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The role of the sociocultural dynamics in the preservation of historical city centers The case of Tunis' Medina

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The role of the sociocultural dynamics in the preservation of historical city centers: **The case of Tunis' Medina**

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for the Requirement of the Degree of Master of Science
in Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable Design

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Abstract

The focus of this thesis is to understand the relation between the knowledge practices of preservation professionals of the Medina adopted by the responsible authorities and institutions and its reality as a dynamic **urban setting and the role of “culture”** as an active sector in the preservation process.

On one hand, there is a positive aspect that will be emphasized on: the Medina of Tunis has mainly developed as a national identity symbol. Unlike other Medinas in North Africa, such as Marrakech, the Medina of Tunis has escaped the over-gentrification phenomenon for the sake of seasonal tourism. The number of hotels and foreign-owned real estate properties is insignificant. This proves that the legal framework has worked in favor of maintaining the vitality of this neighborhood as a living heritage and thus avoiding the sell-out of the Medina and other radical changes in the social structures. This contributed to the formation of specific dynamics inside the Medina moderating the threats concerning the deterioration of the built environment.

On the other hand, the theoretical framework of preservation shows a lack in conciliating the potentials of the Medina not only as a material heritage but also as a cultural one including its specific dynamics. There exists discontinuities between policies and the practices which constitute a brake for a possible redevelopment of the Medina based on its evolving identity based on its popularity, its diversity and the transformative role that culture plays in the preservation of its fabric.

Sociocultural Dynamics

Preservation

Heritage

Identity

Table of content

Chapter 1	13
Hypothesis.....	13
Main research questions.....	15
Methodology.....	16
<i>Overview</i>	20
Chapter 2: Theoretical background	21
2.1. Definitions.....	21
2.2. Discourses about heritage and preservation.....	24
2.3. Place identity and place attachment	26
2.4. Cultural sustainability	28
2.5. Reflection /Contextualization	30
Chapter 3: The Medina of Tunis: National identity symbol.....	32
3.1. Contextual background	32
3.1.1. Historical preview: situation and timeline.....	32
3.1.2. The evolution of the image of the Medina and its identities through its social dynamics	39
3.1.3. Recognition of the cultural heritage: key institutions and policies	44
3.2. Investigations.....	51
3.2.1. Actors	51

3.2.2. Identities, traditions and spatial models	79
3.2.3. Unanticipated pressures: Post-revolution spatial shifts	82
3.2.4. Synthesis	88
Chapter 4: Comparing theory and reality of the preservation process	89
4.1. Observations	89
4.1.1. Policies	90
4.1.2. Patterns	98
4.1.3. Confined gentrification	104
4.1.4. Interpretations	106
4.2. Assessing the impacts of cultural initiatives on the Medina	109
4.2.1. Cases	109
4.2.2. Impacts	117
4.2.3. Conclusion	120
Chapter 5: Recommendations: Conciliating theory and practice.....	121
5.1. Heritage policy retrofitting	121
5.2. Governance based on social dynamics.....	122
5.3. Cultural sustainability in the realm of heritage preservation	123
5.4. General conclusion	124

List of Figures

Figure 1- conceptualization of the cultural asset of the Medina in the city of Tunis.	14
Figure 2- methodology.....	19
Figure 3 overview of the research.....	20
Figure 4- situation map, state of the fabric	34
Figure 5- panoramic views of the Medina.....	35
Figure 6- photo of a street in the Medina.....	36
Figure 7- photo of a street in the Medina.....	37
Figure 8- view from above showing the typology of buildings (courtyard houses) .	38
Figure 9- photo of Bab Souika square in the Medina ca.1899.....	41
Figure 10- Photo of the constitutional party	41
Figure 11- Timeline of political visions.....	45
Figure 12- situation of the squat in the Medina	55
Figure 13- Result of question concerning the situation of the squats in the Medina	55
Figure 14- Governorates forming the Greater Tunis area.....	57
Figure 15- Results of "What activities are the most enjoyable in the Medina?"	58
Figure 16- Results of interviews with Owners.....	60
Figure 17- results of interviews with tenants	61
Figure 18- results of interviews with workers	62
Figure 19- results of interviews with local visitors.....	63
Figure 20- results of interviews with tourists	64
Figure 21- results of interviews with cultural actors.....	65
Figure 22- results of interviews with NGOs.....	66

Figure 23- results of interviews with institutions.	67
Figure 24- synthesis of dynamics between actors	68
Figure 25- Activities/ Spaces and levels of uses by different actors)	69
Figure 26- Number of visits to monuments	71
Figure 27- Presence of actors/ time based on interviews and observations.....	73
Figure 28- photographic sequence of a residential area during the day	74
Figure 29- photographic sequence of a residential area during the night.....	75
Figure 30- photos published by the Aswar Lemdina.	77
Figure 31- celebrated traditions in the Medina/activities and their spaces	80
Figure 32- Celebration of Stambeli music in the Medin	81
Figure 33- young generations celebrating traditional costumes	81
Figure 34- transformation of the square between 2011 and 2016	83
Figure 35- Location of ministries around the square.....	84
Figure 36- ASM event promotional campaign	87
Figure 37- synthesis diagram of dynamic.....	88
Figure 38- Public fountain of sidi Abdesslam	92
Figure 39- State of the fountain as of June 2016	93
Figure 40- Institutional Framework pf heritage preservation in Tunisia	94
Figure 41- Map showing the morphology of buildings (number of floors).....	97
Figure 42- Location of Artisans mapped in 1985.	103
Figure 43-Location of Artisans mapped in 2015.	103
Figure 44- map of cultural spaces in Tunis.	107
Figure 45- Diffent cultural manifestations in the Medina	108
Figure 46 -Atmosphere during the Festival	112

Figure 47- Number of sold entries for Dream City festival per year 114

Figure 48- Different projects initiated by the l'Art rue association..... 116

Figure 49- synthesis diagram: impacts of analyzed cultural initiatives 119

Chapter 1

Hypothesis

Historic urban centers are the nuclei of the cities in the Mediterranean zone; they are the focus of residential, economic and cultural activities, in dense built-up areas. They are the containers of major monuments and buildings of architectural and historic significance, and they reflect the identity of the city. But there is more than the physical environment that is important to look at. The marked physical deterioration of these centers has greatly mitigated the original identity of those cities and brought new forms of identities that are considered incompatible with the intentions of regeneration and renewal, mainly due to the lack of understanding of the new social and cultural composition of these areas.

Today, these social and cultural dynamics play a big role in the preservation of the vitality of the Medina. Preservation, in this case does not only refer to the physical environment, but also the vitality, dynamics and immaterial heritage. Sociocultural dynamics refer to the customs, lifestyles and values that are reflected by the communities in the Medina.

The communities that developed in different neighborhoods of the historic city of Tunis managed to re-**establish its “urbanity”**. **Together** with the work of the institutions that have been created over the past years the sociocultural dynamics helped the medina of Tunis avoid both gentrification and excessive decay. The 2011 revolution and the end of the single party era associated with it has allowed the emergence of an

organized civil society. This blooming associative life has been active in the fields of Heritage and urban well-being in Medinas.

Nonetheless, with the threats that the urban fabric is facing, there seems to be an incapacity to conciliate the living heritage with its community. Therefore, there is a need to understand the development of the Medina on these two main levels: the institutional level and the established (mainstream) level. It is crucial to determine how the issues are framed and interests are defined in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the development process that the Medina has been undergoing in the recent years where sociocultural dynamics play a big role in preserving the vitality of the Medina. The problematic lack of institutional framework for dialogue and cooperation of state actors with civil society organizations is counterbalanced by new forms of appropriation and perseverance.

new shaped identities vs cultural weight of the medina

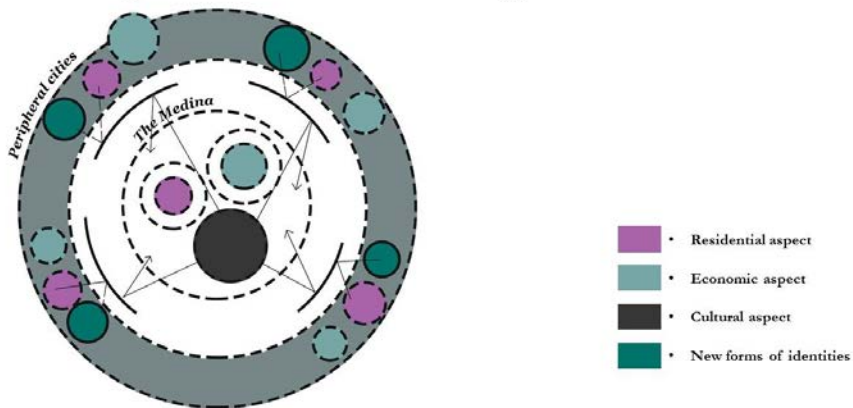


Figure 1 conceptualization of the cultural asset of the Medina in the city of Tunis. Source: the researcher 2016

Main research questions

How is place identity affected by the changes in the social and cultural dynamics?

What influences the preservation process in the context of the Medina of Tunis? How does reality look compared to the theoretical approaches?

In the absence of a clear institutional framework what is the role of sociocultural dynamics in the Medina of Tunis and how sustainable is it/could it be for its development?

Methodology

The theoretical background of this thesis addresses the concepts of the identity of the place and how it evolves through time. It refers also to the difference between place identity and place attachment and links that to the issue of decline. **The decline in the context of a “living heritage” is often** caused by interactions of people with their environment and is countered by preservation strategies that are part of an international and national scheme. In the case of this research, this will be illustrated by a historical preview of the evolution of the city of Tunis focusing on these issues. It will also rely on the understanding of the chronological and institutional process of preservation that set up a vision of the theoretical framework to be assessed and compared to the reality. This phase of the research, based on literature review of journals and news articles, and structured interviews with officials, frames the issues that will be the focus of the data collection on site, aiming to compare theory with the reality.

The case study of this research is restricted to the central Medina (*La Médina centrale*). The focus will be on the mixed identity of this part of the historical district and its current dynamics. This is based on empirical data analysis. The collection of data started with interviews with key actors. These actors are mainly locals (both residents and business owners), people working in institutions dedicated to the preservation and revitalization of the Medina and other actors who are involved in cultural initiatives and projects in the fields of craftsmanship and culture.

The second stage of the research consisted of site visits. Analyzing the site was based on observations and mapping. The focus of the analysis was on the actors, their involvement in the sociocultural dynamics and the way

they adapt to the context of the historical city. The observation of these different types of groups points out differences in their approach and perception of the material and immaterial heritage. In order to juxtapose these different layers of perceptions that also show the different attitudes of preservation in **today's Medina**, an investigation was carried. A questionnaire was distributed on field and another one was developed online to reach other categories of people who are occasional users and academics who are familiar with the context of the Medina. In order to get an in-depth social outlook, and understand relations, an immersion in different networks of actors was made by the researcher by getting involved in different initiatives.

The results were then processed in a way to highlight different dualities (**“users vs professionals”**, **“formal preservation vs informal preservation”**) based on the relations and networks established in the Medina. Such dualities helped develop a state-of-the-art inventory that explains the shortcomings **and potentials in the context of today's** Medina, emphasizing on the post-revolution shifts that brought up ,not only new actors such as the civil society but also new models of space occupation through cultural activities which have a considerable influence on the dynamics inside the Medina of Tunis.

The analysis of the different responses to the preservation issue pointed out influences of the current sociocultural dynamics on the material heritage. The outcome of these influences is then contextualized. By contextualizing these perceptions, pulling out characteristics from each context (professional vs daily/ mainstream) and finding common factors between them, it was possible then to measure the effects of these factors on the preservation process of the Medina of Tunis. The measuring is rather qualitative, relying on a comparison between the reality and the

theory. Based on that, the research follows with identifying the indicators showcasing the role of the sociocultural dynamics in the Medina through mapping new paradigms and interpreting their impacts.

The focus of the last stage of the analysis is then shifted to the transformative role of culture in the Medina of Tunis. The analysis is based on two cases: the festival of the Medina and the work of an association **named L'Art Rue and based in the Medina of Tunis**. It assesses the new paradigms, and the impacts of such projects and happenings compared to strategies found in literature and theoretical approaches initiated by official organisms and state bodies.

The last part of the research concludes with a set of recommendations based on the parameters pulled from the analysis and the comparison between the theoretical frameworks and the reality that is manifested through different dynamics.

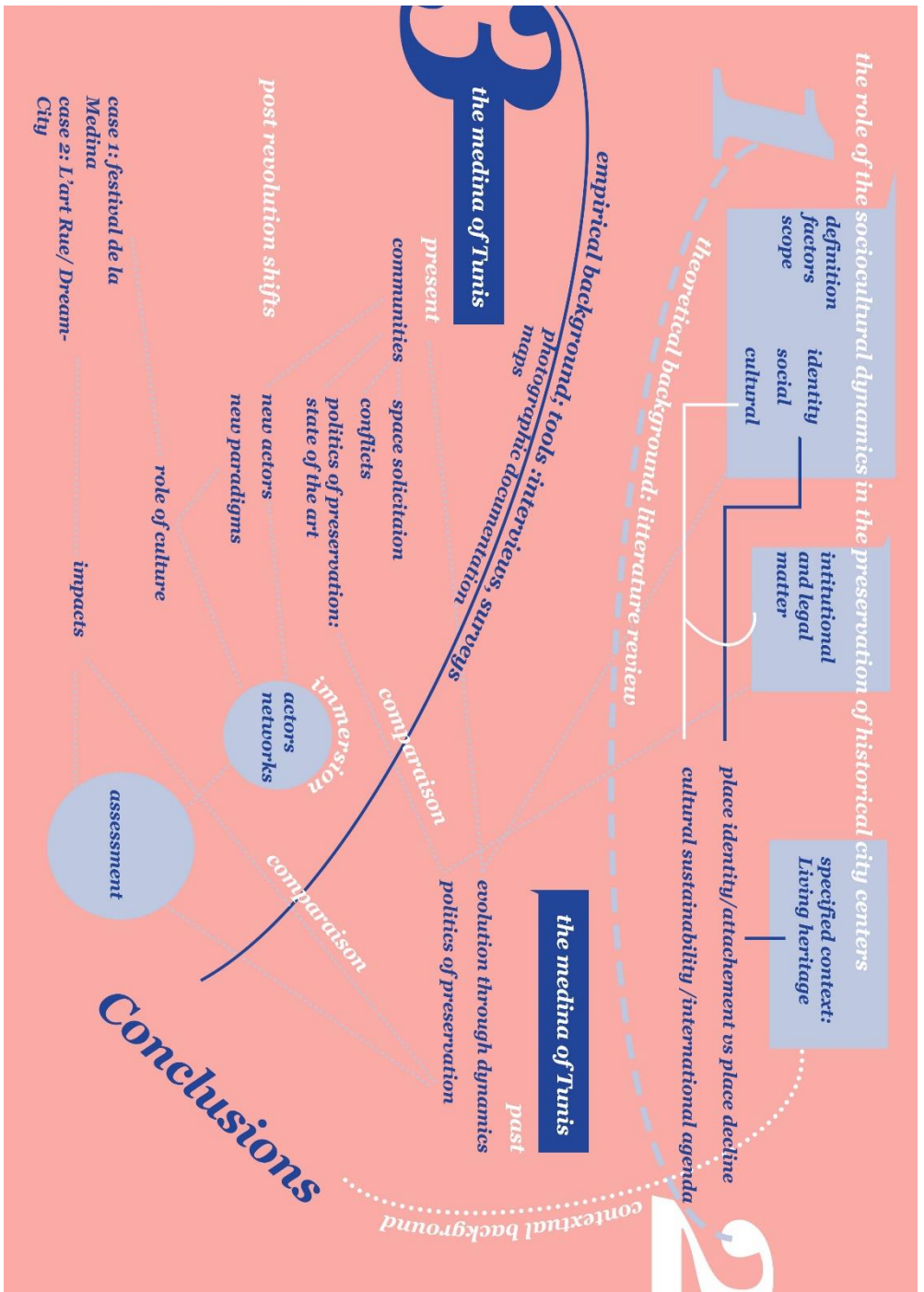


Figure 2 methodology. Source: the researcher 2016

Overview

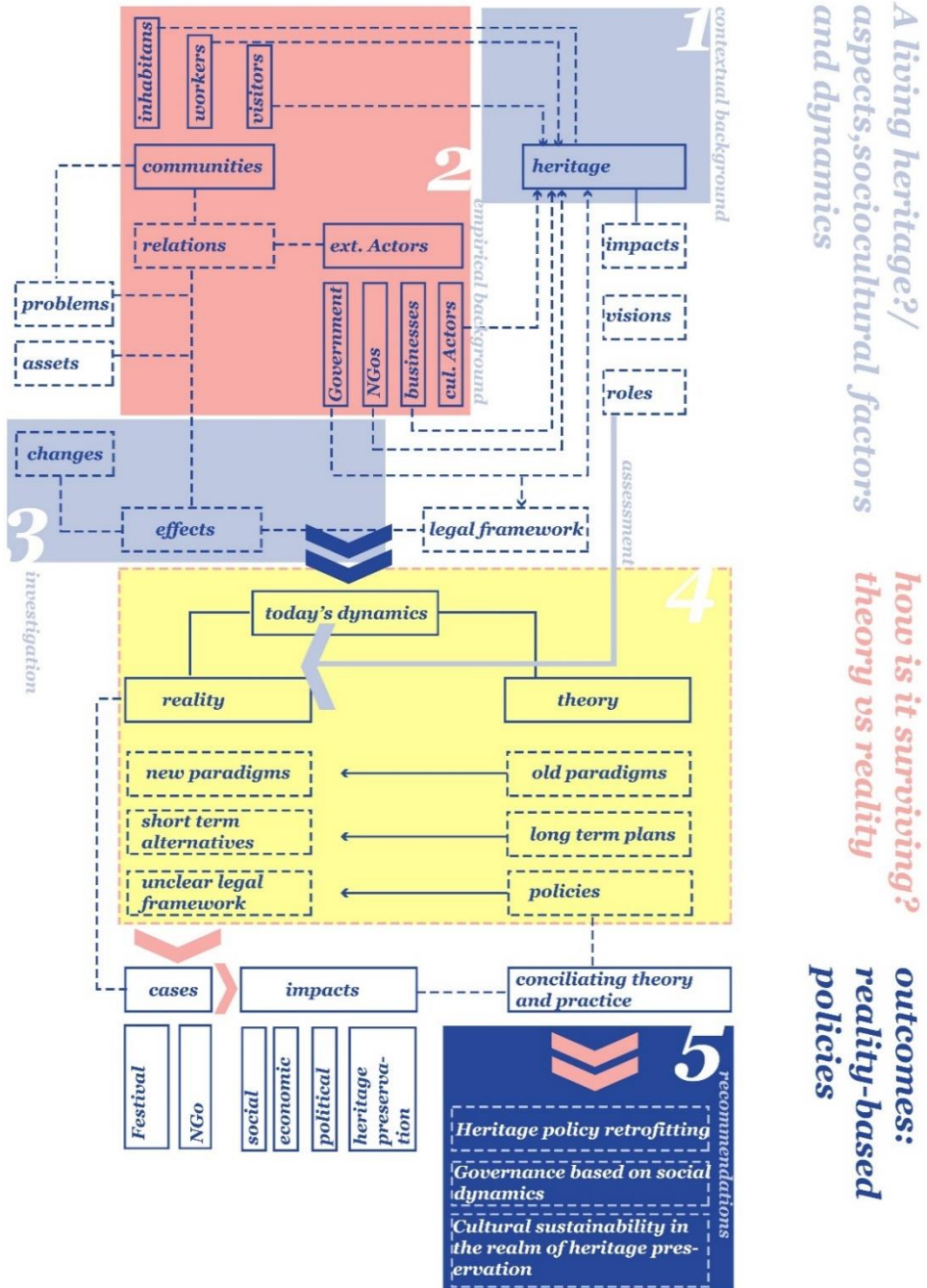


Figure 3 overview of the research. Source: The researcher 2016

Chapter 2: Theoretical background

The theoretical background aims at presenting definitions and explaining concepts that the research revolves around. It starts with the definitions of terms used in the title in order to set the general framework of the thesis. Then, it takes upon notions that are derived from these definitions and represent a theoretical base **for the research. The notions of “Place identity” and “place attachment” are derived from the definition of the sociocultural dynamics** relating it to the spatial issue. The same way, after defining heritage and preservation, the discourses about them are defined in a way that aims to position the research in a set of contemporary ideologies that the research relates to. The last part of this chapter tackles the notion of **“cultural sustainability”, which topic was recently elaborated for the coming UN HABITAT III conference** and is relevant to the research.

2.1. Definitions

The title of the research **“The role of the sociocultural dynamics in the preservation of historical city centers”** includes three main notions which are:

-sociocultural dynamics

-preservation

-historical city centers as a specific spatial location and a specific type of heritage: cultural heritage whether tangible or intangible.

Sociocultural dynamics

The Cambridge dictionary defines sociocultural as “related to the different groups of people in society and their habits, traditions, and beliefs. In psychology, sociocultural factors are the larger scale forces within cultures and societies that affect the thoughts, feelings and behaviors. These are customs, lifestyles and values that characterize a society or group. Cultural aspects include concepts of beauty, education, language, law and politics, religion, social organizations, technology and material culture, values and attitudes. Social factors include reference groups, family, role and status in society, time and available resources.

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH)

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Paris in 2003 defines **the intangible cultural heritage as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.”**¹

This is relevant to the research in terms of the concepts it involves. The idea of identity that will be explored theoretically and later in the reality of the field serves as a reference that is derived from the definition of the ICH. The aspects that are relevant to the research within the definition of the ICH are:

¹ UNESCO, ‘**Brief history of the** Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)’, available at: www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00007 (last accessed 28 Mar. 2010).

the link with “groups” and communities, the interaction with history and the ideas of cultural diversity and human creativity.

“Cultural heritage is indivisible and calls therefore for a holistic perspective and approach. It comprises tangible/physical heritage, intangible heritage – theater, music, dance, oral expressions, social practices, craftsmanship and language - and knowledge and skills related to the production of cultural artifacts.”² This gives an idea of the range of aspects that would be considered when dealing with cultural heritage. These will be indeed the basis of the research carried on filed along with the examined actors.

Preservation

The notion of preservation is crucial in this research. Preservation, protection and safeguarding are always recurrent when tackling the theme of Heritage. **The Cambridge dictionary defines preservation as “the act of keeping something the same or of preventing it from being damaged”.** Preservation is thus an action, which implies that there are dynamics behind the process of preservation

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held **in Paris in 2003 defines safeguarding as “measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage.”**

² International Conference, ‘Globalization and Intangible Cultural Heritage’, Tokyo, Japan, 24–26 August 2004, available at:<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001400/140090e.pdf> (last accessed 6 Oct. 2010), at 49, 51.

2.2. Discourses about heritage and preservation

The UNESCO, over the past years, has been considered a reference in the matter of heritage preservation, notably with its World Heritage Program that started with the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1972 (Elizabeth Betsy Keough 2011).

The UNESCO recommendation of 1976 concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas advocates : “ In each Member State a national, regional and local policy should be drawn up, in conformity with the conditions of each State as regards the allocation of powers, so that legal, technical, economic and social measures may be taken by the national, regional or local authorities with a view to safeguarding historic areas and their surroundings and adapting them to the requirements of modern life. The policy thus laid down should influence planning at national, regional or local level (...). The co-operation of individuals and private associations should be sought in **implementing the safeguarding policy.**” (Article 7)

The official discourses about heritage could be classified into two important sets of heritage practices. The first one focuses on management and conservation of heritage sites, places and objects. The second one is tied to the visitation of sites and institutions within activities involving tourism and leisure (Smith, 2006). Both discourses present a flaw according to new conventions such as the Faro convention on the value of cultural heritage for Society. The convention advocates the replacement of the traditional views on heritage that are limited to old buildings and historical sites by a much broader concept materialized by heritage and cultural strategies implemented on national, regional and local levels. This implies that in **today's world the study of heritage should become transdisciplinary. In** other words, the concern about archeology and conservation should be

shifted to educational and economic aspects and to the possibilities to enrich cultural life within societies.

