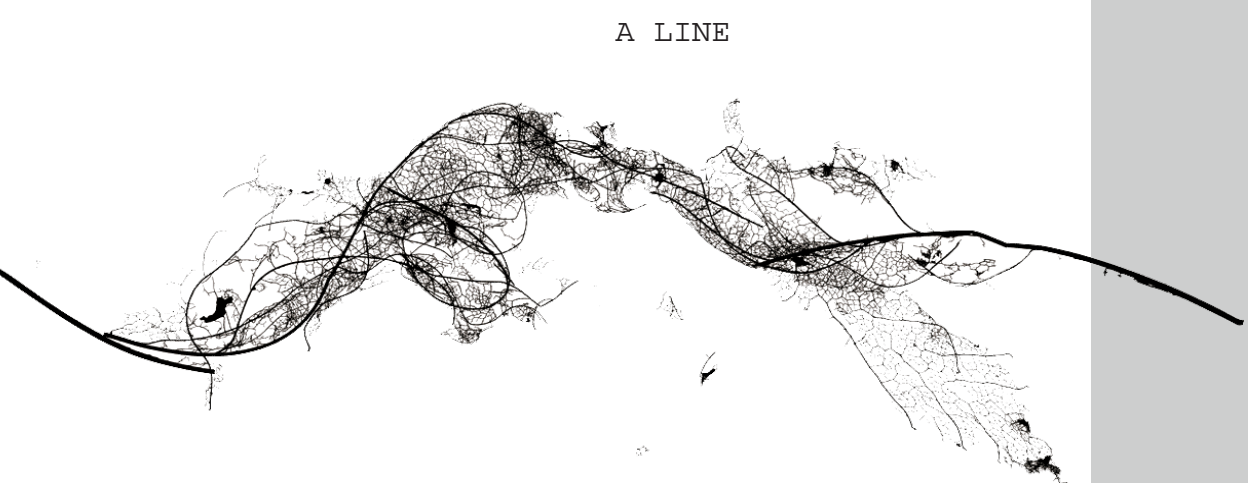


DIVISIONS OF MAIN AXEES



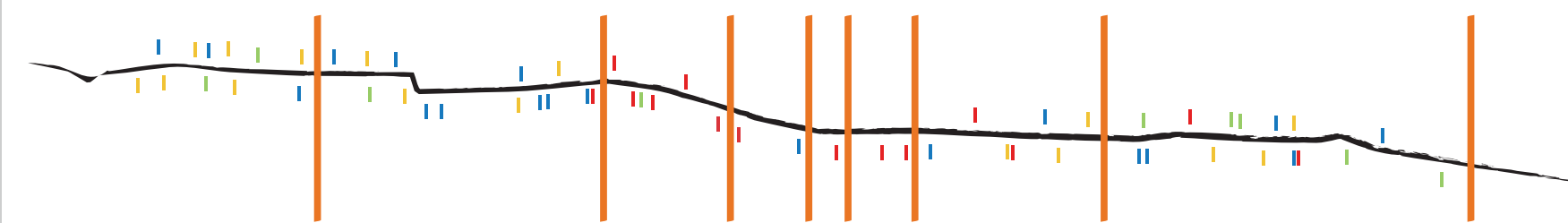
URBAN EXPANSIONS THROUGH TIME

LIMINAL LINE IN BEIRUT



A LINE

