

FOOD PRODUCING COOPERATIVES IN THE BEKAA VALLEY: A GATEWAY OF CULTURE FOODS INTO LEBANON'S URBAN CITIES

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Uses issues

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INTRODUCTION

LEBANON a rich and diverse country



Lebanon



INTRODUCTION

LEBANON a rich and diverse country

- Za'atar mix
- Keshek
- Traditional cheeses
- Sumac
- Olive oil



- Burghul
- Concentrated sour grape juice

- Labneh
- Pomegranate molasses
- Pine nuts
- Vine leaves
- Pickles
- Vinegar



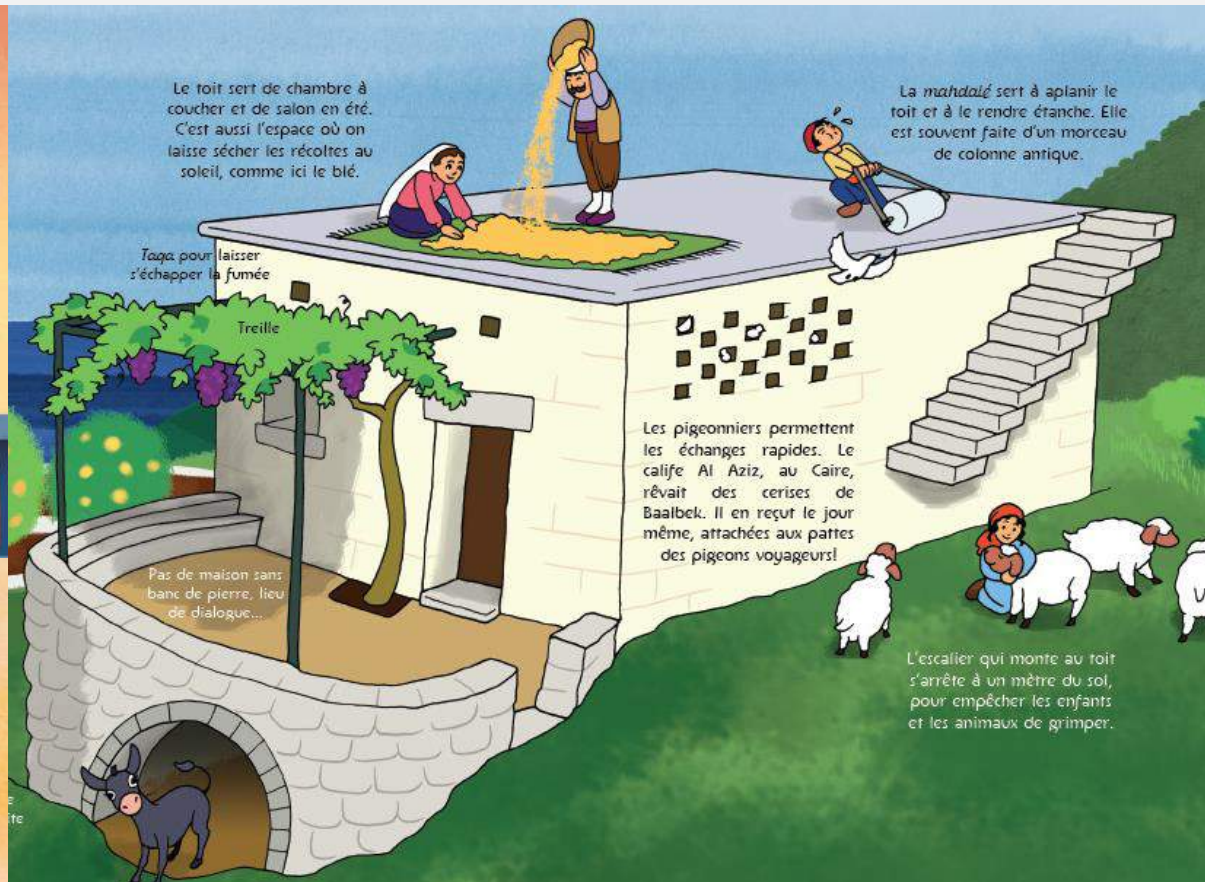
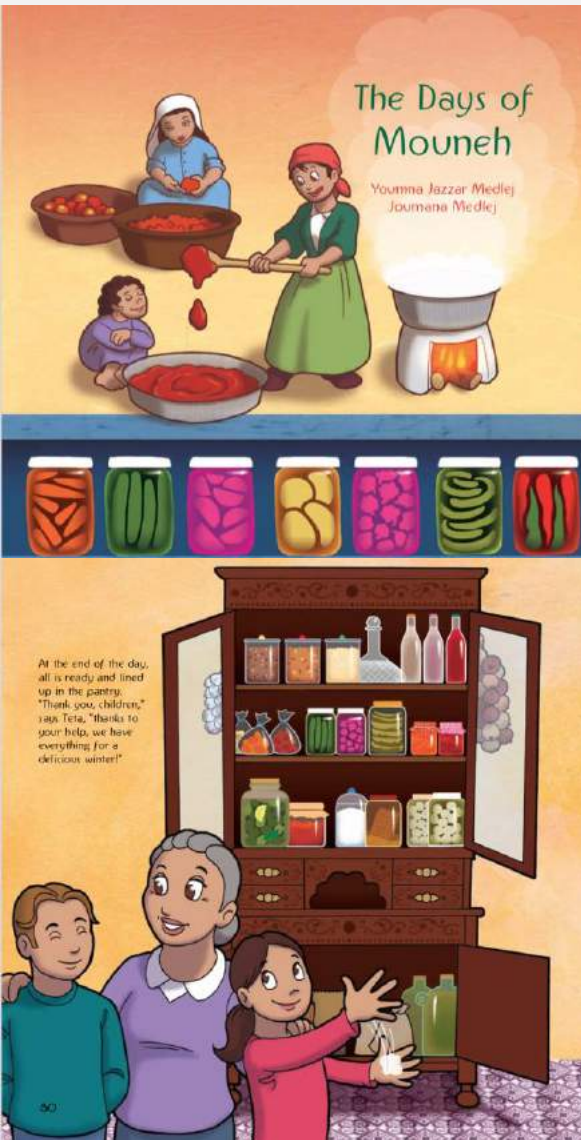
- Orange blossom water
- Rose water
- Rose petal jam
- Nuts



