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# Urban culture and socio-religious fragmentation in post-war Beirut

The case study of Chiyah and Ain El Remmaneh.

**Ahmad Hussein**

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Directeur : Dr. Rémi Baudouï

Experte : Dr. Anna Grichting

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**UNIVERSITÉ  
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**Hes·so**  
Haute Ecole Spécialisée  
de Suisse occidentale

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis investigates the social divisions and geographical discrepancies in Beirut, Lebanon. It features a case study done in the Chiyah and Ain El Remmane neighborhoods, but also other neighborhood situated within the peripheral belt of Beirut. The Disputes over lands and properties happen due to religious and sectarian disagreements which also reflect the situation in Lebanon as a whole. They are reinforced by fear, a lack of interpersonal trust, significant cultural and social differences, and instability in the country. In addition to how territorial markers like religious sites, political personalities posters, and naming of streets to differentiate one region from another, this disagreement is based on the length of the conflict and thwarts attempts at an honest and fruitful reconciliation between the parties. As a result, psychological and unconscious barriers are created, further dividing society.

*Keywords: urban planning and development-fragmentation, political tools, socio ethnic inequalities- conflict and post conflict countries*

## **Thesis Question**

How does post-war urban culture influence socio-religious fragmentation in the periphery of Beirut? The case study of Chiyah and Ain El Remanne.

## **Objectives**

- Show how public urban policies influenced socio-religious fragmentation
  - Identify the expression of these fragmentation within neighborhoods in the periphery of Beirut.
  - Understand the benefits of politics of fragmentation, rather than reconciliation for political religious groups thus the role of political religious organizations in the making of the cities.
  - Show geographies created by war and effect of war anticipation on demographics and cities.
  - Analyze the relationship between state and non-state factors in the country, and the urban policies that arise from this relationship.

## **RESUME**

Cette thèse examine les divisions sociales et les disparités géographiques à Beyrouth, au Liban. Elle présente une étude de cas réalisée dans les quartiers de Chiyah et Ain El Remmane, ainsi que dans d'autres quartiers situés dans la périphérie de Beyrouth. Les conflits autour des terres et des propriétés surviennent en raison de désaccords religieux et sectaires, qui reflètent également la situation au Liban dans son ensemble. Ils sont renforcés par la peur, un manque de confiance interpersonnelle, d'importantes différences culturelles et sociales, ainsi que par l'instabilité du pays. En plus de montrer comment l'utilisation marqueurs territoriales tels que les sites religieux, les affiches des personnalités politiques et les noms de rues pour différencier l'identité d'une région de l'autre, ce désaccord est enraciné dans la durée du conflit et entrave les tentatives de réconciliation honnête et fructueuse entre les parties. En conséquence, des barrières psychologiques et inconscientes sont créées, contribuant davantage à la division de la société.

Mots-clés : *aménagement urbain et développement - fragmentation, outils politiques, inégalités socio-ethniques - pays en conflit et post-conflit*

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*All photographs, drawings and maps are my own, unless otherwise indicated.*

# 1.Introduction

## 1.1 Brief Description

On October the 14th of 2021, heavy gun fight clashes started in the area of **Ain El Remanne** and **Chiyah**, which killed seven people and injured another dozen. It was reminder of the civil war that had ended only military in 1990. Up until now, its aftermath and memories are still present for everyone who lived during that period, and even for those who have heard about it, especially the people of areas where battles were more intense than elsewhere. One of these areas is Chiyah, neighboring Ain El Remanne with the presence of a separating line between them called the “touchline.” The figures below show diagrams that depict how the two areas neighbor each other, with the line (Old Saida Road/touchline) separating them.

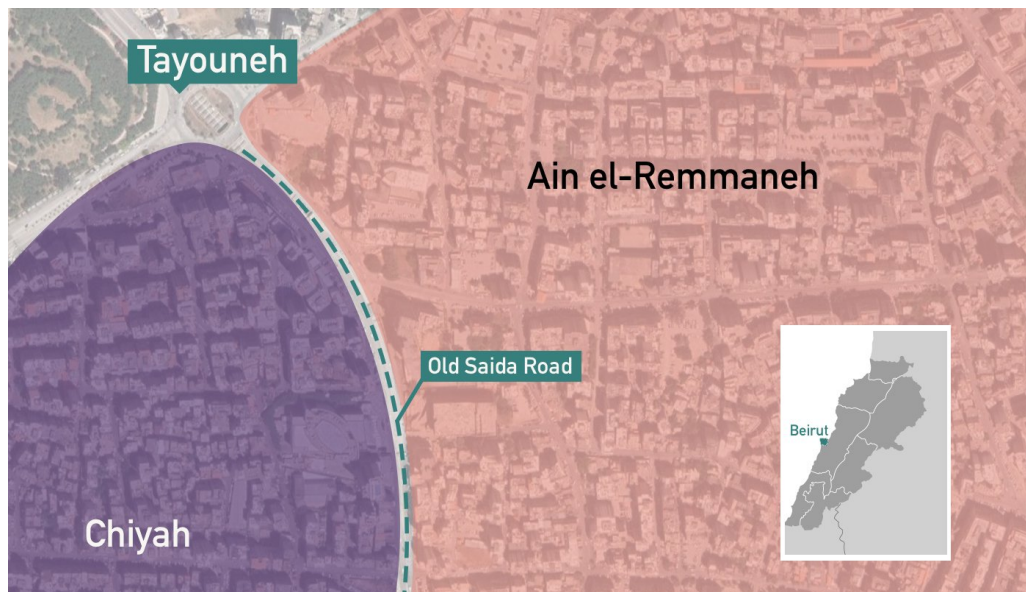


Figure 1: Chiyah And Ain El Remane (Source :middleeastmonitor.com)



*Figure 2 : The green line*

This area is also widely known as the scene of the bus massacre of 13 April 1975 that kicked off the 15-year civil war, has once again awoken to fears of another deadly conflict in the beleaguered country. At the time that conflict happened, I was still in Switzerland, I remember that I started to receive calls from people who are worried, asking about me and my family. Even though I was from distance, I was not worried personally. As soon as I called my family and made sure that no one was in that area during the conflict, it was as if it never happened. I realized that I had become numb to such events. Growing up in Lebanon, I have been witnessing different episodes of such conflicts. I have been in the conflict zone and outside of it. This experience was not exclusively mine but is shared among most Lebanese people. The next day, life returned to normal as if nothing had happened. The Lebanese people live in denial of the past and everything that was happening around them. Eventually, the Lebanese people have been programmed to be in denial of the horrors happening around them and learnt to simply adapt without processing any of the events they went through.

What is surprising is that despite all the hardships that the Lebanese people have gone through during the war, a line of legitimacy for their existence was still maintained, which is alarming and only serve the political class, but that the fragmented city of Beirut had become different frontiers of war between different socio-ethnic or socio-religious groups. These events have been a big part of my upbringing and my conciseness awakening regarding the post-war urban planning in Lebanon.

I have always lived in this homogeneous area on the periphery of the old city of Beirut mostly living there were people belonging to Shi'ite religion. My idea was that the area has always been this homogeneous way. During my field work for my bachelor's thesis, I studied the hidden historical architecture in the area, only to discover that the owners were all from different profiles, religions<sup>1</sup>, ethnicities<sup>2</sup> and social backgrounds. It should be noted that historically, the Lebanese people were not divided into regions based on religion, as all regions have a mix of different religious backgrounds. The current division is a phenomenon born out of fear from others who are different. The figures below show how different religions are distributed in the country and another shows the ethnic distribution in the city of Beirut in 1942.