2.3. Place identity and place attachment

The question of identity is a central one in this work. It will be discussed in terms of its relation with the spatial dimension, and distinguished from the place attachment issue.

By introducing the concept of "place identity" Proshansky (1978) identifies a complex set of relations, environmental behaviors, preferences and attitudes towards the environment. The concept of identity would be inconceivable without a system actively linking an individual to his physical and social environment (Costalat-Founeau, 1997). Therefore the relationship between people and their environment is expressed by the link they maintain with their living spaces. These interactions become then important elements in the construction of identity (Altman & Taylor, 1971). While supporting the role of individual interactions in the construction of the identity of the place, other authors see identity as a collective construction produced and edited by the human dialogue and the meanings attributed to the living (Dixon & Durheim, 2000).

Place identity, place attachment, and sense of place are thus concepts that involve the relationship of humankind and his environment. All these concepts refer to the affective and cognitive relationship between human and the physical environment. The spatial identity is "based on spatial memory, spatial images, the spatial framework of activities and other implicit space components of the ideal and aspirations" (Fried, 1963). Fried admits the role of cognitive and affective factors in the formation of place attachment.

The degree of attachment to a particular place depends on its ability to **meet people's needs. Place attachment is often assumed to develop in a long period of time.** However, it can also be disrupted very quickly.

In this section, the aim is not to identify the concept of identity, but rather highlight some of its aspects such as uniqueness it evokes Relph (1986). This explain the specificity of spaces that reflect different realities. The aspect of experience in the perception of identity is also important. The interactions with the environment and its components are achieved through individual and collective experiences. In general, in order to identify to something, there is a need to compare things or individuals and interaction with others. One last aspect of identity assimilate through literature is that identity is not a stable construct. It is always in a continuous evolvment. Identity evokes a certain dynamic. Therefore, these aspects comply with the scope of the research. In fact, in order to understand sociocultural dynamics, there is a need to understand the factors influencing them. Besides, identity is tightly linked with the perception of heritage.

Heritage is an aspect of the past which could be considered the foundation of individual and collective identity (Hewison, 1987). This is important to understand how relationships to places emerge and how to organize the relation to the places in contemporary societies where identities are confronted with globalization trends especially when it comes to urban planning and management.

2.4. Cultural sustainability

Culture is a fundamental area of social life. The cultural field could be defined as the social field that emphasizes on practices, discourses and material expressions. The recurrent issue of culture when it comes to development matters is the task to assess its impacts. The International Association for Impact Assessment defines impact assessment as "the process of identifying future consequences of present action or proposed ". At its 33rd annual conference, in May 2013, evaluating the cultural impact was drafted through debates on the impact assessment of cultural heritage.

The Habitat III policy paper on sociocultural urban frameworks published in February 2016 strongly advocates the role of culture in sustainable development. This is based on the realization that environmental, social and economic issues in contemporary societies have a cultural background of actions and interactions between people at their roots. Therefore treating these issues is likely to be also based on a wider vision implicating cultural factors. The paper also explains that, in order to be effective and influential in terms of decision making culture has to be made explicit, discussed and argued over within the sustainability debates nowadays.

This is considered a scientific challenge since both culture and sustainability are complex, contested, multidisciplinary and normative concepts. To pursue sustainability through the framework of culture therefore urgently requires new approaches, which cross the sectoral and disciplinary boundaries. Cultural heritage can foster sustainable development through its intangible components that evolve and redevelop within a broad framework which requires innovative cross-sectoral policies and means of implementation.

The Habitat III policy paper also mentions the importance to considerate both tangible and intangible cultural assets and creative practices in urban development processes from inception to implementation. It also suggests that examples of well-planned cities would have integrated cultural heritage and activities in their strategic plans so that the disruptive impact of development on heritage would have been mitigated and the positive impacts enhanced.

The problem with culture, however, is that different places have different sets of values and different priorities. Therefore when supra-national organizations tries to force decisions, they could be not supported by all affected actors. This is where identity influences the course of cultural sustainability.

2.5. Reflection /Contextualization

The Medina of Tunis has been widely studied and covered in terms of monumental heritage preservation and urban regeneration. Nevertheless, there is a huge lack in understanding this part of the city as a living cultural heritage hosting complex dynamics as reflected by Mr. Adnen Ben Nejma, the head of the Medina Unit in the National Institute of Heritage (INP). Mr Ben Nejma, admitted in an interview carried during field visits that the lack of knowledge about the socio-economic layer of the Medina is one of the brakes for its development. He explained that in the past, the INP tried to build a database through surveys, but only came up with a superficial study that is not scientifically reliable nowadays. He also elucidated that the problem with this kind of inventories is the lack of accessibility and security in certain areas of the Medina. There is also the lack of trust of the tenants towards governmental institutions.

The social aspect of the Medina has remained the least covered aspect in the recent years. The changes in the social dynamics have brought new identities that are overlaid on the physical urban heritage. The transformation of the Medina into a low-income neighborhood in the past has shed the light on the threats facing both the material and immaterial heritage. The new society of the Medina is mixed in terms of origins, **economical status and cultural references (religion, traditions, art... etc.)**. **It has long been seen as “invasive” and as an intruder. At the same time,** this society is more attached to the Medina as a vital urban context which will be highlighted in a later phase of the research.

The first response to this issue was the emergence of an institutional framework that took for mission the preservation of the historic fabric through policies and projects implemented throughout the last decades. In the meantime, the country has experienced a political upheaval that resulted in the abolition of a whole system. The void created by resulting incapacities to monitor the preservation of heritage in the Medina was compensated with other alternatives inspired by a new set of practices such as activism in different domains and especially cultural and political engagement.

Chapter 3: The Medina of Tunis: National identity symbol

This chapter sets the contextual frame of the research which is the Medina of Tunis. The contextual background refers to a general preview of the history of the site followed by an overview of its evolution highlighting two different aspects. The first aspect tackles the issue of identity through a look on social changes in the past. The second aspect is the evolution of the institutional framework and their main ideologies as well as the resulting policies that were implemented.

3.1. Contextual background

This part refers to literature as well as data gathered on site to present the case of the Medina of Tunis that will be analyzed in the following sections of the research. The aim is also to consolidate the research through evidence of compliance with the previously evoked concepts of identity and heritage preservation.

3.1.1. Historical preview: situation and timeline

Located in a fertile plain region of north-eastern Tunisia, and a few kilometers from the sea, the Medina of Tunis is one of the first Arab-Muslim towns of the Maghreb (698 A.D.). Capital of several universally influential dynasties, it represents a human settlement that bears witness to the interaction between architecture, urbanism and the effects of socio-cultural and economic changes of earlier cultures. Under the Almohads and the Hafsids, from the 12th to the 16th century, Tunis was considered one of the greatest and wealthiest cities in the Arab world.

Numerous testimonies from this and earlier periods exist today. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, new powers endowed the city with numerous palaces and residences, great mosques, zaouias (mausoleums) and madrasas.³

Timeline:

- 698. Establishment of the medina, *Zeitouna* mosque built.
- 800-900: Reign of the Aghlabid dynasty and occupation of Sicily (835)
- 1060-1160: Reign of Khorassanid dynasty
- 1160-1236: Reign of the Almohads and Hafsids rulers
- 1236-1534: Reign of the Hafsids. The medina takes its actual shape (souks+ palaces+ mosques...)
- 1534-1581: Wars between the ottomans to the Hapsburgs over the Mediterranean. Spanish forts were built in Tunis
- 1581-1881: Reign of Ottomans
- 1881-1956: French protectorate.
- 1956: Independence
- 1979: Tunis is subscribed to the UNESCO world heritage

³ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/36>

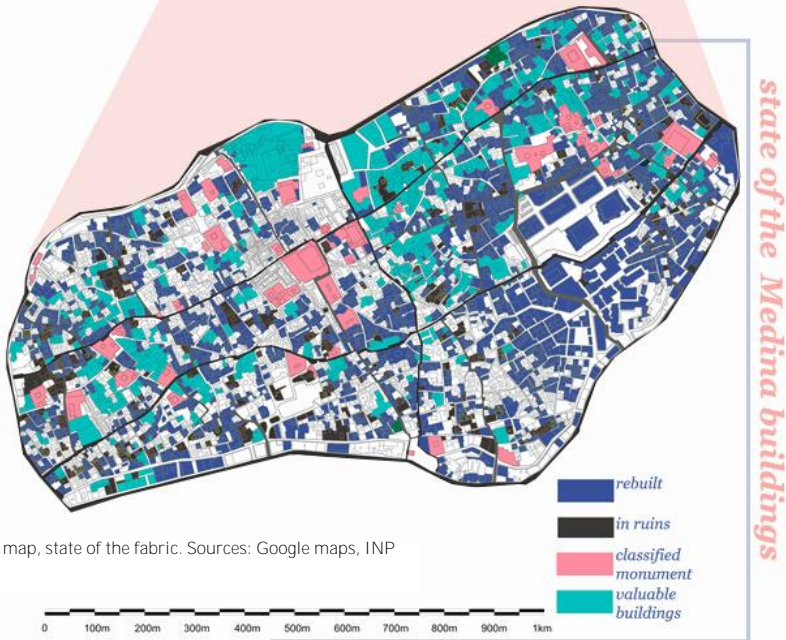
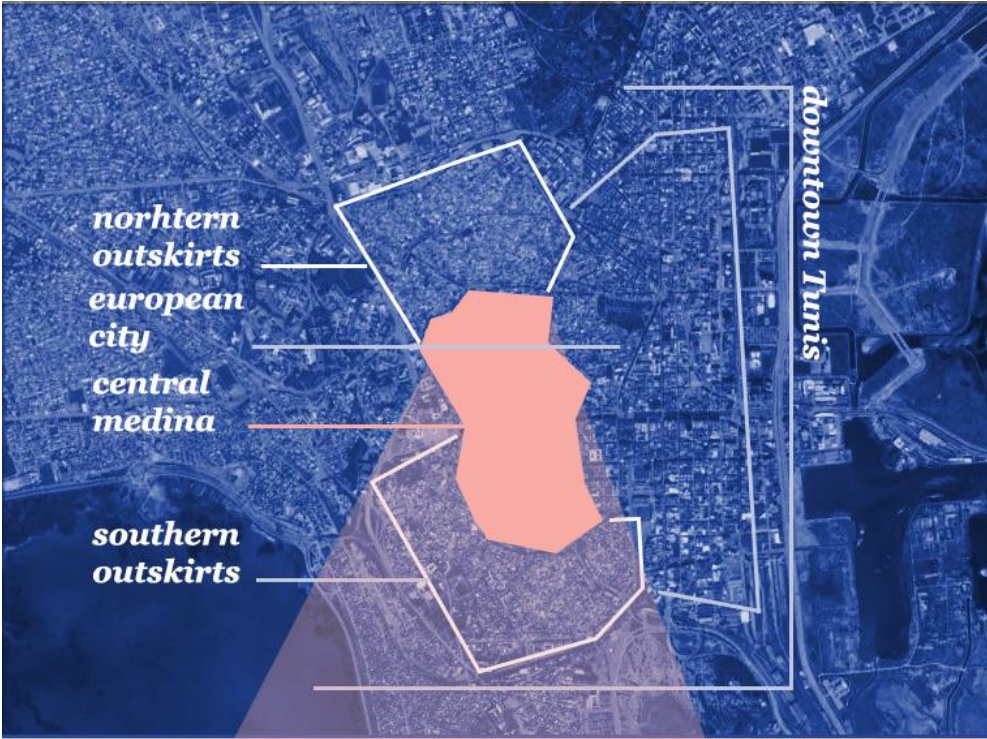


Figure 4 situation map, state of the fabric. Sources: Google maps, INP Tunis



Figure 5 panoramic views of the Medina. Source: the researcher 2014



Figure 6 photo of a street in the Medina. Source: the researcher 2009



Figure 7 Photo of a street in the Medina. Source: the researcher 2016



Figure 8 view from above showing the typology of buildings (courtyard houses). Source: the researcher 2016

3.1.2. The evolution of the image of the Medina and its identities through its social dynamics

This part will be based on literature reviews that highlight the diversity that the Medina represented in terms of social and cultural composition throughout the last century

The Medina of Tunis plays an integral role in the shaping and understanding of life-world reality for the people of Tunisia; as a symbol the medina of Tunis lends identity (Schwemmer, 2006). Sebag (2000), a sociologist and historian whose work contributed to the documentation of the history of Tunis explains that the significance of the city of Tunis began to proliferate when Tunis was the capital of Ifriquia⁴ in the mid-12th century. The identity of the city and country is established after the mid-16th century, when the rulers of the city dominated the country. At that time, the name of the city Tunis was attributed to the entire country (Sebag, 2000)

As far as the social structure is concerned, Muslim Tunisians and poorer Europeans, such as the Maltese and Russian communities, inhabited the Medina. The “Hara”⁵ was reserved for Jews, but the poorest Muslims and Christians could also be found there. These groups were integrated, coming into contact with each other in the course of everyday life, but they were not assimilated, for each group maintained its own cultural specificities and differences without conforming to a dominant cultural structure. (Barnard, 2007)

⁴ Ifriquia is the name of the territories of the Hafsid Kingdom in the medieval era which **included today's Tunisia, territories from western Lybia (Tripolitania) and eastern Algeria** (Constantinois)

⁵ The Hara is a neighborhood in the central Medina of Tunis commonly referred to as Hafsia today.

During the French colonization of Tunisia, the urban structure of Tunis started evolving with the planning and establishment of a westernized city right next to the Medina as of 1881. The European city, referred to as “*ville nouvelle*” was inhabited by a European community. The new city followed a different morphological, functional and social form. Therefore, it was considered the antithesis of the medieval quarter represented by the Medina. During the subsequent years, the architecture that has developed in Tunis was shaped by Europeans which allowed the Medina to evolve into a special model. Thus, the cornerstone was **laid for the medina’s** current symbolic meaning, which has evolved through interaction of foreign and domestic influences (ESCHER et Schepers, 2008). The morphological contrast between the two entities forming the city of Tunis created a first symbolic: the Medina was considered the antipode of the European city. The introverted layout of the Medina characterized by the typology of its architecture (courtyard houses) and the urban morphology (dead ends, narrow streets and dense fabric) were opposed to the open orthogonal design of streets in the European city and its multistoried buildings. Based on these contrasts, both the French and Tunisian actors provided completely different ideological attributes (Escher et Schepers ,2008). For the protectorate government, the medina symbolized the backwardness of the Tunisian people, and this was equated with the irrational, as described by Berque (1958). In terms of dynamics, the social life in the medina, which was incomprehensible for the Europeans and therefore **was construed as a “chaotic hustle and bustle”** (Escher et Schepers 2008).

Consequently, the protectorate government identified the French way of life and European urban development policies as superior social organizational structures that legitimized a French hegemony over Tunisia (Escher et Schepers 2008). **The medina was referred to as the “Muslim ghetto” and became an accessory of the the “main city”: the “ville nouvelle”** (Abdelkafi, 1989). The political resistance movement in Tunisia, however, was based in the Medina, making it a symbol of the Tunisian identity and the basis for action. Therefore, its image was ideologically charged as a symbol for resistance against the colons (Abdelkafi, 1989).



Figure 9 Photo of Bab Souika square in the Medina ca.1899. Source: Detroit Publishing Co. Collection



Figure 10 Photo of the constitutional party that fought against the French protectorate. Source: Wikipedia

Tunisia gained its independence in 1957. The leader of the national movement, El Habib Bourguiba became president right after the independence. With the new reforms, the ideological attributes of the Tunisians were changing their paradigm. The positive attributes became negative ones. An attempt is made to establish a national identity that does not relate to the society of the Medina (Eckert, 1970). In fact, the **rational and progressive vision of Bourguiba's government** adopted the same arguments as the protectorate. The medina was referred to as archaic and as a symbol of historical decadence (Abdelkafi, 1989). It becomes a symbol for opposing western rationality and thus progress and advancement (Escher et Schepers 2008). Moreover, it is associated with the **decadent and wasteful life of Tunisia's bourgeoisie and the Bey** government that preceded the protectorate which resulted in the development of the colonial rule over Tunis (Abdelkafi, 1989). At the same time, the negative attributes result in a cultural deficit (Escher et Schepers 2008). This generated an identity crisis between 1969 and 1974.

This crisis was accompanied with a demographic change in the capital. This panoply of different cultures according to which the center of Tunis has developed until the early years of independence suddenly started to disappear within a short period. The center of Tunis was left by its dwellers. The Jews left the Hara (today known as Hafsia today) to France and Israel since they felt threatened by the new mainly Islamic independent republic. The European community left the capital to return to their countries of origin. The Medina dwellers started to leave their courtyard houses to **settle in the new urbanized "modern" areas away from** the center.

This exodus was accompanied by a wave of migration of villagers to the capital. These villagers took refuge in the abandoned buildings including old palaces, schools (Madrassas), caravansaries. Most of the abandoned buildings were squatted or rented for a cheap price and the Medina **witnessed an “Oukalisation” phenomenon as mentioned by the ASM** (Association de sauvegarde de la Medina). This phenomenon has led to the densification of the historic neighborhood. The population of the Medina attained a peak of 168.110 inhabitants in 1956, year of the independence two-thirds of which were migrants.

The degradation of the fabric has, thus, led to the degradation of the image of the Medina, affecting it to a chaotic identity by the Tunisian society this time. The transformation started to take place gradually by mid-70s when Arab traditions once again became more important for cultural life and national identity (Abdelkafi, 1989). The significance of the medina was on the rise again. A new movement at that time viewed the medina as a symbol of national identity and cultural authenticity. Cultural identity and social principles become merged (Béji, 1982). Hakim (1986) focuses on this topic by taking the old town of Tunis as a model to illustrate the normative principles of social organization for Muslim urban planning. Politically speaking, the Medina acts as a social mirror during the period of the identity crisis and was finally able to be considered a symbol of national identity. This was followed up by the realization that the Medina needed to be finally protected resulting in its inscription in 1979 in the **UNESCO’s world heritage program**. Accordingly, the Tunisian authorities pursued since then, in accord with the Tunisian society a preferably national revitalization and Tunisian structuring of the Medina that will be exposed in the section of the research.

3.1.3. Recognition of the cultural heritage: key institutions and policies

This part presents the main institutions and ideologies that shaped the official preservation of the Medina of Tunis from the French protectorate to the recent years. It provides evidence of the existent frameworks within the political vision of the country through the different periods. The institutions that are mentioned are: The Antiquity service of the French government, the national institute for archeology and arts (INAA), the national heritage institute (INP) and the Association for safeguarding the Medina (ASM).

The Antiquity service and the French decrees

National institutions played a big role in preserving the Medina's cachet.

The work started by the French protectorate with the instauration of the antiquity service that was in charge of the protection of all the archeological sites mainly and the preservation of monuments considered as important for the touristic sector. The policies of preservation were implemented to serve economic purposes. In 1912, the first Islamic monuments were protected in the Medina. A decree was later signed. **The decree of March 3, 1920 established in the Souks of the Medina a “non-edificandi” zone. The decree of March 13, 1912 raised to the status of historical monuments remarkable buildings of Islamic architecture in Tunis such as the Great Mosque (Djamaa Zitouna), other mosques (Sidi Youssef Hamouda Pacha, Casba El Ksar El Djedid, etc.) and mausoleums zaouïas (Sidi Abd-el-Kader, Sidi el-Gacem Jelizi, Sidi Jilani ...)**

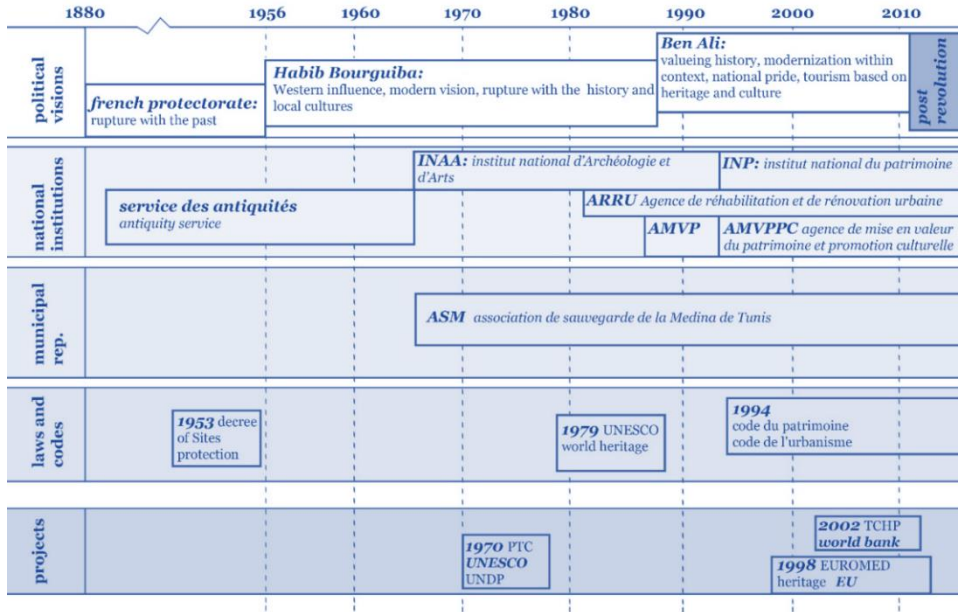


Figure 11 Timeline of political visions, national institutions, laws and projects serving the preservation of the Medina of Tunis. Source: the researcher (2016) according to Escher, Anton; Schepers, Marianne (2008)

Long considered only within the scientific management of the built heritage, the service has gradually been invested by the policy, a process that took shape from 1920. It is indeed likely that if the heritage issues remained only a scientific matter, budgets would have been less consistent. The utility function whose monuments and historic areas were filled in 1920 has indirectly been favorable in return to heritage. This policy of intrusion notably facilitated the safeguarding of historic areas, whether archaeological or urban. This reveals accordingly the practical limitations of the work of scientists. Indeed, from the beginning of the Protectorate, the influence of science on the political level was reduced. Although the quality of its scientific work was recognized, the service was unable to vote

the budgets or the necessary decisions to safeguard the Tunisian heritage. From the 1930s, the service begins to manifest a lack of interest in the classification procedure of the historical monuments. While in parallel, historic areas such as the medieval cities and archaeological sites could still benefit from protection measures.

The INAA: national institute for archeology and arts

In 1957, the Tunisian government has undertaken to transform the former Antiquity service. But it was only in 1966 that a decree on the organization of the National Institute of Archaeology and Art (INAA) could be issued. The lack of interest in monumental heritage has continued and intensified after independence under the thumb of the young Tunisian state. Thus, from 1956 to 1970, the state has abandoned these questions of INAA restoring the heritage status of a purely scientific object. In fact, between 1956 and 1985, the Tunisian State did not enact any law text of protection of monuments or sites. During the 1970s, the confluence of several parameters had caused a change in the heritage perception which led to the publication of several important decrees.

At the initiative of the INAA, were offered to new research topics of interest to the policy and particularly the issues of the national heritage. But the main turnover in that period was the participation of another international organization: the UNESCO. This was mainly important in the evolution of the relationship between heritage and the Tunisian authorities. In the early 1970s, UNESCO was indeed approached by ASM for the safeguarding of the Medina of Tunis which was fulfilled then by classification of the Medina of Tunis as an international world heritage site in 1979.