MOUNEH - LEBANON'S TRADITIONAL PRESERVATION OF FOOD



MOUNEH - LEBANON'S TRADITIONAL PRESERVATION OF FOOD

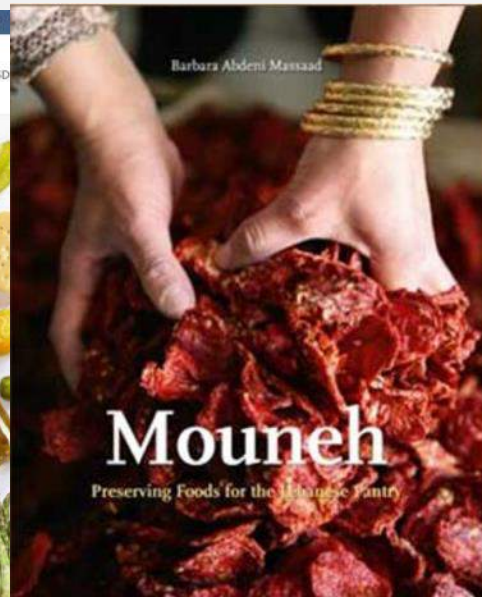


TODAY'S MOUNEH

- Culture food, described as “**Baladi**” reminiscent of traditional & village life
- Strong link to urban public with villages, due to noted internal exodus
- Capitalized for market production = **potentially recognized resource**
- Market channels include: supermarkets, souks & farmers market, specialty shops
- International recognition through the Lebanese cuisine, and evident through increased frequency of “online shopping”



Mouneh Shop
@MounehShop



FOOD COOPS AS TERRITORIAL ACTORS

Food-producing Cooperatives:

- Work within a **specific geographical area**
- Aims to improve the **socio-economic** conditions of its members
- Affiliated with several **official bodies** / ministries because of their food processing activities (Ministry of Industry, Environment, Public Health, Agriculture, Social Affairs...)
- **Reputation** as traditional producers (ILO, 2018)
- Have been the **focus of development**, due to their socio-economic component, support to groups specifically women producers, flexibility in business transactions, and livelihoods.
- Have been introduced to technology, knowhow and collective marketing by **donors**
- Have been targeted through **State/donor partnerships** as the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP)



FOOD COOPS AS TERRITORIAL ACTORS

Food-producing Cooperatives:

- Have the opportunity of coalescing, and pursuing independent marketing routes (direct linkages, private label, collective branding...)
- Rare but existent networks constructed by other cooperatives / enterprises as collective brands

Important to understand the **characteristics**, **organization** of cooperatives, their **horizontal relations** and the type of associations linking them under the national context to evaluate their **complementarity**, competition and their general behavior and propensity for action

Network with organized actors?

Arrangement and behavior?

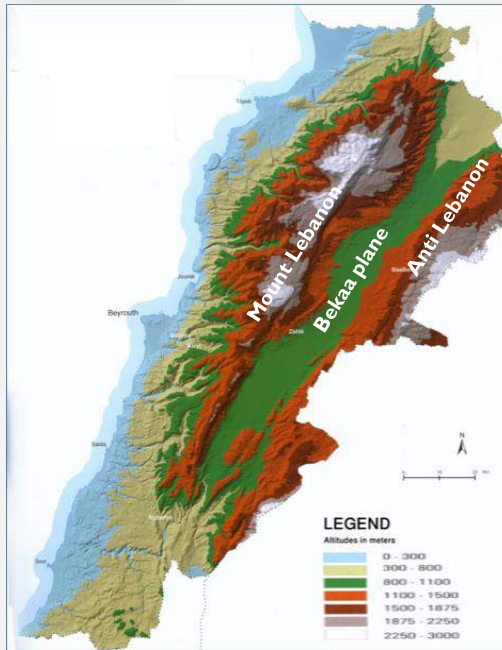
Mobilization and collective action?