Confessional Geographic Distribution  
of Lebanon's Population

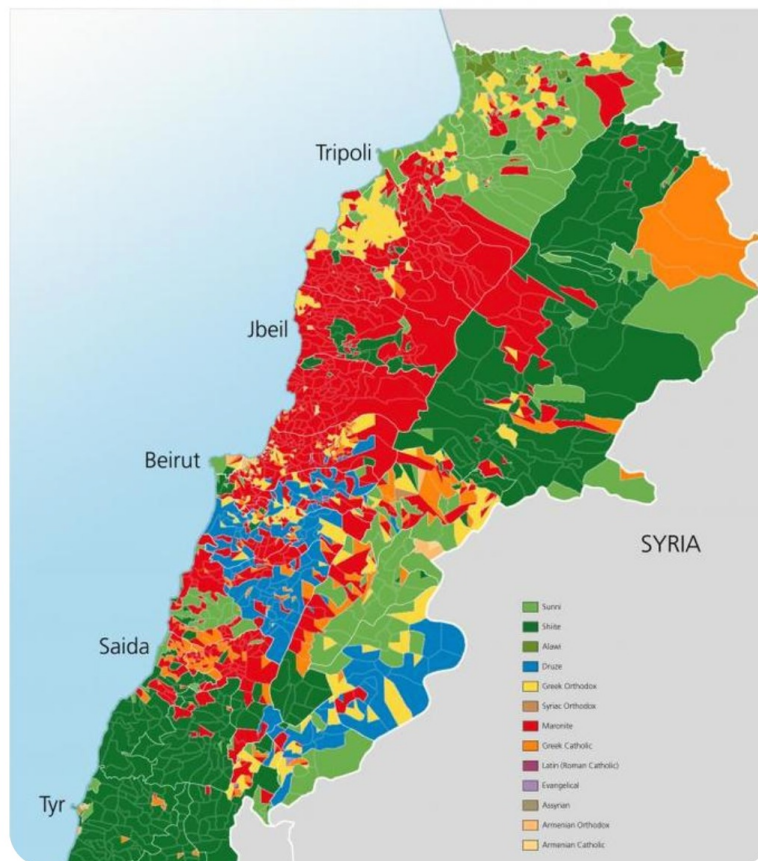


Figure 3 Confessional Geographic distribution of Lebanon's population ( source : [civilsociety-centre.org](http://civilsociety-centre.org))

<sup>1</sup> Religions: Muslim Sunni, Muslim Shiia, Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Druze, Greek Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Alawite, Roman Catholic (Bou Akar, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Ethnicities: Arabs, Armenians, and Kurds. Many Christian Lebanese do not identify themselves as Arabs but rather as Phoenicians (CIA, 2019).

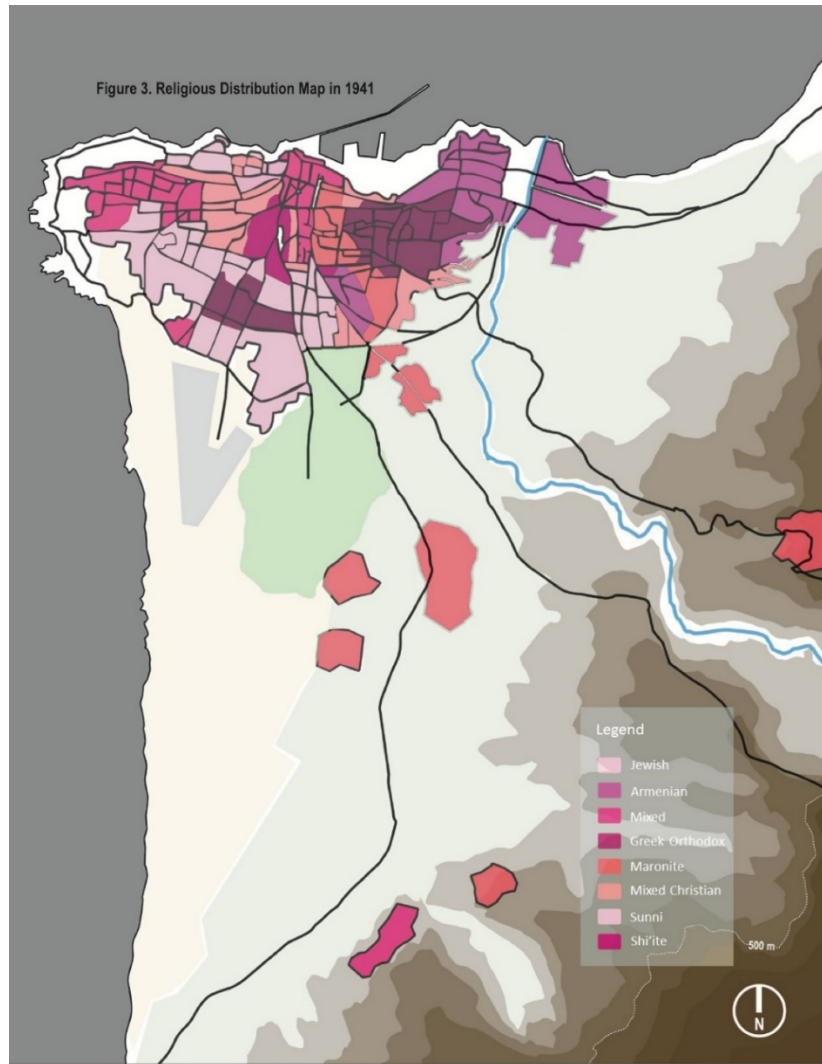


Figure 4 Religious distribution plan in 1941 ( source: "for the war yet to come", Hiba abou akar)

That extreme shift between a time that is not-so-long history (before the civil war of 1975) and today. This was a second important part of my awakening. It is easy to understand how displacement and immigration could happen during the civil war, but not it could continue and become more prominent after the end of the war creating different virtual and psychological frontiers in the city and separating people based on religion, culture, and social classes.



## 1.2 History of Socio-Religious tensions in Lebanon

Lebanon is a Middle Eastern country with a population of approximately 6 million divided into 18 sects. Each of them differs according to regions, culture, and even their definition of Lebanon's identity.

Lebanese history is marked by struggles and conflicts. The hardships first began as a class struggle, only to turn into a class and a sectarian one. Therefore, the class struggle began between the Druze and the Maronites. In the era of the Ottoman empire, there was a persecution of minorities, including the Maronites. This group emigrated from Egypt and other countries to escape the Ottoman oppression and inhabited Mount Lebanon because there was no firm ruling of the Sultanate in that region. The region was dominated by a harsh feudal system that was also in place. In Mount Lebanon, the Druze owned the lands and the Maronites worked for them under harsh conditions. The Druze were, in most cases, the owners of the lands.

However, with time, there became an expansion of the Maronites in the lands of the Druze, which led to the first civil war in modern times in Lebanon in 1840, which led to the emergence of the Quaemakamiyatin regime, which divided Mount Lebanon into an area for Christians and another for Druze. But this regime did not last long, another civil war broke out. In 1860, the Mutasarrifia regime, which lasted until 1920, arose from it, and the state of Greater Lebanon was declared, and the regions were annexed to Mount Lebanon, but despite independence in 1943 and the relative agreement between the Lebanese, the Lebanese civil war returned and arose in 1975, which lasted for 15 years of destruction, killing and division (Salibi,1998)

### 1.2.1 The Civil War (1975-1990)

The **Lebanese Civil War**, which raged from 1975 to 1990, had a profound impact on the internal migrations and demographic changes of the country. Initially, the conflict was between Lebanese nationalists and Pan-Arabists, but it gradually transformed into a war between sectarian militias in various parts of Lebanon. This war had devastating consequences for the population, with many people seeking refuge in areas controlled by militias of their sect. Consequently, Beirut

became divided into a "Muslim west" and a "Christian east," with Southern occupation by the Israeli army leading to people fleeing from the south to west Beirut (Ghaddar, 2017). The impact of the civil war on internal migration was significant, and demographic changes occurred as people fled to areas that were perceived as safe. As Jocelyn Saab, a Lebanese filmmaker and journalist, noted, the war became a class struggle, with different communities vying for power and control (Saab, 1994). However, this struggle quickly escalated into a war between sectarian militias, resulting in a significant shift in the country's demographics. The impact of these internal migrations and displacements was significant and long-lasting, as people were forced to leave behind their homes, businesses, and communities. Moreover, the movement of large numbers of people created significant challenges for the government and humanitarian organizations, as they struggled to provide basic services and support to those in need.

Migration was not confined only to the interior, nor to one of the groups. The exact number of Lebanese emigrated during this period is estimated between 600,000 and 900,000 (Al Salem, 2006), emigrated to all parts of the earth as an escape from the scourge of war and from the unknown future.