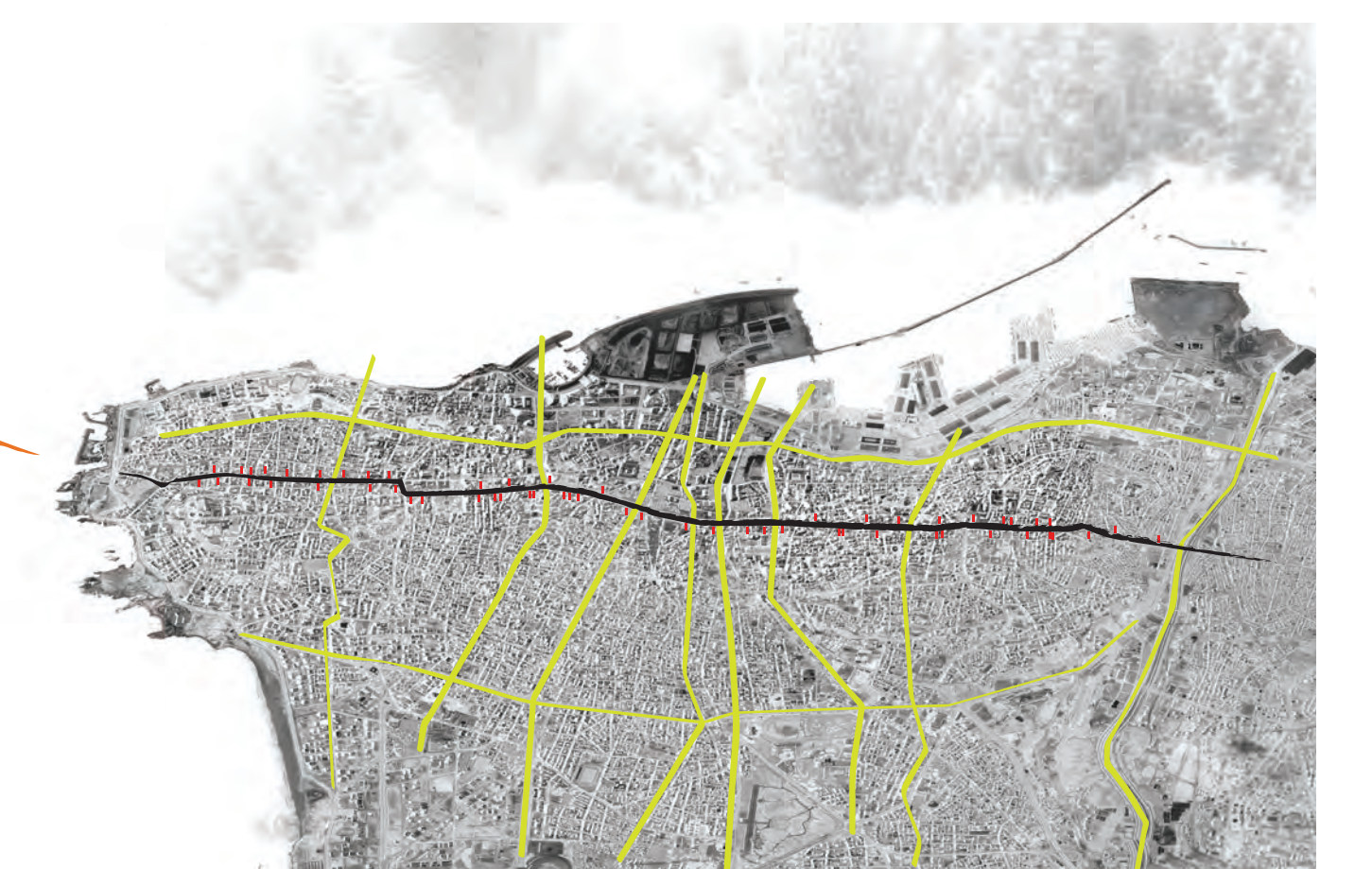
b. One Line of interest



- DESTROYED
- LEFT OVER
- OCCUPIED
- EMPTY



A LINE THAT GOES THROUGH THE OLD AND THE NEW CITY - THE DOWNTOWN AND THE PERIEPHRIES