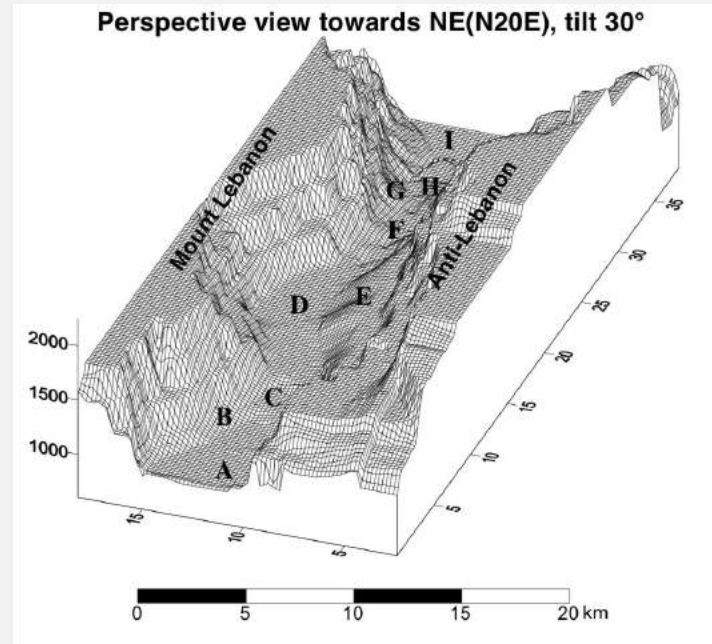
THE TERRITORY



The Bekaa Valley, Lebanon *Important agriculture zone*



Source: Central Administration of Statistics, webpage



Source: Lateef, 2006

- Largest producer of cereals, pulses, potatoes, vegetables and grapes: 43% of cultivated land in the country
- Major Producer of livestock, sheep (38%), goats (29%), and cattle (26%)
- 44% of dairy farms and associated skilled labor
- Most packaging centers (33%) and cold storage houses (42%), and research stations
- Mosaic of soil “*rarely can be found in comparable areas*” (Darwish, 2013)

The agricultural setting and presence of workforces makes “almost every resident a farmer” (Bou-Antoun, 2014).



Kameel Rayes
KameelRayes.com

THE STUDY

Potential Resource

Group of traditional
preserved foods
mouneh



Actors

Artisanal small
producers
Cooperatives



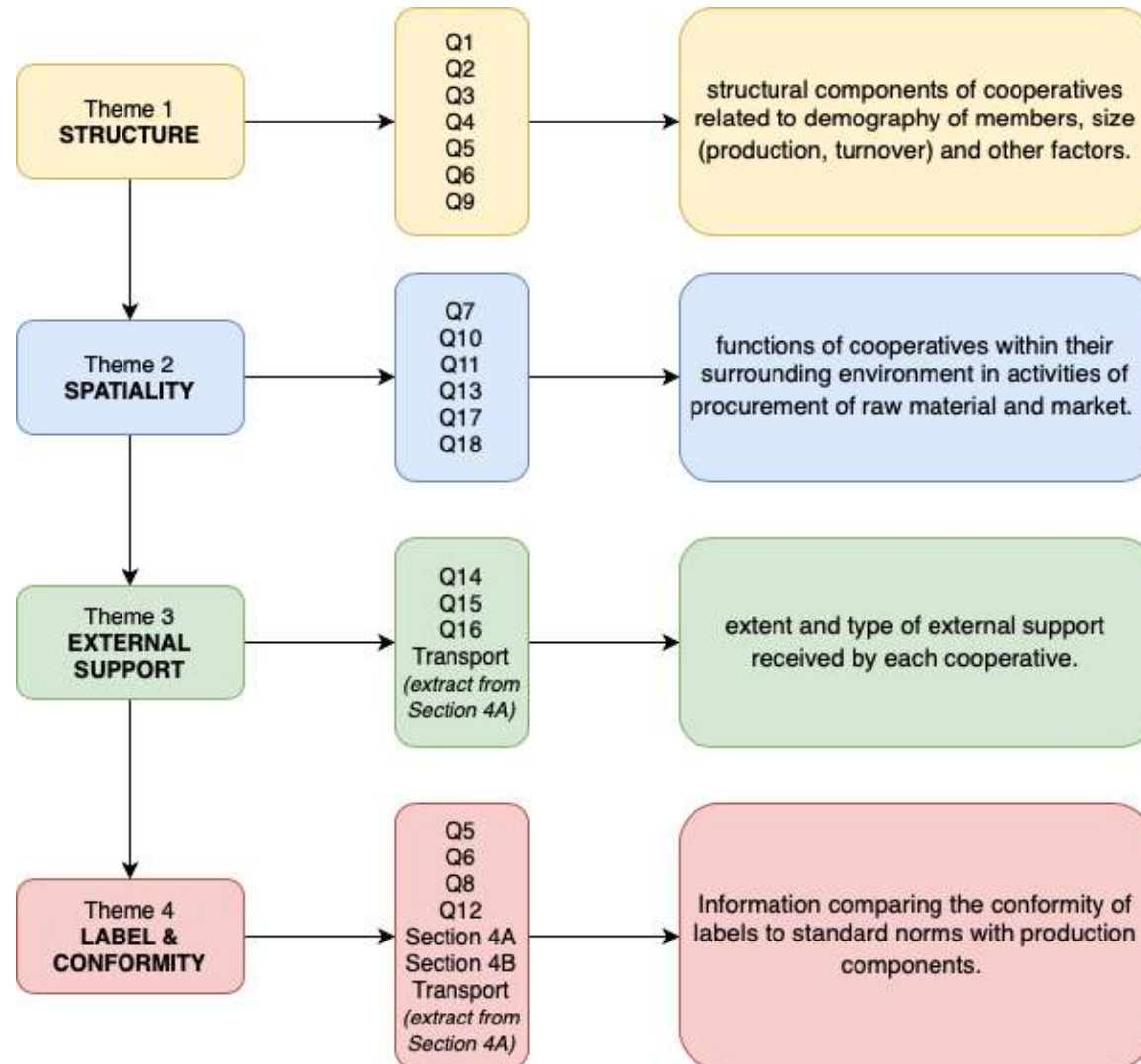
40 cooperatives identified,
surveyed & characterized