However, the war finally ended with the Taif Agreement in 1990 and a new political system was established in Lebanon, which was based on major constitutional amendments that reduced sectarian tensions and distributed power more equally between different groups. This transformed the war from street violence to constitutional institution feuds. (Tabarra, 2011)

### **1.2.2 “Al Taef” Agreement**

The National Reconciliation Accord, also referred to as the "Taef agreement," was a significant milestone after the Lebanese Civil War. The 1990 accord tried to stop the violence and promote peace among the diverse communities of the nation. However, the Taef agreement's execution resulted in unanticipated consequences. This agreement "resulted in the legal exoneration of all militias, regardless of their activities during the war, and the transformation of these militias into political parties along religious lines," according to scholar Maya Mikdashi (Mikdashi, 2018). As a result, there were increased sectarian conflicts in Lebanese society and the emergence of religious political organizations that were severely split along sectarian lines.

Furthermore, the municipal plans implemented in the wake of the Taef agreement were designed to emphasize these sectarian divisions rather than promote reconciliation. The author Mikdashi claims that "urban policy and public space have been mobilized as sectionalization tools, producing new geographies of conflict and power." (Mikdashi, 2018). This has contributed to the separation of different urban populations, resulting in a split urban landscape.

The Taef agreement's influence remains evident in Lebanon since sectarianism continues to play a key part in that country's politics and social dynamics. However, numerous attempts have been made to tackle the issue of sectarianism and support national harmony. For instance, the Lebanese government launched a national conversation program in 2016 with the aim of promoting political stability and reducing sectarian tensions (Al Jazeera, 2016).

Although the most of them were left as hypothetical agreements, the Taif Agreement features a number of key components. Beyond the cessation of hostilities, nothing changed after the war, and there was no sincere Lebanese reconciliation. A future can't be built on an unreconciled past. According to this agreement, they are the same individuals who started the war, prosecuted it, killed thousands of Lebanese, escaped prosecution, pardoned themselves, and have held positions of power ever since.

### **1.2.3 Post War Conflicts**

The two other events that were also especially important in the post-war urban fragmentation were the Israeli Conflict in 2006 and the sectarian violence in 2007 as an aftermath. The Israeli conflict in 2006 had a severe impact on urban areas of Lebanon. Israel started a 34-day war against Lebanon in the summer of this year. 1,200 individuals died in the fighting, the majority of them civilians. Many citizens were abducted, which resulted in a substantial loss of young people. This also led to widespread destruction and a large-scale population shift. The battle, according to Haidar and Zurayk (2013), had a considerable influence on the country's infrastructure, leading to the destruction of a number of buildings, roads, and bridges. The conflict, according to the authors, "resulted in massive building and infrastructure destruction, population displacement, and social disruption." (p. 126).

The conflict increased social and political tensions, which exacerbated sectarianism and division in urban areas in addition to the physical destruction. According to Khayyat and Traboulsi

the war "intensified the sectarian divide and reinforced patterns of territorial segregation." According to their argument, the conflict "had an immediate impact on the country's urban fabric, further aggravating the segregation of Lebanese communities along confessional lines".

The sectarian unrest in Lebanon in 2007 had a profound impact on urban planning and fragmentation. According to Moughalian (2013), the violence "led to the destruction of several urban areas, and the displacement of thousands of people." . The conflict "revealed the frail nature of the country's social fabric and the precariousness of its political situation," the author adds.

The need to address underlying socioeconomic and political challenges and to advance more inclusive and integrated urban planning. According to Moughalian (2013), the conflict in 2007 "brought the issue of urban fragmentation in Lebanon to the fore and the need for comprehensive urban planning that takes into account the social, economic, and political realities of the country."

Large religious and ethnic groups make up the Lebanese population, which is especially separated from each other, reinforced the sectarian discourse there. The war did not finish with the Taif Agreement in 1990 and was not confined to Israeli action in Lebanon. Conflicts between the Sunni-led government and the Shiite opposition broke out in 2008, which resulted in numerous Lebanese deaths and injuries. These conflicts exacerbate differences and aid in the segregation of various groups in their respective locations, impairing social cohesiveness and preventing group mixing. The urban political landscape in Lebanon is more convoluted than it has ever been, with antagonistic perspectives shifting often and political groups growing more fractious. Christians, Sunnis, Shiites, and Druze communities continue to reside in segregated areas, reflecting the long-lasting effects of the civil war on the population of the nation (Karasik, 2019).

#### **1.2.4 Post War Reconstruction and The Beirut Central District**

Due to the damage caused by the civil war, downtown Beirut has a rich history. There was a tremendous effort made to reconstruct this area after the war to bring it back to its former splendor. As a private corporation founded in 1994 to guide the development of BCD, "Solidere" was one of the major enterprises involved in this rebuilding. Solidere focused on both the construction of new buildings and the restoration of historic structures that have left a lasting legacy. The company's work had implications for the area's social and economic dynamics.

The primary objective was to create a location that draws both businesses and tourists. However, as the wealth gap between the rich and the poor grew just a few meters from the center, this practice was heavily criticized. The city has many regions that are abjectly deplorable. Concerns were also raised regarding the effects on the city's cultural heritage due to the demolition or structural changes made to several old structures.

An excellent illustration of how discriminatory laws and inequality can materialize in urban development projects is the renovation of Beirut's downtown area. According to Abu-Sada and Naamani (2016), the post-Lebanese civil war rehabilitation efforts were marked by a lack of accountability and openness, which resulted in the exclusion of some vulnerable communities from the rebuilding process. The central district was a prime example of this exclusion, where well-off and politically connected people were able to secure prime real estate for their own interests, while low-income residents were excluded from the decision-making process and were compelled to move to the city's outskirts. Furthermore, Bou Akar argues that political and sectarian interests affected the restoration process, further marginalizing some communities and upholding preexisting power systems. She contends that the central district of Beirut's renovation reflects a lost chance to create a more just and sustainable city.

### **1.2.5 History of the Planning Sector in Lebanon**

During my field work, I had the chance to consult people on Lebanese urban planning. Most of them answered me “Do we even have urban planning in the country, as everything seems random and uncoordinated.” N.S, employee in the urban planning ministry in Beirut explained that “The reality is that planning sector does exist in Lebanon, strategies have been formulated and masterplans were developed and revisited over the years.” However, upon the first look taken at the city of Beirut, there is no synchronization in the development of the city, especially after the war.

In this part we will be reviewing about Lebanese planning experiences in order to understand its limitations and effect on today's urban culture. According to Eric Verdeil, the three major planning experiences in Lebanon were marked by specific political significance of the time. The three major planning experiences in Lebanon were always inspired due to a significant political event that usually required a change in how the city was divided, for example according to difference of the religions and sects of the people in a certain area. We are going to start with

IRFED who are among the most famous names associated with the era of strong reforms that occurred during the presidential mandate of Fouad Chehab. The president is known for having triggered major administrative reforms and promoting social and economic development of the country. To some people today, they still consider his time as the golden age of Lebanon. The IRFED team were commissioned to study and identify the needs and opportunities of the country. They wrote a report in 1961 that served as a basis for setting up a 5-year masterplan. The plan aimed to achieve regional and harmonized development and to achieve balance between economic sectors and between regions (urban centers and rural peripheries). They surveyed 60 Lebanese villages and detailed in depth the socio-economic situation of the population. It was the first time that such data was available and served as the basis for harmonious development and the country.

Many traditional politicians and businessmen opposed IRFED ideas and as soon as Chehab's mandate was over, the IRFED plan was quickly replaced with others, and they became only symbol of Chehab's policies. Yet what we can learn from this planning experience that it is becoming tricky when you link planning to a political stance. As soon as the power dynamic changed, the whole hardly established plan was demolished.

Another name that is very prominent in history of urban planning in Lebanon is Michel Ecochard. He was commissioned to develop primary plan for Beirut during 1941-1943, and for other cities during the fifties. His plans represented innovation during that time as no plan had ever been developed on the scale of agglomeration. his studies are based on governmental data without having systematic surveys. But from his revolutionary ideas are "villes Nouvelles" which translates to *new cities*. The plan these neighborhoods would be self-sufficient and self-contained and well connected to the center of the city.

It was a way to identify new extension zones for Beirut, relying on physical assessment of city's growth. Ecochard's master plans for the city of Beirut in the 1950s and late 1960s are based on a careful analysis of the city's divided social and sectarian structure. Plans for the city reflected his vision for the peaceful integration of communities by promoting access, functionality, and articulation of communal public spaces<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> (Planning a sectarian topography page 16)



In an article written by Mohamed Chammaa, he speaks about the road networks that still stand till today, were designed during the Ecochard Era, were made divide rather than to connect<sup>4</sup>, they were drawn on sectarian and social lines of that time. In 1963, a master plan was developed with the help of Michel Ecochard studies, yet he disapproved the final draft. Because it did not retain his major projects for the new towns and because the floor to area ratio (FAR) had been raised. He fought against these high densities proposed, but again politics flourished in this case.