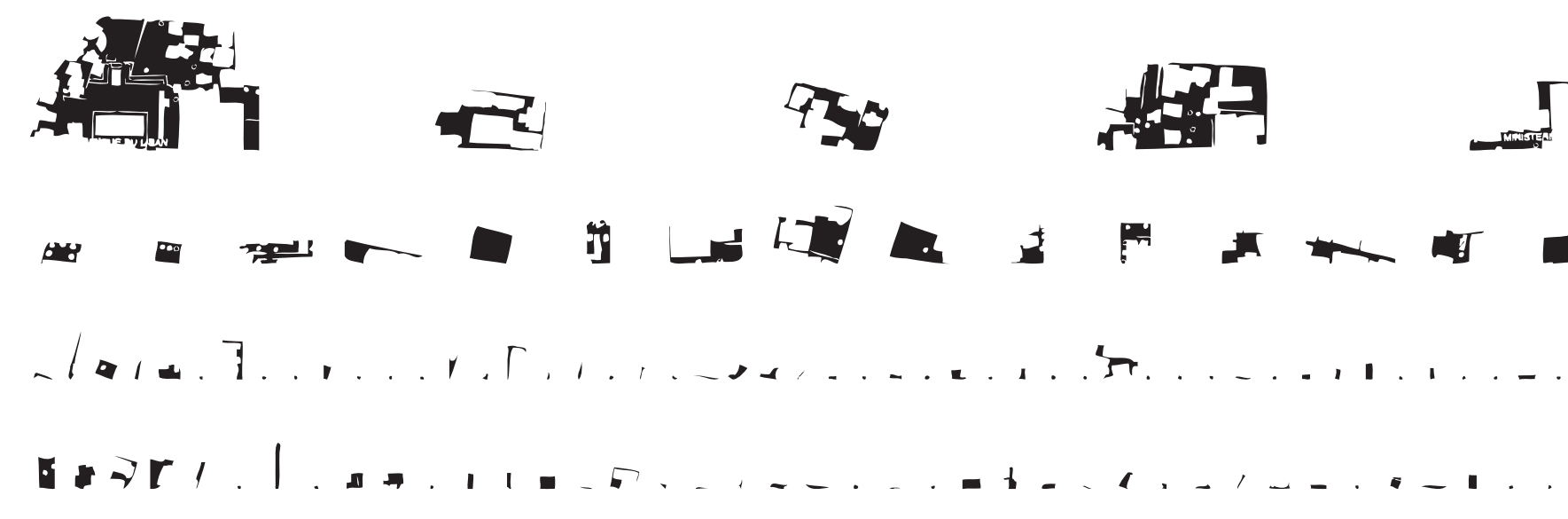


A LINE THROUGH URBAN LIMITS



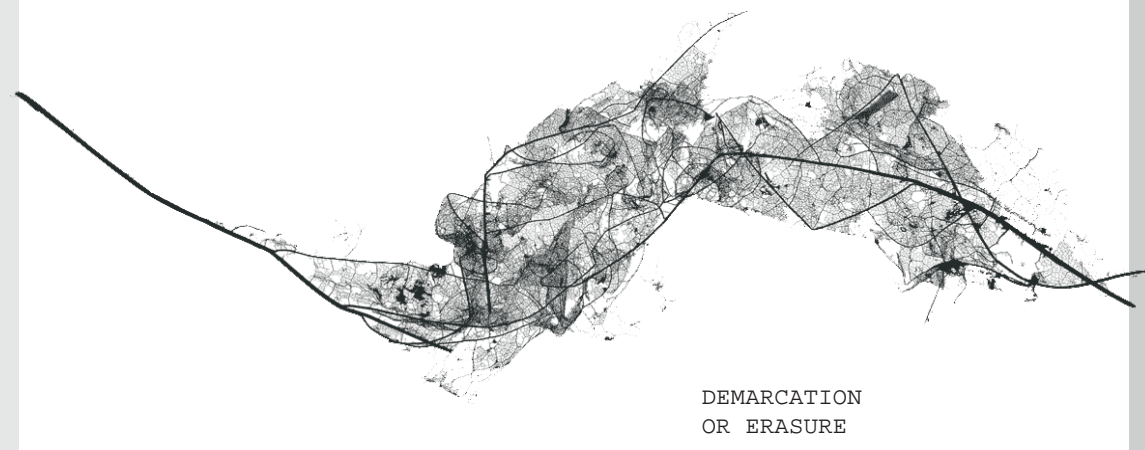
SPIERS

HAMRA - CLEMENCEAU