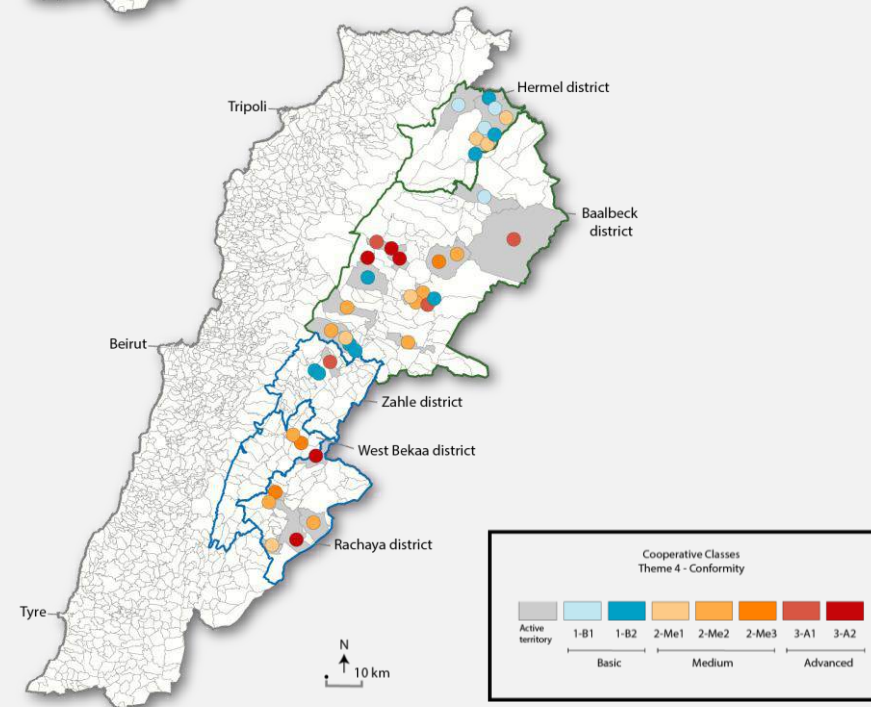
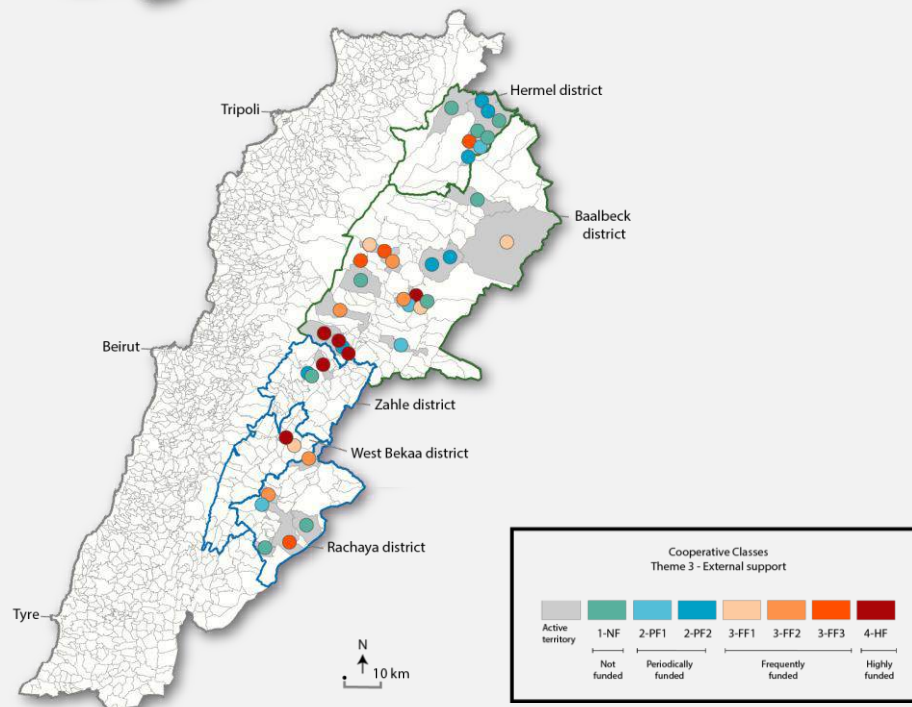