The SDRMB (Schéma Directeur de la Région Métropolitaine de Beyrouth) was elaborated during the war, in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion and during Amin Gemayel's mandate. The final document was completed in 1986 but was not officially approved. Later, in the early 1990s, it was heavily debated during the beginning of the reconstruction process. It is interesting to see how the original intention of the SDRMB as a technical and methodological experiment became intertwined with political interests and agendas. The planners had to navigate the complex and ever-changing context of war, and their work became a balancing act between technical considerations and political considerations. The example of the industrial zone in Choueifat highlights the ways in which urban planning can have significant consequences on the social and political landscape of a city. In this case, the location of the industrial zone served as a means of mediating the conflicting interests of different political groups, but also had unintended consequences for the poor groups in the Shi'a southern suburbs who sought employment in the area. It is also important to note that the context of war in Beirut had a significant impact on the accuracy and availability of data, which in turn affected the reliability of the planners' decisions and assessments. This serves as a reminder of the importance of having accurate and up-to-date information in the planning process. Overall, The research into the SDRMB and its impact on the city of Beirut highlights the complex and interrelated nature of urban planning and political considerations.

During its inception, the SDRMB was disregarded despite its intellectual brilliance, as political leaders were indifferent to it even when they were aware of its existence. Subsequently, the planning community engaged in discussions regarding the SDRMB, and it faced criticism for tacitly acknowledging the war's political status quo But in the end government that directed the

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<sup>4</sup> Mohamed Chammaa article on road network

studies didn't stay for long in power, in the revisited plans didn't mean much after the end of this mandate. (Political issues of the planning sector in Lebanon)

What we can understand from these three experiences, is that politics has long been predominant in Urban development and planning, and there is no consistency or common vision between political parties and no intention to develop a harmonious territory. Lebanon's tangled past has placed its capital in a very exceptional planning structure. The Lebanese's government has visibly had a hard time considering planning seriously since all the master plans in current use are outdated, and all the territorial organizations of Beirut are fragmented and uncoordinated (Bou Akar, 2018)

The figures below show a historic overview of the planning sector in Lebanon.

Historic Overview Of The Planning Sector In Lebanon		
1926 - 1920	First years of the French Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Work on the land-title registry began to replace the Ottoman Deftter Khan system</li> <li>◦ Cadastral survey began</li> </ul>
1932	Five-year plan for Beirut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Included municipal codes and provisions for public spaces and gardens, sanitation, and infrastructure</li> </ul>
1940	Establishment of the Ministry of Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The first urban land-use maps of the entire city (detailed to the level of individual buildings) were created for the seemingly parallel uses of both, city authorities and the military</li> </ul>
1950s - 1941	Ecochard Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The first comprehensive Master Plan for Beirut was developed</li> <li>◦ Master plans for several cities were developed</li> </ul>
1950 - 1948	"The Palestinian "Nakba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Influx of thousands of Palestinian families to Lebanon</li> <li>◦ Establishment of refugee camps</li> </ul>
1954 – 1952	Ernst Egli (Swiss planner)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The first approved Master Plan for Beirut prepared based on Ecochard's plans from the early 1940s</li> </ul>
1964 – 1959	IRFED Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Developed a survey of the socio-economic situation for 60 villages and the major Lebanese cities. This resulted in formulating a five-year plan, which included an agenda of public investments</li> </ul>
1960s	The Fouad Chehab Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Large-scale and state-led infrastructure projects were achieved all over the country</li> </ul>
1961	Doxiadis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Drafted a comprehensive housing plan for the whole country</li> </ul>

*Figure 5 Historic overview of the planning sector 1 ( Source : Verdeil : Methodological and Political Issues in the Lebanese Planning Experiences*

1977	Cancellation of the Ministry of Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The Ministry of Planning was cancelled</li> </ul>
1977	Establishment of the CDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) was established with flexible planning and implementation mandates</li> </ul>
1990 - 1975	The Civil War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Fundamental changes in the demographic distribution in Lebanon due to massive displacement</li> <li>◦ Chaotic illegal expansion of urban areas</li> </ul>
2005 - 1991	PM Rafic Hariri Era	<p>Introducing the concept of private share-holders companies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Solidere was commissioned to design and implement a new plan for the downtown of Beirut, 80% of which had been removed by the end of the war</li> <li>◦ Elyssar project was supposed to relocate nearly 80,000 citizens who live in informal illegal settlements in the Southern Suburbs of Beirut, providing them with new housing. The project remains on hold due to the lack of funding and to political complications</li> </ul>
2009 - 2002	NPMPLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Preparation and endorsement of the National Physical Master Plan (NPMPLT)</li> </ul>

*Figure 6 Historic overview of the planning sector 2 ( Source : Verdeil : Methodological and Political Issues in the Lebanese Planning Experiences*

### **1.3 Thesis Question**

The thesis question of "How does post-war urban culture influenced socio-religious fragmentation in the periphery of Beirut? The case study of Chiyah and Ain El Remmane" highlights the link between urban culture and socio-religious fragmentation in the city's periphery. This question seeks to understand how the post-war urban policies have contributed to the fragmentation of socio-religious groups in these neighborhoods.

## 1.4 Objectives

The **first objective** of this research is to show how public urban policies have influenced socio-religious fragmentation in these neighborhoods. The post-war urban policies implemented in Beirut have been characterized by a focus on large-scale reconstruction projects and the promotion of private investment, often at the expense of public services and community-based development (Fawaz, 2023). This has led to the displacement of many residents in the periphery of the city, as well as the marginalization of socio-religious groups.

The **second objective** of this research is to identify the expression of these fragmentation within neighborhoods in the periphery of Beirut. This includes examining the spatial distribution of different socio-religious groups, as well as the types of conflicts and tensions that arise between them. The case study of Chiyah and Ain El Remmane, two neighborhoods in the southern periphery of Beirut, provides an opportunity to explore these issues in depth.

A **third objective** of this research is to understand the benefits of politics of fragmentation, rather than reconciliation, for political and religious groups in Beirut. While reconciliation may be desirable in theory, the reality is that many groups in Beirut benefit from the politics of fragmentation. For example, political and religious leaders may use sectarian tensions to mobilize their base and maintain power (Haddad, 2010). Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective strategies to address socio-religious fragmentation in Beirut.

A **fourth objective** would be to understand state and non-state actors in Lebanese urban planning, showing their hierarchy and relationship.

At the end of the research, I will propose a couple of alternative ideas that would help break boundaries between people and promote more of a reconciliation planning and policy-oriented solutions.

## **2.Methodology**

This research will focus on the different post-war urban policies that had created different frontiers and influenced socio-religious separation and fragmentation within the city. In order to facilitate the study, the paper will present the different policies taken in Beirut while focusing on the area of Ain El Remmane and Chiyah, because of its history and present story. Another type of fragmentation in Beirut is socio-economic, however this type does not occur in the study's area because residents of both Ain El Remmane and Chiyah are from the lower and middle classes.



## **2.1 Collection of Material**

The first step was to collect technical material, including maps, statistics, plans, urban regulations, building laws, journal articles, interviews, and academic books on planning in Beirut. A process of “collage” was also necessary because Lebanon does not currently maintain a system of national archives. Neither do state agencies maintain formal systems of document storage and retrieval. Even when an agency has an archiving procedure, documents are quite often incomplete, randomly placed in drawers, or thrown in a corner. Tellingly, the most complete archives for public planning projects are locked up in the offices of a handful of prominent private planning firms that have received public commissions from the CDR or the Directorate General of Urbanism (DGU). As a result, my access to public discourse and data depended to a great extent on the benevolence of officials and other actors I interviewed. In this context, as in many others, “benevolence” and “at the mercy of” were two sides of the same coin, with conditions of access being defined along political lines. I also soon came to realize that the officials I interviewed were often only willing to disclose parts of a story. I then linked these fragments together with public information available from news reports, visual surveys, and the virtual media posts of different political groups.