The INP (former INAA)

The INAA was transformed by the new authorities into The National Heritage Institute (INP). The INP functions as an administrative institution affiliated to the Ministry of Culture. It has legal representability and financial autonomy. It is a scientific and technical institution responsible for establishing the inventory of cultural heritage, archaeological, historical, civilizational and artistic, of his study, his backup and its development. The **INP's main mission is preserving, protecting and restoring** archaeological sites, historical monuments and traditional urban ensembles. This is manifested through organizing and undertaking research, search, inventory and exploration in the areas of archaeological, historical and civilization through the different periods. The department also claims the undertaking of research, preservation, protection, restoration and exhibition of historical documents, civilization, science and art (manuscripts and printed materials, audio-visual materials regardless of their support, regardless of artistic works are their subjects, their enforcement techniques such as art, furniture ...). The INP also has a mission to create museums, safeguard their collections. As far as research is concerned, the institutions publishes also scientific and cultural dissemination. Besides, it tackles training of managers.

These missions concern the heritage of the country. The role of this institution, since it still exists, will be further discussed in a later section of the research. It will be discussed within the current institutional framework representing the official party responsible of the preservation of the heritage in the specific case of the Medina of Tunis.

The ASM (Association for the safeguarding of the Medina)

Following an international competition to a breakthrough of the Medina, The awareness of the public around the danger that had been threatening the traditional town of Tunis started to raise. In this context ,the Association for the safeguarding of the medina was established in June 1967, setting a target "to work for the protection of traditional urban ensembles, historic monuments and all objects of cultural heritage character and conduct any action likely to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the medina "(status of the ASM of 29 August 1967). ASM was initiated by the mayor of Tunis, Mr. Hassib Ben Ammar, at a time when the Medina was facing destruction threats and socio-economic devaluation. The initial ASM team was composed of architects, historians, sociologists and researchers; all **urban preservation activists ready to fight for Medina's preservation. They** came together after independence, at a time where the Medina was a thing of the past, and out of fashion, low on the political priority list.

Since its creation, the ASM has established a group of multidisciplinary studies that will quickly establish a diagnosis of the situation and whose proposals will quickly exceed the framework of historical monuments to lead to proposals 'integrated interventions, also affecting the habitat conditions, equipment, activities. The studies focused on both the urban order, the growth system, the typology of buildings, internal organization, and the economic role, commercial, cultural and residential on the current inhabitants of the medina: origin, family structure, income, employment.

Considered one of the largest consulting firms in Tunisia, the architecture workshop of the ASM has developed expertise in preserving the medina as Heritage Park and also as a social housing stock.

Its advocacy has attracted Tunisians and private investors, who are showing a growing interest in the historic fabric of Tunis. Since its establishment, the activities and roles of the association have changed considerably with the support of the municipality which is devoting a significant part of its budget.

ASM's main activities were and still are focused on protecting the Medina's historic urban quarters and monuments and cultural heritage. From 1970 to 1974, UNESCO provided support to ASM through the "Tunis-Carthage project" funded by UNDP and titled "Tunis Medina Restoration for development" which helped ASM position itself as an important national actor in the cultural and urban restoration scene. The project was based on an important socio-urban field surveys. Survey findings were used to develop an analytic report, which had considerable impact on the **recommendations that brought about the "Tunis-Carthage project"**. These studies were the first of their kind in the Arab world, and helped ASM gain a regional reputation of socio-urban experts.

Today, ASM continues to play an active role in designing socio-urban solutions, conduct urban, architectural and socioeconomic studies related **to matters impacting Medina's conservational sustainability. Through its** architecture workshop, composed of senior restoration architects, ASM has become the advisory partner for various institutions, such as the Municipality of Tunis, Ministries of Culture as well as Tourism and various national institutions in charge of heritage. ASM architectural workshops **also provide restoration technical assistance to the Medina's home owners** and investors. This statement reflects the literature available about the ASM. It will be discussed and criticized further in the research in a section that compares the reality of the preservation process to the theory around

it in Tunis. The discussion will follow a foregoing investigation about the role played by the association within the specific dynamics of the Medina.

3.2. Investigations

This part of the research is based on investigations through surveys and interviews carried during the field work. It focuses primarily on the actors including the interactions and relations between them, and the spatial shifts that occurred in the Medina especially after the 2011 revolution. The outcome of this part is formed by an interpretation of the reality of the context to compare in a later phase with the theory and discourse of preservation.

3.2.1. Actors

In the previous sections, there has been a reference to the effect of the social dynamics on the symbolism and identity of the Medina in the last century. Today, one of the main brakes for the development of this historical area is the total absence of a detailed socio-economic study that identifies the real issues and potentials. Projects are carried through individual visions and generally target the most accessible areas, and neglecting the reality of the other areas that are considered a backstage for the showcasing of heritage as understood by the government.

The section constitutes a reading **of the social layer in today's Medina**. This reading is made through the understanding of groups, space solicitation, intercommunal issues and the role of the civil society.

Numerical data is important to have a preview of the weight of the actors that are targeted in this research. Nevertheless acquiring detailed data relevant to each specific group has been problematic do to certain limitations such as time constrains, data availability and the absence of cooperation of some groups. As an alternative, a survey has been made as well as a series of interviews with different people representing samples of each group. Such findings were helpful for the research especially that the intended methodology focuses on a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative one.

Groups

The work carried in this research is based on archives and observations in order to illustrate the reality and complexity of the field in terms of stakeholders, interactions and dynamics. As a first step, during field visits and according, the objective was to identify the different groups.

In fact, apart from the communities living in the Medina, there are actors who are actively participating in different fields such as preservation, culture, development and promotion of the Medina. What today constitutes the dynamics shaping the social reality of Tunis' Medina, is the set of interactions between these stakeholders and the translation of their visions and different means of identification to the heritage. In this section, actors will be categorized into different groups and sub-groups that will be referred to for the coming sections of this work. According to this classification, a total of 38 interviews was carried with different actors on field representing a sample of each group. The direct contact with other large groups of actors such as visitors and inhabitants being not representative and conclusive enough, a survey was distributed on field and online in order to reach a bigger sample. The number of answers to these surveys reached a total of 110. The survey focused on qualitative aspects. Four major themes were addressed to different actors: aspects of their identity, their interaction, their contribution and their perception of the sociocultural dynamics. This section is organized as follows:

- A categorization of the actors and their background
- Results of the investigation
- Synthesis of the investigation

Group 1: Inhabitants

- Group 1.1: These are owners, mostly “Beldis” who own their inherited houses or non- “Beldis” who acquired their private houses. Beldis are a social category also referred to as *Tunisois* or Bourgeois of Tunis. The inhabitants of the medina among this category are descendants of original families. For generations, the Beldis families have been known to at least own a palace in the Medina; its members to practice a craft job or hold political or religious functions. The term Beldi is strongly attached to the urban setting of the Medina which is the center of crafts, political and religious powers.
- Group 1.2: These are tenants who are renting old transformed houses. This category represents the majority of inhabitants nowadays. It is composed of families and descendants of families that moved to the Medina during the massive rural exodus that occurred in the years following independence. The origins of these families are different.

Region in Tunisia	%
North-east	15.1
North-west	28
Sahel (Coast)	16.3
Center	7.8
South	32.8

Table 1

Geographical origin of migrants enumerated in central Medina of Tunis (1968 ASM census)

- Group 1.3: These are squatters who are illegally occupying buildings **in the Medina. Most of these buildings are “fondouks” (caravanserais), but also abandoned “Medrassas” (schools) such as the Hebrew school.**

During field work, this group was the hardest to reach. In fact, the spaces occupied by squatters are inaccessible even for the other actors. Numeric data concerning the number of occupants in each space is therefore hard to gather. The case of the Hebrew school that is annexed to the Kheireddine Palace has been the center of attention according to an interview with an ASM member. The interviewee reported that the issue has gained a sociopolitical symbolic that needs to be addressed within a larger scope than the symbolic of heritage. In fact, this type of occupation is not a new phenomenon in the Medina. During the years that followed the independence, it was common. Back then, **the Medina was not officially considered a “heritage”.** Therefore, there were no policies to regulate human actions, nor institutions to prevent such activities (referring to section 3.1.3 “Recognition of the cultural heritage: key institutions and policies).

The way to deal with it in the actual context has to follow certain measures, according to an interview with a member of Aswar Lemdina, an active Ngo in the Medina. This means that it should be included in an appropriate agenda that tackles the residential aspect of heritage and the access to decent affordable housing in the historic center of the city.

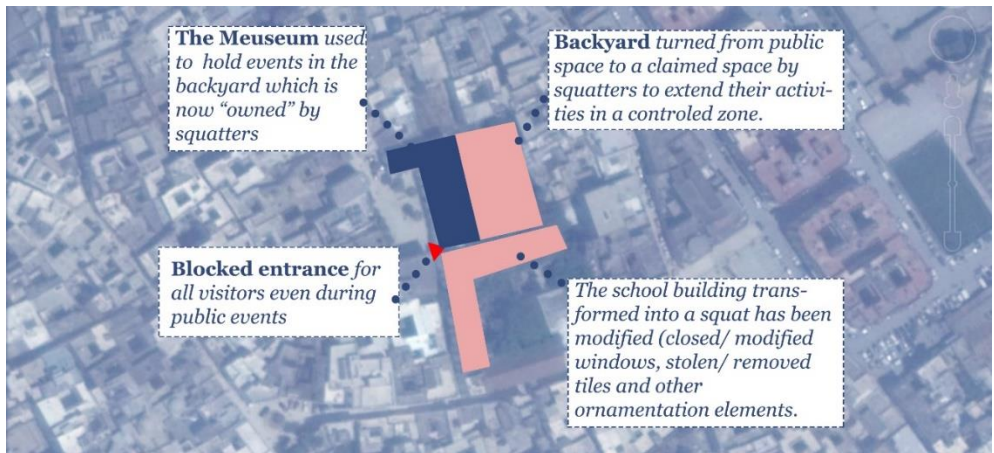


Figure 12 situation of the squat in the Medina. Source: The researcher / Google map

During surveys, a majority of actors responded that this issue presents a negative aspect that harms the integrity of the Medina as a residential space, commenting that it creates certain safety problems.



Figure 13 Result of question concerning the situation of the squats in the Medina. Source: The researcher 2016

Group 2: Workers

- Group 2.1: Traders working in retail.
- Group 2.2: Artisans
- Group 2.3: Employees
- Group 2.4: Business owners (Cafés, restaurants, hotels)
- Group 2.5: street vendors

Group 3: Visitors

- Group 3.1: Foreigners

The Medina, having a cultural and historic value, used to be considered the first touristic attraction on the national level, according to the Ministry of Tourism. The sector, though, has been regressing during the past years that followed the revolution of 2011. According to a report of the Ministry of Tourism, the drawbacks of 2 terrorist attacks on a Museum (the Bardo museum) in 2015 and a hotel in a touristic coastal city the same year were very negative. The recorded total number of entrances to the country has dropped by 44.7 % between 2010 and 2015 according to statistics published by the ONTT⁶. These statistics explain the shrinkage of this group in the Medina of Tunis. Nevertheless, there are still Tourists in the Medina despite the overall negative indicators.

- Group 3.2: Locals : within the city and the country

This group represents the majority of visitors. According to investigations, these people come from different parts of the region of greater Tunis. The region consists of 4 governorates: Tunis, Ariana, Manouba and Ben Arous) that are connected through Metro, bus and Train lines. The Medina is accessible thanks to its proximity to the main transportation hubs of the capital.

⁶ ONTT stands for “Office National du Tourisme Tunisien” (National Tunisian Tourism Office), a public non-administrative institution with legal personality and financial autonomy. It is under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourism.

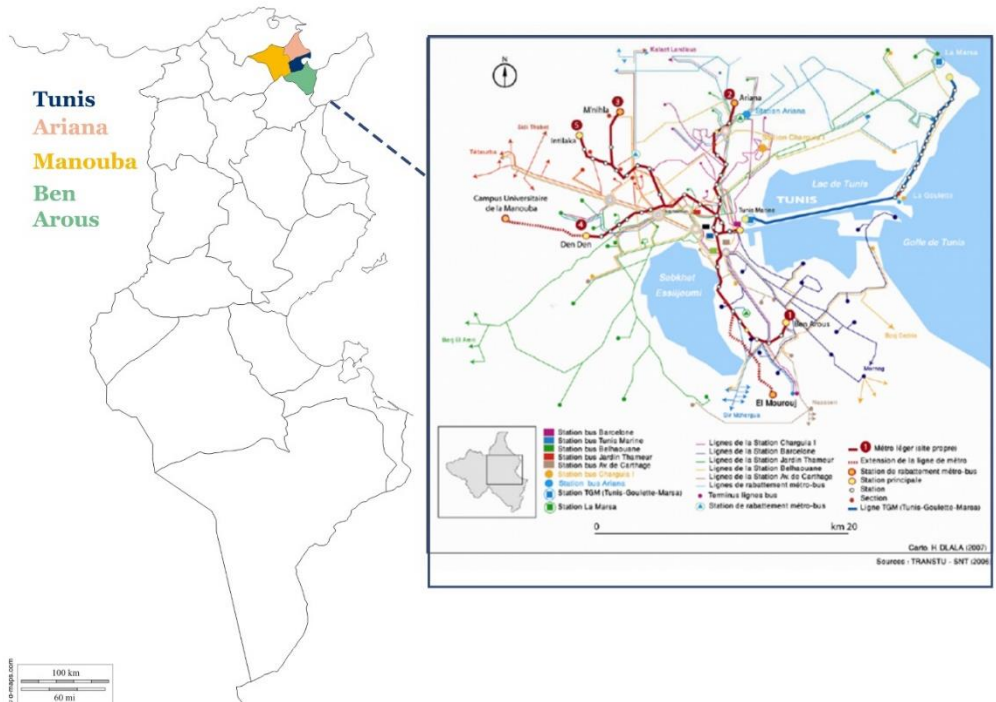


Figure 14 Governorates forming the Greater Tunis area and map of the transportation system of the area. Source: The researcher/ TRANSTU

There are many reasons behind the presence of these people in the Medina. Surveys show that most of the people prefer strolling in the Medina because it is a walkable area. In fact most of the streets are too narrow to be accessible with cars. The second most recurrent activity in the answers consists of Cultural events followed by hospitality activities such as eating and drinking in restaurants and cafés then shopping. Some commented that these activities are more enjoyable in the Medina than in other areas in the city because the experience is more authentic.

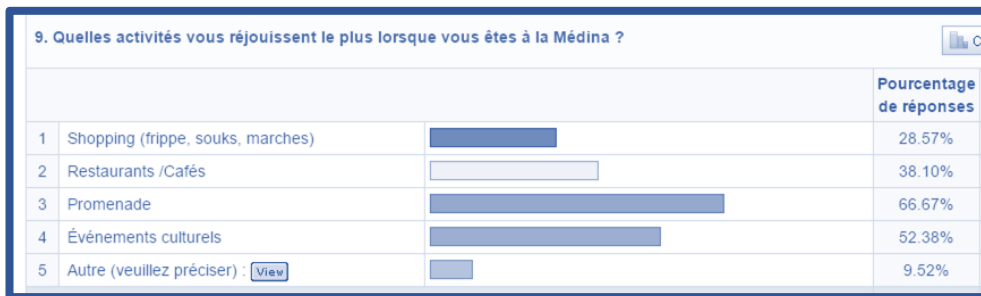


Figure 15 Results of "What activities are the most enjoyable in the Medina?" . Source: The reasercher 2016

Group 4: Cultural actors

- Group 4.1: Galleries
- Group 4.2: Artists
- Group 4.3: Media/ Social-media
- Group 4.4: Cultural projects initiators

Group 5: NGOs

- Aswar Lemdina: is an NGo founded in February 2013. The objectives of the NGO are:
 - The preservation of cultural heritage and the cultural and architectural character of the city
 - The valorization of sightseeing and crafts
 - The consolidation of sustainable development through awareness raising among the inhabitants of the Medina.
- **“Actions citoyennes en Medina” (civic actions in the Medina):** known also under its Tunisian name Lemdina Wel Rabtine was created a few months after the revolution, the association consists of a group of residents Tunis’ Medina claiming the inclusion of local people in urban policies of the quarter. The association aims to educate local

people on the issues that the heritage of the Medina is facing. The **Ngo's objective also include** the emergence of a network of local knowledge. Finally, ACM looks to call the local government on the need to pay more attention to the heritage of the Medina by making the required restoration and renovations, ending the anarchic constructions and taking into account the daily problems of the people living in the Medina.

- **Association l'Art Rue** is a local Cultural non-profit organization, created in 2006 by Selma and Sofiane Ouissi, dancers and choreographers, with the desire to democratize contemporary art. The street, public space being spaces of incessant negotiations, were chosen by the Ngo to reflect on urban space, as well as rural space through artistic proposals created in proximity to the population. The Association consists of a team of people from different fields and interests. The Dream City festival, one of their creations is a biennale of contemporary art strictly linked to the Medina. The festival has been integrated within the new identity of the Medina and thanks to its success was then exported to the Medina of Sfax and to Marseilles in France.

Group 6: Institutions

- Group 6.1: ASM
Even though the ASM has legally an association status, the mechanisms and the nature of its work has put in the same group as institutions.
- Group 6.2: INP
- Group 6.3: AMV