PART 3: A PRODUCT OF TRANSITION THROUGH URBAN LIMITS

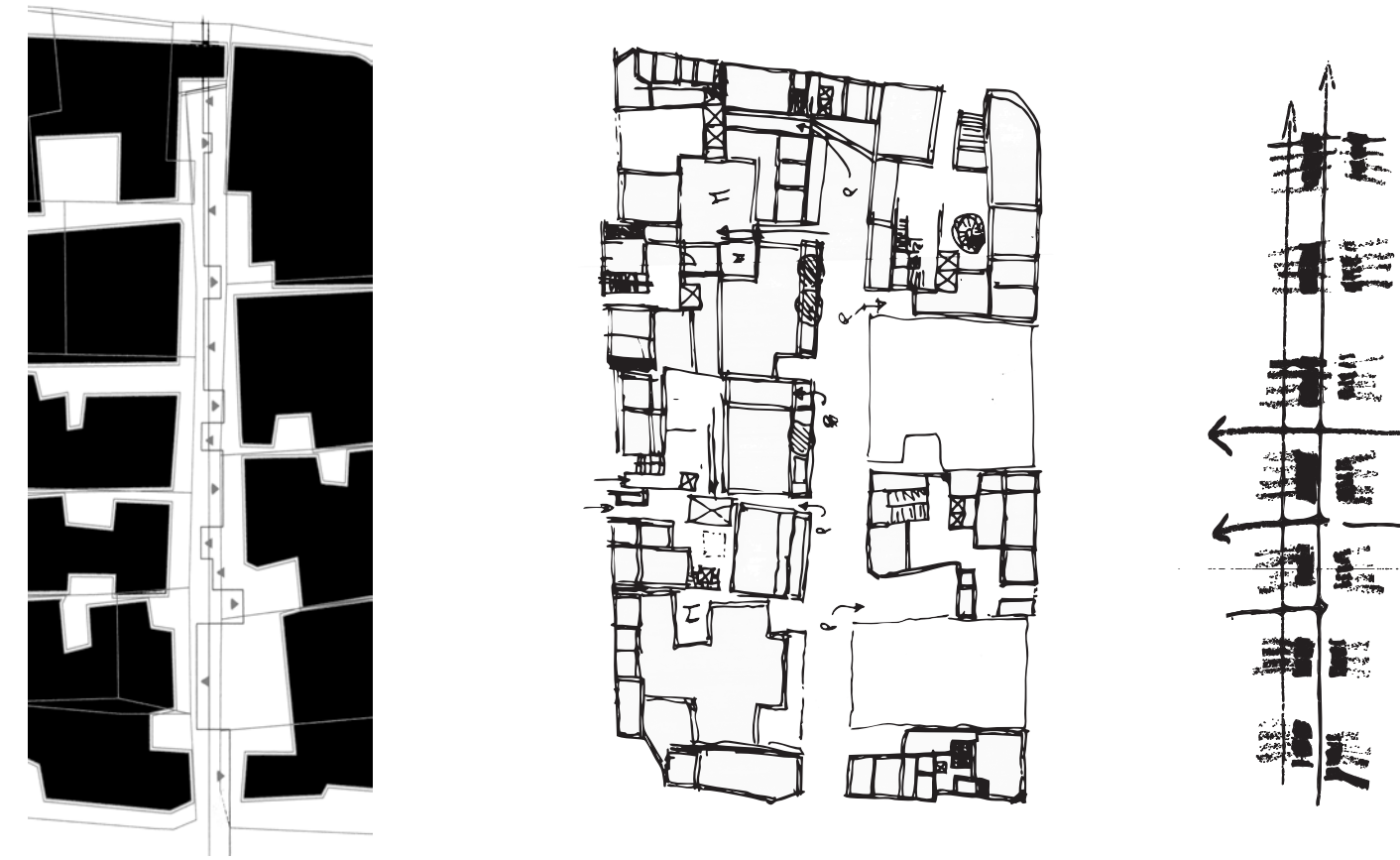
THROUGH LIMITS



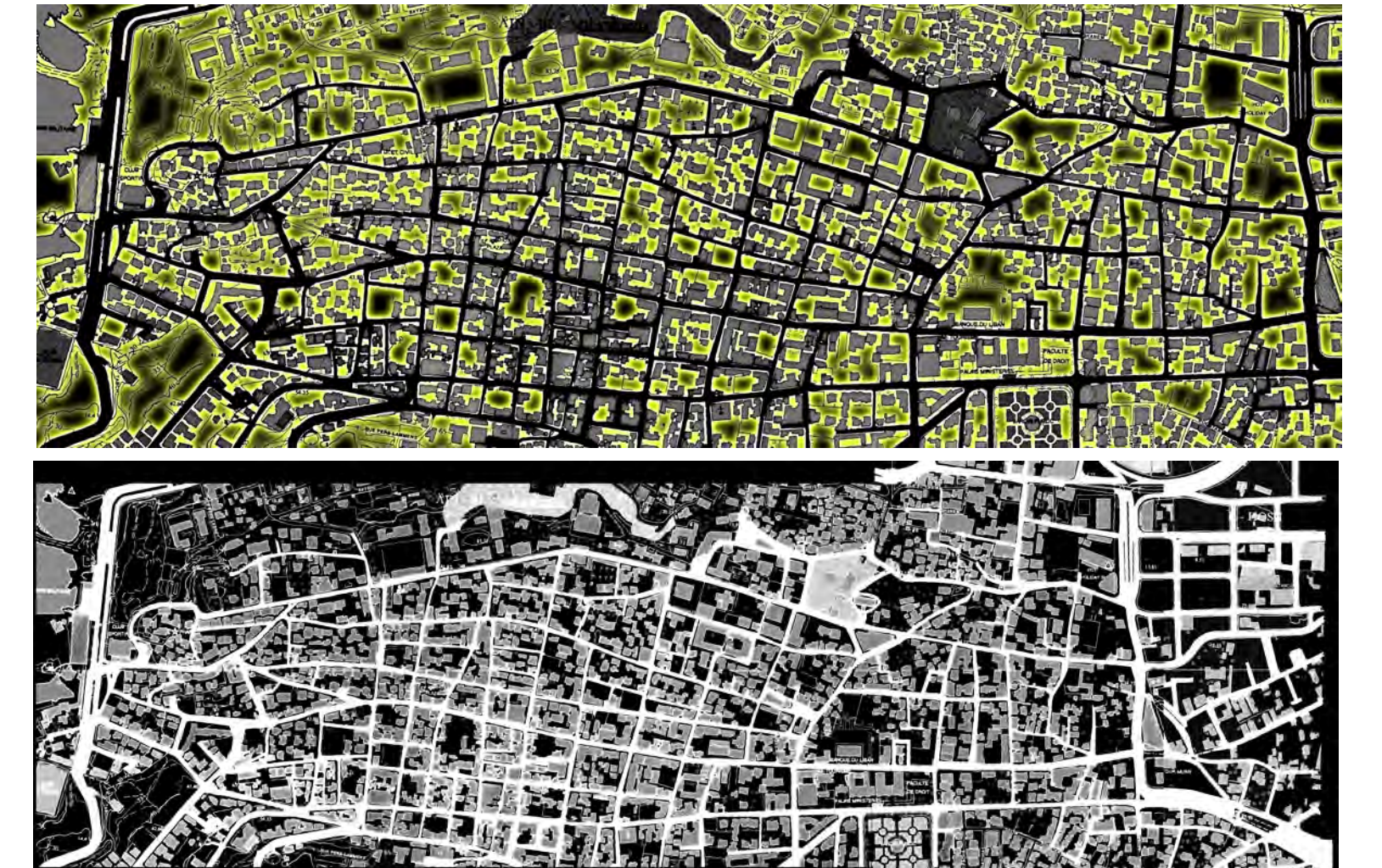
c. Walk the line

POROUS HAMRA