### **2.1.1 Observation Incognito**

In order to obtain the frank, unvarnished answers that are not always conveyed through the media I spent time walking through the two neighborhoods (Ain El Remmane and Chiyah) trying to be as subtle as possible, as it would be tricky and sometimes dangerous when people discovered that I’m “studying them”, especially when they discover that it is for a paper I am doing in Switzerland and that would trigger their paranoia about outside interference in the country.

### **2.1.2 Interviews with Residents of the Area and Experts**

Additionally, I had non-directive interviews with local residents from both neighborhoods, and chats with local residents and politically affiliated people in the two areas of interest to gain a deeper insight into the impact of these policies on their daily lives and the ways in which they have responded to the changes in their neighborhoods. It is important to note that the findings of my research will be subjective, as the perspectives and experiences of those interviewed will shape the

narrative of the study. To mitigate this, it is important to gather a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, and to analyze the data collected in an impartial manner but also to link it with the literature and other studies done on this matter.

## 2.2 Limitations

It is important to mention that the field work done in Lebanon was not as easy as it was expected to be. There was difficulty in accessing information and documents which can limit the scope and objectivity of a study. I can not only base my sources on experts and the residents of the region for several reasons. Plans and projects despite the right of the Lebanese people to access information because the Lebanese law allows and enshrines that. Also, what made the task more difficult is how most of the information was damaged or lost due to the war, in addition to the failure to adopt automation in all public facilities. Also due to the severity of the economic crisis, interaction with residents was harder than what was imaginable. Moreover, municipalities are not fully working, because of the depreciation of currency as well as the public sector workers are not fully working nor are the public institutions.

I was unable to speak to any of the mayors responsible of Ain El Remmane or Chiyah, as I discovered that both were living abroad and working another job. Thus, access to data, maps and up to date information was not available, which posed major drawbacks to the collection of material parts. Getting the expert opinion from within the municipalities itself was a valuable addition that would have benefited the outcome of my research. Situation of the country made it also harder to be consistent with my field work as it was not recommended to go daily to the area of study. I was dependent on the people that accompanied me with me and for the day to be a generally calm and dispute free.

Additionally, the context of Beirut is unique and complex, with a rich history and a diverse population. As a result, it is important to consider the historical and cultural context when interpreting the data and drawing conclusions from your research. I will be linking the information that I gathered with the literature and supports and early studies along this study.

### **3.Literature Review**

The process of creating and designing urban areas to satisfy a community's demands is known as **urban planning**. The method aims to future-proof cities and towns by drawing on a variety of academic fields, including design, engineering, economics, sociology, public health, and more. It usually forms a part of a wider city plan and should relate to the purpose and vision statements of the municipality. (Sailus, 2023)

Towns, cities, and urban areas are built out according to a set of goals that have been specified by the state or territory in collaboration with local councils through the innovative process of urban planning. Urban planning has an impact on the infrastructure, transportation network, and more. It also determines the layout and permitted densities of the residential, commercial, and industrial zones. Residents of an urban area that has been poorly built must deal with traffic jams, shoddy infrastructure, costly housing, and they are more susceptible to climate change, fire dangers, and flooding. When a city and its infrastructure are no longer viable, population and economic expansion are hindered. (Archistar, 2022)

It is crucial to keep the goals of the nation's urban planning process and the requirements of the community in mind in order to ensure that a property development project is successful and does not become stuck in the planning stage. Projects that fail to consider some crucial elements of urban planning are likely to be met with opposition from both the city and the community. Sustainability, water sensitivity, urban redevelopment, climate change, heritage, and conservation are the most important considerations. (Archistar, 2022)

In the US, the phrase "urban politics" was first used to highlight the political responses to the rise of Black people, the decrease of urban populations and economic activity, and the advent of serious social dysfunction brought on by crime and narcotics in metropolitan areas in the 1960s. Although these associations are still present, the phrase is currently used more frequently to describe the conflicts, rivalries, and agreements that take place in large cities' public spaces. (Eisinger, 2001)

Urban politics can influence fragmentations in many ways. Government, public policy, housing, and economics must operate in a powerful and complicated setting that is created by political fragmentation, or the number and variety of governments that are active in a metro region. The idea that there are too many governments in a region makes it impossible to rule as a region is a typical banner to use to describe issues like pollution, traffic congestion, racial isolation, and concentrated poverty. One of many theories explaining the loss of center cities

during the past 60 years is that suburban settlements have a parasitic impact on cities. (Wiedlocher, 2014)

Actors in fragmentation come from the municipal, county, and state governments. Each participant has their own ideas about how local government ought to function. Given that every level of government has some influence there, these expectations can occasionally cause problems for urban regions. Since each metropolitan region has a different system of government, not every metropolitan can utilize the same method to address all of its issues. (Duckett, 2012)



### 3.1 Fragmented Cities

Fragmentation within the city of Beirut, it is important to be clear about what is meant by the term "fragmentation." According to an article on Carnegie Middle East Center, Beirut's fragmentation refers to "the social, economic, and political divides that is represented through sectarian divide that have defined the city's recent history."<sup>5</sup> One example of economic fragmentation in Beirut is the "widespread inequality in the city, with many citizens living in poverty while the wealthy enjoy a luxurious lifestyle," as described in a report by the World Bank<sup>6</sup>. Another source of fragmentation is political, as the city is divided into different neighborhoods that are loyal to different political parties. This has been a source of conflict, particularly during times of political unrest<sup>7</sup>.

According to Jaffe (2013), the reproduction of urban fragmentation is influenced by the use and construction of space, particularly in cities with a history of colonial segregation. Socio-spatial norms determine appropriate behavior and users of certain spaces, which can lead to discomfort for those who cannot conform. Maintaining a respectable social position involves an embodied fluency in specific social spaces. Urban residents engage in social distancing and place-making, limiting mobility and interaction. While those in low-income neighborhoods display a powerful sense of place attachment, they are also hesitant to move outside their area, perpetuating stereotypes and reinforcing patterns of urban exclusion and fragmentation.

Additionally, it is important to note that it may be necessary in theoretical cultural influence relationships to refer to marketing cities or urban branding to emphasize today's new fragmentation through gentrification. Gentrification is the process of reinventing and revitalization in urban areas that usually result in the displacement of the low-income residents and the huge flux of higher income residents or new business, which can also displace local industries. Gentrification adds to the fragmentation of the communities in Lebanon and affects the cultural and religion influences.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/61409>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/10/27/lebanon-beirut-urban-inequality>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/5/beirut-blast-anger-over-corruption-and-political-fragmentation>

Due to the displacement of families who have been living in an area throughout their whole lives and lives of their ancestors, a sort of erosion of existing cultural expressions, traditions and even social networks can occur. Moreover, influx of new residents of a different socio- cultural and religious backgrounds can additionally contribute to the division of communities as result of gentrification, which can lead to the conflicts and divisions that can be clearly noticed in the country.

One could almost say that urban planning, being that of gentrification of the city center, there is no longer any urban policy to regulate poverty and misery, and therefore no place for the poorest who must take refuge in peripheral neighborhoods after being chased out of the city center.

Henri Lefebvre discussed how cities and the built environment in general are sites of capital accumulation, mostly by dispossession, with soaring land and housing prices that are increasingly pushing the working class and poor people in many cities of the world out of the way—out to the peripheries, or into ghettos and slums.

Furthermore, narratives of crime and violence in urban areas can lead to area stigmatization, where certain neighborhoods are labeled as deviant and dangerous. This creates a sense of fear and insecurity among residents, which further reinforces urban fragmentation. While residents of low-income areas may develop an intense sense of place identity and attachment, they are often hesitant to venture beyond their own neighborhoods due to narratives of crime and violence<sup>8</sup>.

Fragmentation is not only a result of physical barriers but also a product of social and cultural norms that shape how people interact with each other and with urban spaces. The reproduction of inequalities through the use and construction of space creates a fragmented urban landscape that perpetuates marginalization and exclusion<sup>9</sup>.

## **3.2 Urban Politics in Fragmented Cities**

Complex challenges like urban politics and fragmentation reflect the variety of individuals and interests that exist within cities. The way power and decision-making are allocated among various actors can significantly affect how well people live in cities. Finding ways to strike a balance between the interests of various groups and develop a shared vision for the future of the city is one of the fundamental issues of urban politics.