Results of investigations

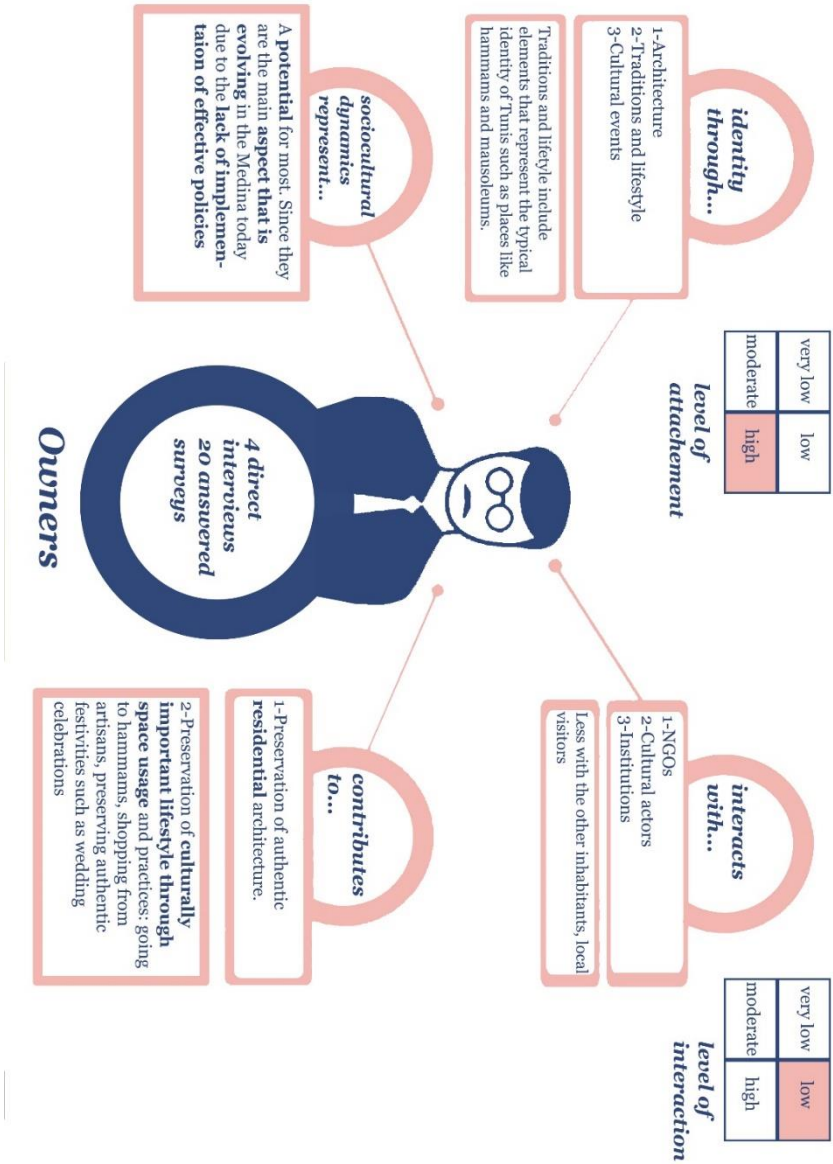


Figure 16 Results of interviews with Owners. Source: the researcher 2016

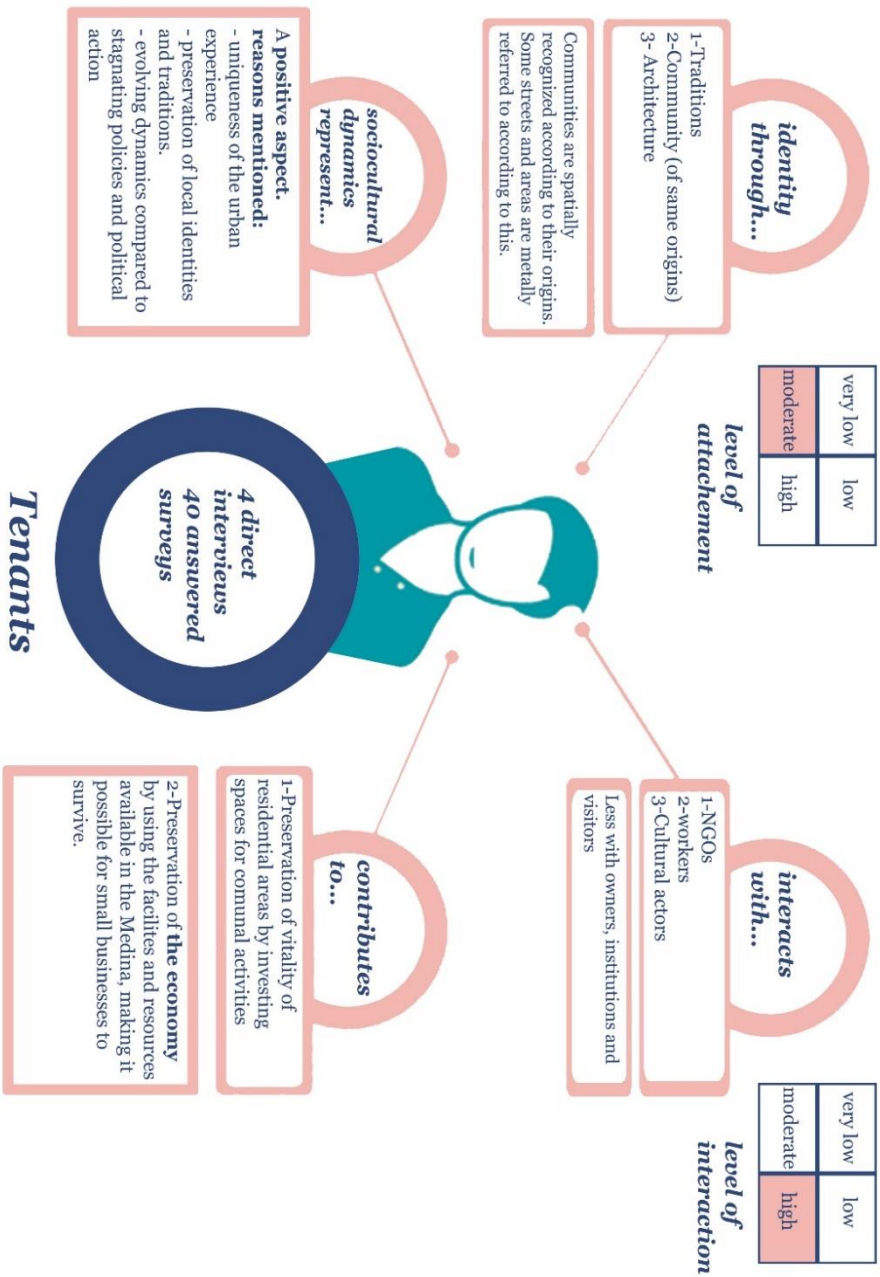


Figure 17 results of interviews with tenants. Source: the researcher 2016

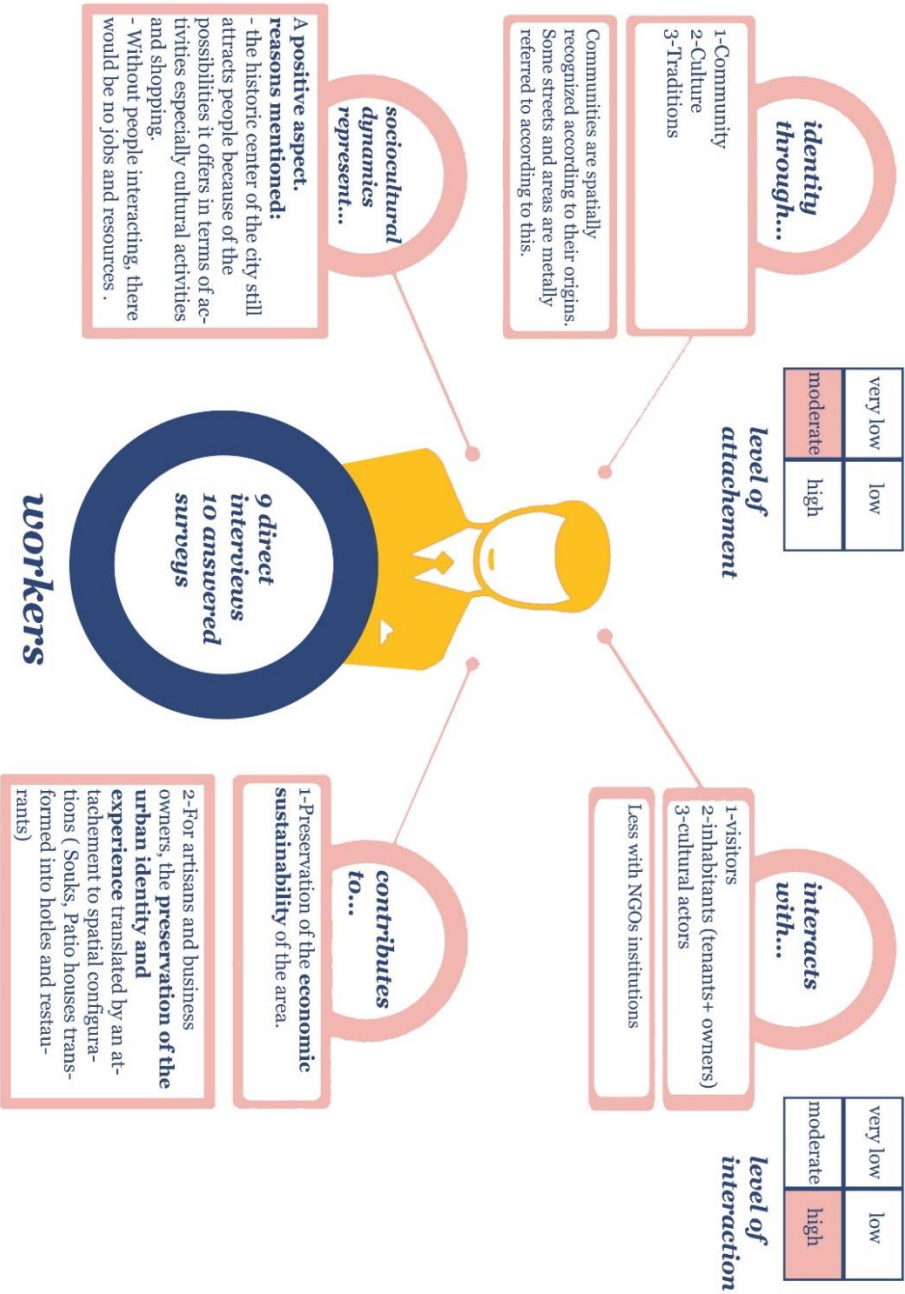


Figure 18 results of interviews with workers. Source: the researcher 2016

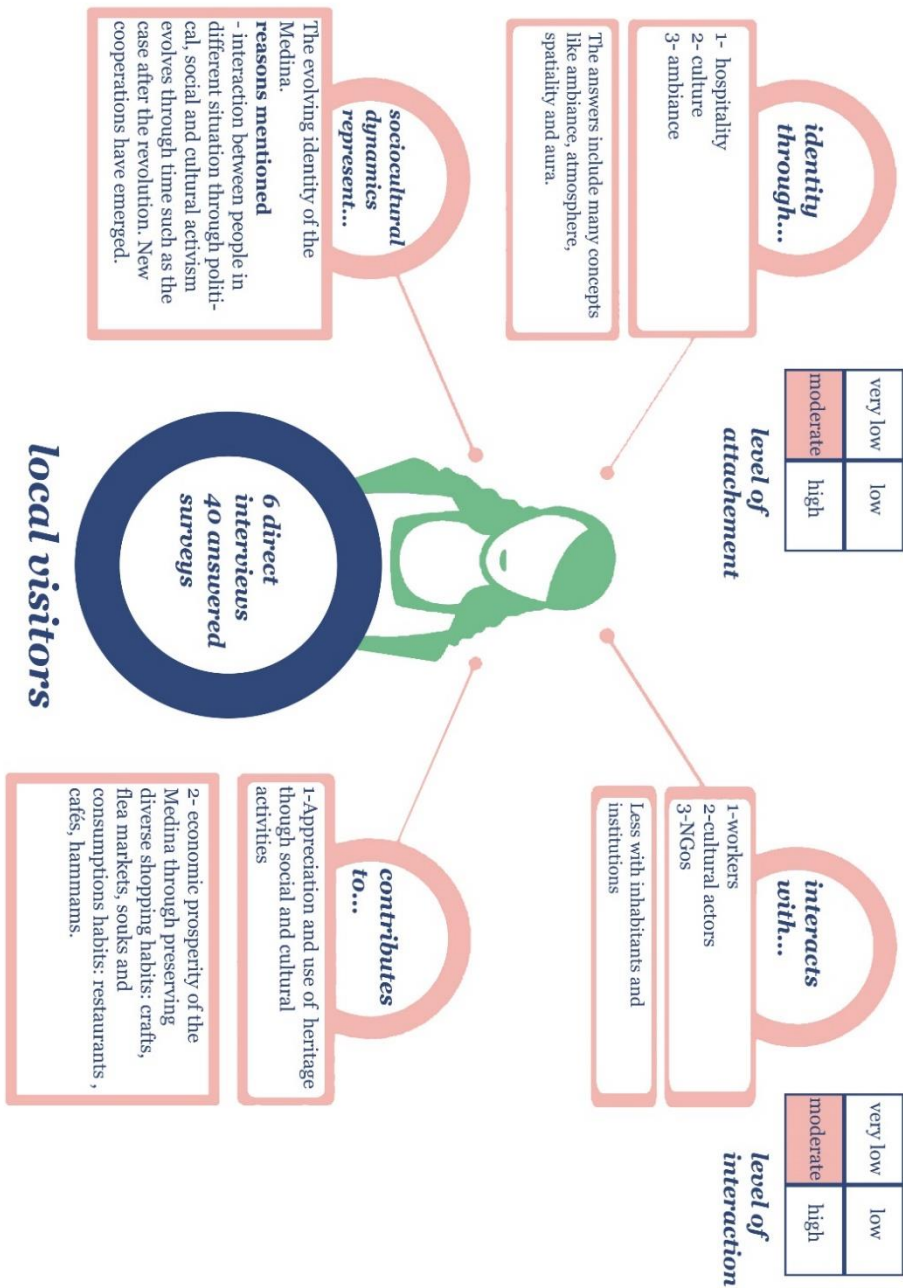


Figure 19 results of interviews with local visitors. Source: the researcher, 2016

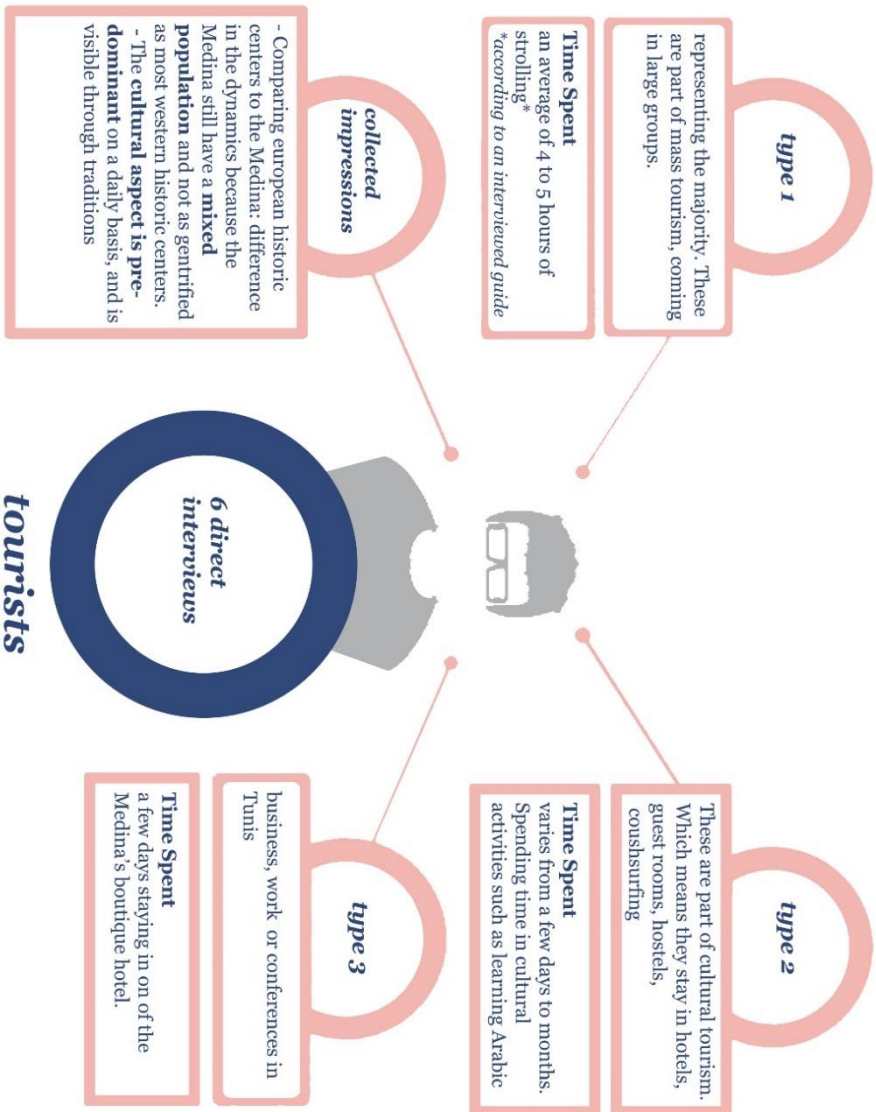


Figure 20 results of interviews with tourists. Source: the researcher, 2016

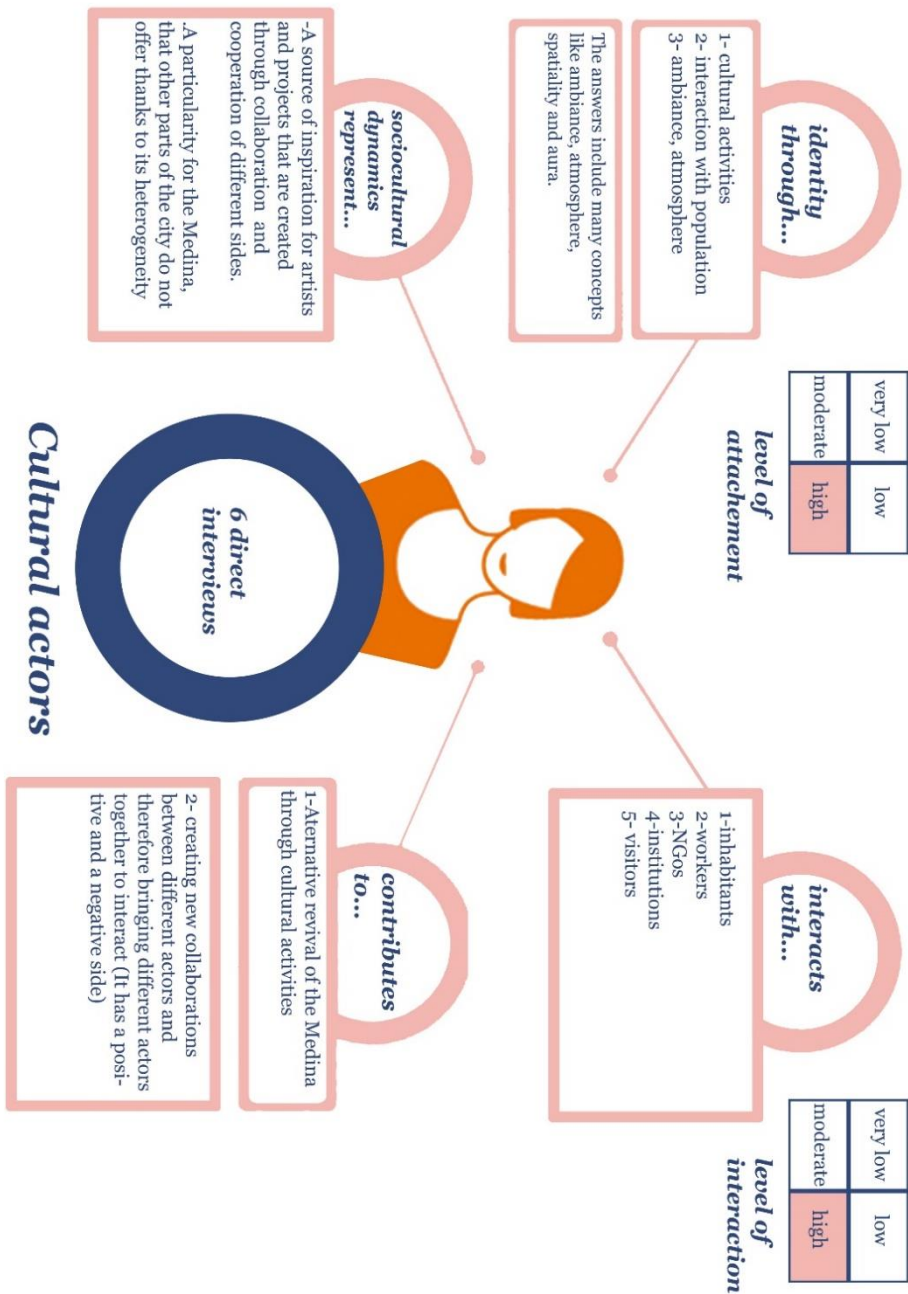


Figure 21 results of interviews with cultural actors. Source: the researcher, 2016

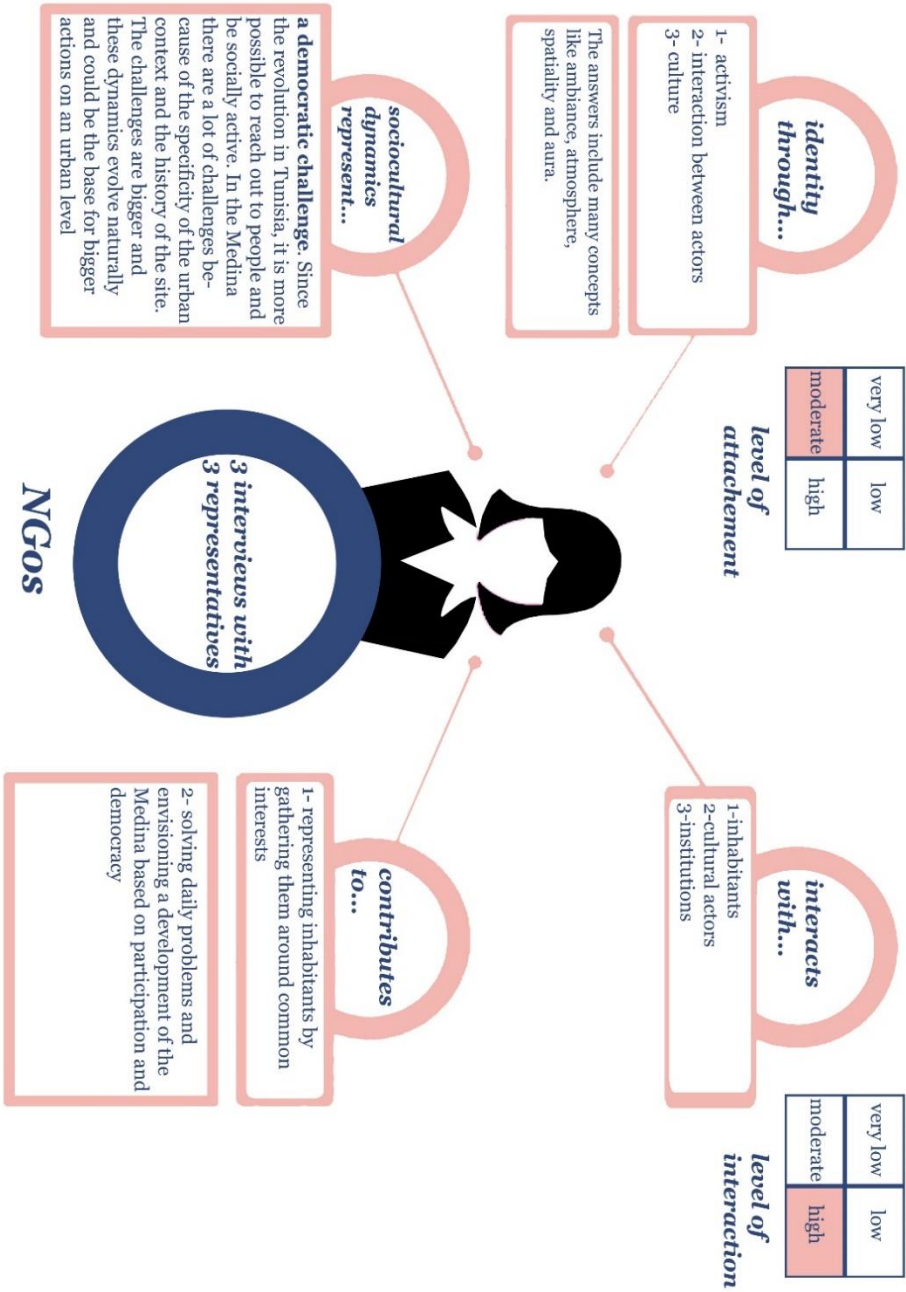


Figure 22 results of interviews with NGOs. Source: the researcher, 2016

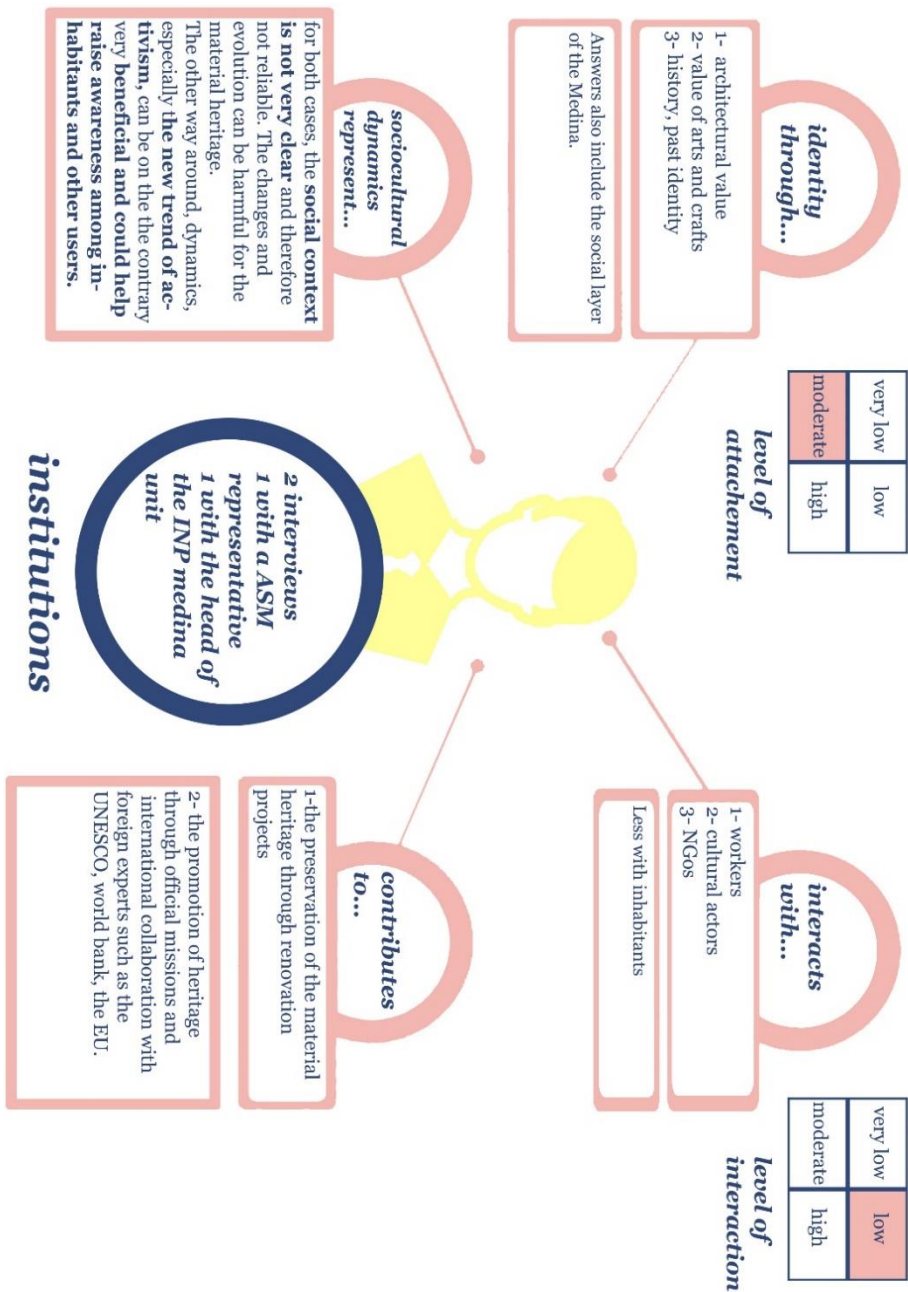


Figure 23 results of interviews with institutions. Source: the researcher, 2016

Synthesis: Dynamics between actors

The study of these groups through observations and interviews shows different types of interactions between them, but also inside the same groups and between sub-groups. These interactions are based on aspects such as common interests, experiences but also a set of pre-established judgements.