i. Hamra: overlay of historic periods



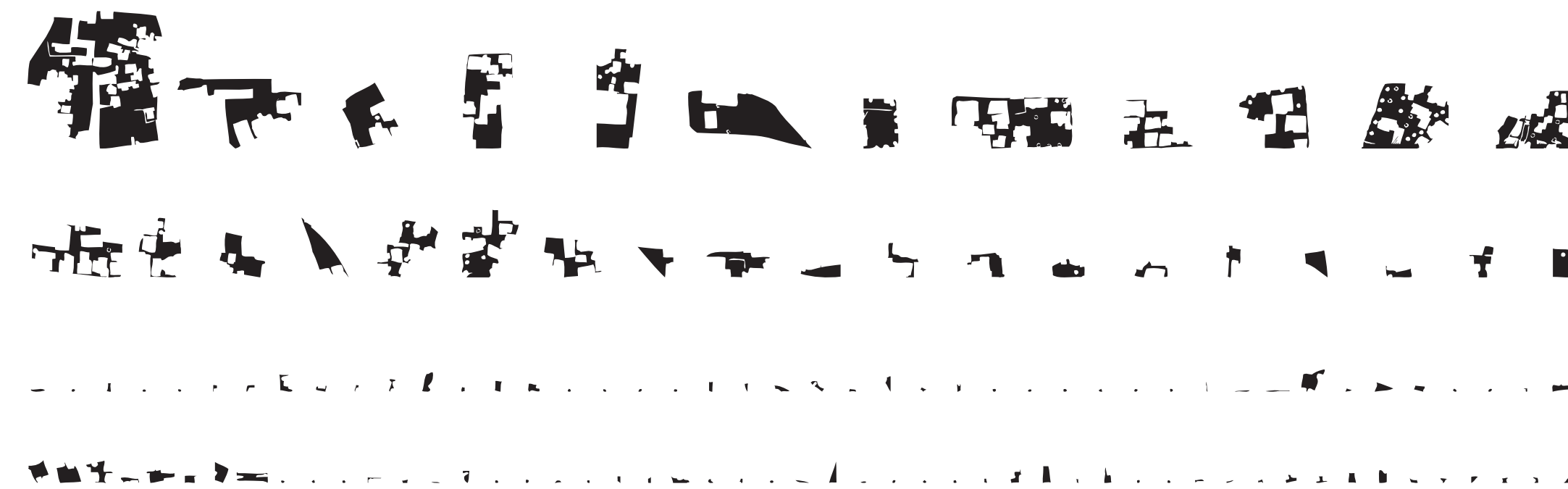
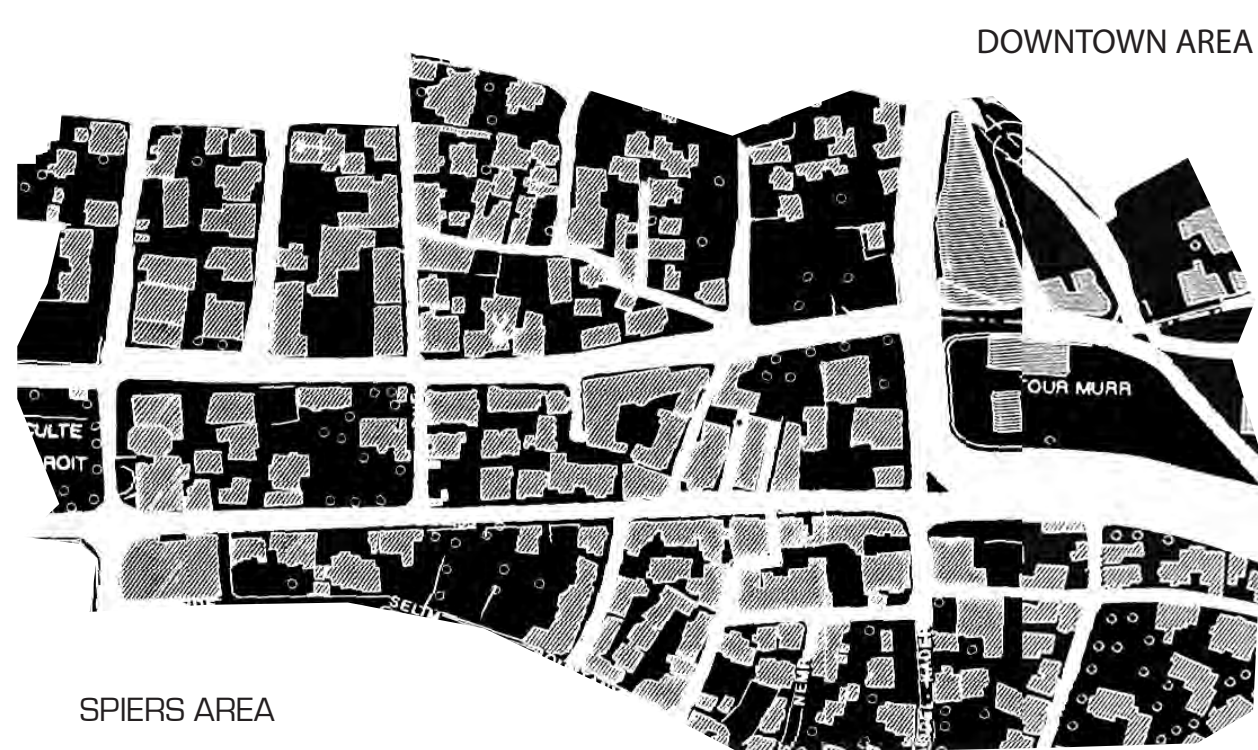
URBAN POROSITY IN HAMRA DUE TO THE IN-BETWEEN SPACES