Urban politics heavily depends on how local governments interact with higher governmental authorities. Cities frequently rely on state or federal governments for financing and support, but this can lead to conflicts when local officials try to show their independence and speak up for their city's needs. For instance, public transportation funding has been a problem in the United States for cities because it is frequently the responsibility of state or federal authorities (Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004). Due to the fact that changes in leadership can result in changes in priorities and money, the political alignment of these various levels of government can also have an impact on urban politics.

Urban politics also heavily relies on interest groups and community organizations. These organizations could have different interests and viewpoints than elected politicians, and they occasionally pose a threat to the legitimacy of the executive branch. Community organizations, for instance, could promote more affordable housing or improved public services and might enlist public support to put pressure on local officials to act (Hahn, 2013). Urban politics' dispersion can, however, also result in conflicting interests and a lack of agreement on crucial topics. The growth of several agencies and departments in charge of various facets of urban life is another indication of the fragmentation of urban politics. This may make it difficult to coordinate efforts and develop a common understanding of the city's destiny. Sometimes, this can result in inefficiencies, contradicting rules, and duplication of effort. Some cities have implemented more collaborative governance models that prioritize relationships between various departments and stakeholders to address this problem (Kraft & Furlong, 2013).

Urban inequality may be affected by the fragmentation of urban politics. Social and economic inequality within a city can worsen if certain groups have more access to political power and resources than others. For instance, unequal access to public services and resources may result if wealthy neighborhoods have more political sway than low-income neighborhoods. Cities face complicated issues with urban government, according to Goldsmith and Eggers (2004), as many interest groups and community organizations vie for funding and political influence. Cities like Beirut, whose sectarian and political tensions have produced a complicated and unpredictable political landscape, are particularly notable for this fragmentation of urban politics (Charney, 2016; Salamey, 2016).

The political environment of Beirut has become more fragmented as a result of the connection between the city government and higher levels of government (Kraft & Furlong, 2013). According to Charney (2016), the city has frequently been sidelined by the federal government, which has resulted in a lack of money and support for infrastructure and public services. As local officials try to express their independence and speak up for the needs of their community, this has led to tensions between the city administration and higher levels of government.

The political environment of Beirut is significantly influenced by interest groups and neighborhood organizations (Hahn, 2013). These organizations could have different interests and viewpoints than elected politicians, and they occasionally pose a threat to the legitimacy of the executive branch. Community organizations, for instance, were instrumental in organizing public support for reform and anti-corruption measures during the 2019 protests in Lebanon (Salamey, 2016).

A complicated and unsteady security environment has been produced in Beirut as a result of the growth of numerous armed organizations and militias (Harb & Legrenzi, 2014). Given that some districts have better access to resources and public services than others, this fragmentation has also contributed to the urban inequality in the city (Charney, 2016; Salamey, 2016). The fragmentation of Beirut's political environment has a big impact on the growth and planning of the city (Harb & Legrenzi, 2014). It might be challenging to develop a comprehensive vision for the future of the city when various factions are vying for control and resources. This has led to a lack of investment in public services and infrastructure, which has made it more difficult for the city to address environmental issues like pollution and climate change (Charney, 2016; Salamey, 2016).

### 3.3 Actors in Lebanese Urban Planning

Lebanon is a highly urbanized country with 87% of its population living in urban areas. The urban growth and the accelerating drift to major cities and coastal towns were not accompanied by any state policies or plans, which turned those cities and towns into a single urban area that is challenged by the lack of basic services, in addition to transportation and environmental problems, with traffic congestion and a deterioration of the natural environment.

There are several actors in relation to urban planning. Local actors like municipalities are highly influential in the local planning processes, as they are the primary local agents responsible for managing their territories, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and addressing their issues. The Municipal Law (Article 49) stipulates that, in collaboration with the Directorate General of Urbanism (DGU), communities can draft their master or detailed plans, designs, regulations, and parcel projects. To accomplish this, municipalities typically hire consulting experts or firms to undertake the necessary studies and submit their proposals to the Higher Council for Urban Planning (*Reforming Urban Planning System in Lebanon 29*).<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, these local communities often engage in planning processes without considering the broader context of neighboring municipalities. As a result, there is a missed opportunity to promote collective action, mutual benefits, improved services, and ultimately, a balanced and sustainable development. In our case study, there is no coordination between the municipality of Chiyah or the municipality of Ghobeiry (Which includes the Shiite part of Chiyah).

There are also National actors like the Directorate General of Urbanism (DGU), who are a key public planning actor. The DGU is a well-structured public administration, within the Ministry of Public Works. The DGU reports to a Higher Council of Urban Planning (HCU) headed by the Director General. The HCU is the clearing and approving body for any primary plan before its submission to the Council of Ministers. Its tasks are to elaborate masterplans, provide necessary studies concerning road maps, monitor implementation of plans in relation with the municipalities and support their studies. Yet, there is no clear understanding and procedures of collaboration and

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<sup>10</sup> *Reforming Urban Planning System in Lebanon - page 29*

harmonization with the other key planning actors are in place. Its relations with the municipalities follow strenuous patterns. They both compete and sometimes clash due to the conflict between the political representation of the municipalities and the technical/legal representation of the DGU in the planning process. According to Verdeil (2007), the DGU (Department of Geography and Urbanism) is inadequately staffed, and its employees are not equipped to manage the demanding tasks, such as cadastral mapping of a massive portion of Lebanese territory. As a result, the DGU hires urban planners and firms to propose primary plans for specific groups of cities and towns. This process is often slow, bureaucratic, and outdated in terms of planning approaches. Moreover, it takes the DGU years to approve and implement the proposed primary plans, which can contradict the consultant's original planning intent, as noted by Yazigi (2012).

The Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) was founded in 1977 to take charge of reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. CDR is a Lebanese government agency responsible for the development and reconstruction of the country. To regulate urban growth, CDR has been given the task of developing a national physical master plan for the Lebanese territory. The end result provides a national general framework for urban planning and land use in Lebanon, to which all stakeholders involved in planning must adhere. Prior to 2004, the CDR had not formulated a national-level plan for Lebanon and its primary functions were hosting studies for some urban planning initiatives at the scale of metropolitan Beirut and supervising bids and the execution of infrastructure projects. In 2004, the CDR submitted to the Lebanese government the *Schema Directeur de l'Aménagement du Territoire Libanais (SDATL)*, a land use plan that devised general spatial development guidelines for Lebanese regions and sub-regions, including major cities, specifying geographic hierarchies, inter-relationships, and functions. The plan was the result of cooperation between Lebanese and French experts and was financed by the IAURIF. It was approved by the Lebanese government in 2009 and serves today as a main reference for national spatial development in public agencies, and regional and local governments<sup>11</sup>.

However, the SDATL remains too generic in many of its recommendations and lacks implementation mechanisms at the regional and local levels. The CDR is currently studying ways through which it can extract more detailed regional plans from the SDATL that would specify

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cdr.gov.lb/CDR/media/CDR/StudiesandReports/SDATL/Eng/NPMPLT-Intr.PDF>

more precisely spatial development and planning at the scale of regions. It is also discussing avenues of cooperation with the DGU and municipal unions in order to achieve this goal<sup>12</sup>.

Today, however, there is a need to supplement this national framework<sup>13</sup> with regional urban planning frameworks. Other ministries play a role in development, as water issues are in the hands of the ministry of energy and water. Municipalities are in the hands of ministry of interior, and the DGU are in the hands of the ministry of public works. This fragmentation makes the synchronization even harder for a harmonious development, adding to the problem that each ministry belongs to a different political group who have different interests (with one common interest, is to divide people).

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cdr.gov.lb/CDR/media/CDR/StudiesandReports/SDATL/Eng/NPMPLT-Intr.PDF>

<sup>13</sup> *Reforming Urban Planning System in Lebanon - page 23*

### 3.4 Non-State Actors

Most planning theories assume that planning practice, especially on a large scale, is a tool used by public planners with venues for participation, recourse, and accountability integrated into the political structures of the nation-state. This is how planning is used to organize and spatialize particular forms of authority and identity. However, the post-summer 2006 war reconstruction of Beirut's southern suburbs in Lebanon provides a unique example of how planning can be taken up at a large scale by a non-state actor and what forms it can take in that context. After the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006, Hezbollah, the political party known for its role as the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon, became the main planning actor in the reconstruction efforts. They conducted damage surveys during the bombings and became a necessary partner for all relief agencies and reconstruction donors. Hezbollah also intervened in rehabilitating damaged road networks and bridges and developing design schemes for the reconstruction of several damaged villages and neighborhoods. While some of this work was done to assist other donors, such as the Iranian Embassy, the political party directly conducted other work itself. (Quilty and Ohrstrom, 2007). As Hezbollah is the main political party in that area, planning strategies has to pass by them, or in some cases initiated by them. Same example would apply for in other areas with different dominant political groups.