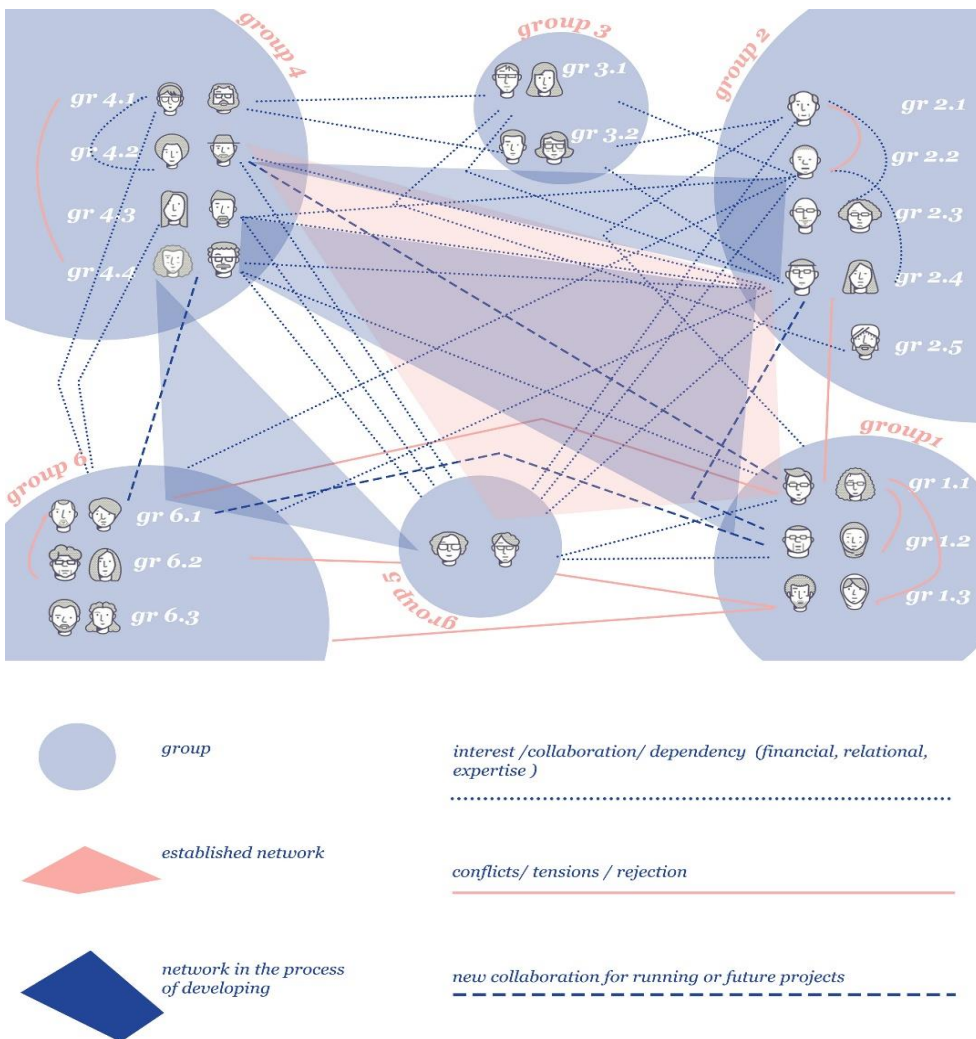


Figure 24- synthesis of dynamics between actors. Source: the researcher, 2016

Space solicitation

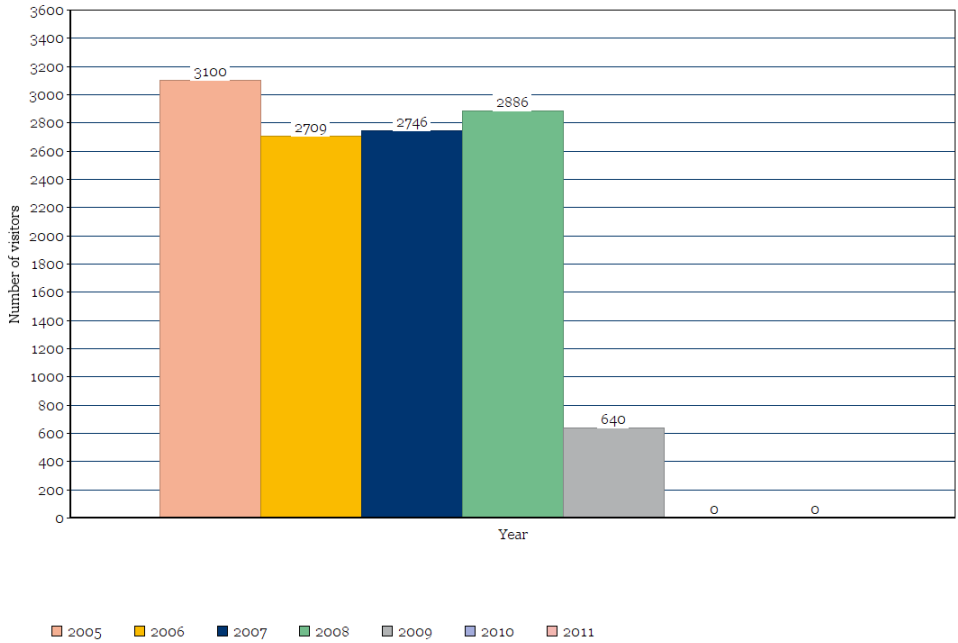


Figure 25- Activities/ Spaces and levels of uses by different actors. Source: the researcher, 2016 based on World Bank study (2010)

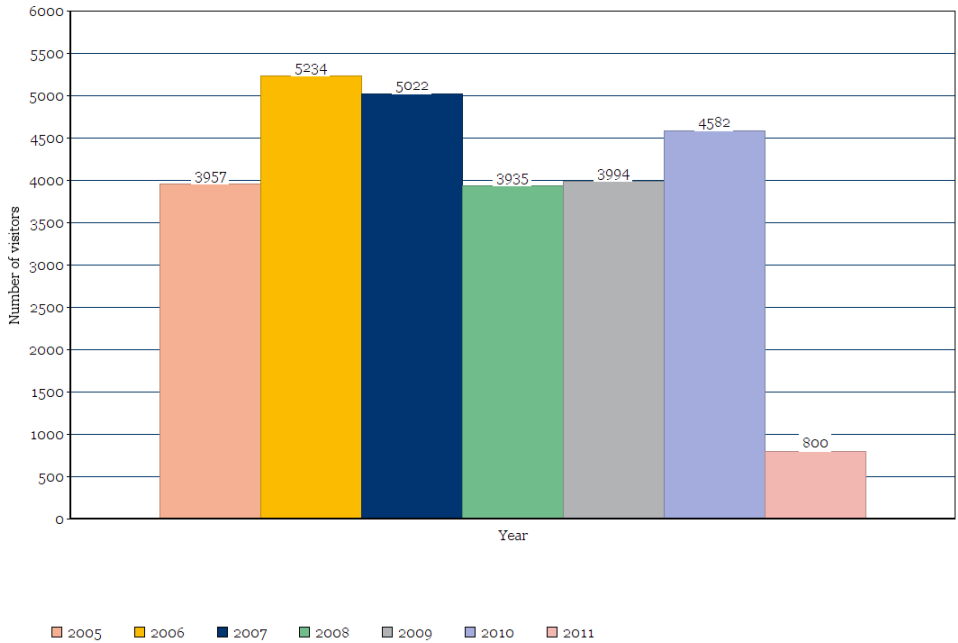
As a living heritage, the Medina of Tunis offers a range of services and types of activities that are used differently among the present actors. It is noticeable that the hospitality spaces and commercial facilities are the most used and thus there is a demand for types of spaces and not for others.

In fact, during the past 10 years, there has been a considerable decrease in the number of visits to the monuments of the Medina which was drastically confirmed in the years following 2011. The three monuments mentioned in the table are the most known in the Medina. Dar Ben Abdallah, also known as the City Museum is since 2010 in danger of collapsing. Today the INP is in charge of its restoration and reallocation.

Number of visits: Dar Ben Abdallah



Number of visits: Tourbet el Bey



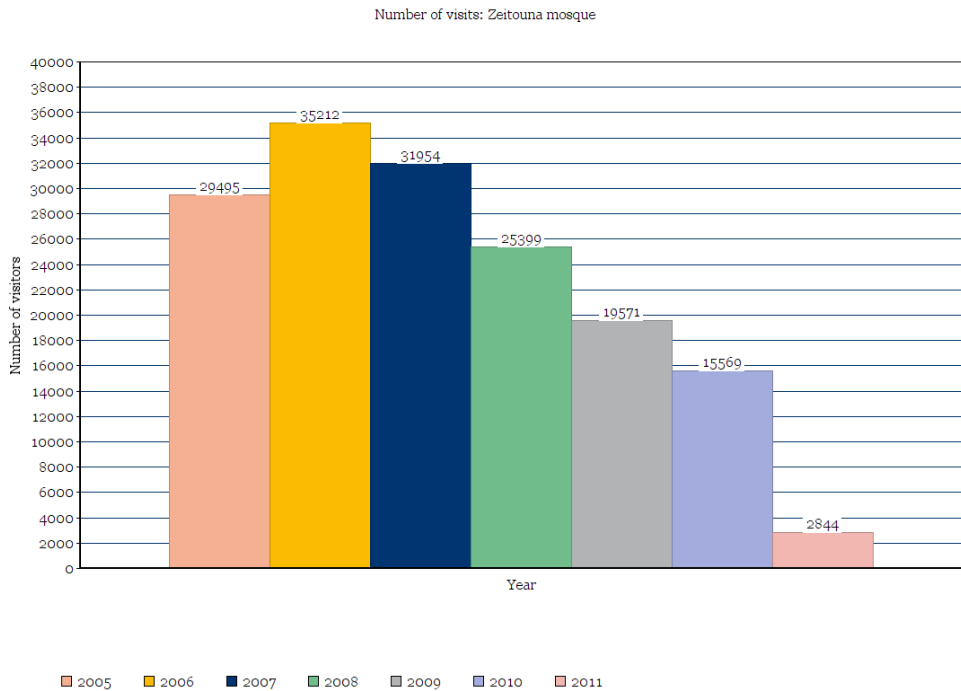


Figure 26- Number of visits to Dar Ben Abdallah, Torbet el Bey and the Zeitouna mosque between 2005 and 2011. Source: the researcher 2016 based on numerical data of AMVPP

The Zeitouna mosque is the oldest Mosque in the Medina and one of the most important Islamic landmarks in the region. It is the most visited monument of the Medina of Tunis. Nevertheless, starting 2011 the number of visits to the mosque has dropped substantially (from 35212 entries in 2006 to 2844 entries in 2011). Through interviews with locals, the reason behind this drop is to be linked with the political situation of the country. Security being a new concern, tourists tend to avoid mosques, religious facilities and the complex networks such as Medinas.

During working days, the Medina is crowded compared to other parts of the city. 55% among 110 surveyed people admitted they occasionally visit the Medina because they obliged. The main two reasons mentioned include

needing paperwork from one of the ministries or the municipality or special shopping needs that could only be fulfilled in the Medina because of the availability of certain products. When they visit the Medina at their will, it is rather for strolling and enjoying cultural activities. This explains the variations in the crowdedness of the Medina during daytime and night time, but also on working days, weekends, public holidays and on special events like festivals.

At night time, the Medina of Tunis is left to its residents. Besides a few open restaurants and cafés, all businesses are closed. The residential dimension of the neighborhood is noticeable during the evening. The transformation of the spaces is strongly linked to the activity of people in the Medina. Public places where markets are installed during the day turn into parking plots for the residents. Cafés where visitors take their break turn into meeting points for the locals at night right before closing time.

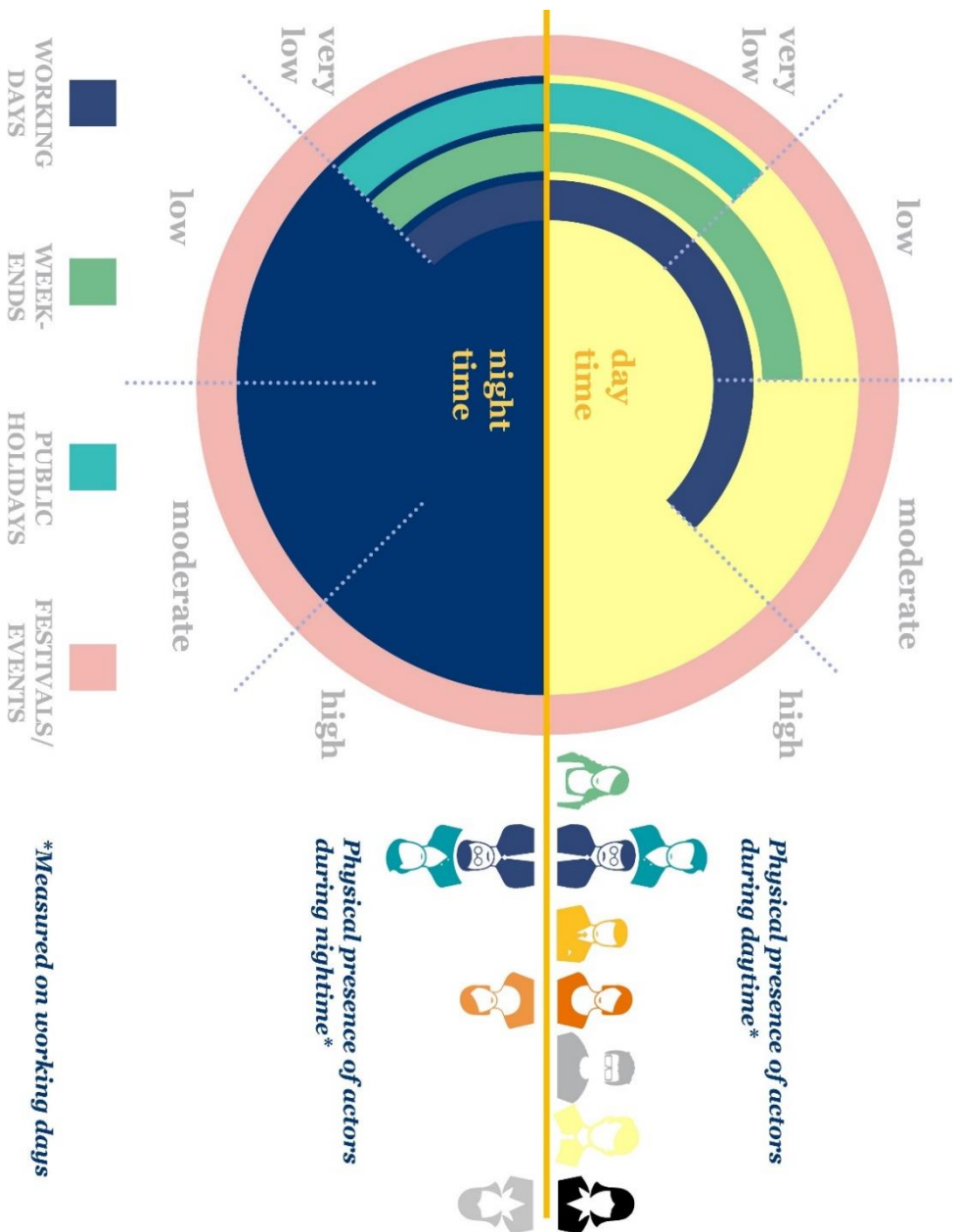


Figure 27- Presence of actors/ time based on interviews and observations. Source: the researcher, 2016

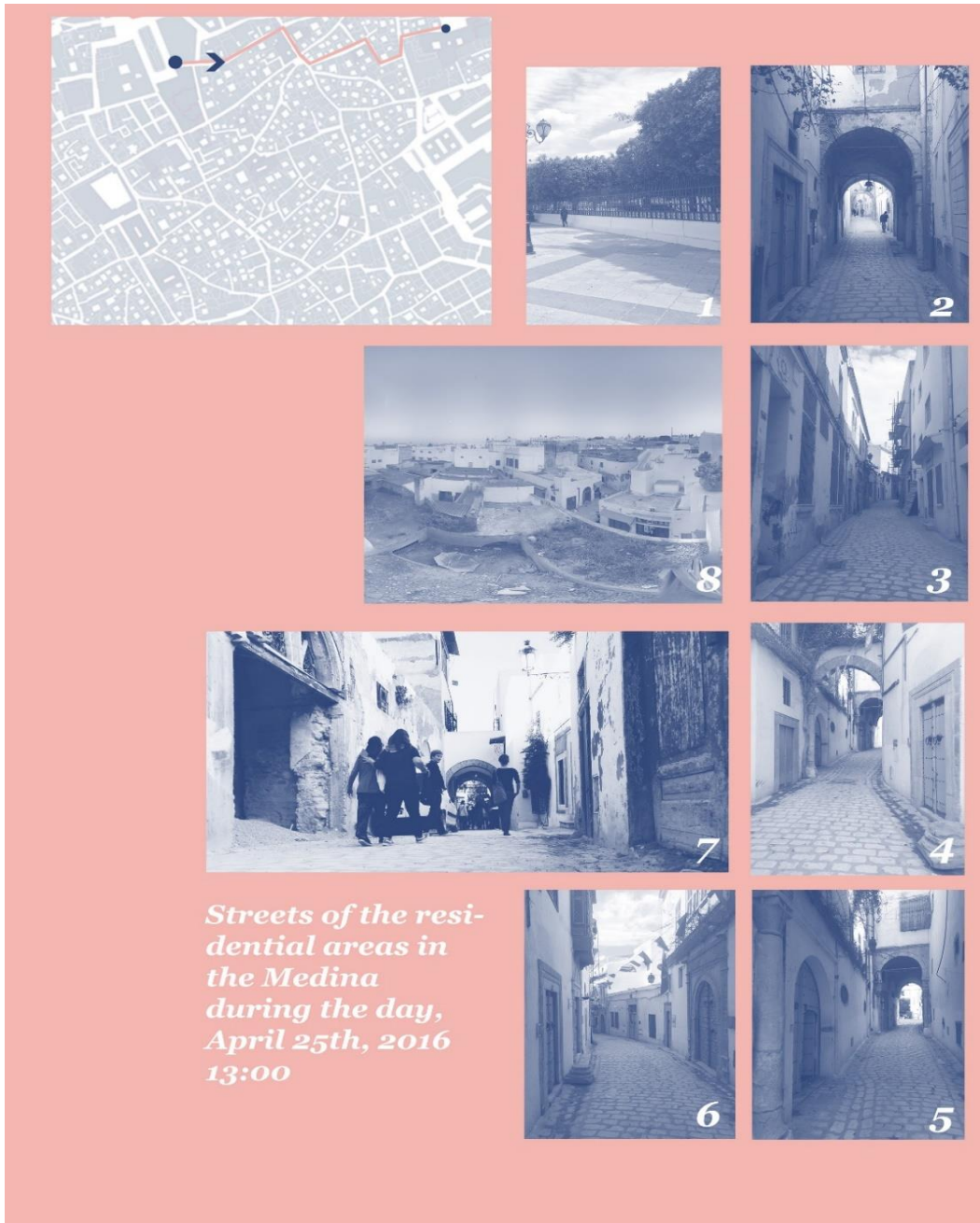


Figure 28- photographic sequence of a residential area during the day. Source: the researcher, 2016

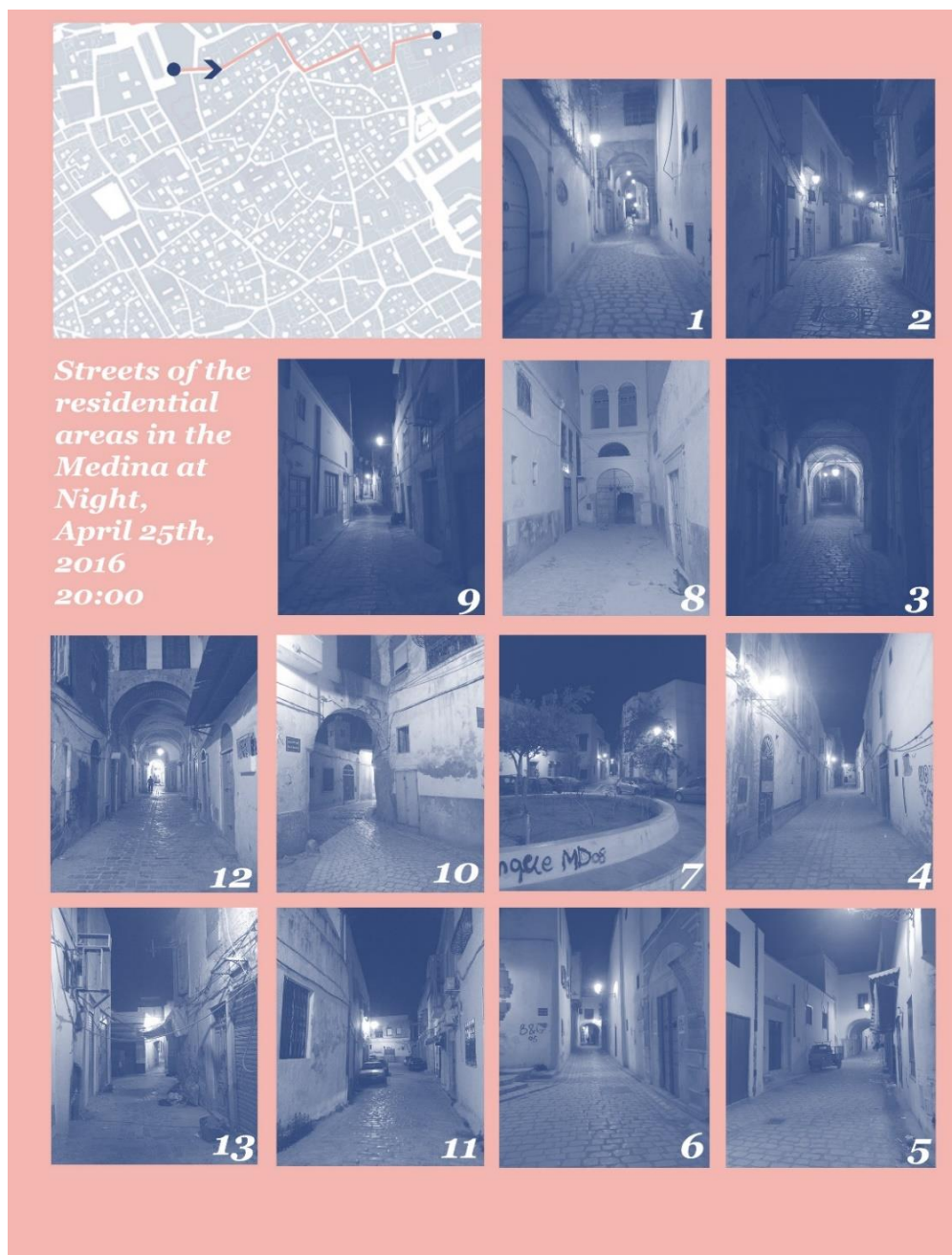


Figure 29- photographic sequence of a residential area during the night. Source: the researcher, 2016

The civil society: a new born actor

The Revolution led to a re-appropriation of heritage by the population both positively and negatively. On the one hand, the provisional government, the current administrative and legal uncertainty has resulted in a set of anarchic buildings and destructions without respect the rules of town planning and heritage preservation. This is what has been observed in the Medina of Tunis. A new wave of brick buildings were observed in the Medina of Tunis in old palaces and houses of the Medina. On the other hand, this context has resulted in mobilization of inhabitants of these sites in order to fight against the degradation of the urban heritage. Beyond this phenomenon that has contributed to the emergence of an active civil society, one must take into account the broader context of political mutations that have affected the country, which favored the birth of these associations and re-appropriation of heritage by the inhabitants. The fall of the Ben Ali regime was an opportunity for Tunisian society to take actions in the urban and social fields.

The creation of associations such as “Medina wel Rabtine” and “Aswar Lemdina” has brought new actors on the table. According to interviews with people on field, Aswar Lemdina has turned out to represent the inhabitants of the Medina, no matter their social background and status. It tackles real issues such as the problems of infrastructure, issues concerning neighbors and new investors. The association has had many successful measures and it succeeded to stand up against other actors at some point when the comfort of some inhabitants was threatened. In 2015, the association stood up against a **touristic agency named “Lira hospitality”. In fact, the said agency acquired an ancient house and launched a big construction site to transform it into a hotel. Hafedh Belhaj, a member of the association explained that they were urged to take action by residents who reported many violations such as: the **obstruction of a mosque’s window, damages to the neighboring Hafsid school****

building built in the 13th century and exceeding the legal height of construction⁷



Figure 30- photos published by the Association on their official facebook page to report the violation of the site. Source: Aswar Lemdina, 2015

The association took action immediately, using social networks and filing a claim to the Municipality of Tunis. Two months later, the agency was ordered by the municipality to suspend construction works, repair and compensate the damages. The agency also arranged a meeting with the two associations **“Medina wel Rabtine”** and **“Aswar Lemdina”** as well as **all the neighbors** in order to find an agreement which turned out to be a successful measure, since a compromise was reached between all parties.

Medina del Rabtine represents rather the elite society including the remaining Beldis of the Medina, artists and academics. It is more focused on the exclusive culture of the Medina and the authentic lifestyle that has

⁷ The legal construction height is set to a maximum of 12 meters according the tender of specifications of the Medina.

disappeared when the Beldis left their houses. The association organizes events and exhibitions, but **doesn't take action in collaboration with other** residents according to interviewed inhabitants. It plays a role in the promotion of a visual identity of the Medina. The latest project was a **photographic documentation of closed "Hammams"**. According to an ancient member of the association, the idea started with the objective to invest the money gathered through exhibitions in the restoration of these spaces and reopening them to the public.