DEMARCATED DOWNTOWN



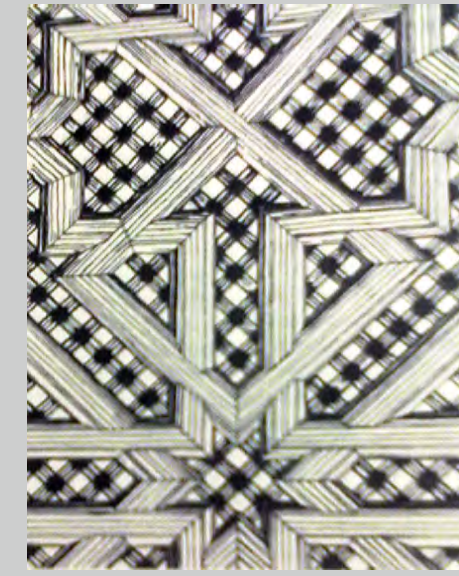
ii. Downtown: demarcation and erasure



PART 4: INTERSTICES AS POTENTIAL ARCHITECTURAL TOOLS

CHAPTER I. Urban Potential

- a. Networks of gaps - Networks of fragments
- i. Case of Beirut post-2006 Suburbs: recreation?



BEFORE 2006



DAHIEH IN THE SUBURBS OF BEIRUT