Today, because of the postwar crisis and the lack of interest of the governments to propose or implement strategic and harmonious development for the country, international actors have become a big part of the country development process. For instance, post fourth of August explosion, they had funded reconstruction of the historical houses, where the Lebanese government is unable to do anything. They propose and fund studies and research and finance specific areas of development. Yet, they have been criticized for going hand in hand with the governments with zero transparency and on where the funding is exactly going and no participation from the people in this process.



### 3.5 Religious Political Organizations

The Former civil war militias have become the main religious political groups since the end of the war are the primary actors of the planning and development. For years they have divided public tasks among them. There is Five main sects Lebanon which are Druze who are represented by the progressive socialist Party (PSP), the Shiite which are represented by Hezbollah and Haraket Amal, The Sunnite who are represented by Future movement and the Maronite Christians represented by the Free patriotic movement, The Phalange Party and the Lebanese forces. In my research, the two neighborhoods have Shiite in the western part (Chiyah area) and Maronite Christians eastern part (Ain el Remmane). When I mention these two religions in general, I would be speaking about the main religious political groups they are affiliated with, because these groups operate from within the government by the different governmental roles they share among each other, and outside of it by their network of followers. I also don't want to generalize as they are a lot of Lebanese Christian, Muslim or Druze who are not affiliated with any political groups but on the opposite line, they are trying to fight their supremacy. One of the main points that interested me during my series of interviews with concerning people who follow these political groups, first one is the fear of the other, which has been big topic since 2007 conflict in Beirut. And another reason is to have a contact within the government, as there is no possibility of finding a job in the public sector or having administrative papers, demands all done. "Even if I know they are thieves, it's better to have them on my side," one of the residents of Chiyah told me. The reality that it was necessary to have a contact in the government therefore in one of political groups, in order to survive in this spatially unjust country.

The table below shows which religious-political organizations are affiliated with each sect, for more context.

Sectarian Affiliation	Religious-Political Organization
<b>Druze</b>	Progressive Socialist Party (PSP)
<b>Shiite</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hezbollah</li> <li>○ Haraket Amal</li> </ul>
<b>Sunni</b>	Future Movement
<b>Maronite Christian (Catholic)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maronite Church</li> <li>○ Free Patriotic Movement</li> <li>○ Phalange Party (Kata'ib)</li> <li>○ Lebanese Forces</li> </ul>

### 3.5.1 Sectarian Topography

For one to understand my case study and research, one should understand the peculiar urban landscape of this country. The merging of diverse sectarian, ethnic and national entities within a city has continually redefined the notion of urban space as the city moves, sometimes quite dramatically, from prosperity to destruction and vice versa. This urban mosaic is in most cases regarded as Beirut's source of cosmopolitan charm as well as the city's ultimate tragedy. According to Mona Harb much of Beirut is divided. "It is a fragmented city, made of more or less self-sufficient neighborhoods, or sets of neighborhoods, with clear, segregated lines," There might exist neighborhoods with mixed identities and profile of people but not a lot exist. These division lines in the cities become a source of tension in the city and confrontation lines. A city that is divided based on politics and sectarianism, becomes a mirror of the political conflict. As soon as a problem is happening in the parliament between two groups, the tension would mount in the adjacent neighborhoods belonging to followers of these groups. The figure below shows how many different religions are sects are in Beirut.

### 3.5.2 Territorial War

The area we are studying is an area where Shiite community and Christian Maronite are fighting over land. It could also apply to other communities fighting over land. Abou Akar described the war happening between Druze community, followers of the progressive socialist party and Shiite community represented by Hezbollah, on the other side of the periphery.

Bou Akar's theory of territorial war can be applied to the case of Chiyah and Ain El Remmane neighborhoods in Beirut. These neighborhoods have long been marked by socio-religious fragmentation, with diverse groups living in distinct areas with their own unique cultural practices and social norms. This fragmentation has been exacerbated by the political system in Lebanon which allocates political power according to religious and sectarian identity.

Bou Akar's analysis of the geographies of urban planning and war is particularly relevant to the case of Chiyah and Ain El Remmane. The neighborhoods' spatial configuration has been shaped by the actions of religious political organizations, who have sought to consolidate their power and influence within specific areas. This has led to the creation of distinct neighborhoods that are dominated by one particular group, with limited interaction between different communities.

The aftermath of the Lebanese civil war has also had a significant impact on the spatial and temporal logics of the war yet to come in these neighborhoods. Displacement and resettlement have contributed to the fragmentation of communities, with diverse groups being forced to relocate to specific areas. This has perpetuated the existing socio-religious fragmentation, as groups have sought to establish their presence and power in their new neighborhoods.

To address the territorial war in Chiyah and Ain El Remmane, it is important to promote greater interaction and understanding between different communities. This can be achieved through initiatives such as community events and cultural exchanges, which can help to break down stereotypes and prejudices. It is also important to address the underlying social and economic inequalities that contribute to fragmentation, such as poverty and unemployment, which can further exacerbate tensions between diverse groups.

On a local level, the territorial war is being fought through channeling real estate markets, changing land policies, and modifying building and zoning laws. Internationally its being unfold big networks of finance, fundraising and religious allegiances. Church affiliates are trying to change preemption laws on land sale to expand the right of first refusal.

### 3.6 Question of Integration

The flux of people from outside and from within the Lebanese territory has always been part of our history. From people coming from the outside of the country because of regional wars, Like the Kurdish and Armenian communities in the early 20th century (Harris, 2012), to the settling of Palestinian post Nakba and finally since 2011 the flux of Syrians towards Lebanon . From within the country people were moving towards Beirut to settle in the Suburbs, first from the mountains who were Christian Maronites and then from the south of Beirut which were Shi'ite. In Chiyah they were mostly Christians and in Ghobeiry, which is the adjacent neighborhood, were mostly Shiite. Between 1935 and 1956 both Chiyah and Ghobeiry formed part of the same Municipality of Chiyah, which was responsible for public works, like road and schools, water and electricity and physical planning of the city. Seats in the municipality council as elsewhere in Lebanon were allocated based on confessional basis, which means a coalition of a Christian Maronite and a Shiite would always win, this creates mixed sect coalitions against each other's. This means that the two sects should find a meeting a point through negotiations and compromise and in order to avoid irreconcilable issues. Issues were present and the Shiite community argued that the Maronites spent more funds on projects important for Chiyah and that services like water, streets and electricity were better maintained than in Ghobeiry. On the other hand, Maronites insisted that the money was invested from the area in which it was raised. Therefore in 1956, the municipality of Chiyah splits into two on the basis of confessional lines (khuri, 1995), thus each managing their own affairs independently from the other. Integration was never a virtue in Lebanon and separation was always the answer for any conflict. This solution was again used when Chiyah residents had become more of Shiite community during the displacements triggered by the civil war and the Israeli invasion in the south and the East part, separated by the green line were lived most of the Christians in Ain El Remmane. The municipality of Chiyah was again divided into two entities, Directing administrative duties of the Western part of Chiyah to Ghobeiry Municipality (Khuri, 1995)

### **3.7 Strategy of the Displaced After the War**

During the final stages of the civil war, the emergence of Hezbollah led to a political division in the region. Displaced families residing near the Mar Mikhail church in Chiyah remained supporters of Haraket Amal, whereas those in Hayy Madi, situated on the opposite side of Zakkour Road, became Hezbollah supporters. This polarization intensified in 2004 when the government began issuing monetary compensation to displaced families. The compensation was intended to facilitate their return to the villages they had been displaced from. However, both Haraket Amal and Hezbollah benefited from negotiating compensation packages for families with strong ties to their religious-political organizations. Since most families had established new lives in Beirut over the past thirty years, they were not keen on returning to their former villages. As families with connections to these organizations were more likely to receive higher compensation awards, the two organizations solidified their hold on the local political landscape. Displaced families, who were soon to be evicted, were compelled to search for new apartments in nearby areas, increasing demand for affordable housing in the city. As a result, Hezbollah intervened in housing and real estate markets in the neighborhoods adjacent to ‘‘Al Dahyah’’. ( Bou Akar, 2018)