The former member of the association in question, Habib Baccouche, was born and grew up in the Medina. He spent several years documenting houses in the area. He admitted that his action started when he realized that none of the institutions responsible for the preservation of the heritage was living up to their roles. When he realized that some houses started to show signs of advanced decay, he started his photographic surveys of all types of houses in the Medina from the modest house until the great palace. Today, he has a database of more than 20,000 pictures of houses, some of which no longer exist. **"Beyond the pictures, I made extraordinary meetings on the human, cultural and historical levels" he explains.**

3.2.2. Identities, traditions and spatial models

The decline of the urban fabric in the Medina of Tunis, described in newspapers, reports and observed on site is a reality that is perceived differently by the stakeholders involved in the process of preservation as demonstrated by the outcomes of the investigation in the previous section.

On the one hand, the work of governmental institutions such as the INP is focused on the architectural and material value. On the other hand, inhabitants along with the civil society contribute to the preservation of the immaterial heritage by reclaiming traditions and integrating them in their lifestyle. Aspects of these practices are tightly linked to spatial models that are characteristic of the Medina. The results of discussions with a sample of 20 inhabitants of the Medina have shown that some traditions are considered timeless such as wedding celebrations, others are recovered by readapting them to the new identity such as celebrating Sufi music in mausoleums in **“Mouled” (a religious feast which celebrates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad)** and Hijri New Year.

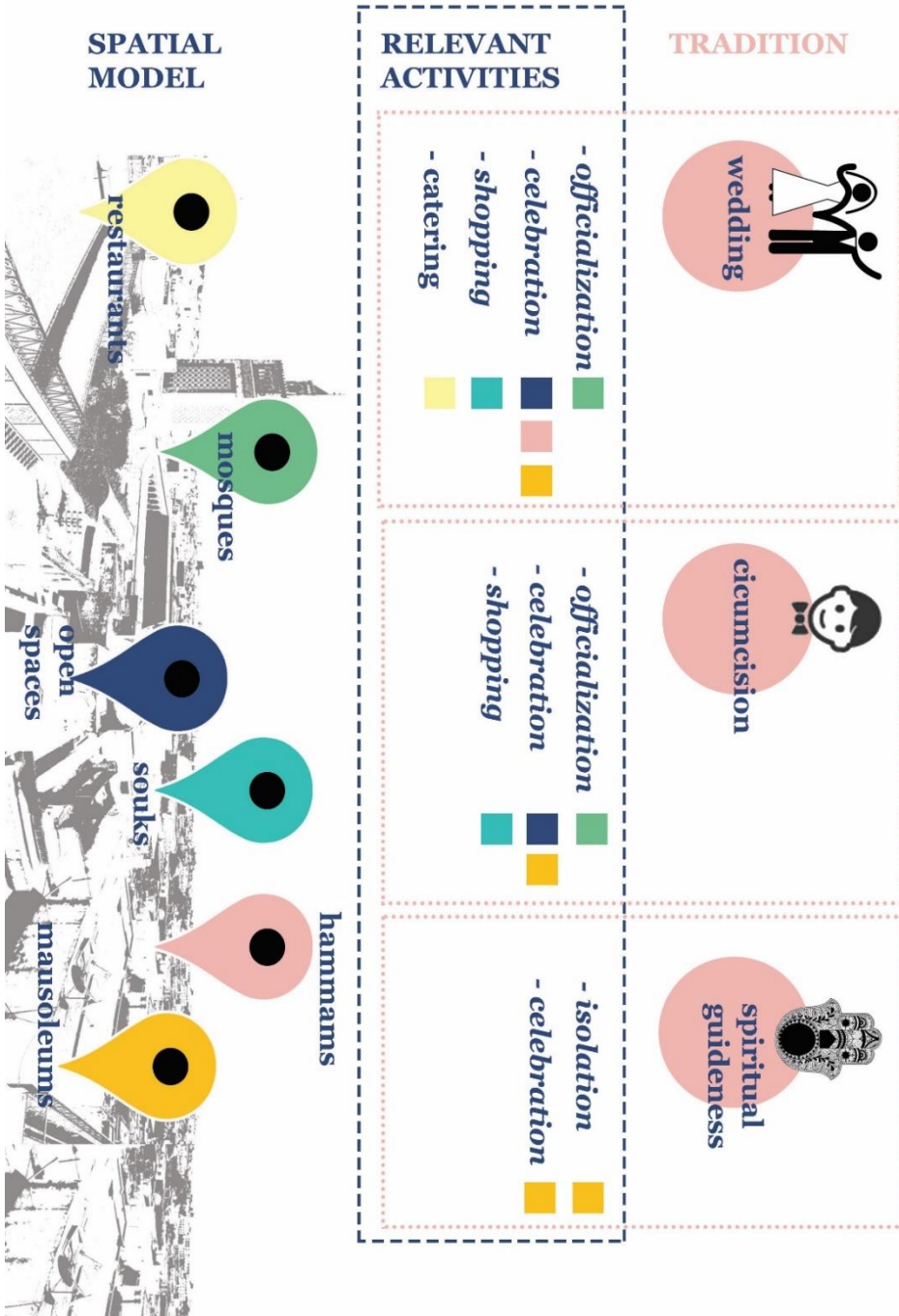


Figure 31- celebrated traditions in the Medina/activities and their spaces. Source: the researcher, 2016



Figure 33- young generations celebrating traditional costumes. Source: Les revenants de la Médina, 2015



Figure 32- Celebration of Stambeli music in the Medina. Source: Sidi Ali Lasmar official website.(<http://www.stambelisidialilasmar.com>)

3.2.3. Unanticipated pressures: Post-revolution spatial shifts

After the revolution in 2011, some places in the Medina has acquired a new identity. Due to the presence of governmental entities on the western entrance of the Medina, pressures and conflicts between people and the government are expressed in these place. The former square surrounded by the ministry of finance and the prime ministry buildings was the largest open space in the dense fabric of the Medina. In February and March 2011, **following the events of “El Kasbah 1” and “El Kasbah 2”**⁸, the square has gained a revolutionary symbolic and protesters found refuge in the square during multiple events such as strikes, protests, marches, etc.

In this specific square, and due to its strategic location for the authorities, the response of the government was to completely close it. Some of the tourists met during the field visits mentioned that the entrance to the Medina from the Kasbah made them worried the first time. The presence of police vans and military forces in the square installs a hegemonic atmosphere. Inhabitants and visitors that were interviewed complained about the closing of access to the Bab Bnat Street that was an important circulation artery and the main access point to the inhabitants of the western part of the Medina.

⁸ **“El Kasbah 1” and “El Kasbah 2” were the largest demonstrations** after the one that took place in January in Avenue Habib Bourguiba, following which the former president of the Tunisian republic was withdrawn. Unlike the 14th of January demonstration, the two events attracted people from other parts of the country who then squatted the area for several days.



Figure 34- transformation of the square between 2011 and 2016. Sources: Wikipedia, Wikipedia, the researcher (2016)

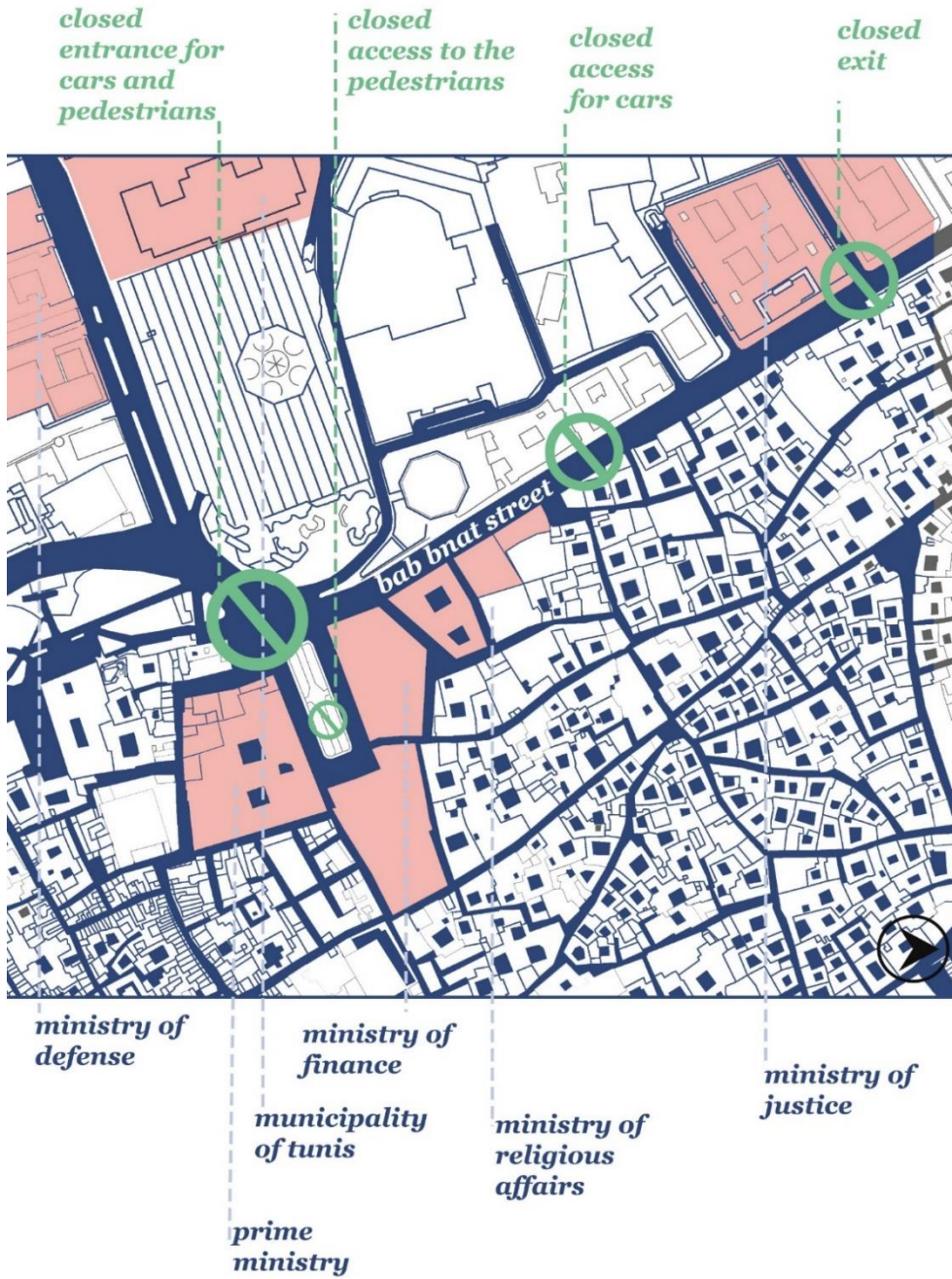


Figure 35- Location of ministries around the square and repercussions of its closing. Source: the researcher, 2016

During the revolutionary process in Tunis, the Medina represented essentially a space for protestation. Barricades were erected at each entrance and the police could not chase protesters for fear of facing heavy losses because of the nature of the urban fabric.

During the days before and after January 14, 2011, the Medina of Tunis became a refuge for many people living in the surrounding neighborhoods of downtown, especially activists and artists. The Medina had become one of the spaces of central mobilization, obeying to a logic of a neighborhood, police, and therefore the state has been pushed from these reclaimed areas. The architecture of the space has greatly participated in making it safe, because of the knowledge that the people living inside have. Therefore, there has been during this period a reshaping of social relations as well as new forms of individual and collective appropriation of space.

In the temporary absence of governmental authority, one of the groups mentioned in the previous sections has emerged as a symbol of anarchy and protestation (Group 1.3: Squatters). This group, is probably the least connected to the heritage, and only identifies to the symbolic of post-revolution rights of protestation. It is also the least accessible of the mentioned groups. During field visits, attempts to reach squatters were failed by inaccessibility to their claimed spaces. One of these spaces is the former **Israelite school neighboring “Palais Kheireddine”, a museum in the heart** of the Medina. The school shares the courtyard of the museum and thus there are many interaction problems.

The economic collapse in the Medina is linked to the situation of the country after the revolution. The economy is dependent on tourism, which sector has greatly declined according to statistics (referring to section 3.2.1). As mentioned in the description of groups in that section, the number of tourists in the Medina is not enough to sustain its economy. Therefore, many shops

have closed in the last five years. Nevertheless, the attachment of many artisans to their struggling businesses shows that there are alternatives to sustain the sector.

A Beldi craftsman specialized in wedding and funeral goods expressed his pleasure working in the Medina with these words: "Sometimes I do not sell any items throughout the day, and I'm still happy. But I get day when I do not come and I do not open the shop". **The nostalgia, an expression of place** attachment, is an aspect that empowers the dynamics. In fact, with the help of the civil society and collaboration of institutions such as ASM, the Artisans have the opportunity to promote and sell their merchandise through new methods such as exhibitions, organized workshops and other **events. In 2015, the exhibition "histoires d'artisans" was the outcome of a** collaboration between ASM, Medneta, the civil society and businesses in the Medina. The event allowed artisans to promote their crafts through an awareness raising campaign followed by a series of workshops and exhibitions where they could also sell their products. An artisan admitted in an interview during field work that such initiatives could revitalize the sector because they bring to the attention of the public many aspects of their culture. He explained that according to his experience the public is often not familiar with these aspects such as the processing of materials, the techniques used. This makes the people generally curious and collaborative.

Médina Centrale

Savez-vous que les métiers de dinandier et de cordonnier font partie des métiers les plus importants de la Médina de Tunis ?

Pour en savoir plus, soyez au rendez-vous, HISTOIRE D'ARTISANS, 13, 14 et 15 mars 2015 #histoiredartisans

Savez-vous que la Médina de Tunis compte aujourd'hui plus de 32 types de métiers et plus de 525 ateliers d'artisans ?

Pour en savoir plus, soyez au rendez-vous, HISTOIRE D'ARTISANS, 13, 14 et 15 mars 2015 #histoiredartisans

حكاية صناعية
HISTOIRE D'ARTISANS

حكاية صناعية
HISTOIRE D'ARTISANS

Chechia Expo **معرض الشاشية**

Savez-vous que la chéchia "Made in Medina" est exportée dans toute l'Afrique? Saviez-vous que la production de la chéchia prend quatre mois? Voici une exposition pour savoir plus sur la Star de la Médina de Tunis qui est sous-estimée.
Souk Chaouachia, du vendredi 13 mars au dimanche 15 mars 2015.

هل تعلم أن الشاشية التي يتم إنتاجها في المدينة القديمة، تصدر إلى جميع أنحاء أفريقيا؟ هل تعلم أن صناعة الشاشية تحتاج على الأقل إلى أربعة أشهر؟ يوجد هنا معرض يساعدك على التعرف على والتي تنتج في سوق الشواشية. يومئذ المعرض من يوم الجمعة 13 مارس إلى يوم الأحد 15 مارس 2015

La calligraphie **الخط العربي**

Vous voulez pratiquer la calligraphie arabe; c'est le bon moment et lieu pour vous. C'est une chance de plus de rencontrer et interagir avec le dernier fabricant de luth et le dernier relieur artisanal dans la Médina.
Dar Lasram II rue Bir el Hajjar, le dimanche 15 mars 2015, 9h00-13h00

ترغب في ممارسة الخط العربي؟ هذا هو الوقت والمكان المناسب هي أيضا فرصة تاريخية للالتقاء والتفاعل مع آخر حرفي متخصص في صناعة العود وأحد المتخصصين في تجليد الكتب في المدينة العتيقة.
دار الأصرم II، يوم الأحد 15 مارس 2015 من الساعة التاسعة صباحا إلى الساعة الواحدة بعد الزوال.

Savez-vous qu'il existe un seul céramiste aujourd'hui dans la Médina de Tunis et que les selliers ont quasiment disparu ?

Pour en savoir plus, soyez au rendez-vous, HISTOIRE D'ARTISANS, 13, 14 et 15 mars 2015 #histoiredartisans

MOSQUEE EZ-ZITOUNA

Savez-vous que plus de la moitié des oukals de la Médina centrale sont occupées par des artisans ?

Pour en savoir plus, soyez au rendez-vous, HISTOIRE D'ARTISANS, 13, 14 et 15 mars 2015 #histoiredartisans

Figure 36- Event promotional campaign based on diffusion of information about the Medina and the Crafts sector. Source: ASM 2015

3.2.4. Synthesis

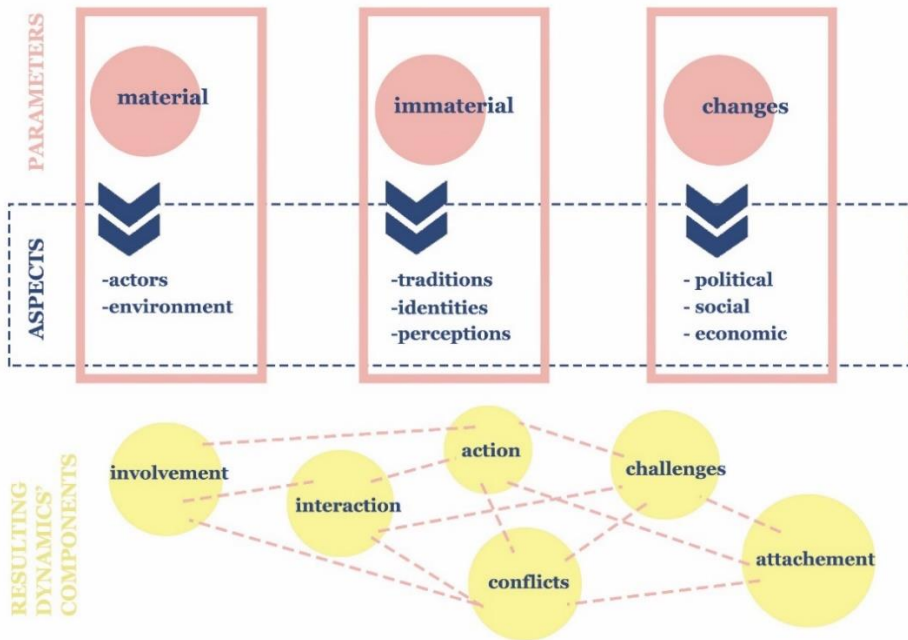


Figure 37- synthesis diagram of dynamics. Source: the researcher, 2016

The results of this first part of the investigations show that dynamics are the outcome of a different set of parameters shaping the perception of heritage in the context of the Medina. These could be classified into material parameters, immaterial parameters and parameters of change. Each of these are represented by different aspects such as actors and their environments, traditions, identities and different perceptions as well as political and economic aspects. The interlinkage between these different aspects produces the components of the dynamics and thus the reality of the heritage in the Medina of Tunis. This reality will be confronted in the coming section to the theory of preservation as observed through policies and spatial patterns on the field. This would highlight the role of special dynamics in the preservation process.

Chapter 4: Comparing theory and reality of the preservation process

«The government of Tunisia, after a long and mixed experience with piecemeal donor support for one or another of its historic monuments, **concluded that it was in the country's best interest to adopt a national program.** This approach consists of developing a countrywide strategy for cultural heritage preservation and management, defining criteria for site selection, and piloting the feasibility of each strategy objective on a suitably **chosen site. Tunisia's relatively** strong institutional and legal framework justified the adoption of this countrywide approach »⁹.

4.1. Observations

In order to compare theoretical approaches and discourses about the heritage with the reality in situ, importance was given to examples that illustrate dualities. These examples were observed on site. The observations could be summarized in three categories:

- Observations about policies and the extent of their applicability in reality.
- Observations about spatial patterns such as the reallocation of the functions of monuments, spatial dispersal of artisans inside the central Medina and the new patterns of public space
- Observations about phenomena that are developing, mainly gentrification.

⁹ The World Bank, Cultural heritage and development: A framework for action in the Middle East and North Africa, June 2001, p.42

4.1.1. Policies

The Medina of Tunis is listed as a cultural heritage and should be subjected to the law n°94-35 passed on February 24th 1994 relative to the code of archeological heritage, historical heritage and traditional arts (Le code du patrimoine). The law stipulates the measures that should be taken into consideration for the protection of heritage sites. According to the code, there should exist a safeguarding and enhancement plan (*plan de sauvegarde et de mise en valeur*) for the area that is listed as heritage. The safeguarding and enhancement plan includes the plot plan and regulatory requirements. It should mention: built or unbuilt properties to save, degraded constructions to rehabilitate, rules concerning the development of public squares, prohibited activities for being incompatible with the requirements of the protection of the conservation area (article 22). The law also mentions the rules to follow for any construction or rehabilitation actions taking place in protected areas such as the Medina of Tunis.

Today urban regulations are the most effective tool for the preservation of the **urban historical fabric; it is also the basis for ASM's technical support to inhabitants, in need of restoration permits or architectural consultancy services provided by ASM's restoration architects. In 1994, thanks to the Heritage Code, a Conservational Plan was also developed, with an aim to strengthen the process of legislative developments in the urban restoration sector (Leila Ben Gacem 2016).** This statement refers to more to theory than reality. In literature, it is very recurrent to come across this type of statements, mentioning the role of institutions such as the ASM in the preservation of heritage.

But in reality, the existing policies are generally not applied according to observations and interviews. The state of the art shows a different reality. A reality where most of the monuments are in advanced state of decay, some even in ruins already. These monuments are for most of the cases a state property. Besides, some practices that are against the law have developed in the recent years. Acquiring a house in a historic fabric that is part of the UNESCO world heritage, for example, should be subjected to special regulations. But real estate in the Medina has become an informal market.

During field visits, a case of a house that was recently sold was tracked. Through investigations, the new owner who is an architect, admitted that he started the construction without a permit from the Municipality. The municipality is theoretically represented also by the ASM when it comes to **the preservation of the Medina's heritage. When asked about the reason** behind avoiding the normal procedures, the owner stated that the paperwork in this context takes a long time to prepare. **“We have talked with all the neighbors before starting to demolish the old structure and launching the construction of the new house. When made sure to ask people from here and they explained that it is normal to proceed that way”, he explains.**



Figure 38- Public fountain of sidi Abdesslam protected by the decree of March 3, 1915. Photo: Boubakker ben Fradj, 2016



Figure 39- State of the fountain as of June 2016. Photo: Boubaker Ben Fraj, 2016

In order to understand the reality of policies and their applicability in the Medina of Tunis, it is important to refer to the groups of actors mentioned in the last chapter, who are targeted with these policies. The inhabitants (group 1) are on the top of the list, followed by artisans and business owners (group 2). The institutions (group 6) represent those policies as they are in charge of managing the heritage (INP) and preserving it (ASM).