Interstitial formation due to the war of 2006
Potential for future



AFTER 2006



BUILT STRUCTURES
PLOT LIMITATION
INTERSTITIAL SPACE
GREEN AREA

SCALE



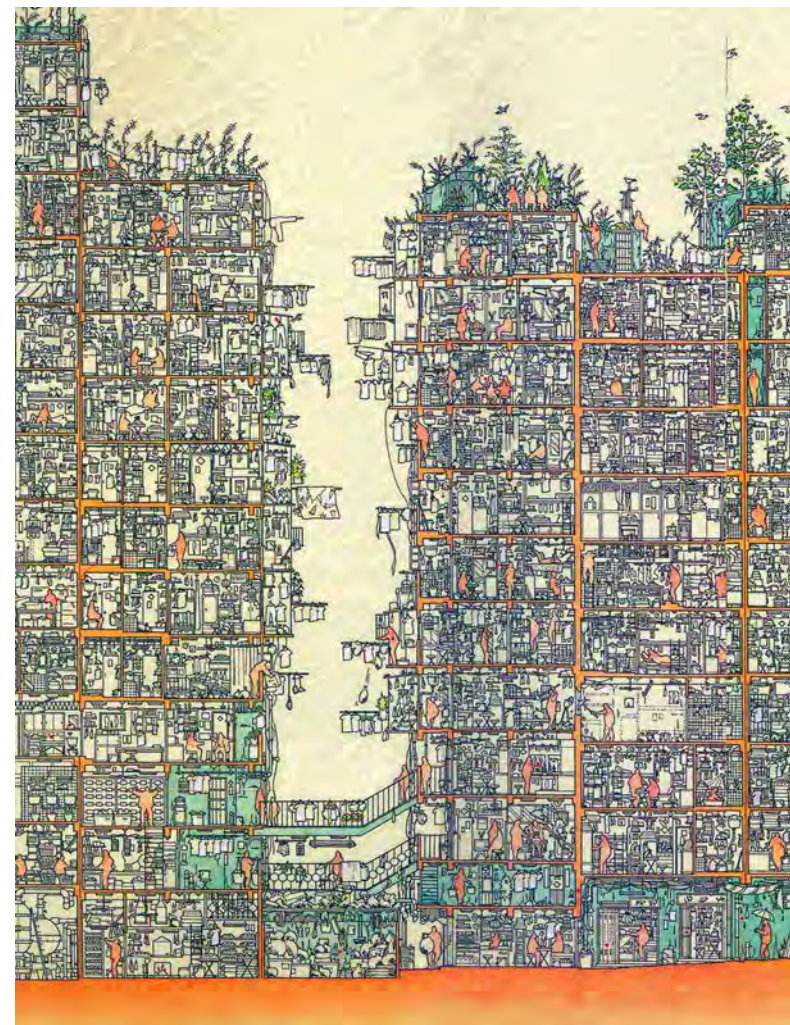
NETWORK OF GAPS OR FRAGMENTS

ERASURE/RECREATION

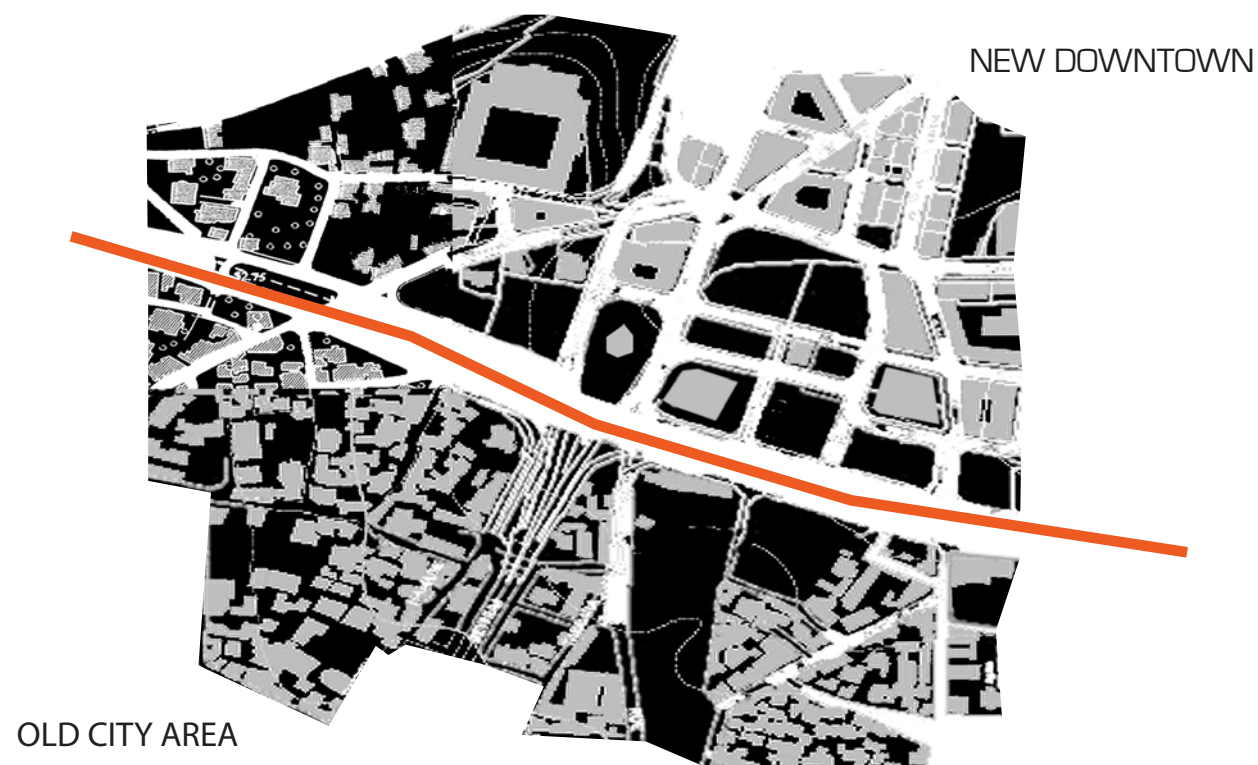
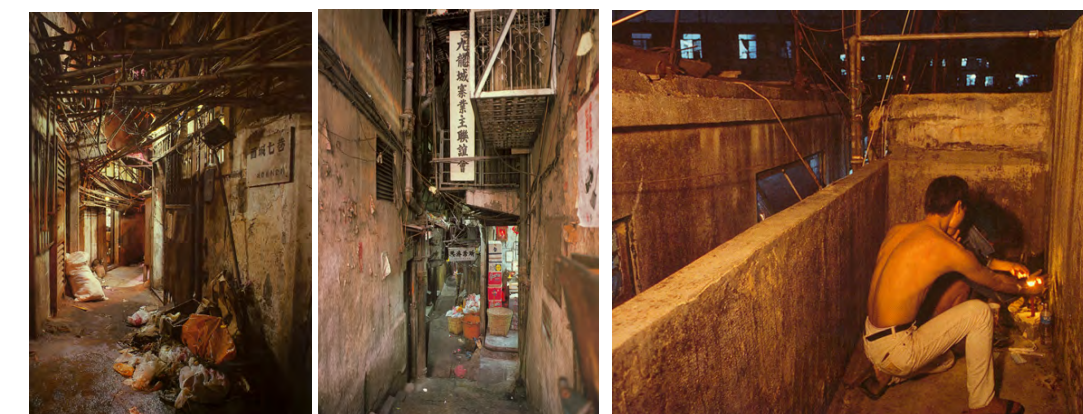