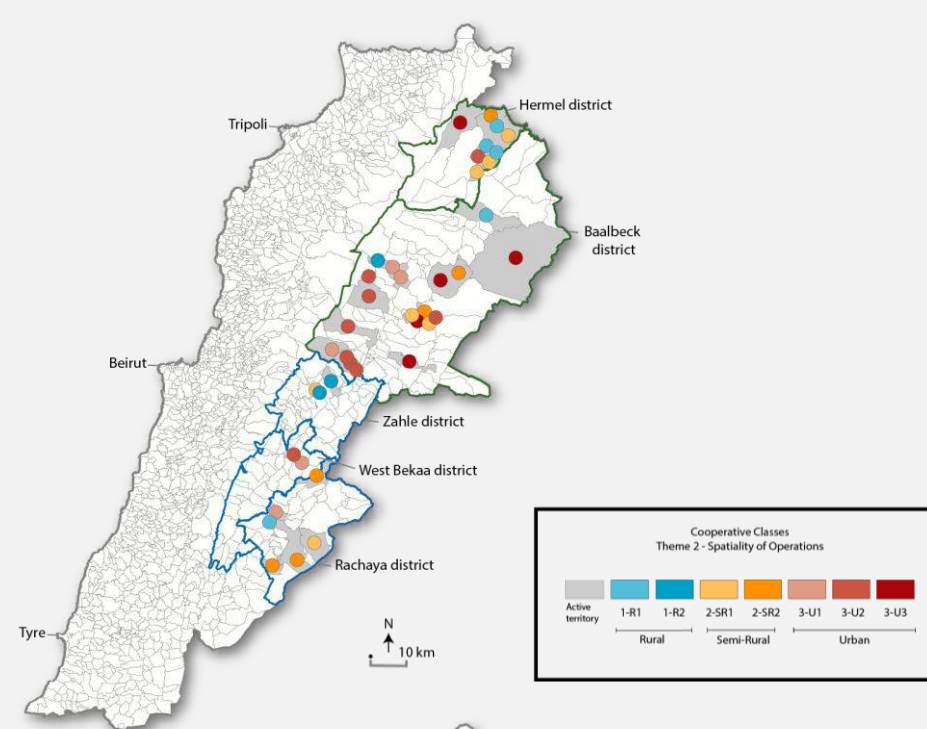
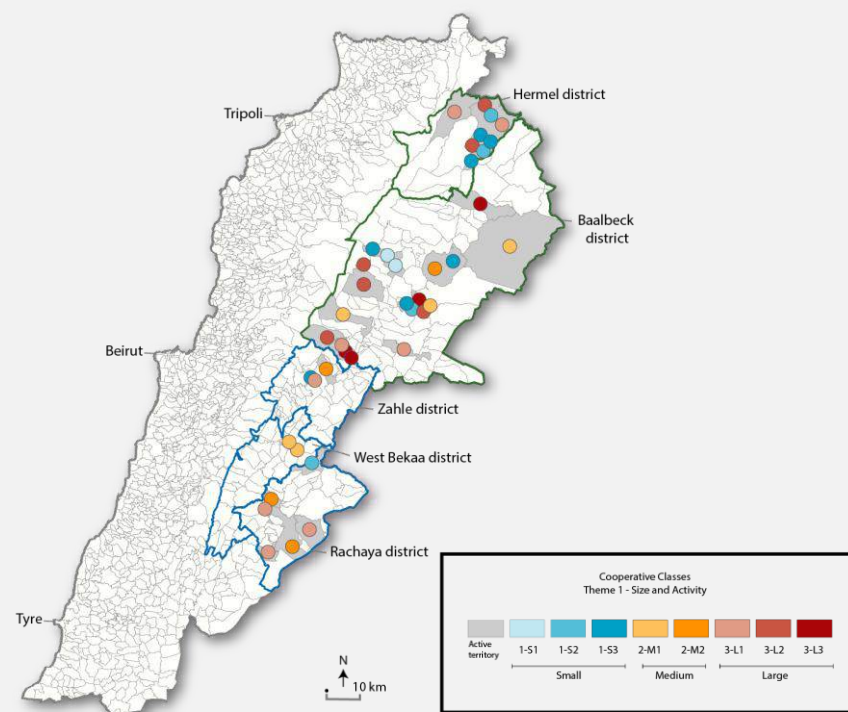
Territory