The roles of these actors on the field is complex to assess due to the absence of coordination and communication. There are actually many loopholes as far as the management of the medina is concerned. An interview with a former employee at the ASM shed light on reasons behind such unconformity between reality and theory. According to her words, "Heritage is a double-edged sword since it generates many "problems" with the actors (...). There are good wills and some very extensive studies but it does not go very far. On the administrative structure, one can find the INP, ASM etc, and the main problem is: there is no coordination between them and between the research structures and architecture experts. The ASM was created to help people, but again, it is a double-edged sword, it only helps some people **and others not**"

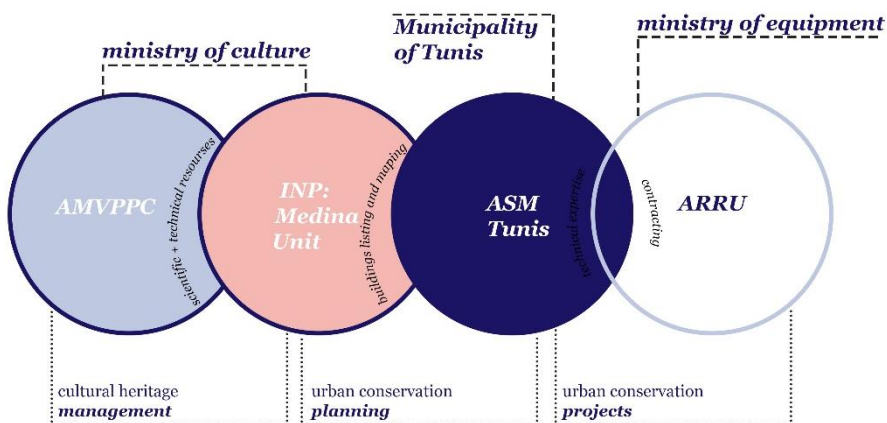


Figure 40- Institutional Framework of heritage preservation in Tunisia. Source: Escher and Scheppers, 2008

During the period of the research, the two main bodies that are responsible for the preservation of the Medina, which are the ASM and the INP were both struggling with internal issues concerning their status, their missions and their organizational structures. The ASM, besides some new collaborations with cultural actors, is currently redefining its status because of the changes in the laws regulating the activities of associations in Tunisia. Due to the implication of associations in the turmoil that has risen recently concerning terrorism and corruption, associations are being questioned about their financial resources and are penalized in case they fail to present evidences of their expenditures. The ASM, struggling with its legal status and internal affairs, is undergoing a reform to proceed with its activities. Through an interview with a former employee in the association, it has been mentioned that restoring the historic district and improving the living conditions of inhabitants can only be a long process. The ASM admits that it is the inhabitants of the Medina who are first concerned with the safeguarding of the values of heritage in the medina¹⁰. Therefore, they should be the starting point for any policy-making reflections

The INP, on the other hand, recently launched a tender to restructure the department of the conservation of the Medina. The administration suffers a lack of competences in the field. An interview with the head of the current department, Mr. Adnen Ben Nejma highlighted the main problems that the conservation sector suffers today. The unit in charge of the conservation of the Medina has been working on an inventory in order to suggest a revision for the actual PAU¹¹ of the Commune of Tunis. The project has been launched in 2012 and did not achieve its goals until now. The process has started with the aim to start by an evaluation of the critical state of the historic center and the organism that is in charge of the management and conservation, which is

¹⁰ Interview with a former ASM employee

¹¹ **PAU: Plan d'Aménagement Urbain** (urban development plan)

the CMT (the conservation unit that is part of the INP). It is with this desire that preliminary decisions are made. These are necessary for organizing and adequately managing the rehabilitation process, backup and enhancement.

The INP is aware of the problems of the conservation in the Medina of Tunis today. These problems could be summarized in 10 main points. These points are the result of the discussion carried with Mr. Adnen Ben Nejma, the head of the Medina Unit in the INP.

- 1- The absence of a general inventory of monuments of the Medina of Tunis
- 2- The absence of an effective legal tool for the good management of the historic complex of Tunis
- 3- The absence of historical graphic documents, most documents concerning the monuments do not exist or are not updated
- 4- The absence of medium and short-term strategies
- 5- The inconsistency in the management of building permit files due to a lack of objectivity and a clear and uniform vision
- 6- The lack of an inventory of equipment and materials of the CMT and especially regarding the archaeological monuments registered in certain monuments
- 7- Several projects take more time than expected in their execution
- 8- The profiles of the responsible staff are, in most cases, incompatible with the tasks assigned to them
- 9- CMT lacks competence in research tools
- 10- The absence of a heritage observatory.

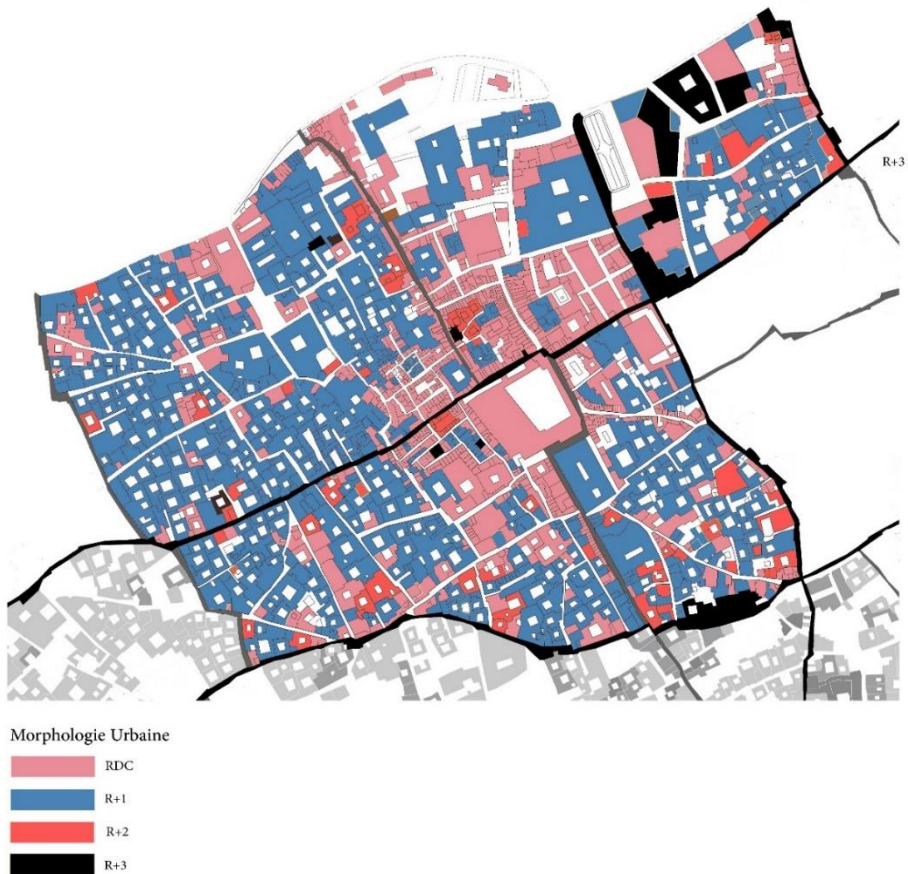


Figure 41- Map showing the morphology of buildings (number of floors). Source: INP 2015

Due to these problems, many changes in the morphology and patterns in the Medina are being witnessed. The lack of policies have turned the area into an experimental laboratory where all actors are acting for their own sake. This experimentation will be highlighted through other observation about the role of certain actors in the emergence of new practices involving different aspects of the heritage and not only its materiality.

4.1.2. Patterns

Some of the changes that occurred in the Medina concern some patterns that are the fruit of interventions of the official politics managing the heritage in the Medina such as the reallocation of the function of monuments in order to protect them from decay. Others revolve around spatial shifts such as the changes in the location of artisan workshops, and spatial phenomena such as gentrification. This section presents these patterns as diagnosed in the present.

Reallocation of the function of monuments

It was noticed through field observations and interviews that social dimension exists in the restoration projects of the medina, and the difference compared to other restoration approaches in the Arab world is that the social side is very important in the case of the Medina of Tunis. The authorities confirm that there is no will make this space a museum, on the contrary. They claim taking into account the specificities of the social living space. One measure to prove that is reallocation of function of several monuments after their restorations. The restoration of some abandoned houses and the idea to give them other functions is a way to develop the cultural and tourism sectors by making accessible to visitors other unknown and landscaped spaces. For example the case of the madrasas Montasiria that was a madrasah with a specific function which is the teaching of the Koran. This space was restored and became a kindergarten. The change of function, can be beneficial in a way that it allows daily maintenance to the affected monument. Moreover, it allows the building to be profitable but also to meet a social need of the local population: "The social dimension is any same view for a monument. When we restore a monument and give it a new function, the social dimension

consists studies carried in the neighborhood to find out what people need, such as the case for the Madrasah Montasiria. It was converted into a kindergarten in an area that is mainly residential, and where people needed to have a kindergarten (...) So each program for the conversion is studied and taking into account what the neighborhood needs” confirmed Faika Bejaoui, a former ASM member.

There is also the School of Traditional Music of Tunis La Rachidia which is installed in a monument. The principal of the school says they possess buildings around Tunis where they could establish the school, but for them it was essential to **link the history of Tunis’** music with its space that is the Medina of Tunis. Therefore, they would be able to participate in the preservation of its monuments by giving them another life. Examples of similar measure are many in the Medina. The National Heritage Institute was housed in the former home of a Bey, one of the most beautiful palace in the medina, a sub administration of INP is also installed in a house called Dar Othman, an architectural gem in the heart of the medina. The example of Dar Lasram also is important, a beautiful patio house, with its annexes is now completely restored and opened to the public serving as offices for the ASM.

In theory, this method of reallocating monuments presents many benefits and could be an efficient recycling measure to preserve the physical environment. The missing step in this approach is the assessment of its actual efficiency. If monuments such as Dar Lasrem benefited from the attention of local authorities because of the ability of the ASM to maintain its integrity, some other monuments could not escape the threatening decay. The Example of Dar Ben Abdallah gives probably the most evidence that it is not enough to inject a new function into an old monument but there should be a follow up of the evolution of the studied needs and therefore more flexible measures.






<i>Property</i>	<i>former use</i>	<i>new use</i>
 Kasba	location of Kasba	Town hall
Kasba	Arsenal	Ministry of defense
Kasba	Arsenal	Ministry of culture
Dar El Bey	Palace of the ruling Bey	Prime ministry
 Dar Daouletli	Residence of the governor	Rachidia music school
Dar Hssine	House	INP headquarters
 Dar Othman	House	Museum
Dar Cherif	House	INP annexes
Dar el Mestiri	House	INP annexes
 Dar Lasrem	House	ASM of Tunis
Makhzen dar Lasrem	Storehouse	Cultural club
 Dar ben Abdallah	House	Museum (under restoration)
Dar Jaziri	House	Cultural institute: house of poetry

Table 2- Buildings, their original function and new uses. Source: the researcher, 2016. Part 1

<i>Property</i>	<i>former use</i>	<i>new use</i>
 Dar Ibn Khaldoun	House	INP archives
 Dar ben Achour	House	Library El Bacha street
 Dar Bach Hamba	House	NGo: L'Art Rue
 Medrassa Bir Lahjar	Quran school	Cultural center for youth
 Medrassa Achouria	Quran school	Cultural institute
 Medrassa Montasiria	Quran school	Kindergarten
 Medrassa el Nakhla	Quran school	Training center
Synagogue	Synagogue	UNTF (National union of Tunisian women)
 Eglise St Croix	Church	Municipality annex
 Eglise du Rosaire	Church	Festival venue
Caserne El Attarine	Barracks	National library
 Kishlet sidi el morjani	Barracks	Department of INP: restoration of the Medina

Table 3- Buildings, their original function and new uses. Source: the researcher, 2016. Part 2

Spread of artisan workshops

The souks of Tunis could not escape the globalization phenomenon, making them open to new markets. The effects of this change constitute a threat for the local craftsmanship that is slowly disappearing and replaced by imported cheaper commodities. According to a study carried during the Medneta¹² between 2014 and 2015, there are 525 artisan workshops spread in the Medina. The local craftsmen, who used to produce and sell in the souks have either shut down their businesses, or moved their workshops to other areas in the Medina. This point illustrates the non-compliance with the existing codes and laws, concerning the zoning in the Medina. While there is a theoretical set of laws, the reality is different on field. The relocated workshops are often found in formerly residential areas and in most of the **cases in “oukalas” (caravanserais).**

The other reality of the site, is the reconnection to craftsmanship expressed by new designers established in the Medina. During field work, a project based in the Medina and led by a young designer was mainly devoted to solicit local workforce and material. The idea is to renew the image of crafts according to the new trends of fashion and design. The designer admits that the possibilities are countless with the materials and know-how of experimented artisans. The preservation of such practices are important within the scope of heritage preservation.

¹² Mediterranean Cultural Network for the Promotion of creativity in arts, crafts and design for urban regeneration in the historic centers.

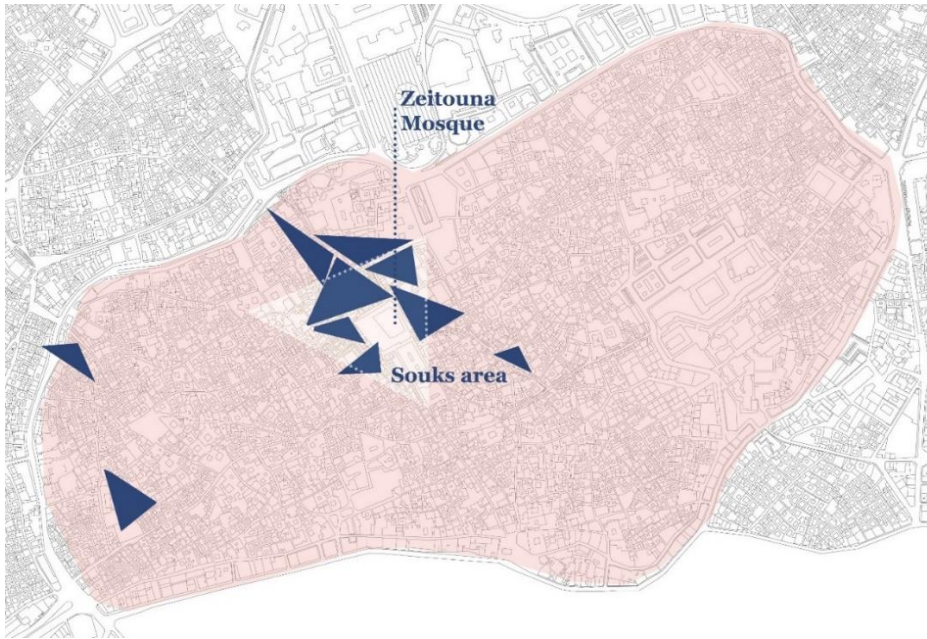


Figure 42- Location of Artisans mapped in 1985. Source: the researcher based on data by ASM.



Figure 43-Location of Artisans mapped in 2015. Source: the researcher based on data by ASM.

4.1.3. Confined gentrification

Tunis's Medina has witnessed various changes affecting its dynamics in the last century. The political changes that the country went through, had repercussions on the structure of the city and the role it plays in a wider vision for its development. Nevertheless, parts of the historical district have remained the most vibrant parts of the city center and sustained the prosperity of its economic, social and cultural dynamics for the whole population of the capital city.

Gentrification refers to a particular form of “bourgeoisification” respect the neighborhoods and through the transformation of the habitat or of the public space and shops. This concept fits into the scope of social and involves a change in the social division of intra-urban space, which also involves physical transformation. In urban studies, gentrification, at first, was identified as a re-appropriation process by the middle classes of abandoned downtowns. But it evolved to include multiple forms of transformation of popular areas that are not necessarily residential; such as industrial areas, especially the old docks - whether by rehabilitation or new construction (new-built gentrification), on the initiative of public authorities, private developers or new resident households.

Gentrification and tourism-oriented revitalization are not yet a concern in the Medina of Tunis according to observations on field. It still stands as a national symbol that offers an authentic urban experience of a living heritage. Compared to other Medinas in North Africa, such as Marrakech, the Medina of Tunis was not sold out to foreigners. Instead, it kept evolving in a national context either through the projects that are initiated, or through its actual sociocultural dynamics. This was facilitated by the legal framework that includes laws forbidding foreigners to possess any real

estate property in the Medina in order to prevent a scenario similar to that **of Marrakech's Medina.**

The strategy implemented by the state, focuses on the identity of the Medina as a national symbol and thus does not allow any appropriation of the fabric for the sake of tourism. In fact, among the 15000 buildings in the central Medina, only seven are list hotels and one is a youth hostel. Yet, the real estate laws have seen some changes in the last ten years. In fact, a law passed on May 22, 2006, allows henceforth foreigners to own property **in Tunisia, only within a “touristic zone” and for tourism**-oriented projects (JORT, 2006). The medina of Tunis until now, is not considered as a **“touristic zone” and thus this law still doesn't pertain to its case, which** explains the absence of foreigners in the Medina.

Through a survey conducted by the researcher, people from the middle class expressed their disinterest in living in the Medina although they expressed attachment to its symbolic and its cultural load. The reasons given for that matter are all revolving around the issue of insalubrity, decay and inadequate infrastructure. Many buildings in the Medina are in an advanced state of disrepair and the absence of a global strategy to promote the Medina as a living heritage is negatively affects its image as a residential area.

In many cases, gentrification starts as a spontaneous phenomenon and is, then, backed up by governmental or private real estate initiatives. In the case of the Medina of Tunis, there are very few signs of this phenomenon taking place. These signs include the emergence of new boutique hotels, galleries, first-class restaurants and other fashion-related businesses **and around “Rue Sidi Ben Arous”.**

4.1.4. Interpretations

The role of official planning and preservation bodies in the Medina has to be questioned in terms of how sustainable their measures are and whether they meet or not the need of the communities that are evolving. In fact, these measures are neither compatible with the basic recommendations of the UNESCO nor can be categorized as iconoclastic measures due to the absence of an effective policy-making structure and follow-up strategies. The Medina has witnessed important changes induced by factors that were not taken into consideration. The political effervescence of the years following the 2011 revolution has impacts on the dynamics of the historical district where some actors ascended to new degrees of legitimacy.

While developing this research, many contrasts have appeared and influenced the research objectives. The preservation of historic centers is strongly dependent on the degrees of identification to the place and the commitment of the communities. This would explain the failure to impose non-inclusive policies and the tense relations between actors that identify differently to the Medina of Tunis. The socio-cultural dynamics is the reality that policy-makers should not only address but also integrate in the process of policy making and any action plans intended to influence the conservation state of the fabric. In the Medina of Tunis, these dynamics have succeeded where policies have failed. One important aspect, besides the number of initiatives and events taking place regularly, is the diversity of the themes these tackle, giving as much importance to the built heritage as to the immaterial heritage of the Medina. This immaterial heritage consisting of traditions, food, music, behavior, clothes, street games, arts etc.

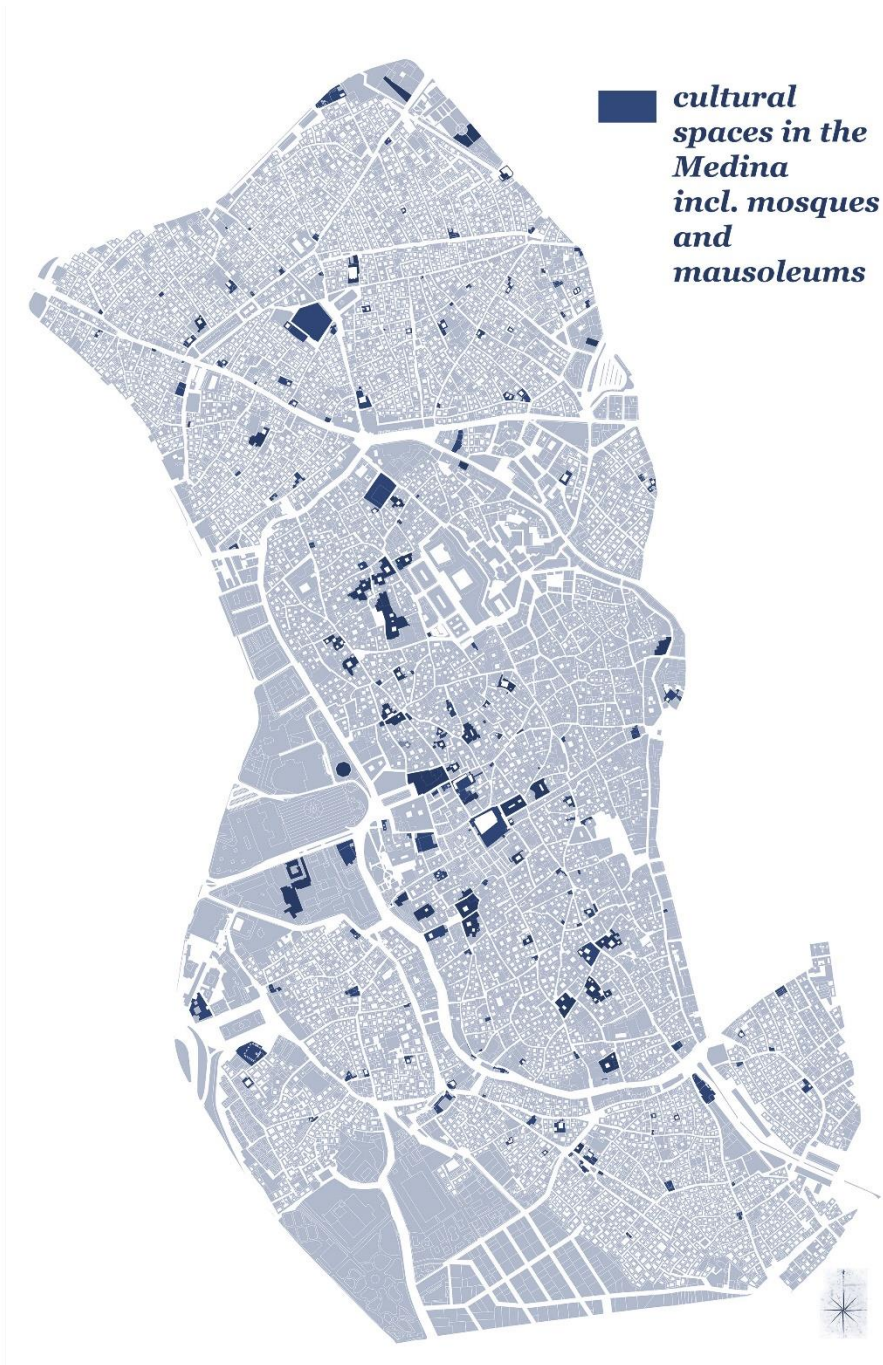


Figure 44- map of cultural spaces in Tunis. Source: the researcher . Basis of Map: INP, 2016

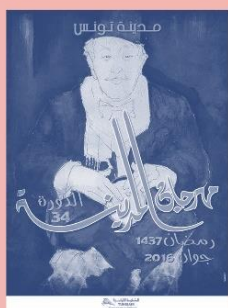
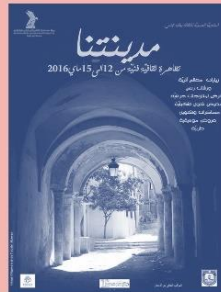


Figure 45- Diffent cultural manifestations in the Medina. Sources: Rachidi School, Aswar lemdina, Festival de la Medina, L'Art Rue,ASM, Medinapedia, Ministry of Culture and Doolesha

4.2. Assessing the impacts of cultural initiatives on the Medina

Through observations, culture has turned out to be an important asset in the Medina. The cultural dynamics prove that the reality of preservation in such historic districts is not only relying on policies but also on integrated practices and initiatives that become part of the identity of the place as they target deeper phenomena.

4.2.1. Cases

In order to assess the impact of cultural dynamics in the Medina, this part of the research focuses on two cases of initiatives: The festival of the Medina case illustrating the capacity of cultural events to revive the district by bringing all categories of people together **during times they usually don't feel safe to go to the Medina**. The other example illustrates the capacity of an NGO **called l'Art Rue to foster exchange between different actors especially artists and people from the neighborhood**.