- b. Liminal: Transgression or transition?
Interstitial: Recreation or Erasure?
- i. Case of Beirut Downtown: erasure?

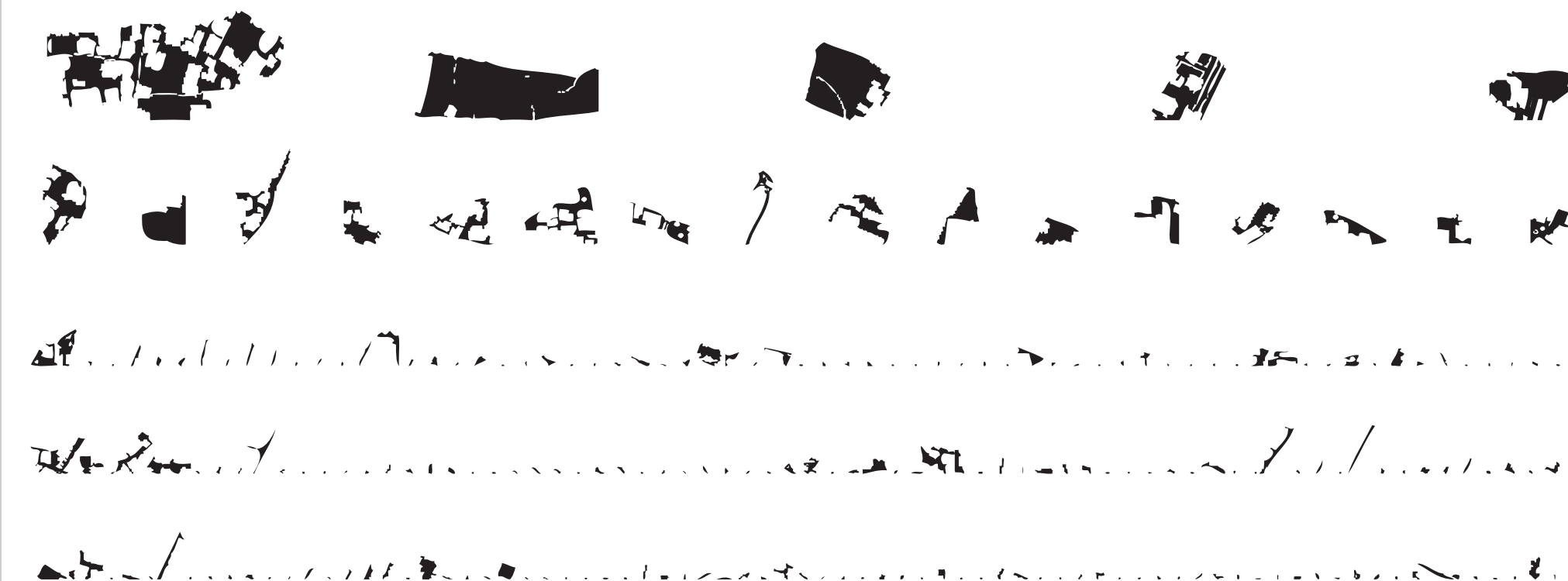
TRANSGRESSION/TRANSITION



- ii. Case of Kowloon - HongKong: question of scale



OLD CITY AREA



VS.