Lebanon
Bekaa valley

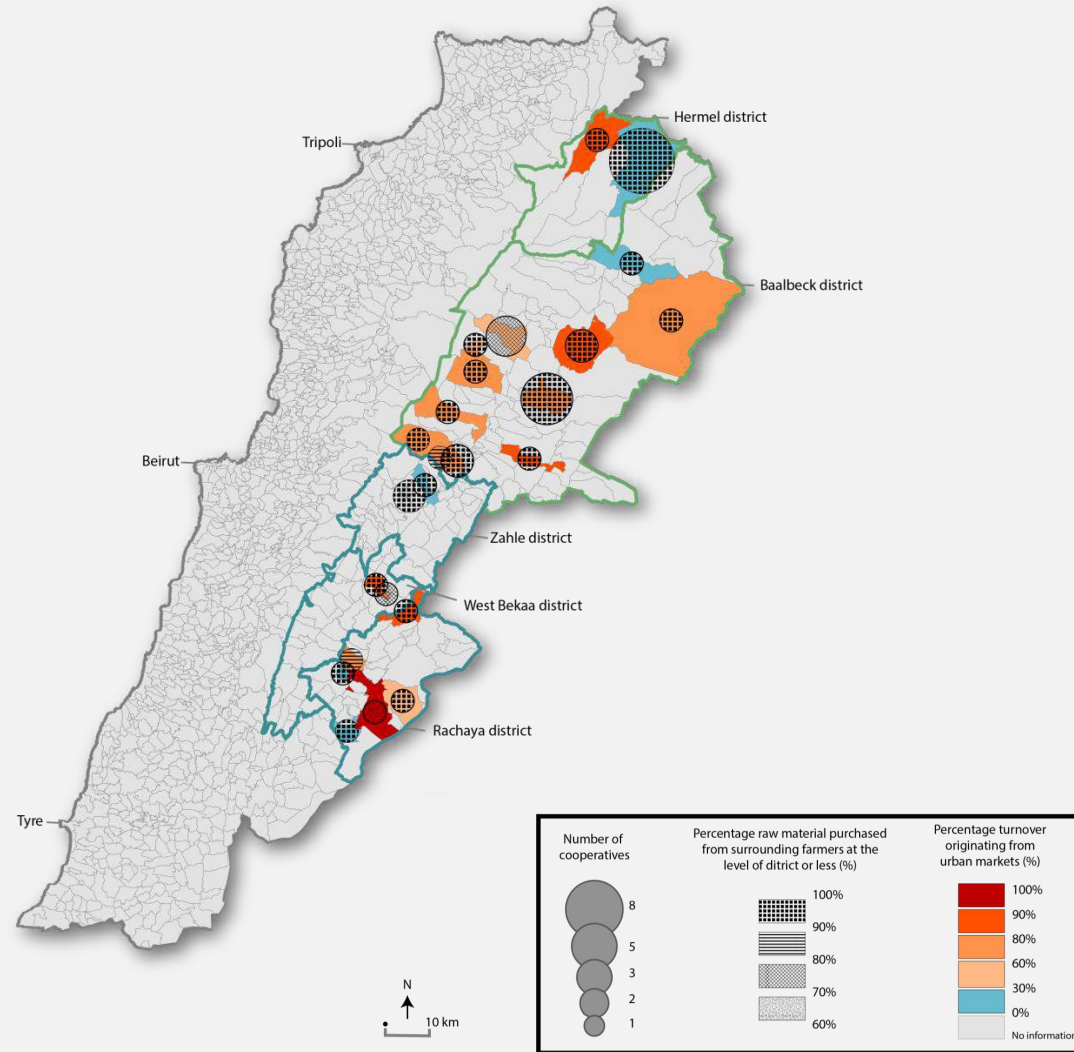


CHARACTERIZATION OF FOOD COOPS





MAIN COMMON CHARACTERISTICS



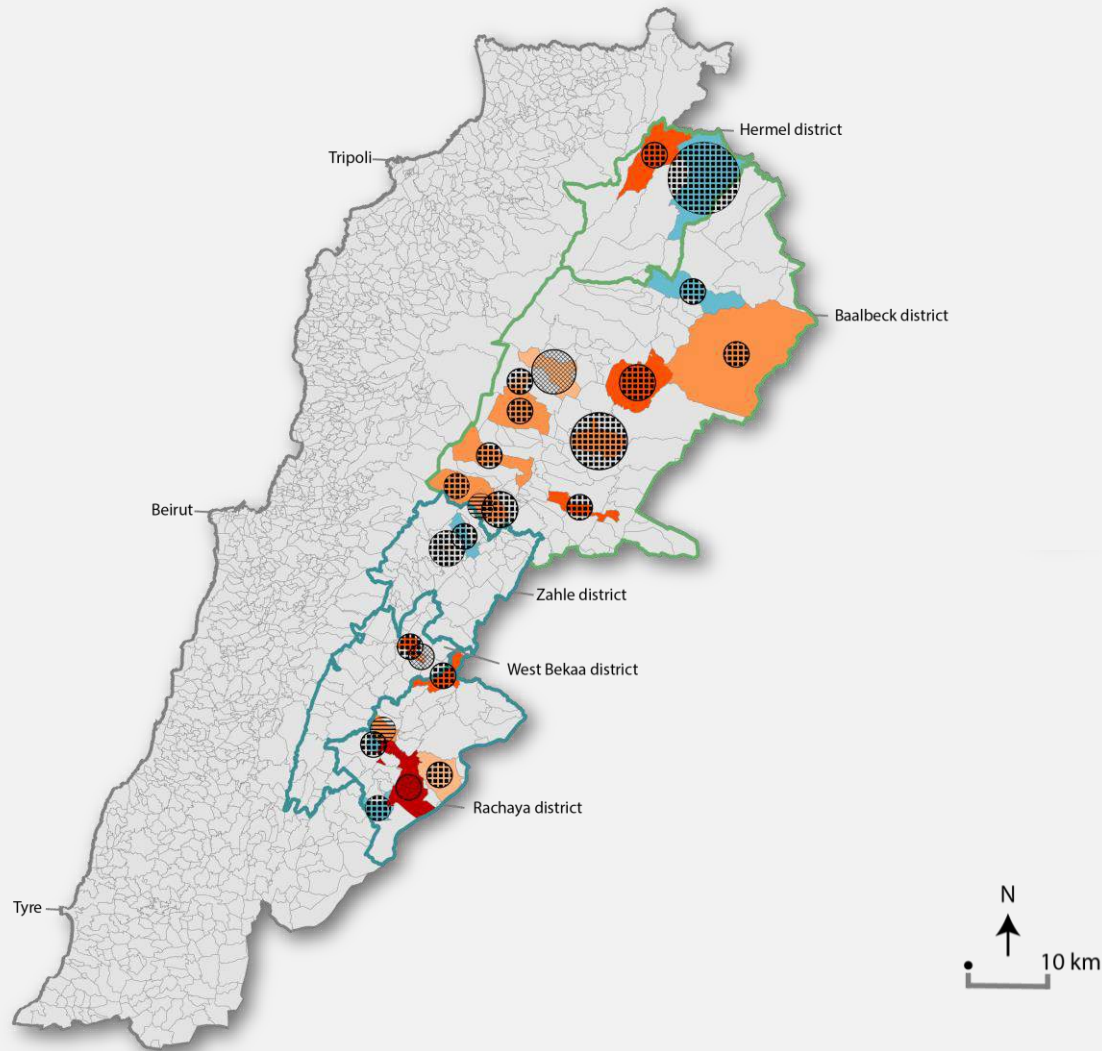
Cooperatives demonstrate:

- **Major incorporation of women:** 30% of coops are only-women & only 30% have less than 70% of women members.
- **Low attraction to youth:** Only 18 of 700 members are less than 30 years of age; and almost 60% of members are over 40 years of age, comparable to ILO (2018).
- **Small size & production:** average of less than 20 members (double in agricultural cooperatives) and a minimum of 1 up to 15 tons of annual (seasonal) production, but do not represent full capacity. Cooperatives are market-driven & have scale-up potential.
- **Extensive external support received:** 65% of coops received support from NGOs and 28% from the state, mostly as equipment and capacity building (training). Support is regular (annual) for over half of coops. Dependency? (Esim & Omeira, 2009) (McKinsey & Company, 2018) or enhanced efficiency?

Figure: Spatial distribution of food cooperatives in the Bekaa valley, Lebanon (Baalbeck-Hermel governorate in green and Bekaa governorate in Blue) coupled with the percentage of raw material originating from surrounding farmers at the district level, and the percentage turnover originating from the urban market of the capital Beirut.

Source: Jalkh R., 2020, ART-DEV, UM3

RURAL-URBAN FOOD BRIDGES



Cooperatives demonstrate:

- Strong link to **local sources** of raw material with a minimum of 80% originating from surrounding farmers within the district level
- Significant **reliance on urban markets** for trade sales: 60% reporting over half of turnover from the urban market (capital Beirut), of which 60% indicate an urban turnover of over 80%.