Festival de la Medina

Cultural enhancement of the medina is an essential condition for his return life. There are public actions with the creation of several cultural events proposed by the House of Culture. The Medina Festival is especially programmed to the month of Ramadan. "The city at that period (Ramadan) sparkles with lights: signs, illuminated windows of cafes and concert halls, garlands and multicolored lamps. Since its creation in 1983, the Association of the Medina Festival offers entertainment every night of the month Ramadan in different spaces restored in the medina (Palace Medersas, Zaouias, bustling streets ...). This event has become an important appointment for the population of Tunis along the holy month. This association supported by the Municipality of Tunis contributes enormously to rediscover the streets of the medina and its architectural heritage and brings music closer to a wider audience. The festival offers different cooperation for the benefit of the revitalization and preservation of the historic center, a place of collective memory. For this matter, the written and audiovisual press participates significantly to the implementation of awareness among this public. During the last years social Media has become the main means of marketing for this type of events and to reach younger people. The audience has changed during these years, becoming younger and bringing different fields of interests in the art and culture to the Medina (street **art performances, slam poetry...**)

On the basis of funding for the improvement of the tourist environment Fund these festivals and these evenings during the month of Ramadan are held to promote projects mixing culture and tourism. The Medina Festival was

established in 1982, at the deterioration of the image of the Medina especially that the latter has to his credit numerous monuments can serve as cultural entertainment places for a diverse audience. These animations are through performances and screenings in zaouïas, madrasahs or mansions, places previously ignored by visitors to the Medina. This aims to valuation the hardware architectural space, but also intangible through singing, exhibitions ... There was open during the festival this medina restaurants, art galleries, the charming hotel "Dar El Mdina," the Dar El Jeld Diwen and showcases crafts. In collaboration with the Ministries of Tourism, Trade and Crafts, the medina was moderated by well-lit paths, accessible and comfortable for pedestrians, but also by Jazz concerts instead of court, singing instead of Hafsia to lute instead Romdhane Bey, and the release of "tabbal" a man wearing the outfit traditional with the drum for the good fortune of Se hour (beginning of fasting). The painters are installed on several sites in the medina with their brushes and colors, others exhibited their paintings and their creations.

*atmosphere
during the
month of
Ramadan and
the Festival de
la Medina*



Figure 46 -Atmosphere during the Festival. Source: www.hellotunisia.com

L'ART RUE

As presented in the Actors section of this research, this association's work is strongly connected to the context of the Medina. The association is occupying one of the palaces of the Medina and using it not only as a workplace but also a venue for different cultural activities. The activities include Artistic residencies, concerts, workshops but also a cultural club for children from neighboring schools. **The association's response to the lack of resources in the** fields of creation is fostering collective work. It experiments relationships between art, society, heritage, memory, territory, citizenship and politics. The research refers to their work for two main reasons:

- **The temporary impacts of Dream City festival created by l'Art Rue and** the way it is integrated into the new identity of the Medina.
- **The impact of the "school projects" initiated by the association.**

According to an interview with Béatrice Dunoyer, project manager and responsible for public relations in the association, the association could legally exist only starting from 2012 when a permit was attributed. Nevertheless, it has been working since 2006, under the totalitarian regime, without a legal permit. Throughout its four editions (in 2007, 2010, 2012 and 2015), Dream City has contributed to the showcase of the dynamics previously described in the research. Being based in the Medina of Tunis, **the festival's resources are derived from the site. The preparations on site take at** least 6 months before the launching as explained by the interviewee. During this period, a contact is established with the population and artisans in order to solicit their cooperation. Then a series of workshops is organized with all actors involved, including volunteers that are most of the time students in different universities within the city. The interviewee also highlighted the fact that during the two first editions that took place before 2011, it was harder to organize and manage the festival especially when it comes to dealing with

official authorities. On the contrary, the last two editions were relatively easier because the festival was already known by the population. In fact, during field research and through interviews, many people were curious to know if there will be a new edition of the Festival. When asked about the reason behind it, many people simply answered: “We love the Medina at that time, it lives again”.

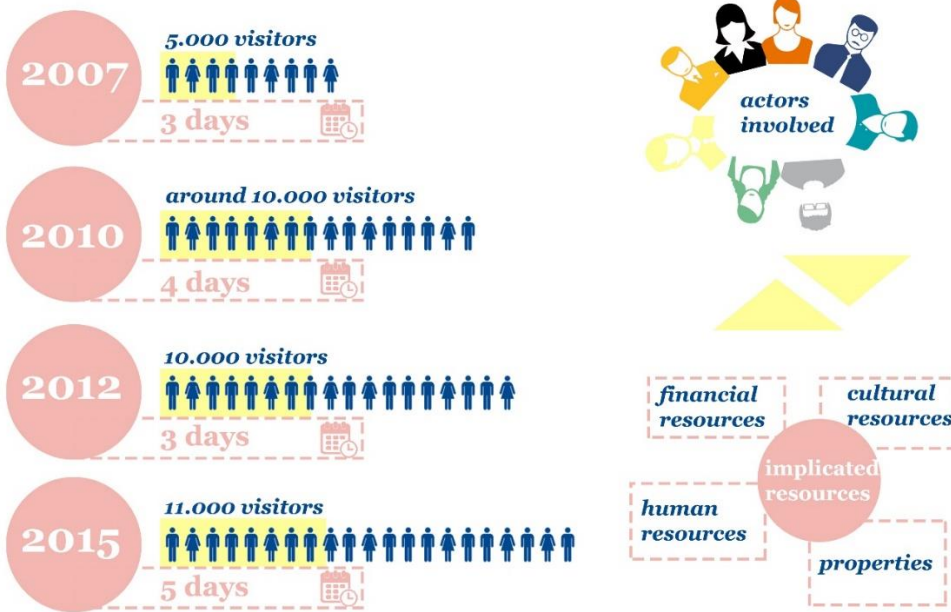


Figure 47- Number of sold entries for Dream City festival per year. Source: the researcher based on data from l'Art Rue, 2016

The association's work also has an educational and social component. The school projects it has initiated in the past years within a network of schools inside the Medina aims to raise awareness among children of different issues **such as culture, environment protection and heritage preservation. L'Art Rue's objective is to find an alternative** to the lack of initiatives from the concerned authorities by exposing children to their reality and sensitizing them to factors that influence their environment. Seeing the effectiveness of these initiatives, the Tunisian ministry of education with the cooperation of the City of Architecture and Heritage in Paris have joined two of the **association's projects called "Cartons Pleins" and "Change your classroom" in** which children are introduced to creative tasks such as the renovation of their own learning spaces.



Figure 48- Different projects initiated by the l'Art rue association. Source: <http://lartrue.com/>

4.2.2. Impacts

The impacts of such initiatives in the Medina as are visible through experience. The Medina has a variety of aspects that are profitable for experimentation as long as it is considerate towards the characteristics of the context. These aspects include the social mixture and the urban setting. In order to assess these impacts, questions related to these festivals were included in the survey made during the research phase. As much as 60% of people admitted that they visited the Medina for the first time during a cultural event. Most of these people are aged between 18 and 25 years. As far as inhabitants are concerned, interviews showed a satisfaction with the vitality of the Medina during events like Dream City.

In general the impacts could be sorted into different groups according to their nature:

Social impacts

These include the new possibilities of collaboration between different parties including artists, inhabitants, artisans and business owners. The collective work during these events vary from preparations on site to assuring the security. Among important aspects is the new awareness of inhabitants of their environment. In an interview carried on site, one inhabitant explained **the change of his perception of the Medina through these interventions. “We are aware that we live in a special area, but we only assimilate it when we see the amount of people that come to these events. They come from different parts of the city and obviously from different background, but they are all amazed by the Medina. This makes me personally more considerate and attached to this place, no matter the other issues we face daily”, he explained.**

Economic impacts

These include the income generated during these manifestations where thousands of visitors use shopping facilities as well as restaurants and cafés during breaks or after the shows. Hotels are also integrated in the loop as an accommodation option for visitors and artists. Furthermore, there are new markets that are flourishing as an indirect result of these initiatives such as printing and design since the Medina became more accessible.

Impacts on the material heritage

The heritage is promoted through a less monumental image. The survey carried during research demonstrated that heritage is assimilated by most **people with “monuments”**. By making it more accessible, heritage could be understood within its actual context: a valuable good that is adaptable to new spatial configurations and needs.

Political impacts

These include the influence that these initiatives have on official governmental bodies such as ministries that cooperate with organizers. Political impacts also refer to the legitimacy acquired by these initiatives as an influential actors of change accepted by the community in the Medina through acts of engagement.



Figure 49- synthesis diagram: impacts of analyzed cultural initiatives. Source: the researcher, 2016

4.2.3. Conclusion

In a previous section of the research where actors were analyzed, there has been a reference to the complexity of the human networks and the conflicts it implies. These particular case studies are presented as an example of alternatives that show two main ideas within the scope of the research:

1. The first idea is about the perception of identity and the instability of its construct. In fact, as shown by these examples, some of the activities that are introduced to the Medina could be considered inappropriate if put in a theoretical frame where the Medina of Tunis is seen as a fixed space. The outcome of investigations within institutions such as ASM or the INP confirms this idea. In fact, these parties are currently reframing their approach to heritage through cooperation with other actors especially NGOs and cultural actors as demonstrated previously. New identity factors such as **“collectiveness”** and **“openness”** to others are cumulated by means of cultural and social initiatives in the Medina. The reality of these evolving identities influences also the attachment of people to their physical environment and immaterial heritage.
2. The second idea is about the alternatives to institutional preservation tools. These alternatives mainly rely on a participatory approach to heritage preservation. The examples demonstrate that there are possibilities to sidestep the lack of political will and the lack resources by utilizing the existing potential of actors.

Chapter 5: Recommendations: Conciliating theory and practice

“Preserve while considering the constant composition of the meanings, identities, and traditions; considering the heritage as a resource for development; and, simultaneously, building the heritage in its social sense, of citizenship and promoting the quality of life for a future that aims for equity, the right to memory and cultural diversity, within an interdisciplinary and interinstitutional strategy, are placed as the main challenges of what is referred to as “sustainability” in the context of heritage policies” (Gayego Bello Figueiredo, 2014)

Accordingly, the research’s outcome is an attempt to establish a set of recommendations based on the understanding of the context. These recommendations are targeting three main axis:

1. Heritage policy retrofitting
2. Governance based on dynamics
3. Cultural sustainability in the realm of heritage preservation

5.1. Heritage policy retrofitting

After understanding the context of the Medina through the changes it underwent based on literature, the reality of its socio-cultural dynamics, the potential actors of change and the conditions of this change. The aim would be to envision a strategy to sustain the effectiveness of policies and their applicability in the Medina relying on its reality.

According to an interview with the director of the INP. The future project for the medina is an action plan that will involve all actors. The civil society in the context of the Medina has proven that its role is crucial. For a public institution, to admit its inability to manage alone the heritage of the Medina is a step forward in Tunis. The rivalry between the INP and ASM has to be put aside and transformed into collaboration since both have potential in different fields of expertise. One of the problems stated by Mr. Adnen Ben Nejma is the lack of specificity when it comes to dealing with heritage policies. He explained that a National Institute for Heritage working on a national level to insure the preservation of different types of heritage (archeological sites, museums, objects, natural sites and Medinas) is not enough. The particularities of each context have to be assessed and treated in different corresponding units. This way there would be less losses in time, human and financial resources. Specific policies could emanate from these legitimate units having as a single vis-à-vis a governmental structure. These types of units would include representatives of each group of actors mentioned in the research. Their input based on respective experiences would foster more specific approaches to policies and better acceptance from different communities.

5.2. Governance based on social dynamics

The dynamics analyzed in the research show that governance structures such as the municipality of Tunis are important when it comes to dealing with conflicts but their measures are influenced by civic action and engagement is the process of preservation. The investigations also demonstrate the leading role of NGOs in the post-revolution context. It is important to mention that this research was conducted in a special context influenced by political factors such as the delay in conducting municipal elections. This means that the municipalities were not reformed after the revolution in Tunisia, which results in the absence of trust and legitimacy granted by people to these

122

governmental bodies. In that way, temporary governance is performed by the civil society. It is therefore recommended that special environments such as the Medina of Tunis are administrated through a multilevel participatory governance organization implicating the relevant actors in the framework of decision-making and implementation of the policies. This could be profitable for the preservation process by acknowledging the role of the dynamics as a resource. The hazards of abuses could also be reduced through accountability of shared resources and by avoiding exclusiveness to access to heritage practices.

5.3. Cultural sustainability in the realm of heritage preservation

When tackled separately, the topic of cultural sustainability might appear incongruous with the realm of heritage preservation. The cases presented in the research as well as reading on updated knowledge on cultural heritage show the tight relation between creative work and the identity. Supporting cultural sustainability within the context of the Medina for example could possibly influence the identity of its residents which represents the immaterial heritage of future generations. It could also contribute to the preservation of a certain know-how in the different fields it involves in a process of constant change. Therefore, the existing cultural platform that exists already in the Medina could be enhanced and integrated within a new policy and governance framework in order to develop synergies between the different sectors included in the work of cultural actors. Sectors such as tourism and local craftsmanship could be promoted which could create economic opportunities that would be beneficial for a continuous revitalization of the urban fabric by investing income in rehabilitation and renovation of the existing infrastructures.

5.4. General conclusion

By analyzing the medina in its current structure, the complexity of the problems that have accumulated through more than a century on the political, economic and social. Tunis medina has potential for cultural tourism, cultural engagement. The development of cultural tourism is expected to bring new life and participate in the safeguarding of the Medina. This requires the deployment of huge resources in human capital, technical and financial involvement with the authorities and stakeholders in tourism and culture. The preservation of this heritage is a shared responsibility. And for that there should be "work towards a good scientific understanding, improve urban planning practices and architecture and open political debates to ensure civic responsibility". This would allow a better appropriation of space by the different actors socially present and in this perspective, the spatial discontinuities could probably fade. It is necessary to guide any investment closer to a practice that is based on commitment, discovery and exchange. The development of the craft structures is a need to adapt new trade patterns that meet the quality to compete with important goods that are invading the old souks and markets. The craft sector shall prevail and regain its position. It is a way to promote the cultural knowledge. Promotion should be based on product quality and authenticity by a certain control from a responsible body (example: the Office of Artisanat in Tunis).

There is a set of parallel movements from the local politics that allow safeguarding and enhancement of the medina, addressing a much wider audience and not just tourists. These backup movements are many and have important part of the heritage rehabilitation of the medina of Tunis. The medina and its assets are in the process of regaining interest by a great effort undertaken by different actors. But this effort seems to be hampered by lack of coordination among stakeholders and agencies in the medina. All this requires a greater coordination, a wider vision and a more regular “**mise-au-**124

point”. A dialogue must be set up between representatives of the various interests and identities. It must be a base for common projects of rehabilitation of the medina, its monuments and handicrafts.

Today there is a need to go beyond the idea of implementation of individual projects disconnected from other disciplines. A concerted effort must be made between these institutions and the population living and working in the medina.

In a complex context such as the case for the Medina of Tunis, actual policies play a secondary role compared to established habits and practices. The policies should be flexible enough to help the population to both preserve the heritage and live it. Preserving and living are equally important since the existing policies could be easily applied for an archeological site with no dynamics inside. Therefore, it is recommended to build a vision based on the existing potentials rather than the existing problems because there is actual proof of the efficiency of these potentials.

The example of the Medina could also serve a reference to assess site-specific urban policies of new built areas in Tunis since it shows an evolution over time of a neighborhood inhabited by different communities. It can hence help speculate the possible changes that neighborhoods might encounter.

To conclude with, referring to the Title of the research, the role of sociocultural dynamics in the Medina of Tunis is the continuity of its evolution despite the regression of official and efficient planning and management structures. The evolution of the immaterial heritage and the experimentation with the cultural heritage in the anticipation of an overall urban regeneration of the Medina is a way of preserving it.

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Annexes

Questions for institutions in the Medina:

1. What is your employment status?
2. Since when?
3. Is there any backup and restoration of the Medina?
4. Since when? How do you proceed?
5. What has already been achieved as backup operations? Monuments?

Circuits?

6. What do you plan to restore in the future?
7. Why such a space (monument) and not another? How do you choose?
8. Does this space have a social dimension?
9. For you, what is this institution and the existence of this center in the medina offers Medina value or not?
10. How do you fight the deterioration of buildings, especially houses and residential spaces?
11. For the people who are leaving the Medina, is there any advice from your behalf to influence their decision?
12. Is there any help offered for the people to safeguard their property?
13. What types of help?
15. How do you see your relation with the inhabitants?

16. Are there other local movements backup and tourism development the Medina?
17. Did you integrate the local population in your procedures?
18. I noticed that you gave a lot of functions to monuments such the delegation, the madrassah Rachidia. Is it your choice to you? Or How's it going ? It allows you to live the building?
19. Why did you choose to settle in this monument?
20. What is the purpose of the restoration of this space, it is intended only for tourists? Residents?
21. What became of Tunis population who left once the medina?
22. Are they about to return?
23. What is your intention with respect to this population?
24. What is your intention in relation to the current population?
25. Is the medina, this place of memory and culture, is in the process of finding a new start?
26. Is it becoming a center of cultural and tourist activities? Or will it follow the example of Marrakech medina and become inhabited by foreigners?
27. Do you have a model of a medina in the Arab world to follow? Why ?
28. The majority of tourists to the Medina belongs to the mass tourism category, do you have the development projects of other types of tourism?
29. Many problems exist in the medina, mass tourism, guides, Chinese products, lack of security, dirt ... How you position over all this?
30. How to deal with security issues, dirt in the medina?

Survey for inhabitants and visitors

Ce questionnaire a été élaboré dans le cadre d'une étude de master intitulée : Le rôle des dynamiques socioculturelles dans la préservation des centres historiques: Le cas de la Médina de Tunis

La Médina de Tunis est l'une des Médinas les plus préservées. Elle est également un exemple **d'un patrimoine vivant, y compris les différentes communautés qu'elle abrite et leurs identités** différentes. L'objectif de cette étude est d'évaluer les effets de ces dynamiques socioculturelles de la Médina sur le processus de sa préservation et de comparer ces effets avec les idéologies nationales et internationales axées sur la valeur patrimoniale matérielle des centres historiques.

1. Age

-18

18-24

25-34

35-54

55+

2. Sexe

Homme Femme

3. Area

Où habitez-vous à Tunis?

4. Profession

5. Habitez-vous /avez-vous habité à la Médina de Tunis?

Yes

No

Les questions 6-9 concernent les habitants de la Medina de Tunis

6. Si oui, dans quelle partie de la Médina et depuis quand ?

7. Pourquoi avez-vous choisi de vivre à la Médina?

Location (centralité, proximité des services)

Raisons économiques (prix du loyer...)

Style de vie (culture, traditions...)

Valeur architecturale et authenticité du tissu

Autres

8. Etes-vous satisfaits des conditions de vie à la Médina de Tunis?

Oui

Non

Veillez justifier en quelques mots votre réponse:

9. **Quels changements sont les plus immanents pour la Médina aujourd'hui**

Changements sociaux (renforcement des communautés)

Renouvellement urbain (réhabilitation des bâtiments en ruines espaces ouverts, plus de services...)

Pas de changements nécessaires

Autre, veuillez mentionner

10. Quelle est la fréquence de vos visites à la Médina?

Quotidiennement

Plus de 2 fois par semaine

Occasionnellement

Rarement

11. **Selon votre expérience, que représente la Médina de Tunis le plus aujourd'hui?**

Un quartier commercial bondé

Un quartier populaire

Des repères culturels

Une zone touristique

Autre (veuillez mentionner)

12. Quelles activités vous réjouissent le plus lorsque vous êtes à la Médina ?

Shopping (frappe, souks, marches)

Restaurants /Cafés

Promenade

Évènements culturels

Autre, (veuillez mentionner)

13. Quelle est la spécificité de la Médina comparé aux nouveaux quartiers de la capitale?

14. Qui joue le plus grand rôle dans la promotion de la Médina de Tunis

Les institutions gouvernementales

Les ONG

Les Médias (films, séries, réseaux sociaux.)

Les organismes culturels

Les habitants, les commerçants...

15. Pendant le mois de Ramadan, la Médina attire beaucoup plus de gens que pendant l'année

Allez-vous à la Médina pendant Ramadan?

Pourquoi, selon vous, les gens sont-ils plus attirés par la Médina à cette période de l'année

16. Avez-vous déjà participé ou assisté à un événement culturel se déroulant à la Médina de Tunis?

Oui

Non

Si oui, lequel/lesquels ?

La Médina présente-t-elle un cadre adaptée à ce genre d'activités ? Pourquoi ?

17. Certaines Oukalas abritent encore des classes défavorisées et certains bâtiments (ex : palais Kheireddine) sont squattés. Selon vous, devrait-il exister des mesures pour expulser ces habitants et empêcher la reproduction de ce phénomène ?

Oui

Non

Pouvez-vous justifier votre réponse en quelques mots

18. Qui est plus apte à comprendre et aborder les problèmes de la Médina ?

La communauté (habitants, commerçants...)

La société civile

Le gouvernement (Municipalités, ministères, institutions)

Une collaboration entre ces derniers

19. Quelle devrait être la priorité dans le processus de sauvegarde de la Médina de Tunis?

La valeur matérielle/ patrimoine bâti

La valeur immatérielle

Les deux sont importants

نبذة مختصرة

تركز هذه الأطروحة على فهم العلاقة بين الممارسات المعروفة من طرف السلطات المسؤولة والمؤسسات المختصة في الحفاظ على التراث العمراني للمدينة العتيقة بتونس و واقعها كإطار حضري حيوي. من ناحية أخرى تطمح الدراسة الى تقييم دور القطاع الثقافي الاجتماعي الذي اعتمده المجتمع المدني خصوصا اثر التغييرات السياسية التي طرأت على البلاد، في تحقيق نفس الاهداف.

من ناحية، هناك جانب إيجابي سيتم التركيز عليه: المدينة العتيقة بتونس تطورت باعتبارها رمزا للهوية الوطنية. على عكس مدن أخرى في شمال أفريقيا، مثل مراكش، قد نفادت المدينة في تونس ظاهرة الإفراط في التحسين من أجل السياحة الموسمية. عدد الفنادق والعقارات المملوكة للأجانب ليس ضخما. هذا يثبت أن الإطار القانوني عمل لصالح الحفاظ على حيوية هذا الحي كتراث وطني وبالتالي تجنب عملية بيع المدينة والتغييرات الجذرية التي تنجر عن ذلك. مما ساهم في تشكل ديناميات معينة داخل المدينة ساهمت في التخفيف من التهديدات المتعلقة بتدهور البيئة العمرانية

من ناحية أخرى، يظهر الإطار النظري للحفاظ على التراث نقصا في التوفيق بين إمكانيات المدينة ليس فقط باعتبارها تراثا ماديا ولكن أيضا بصفتها تراثا ثقافيا اجتماعيا بما فيها من الديناميات الخاصة. هناك وجود انقطاعات بين السياسات والممارسات التي تشكل عائقا لإعادة تطوير ممكنة للمدينة اعتمادا على الهوية المتطورة التي تقوم على شعبيتها، تنوعها والدور التحويلي الذي تلعبه الثقافة في الحفاظ على التكامل بين نسيجها المعماري و الحيوي .

إقرار

هذه الرسالة مقدمة في جامعة عين شمس وجامعته في وقت حرجي لحصولي على درجة الماجستير في علم الاجتماع
التي صممتها لمسة دامية. إننا نعمل الذي نحوي. هذه الرسالة التي تم إنجازها بمساعدة الباحثين سنة ٢٠١٦

هذه الرسالة التي تم إنجازها من قبل الباحثين في علم الاجتماع هو خلاصة بحثي في علم الاجتماع وأنظمة التعليم العالي في مصر
الإشارة إلى المواد المذكورة من المراجع العلمية التي تم استخدامها في إعداد هذه الرسالة..

وهذا الإقرار مني بقبولك،،،

للتقوي ع:

الباحث: نائل محمد فيفي*

التاريخ / يوليو ٢٠١٦

دور الديناميات الاجتماعية و الثقافية في الحفاظ على مراكز المدن التاريخية دراسة للمدينة العتيقة بتونس

مقدمة للحصول على درجة الماجستير في العمران المتكامل والتصميم المستدام

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تاريخ المناقشة:

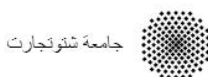
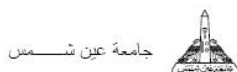
الدراسات العليا

أجيزت الرسالة بتاريخ:

موافقة مجلس الجامعة .../.../...

ختم الإجازة

موافقة مجلس الكلية .../.../...



MM/DD/YYYY



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