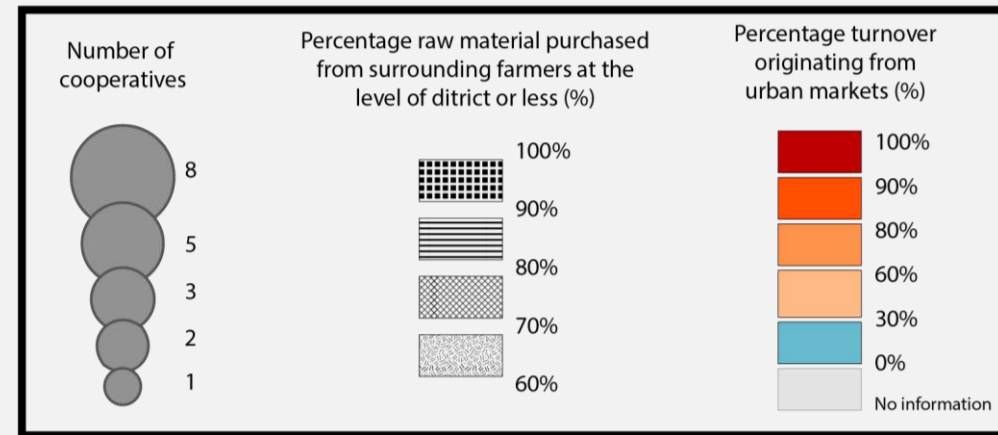
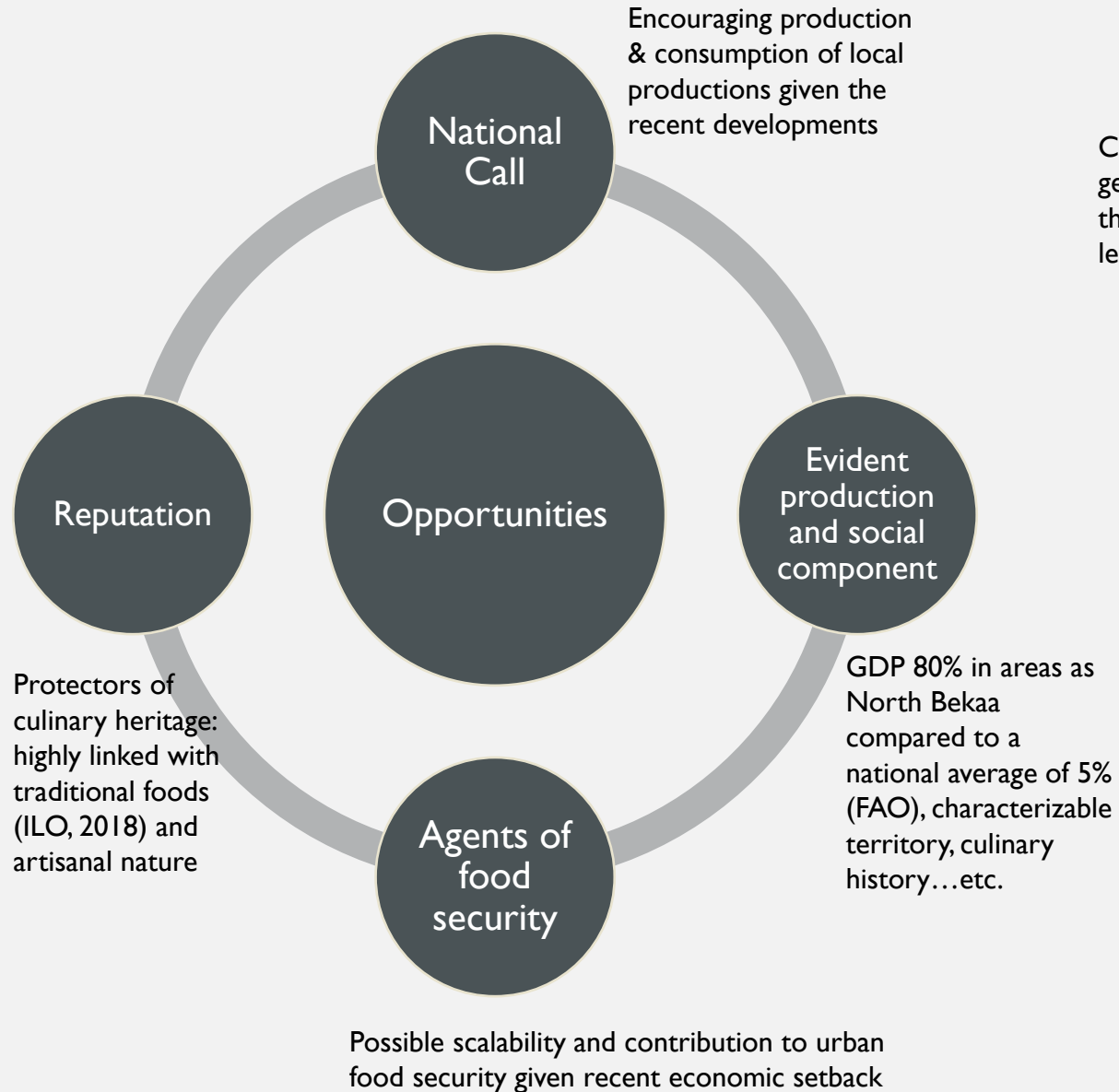


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CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES



THANK YOU
QUESTIONS?