### 3.8 A Peripheral History

The perimeter of choice used for my study had an emotional aspect, but also a geographical aspect as it is situated with the periphery of Beirut and plays a role in itself. In 1888 Beirut would be designated as a provincial capital<sup>14</sup>. The increased relationship between the mountain and the city geographically, politically, socially, and economically would mean exponential prosperity for Beirut. A new form of urban projects was implemented to transform Beirut into a trade center, facilitating access and circulation in the dense city. The Municipal council at the time, formed of key feudal families from Sunni, Maronites and Greek Orthodox Families<sup>15</sup>. The city's planning during the late 19th and early 20th century was primarily focused on advancing the economic interests of Lebanon's feudal families, who dominated the council at the time. This often involved capitalizing on the urban fabric of the city and implementing urban reform in areas that would enhance economic output and trade in the families' respective territories. According to Hanssen, the new municipal council in Beirut initiated a program called 'social cleansing' aimed at introducing cleanliness and order into the crowded streets of the medieval town. This program resulted in the systematic displacement of poorer residents towards the city's peripheries, as the city's wealthy inhabitants embarked on a large-scale campaign to transform the urban landscape. The influx of people from Beirut's new hinterland and Mount Lebanon led to the expansion of the city's neighborhoods along pre-established community zones, with villages such as Jnah, Furn el Chebbak, Chiyah, and Sin el Fil taking shape at the periphery. The majority of the population in these villages comprised Maronite peasants who worked in the vast Orange, Olive, and Mulberry groves of south Beirut, enabling them to benefit from the city's prosperity while avoiding its onerous taxation policies. (This movement of mountain residents towards the city also facilitated the emergence of the Za'im.<sup>16</sup> Social organization as communities congregated by class, village of origin and familial ties). The displacement of the Shi'ite population to the suburbs of Beirut was

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<sup>14</sup> Sectarian topography, Ali Khodr page 43

<sup>15</sup> Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut*, 149, Figure. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Za'im references the feudal lords of the Lebanese mountains who maintained patron-client relationships with their subjects throughout the late Ottoman era. Rowe and Sarkis, *Projecting Beirut*, 12

the most prone during the civil war even though it started even earlier in 1927<sup>17</sup> as they were evading the Israeli atrocities. Happening in the south, and settled in the periphery, in areas like Chiyah, in the other side of the green line, divided from the Christian part of the suburb in areas like Ain El Remmane (Khuri, 1995).

What is interesting about studying areas in the peripheries are Abdou Maliq Simone's perspective suggests that the periphery can serve as a boundary, neighboring other cities, rural areas, or peripheral regions, resulting in a hybrid space where diverse ways of living urban life can converge. This understanding of the periphery as a frontier can be optimistic, as it may accommodate tensions stemming from differing ways of life (Simone, 2008) . However, this positive view does not align with the situation in Beirut, where the periphery's transformation into a frontier or their coexistence is a consequence of recurrent conflicts and continuous efforts by competing religious and political organizations to secure spatial superiority in anticipation of future wars. According to the main plan created by French planner Michel Ecochard in 1963, there were controversial restrictions on development in Beirut's Chiyah suburb, which primarily involved calculations of minimum lot size and exploitation factors. These restrictions were viewed as limiting the affordability of land or apartments in the area. Although landowners wanted to build more densely on land in Chiyah, the Ecochard plan proposed to restrict the amount of construction possible, which reduced the value of land. This caused disagreement between lower-income Christians and the phalangists who supported building restrictions in Chiyah, hoping that it would create opportunities for lower-income Christians to obtain land at depreciated prices. However, landowners opposed this plan vehemently. Municipal elections in the area in 1964 were fought based on candidates' positions on the Ecochard plan, which prefigured how planning and real estate concerns would shape local politics in Beirut's peripheries in the lead-up to the full-scale civil war in 1975 (Fawaz, 2010).

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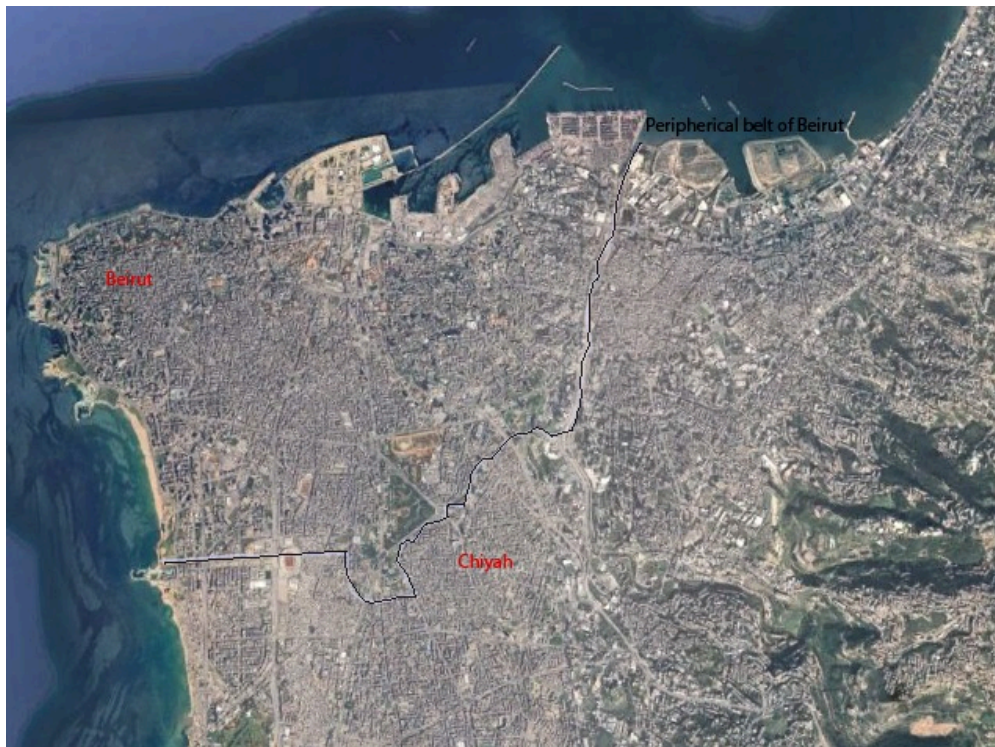
<sup>17</sup> Fuad Khuri, *From village to suburbs*, 209

## **4.Area of Study**



## 4.1 Chiyah and Ain el Remmane

Chiyah and Ain El Remmane are two neighborhoods in the periphery of Beirut that are characterized by socio-religious fragmentation as shown in the figure below.



*Figure 7 : Chiyah and Beirut city center*

Chiyah is home to a Shiaa Muslim population, while Ain El Remmane is home to a Christian population, with a significant Armenian presence. The figure below shows the distribution of religious buildings in both areas. These neighborhoods have developed their own unique socio-cultural norms and practices, which are often at odds with those of other groups in the city.

Divisions such as the ones seen in Ain El Remanne and Chiyah have happened due to the fact that residents were forced to live as autonomous and supportive community spaces in order to survive in a city that excludes them. Such spaces can be seen as way to self-preserve and a way to keep themselves safe from different traditions and cultures that could come due to differences in religions. Urban theories of a liberal city often refer to the theories and ideologies that could view a city in the liberalism point of view, which focuses on the liberties of the individual, free markets,

and a limited involvement from the government. As for liberal self-regulations, it often refers to the notion that such communities that expected to govern themselves, of course, within the framework of liberal principles.

Religious buildings are very important in order to show the identity of an area. During the rebuilding of the city center, The Amine Mosque commissioned to be built next to the saint George maronite cathedral. This intervention was to show the world that the war is over and that the Muslims and Christians were reunited again. The difference was that Amine Mosque was way bigger in size and flashier and more situated in a better geographical place, grabbing full attention. Some people read this architectural intervention to show the bigger Muslim role in the governance of the country after the war.

In Chiyah and Ain El Remmane, we can notice the religious building are more prominent in Ain El Remmane than in Chiyah. Four in the area Chiyah and other eight in Ain El Remmane, as we can see in the image below. We can understand this difference in numbers as a reaction to the expansions of the surrounding Shiite area, as many of them seemed that they were built in the last 10 years.



*Figure 8*

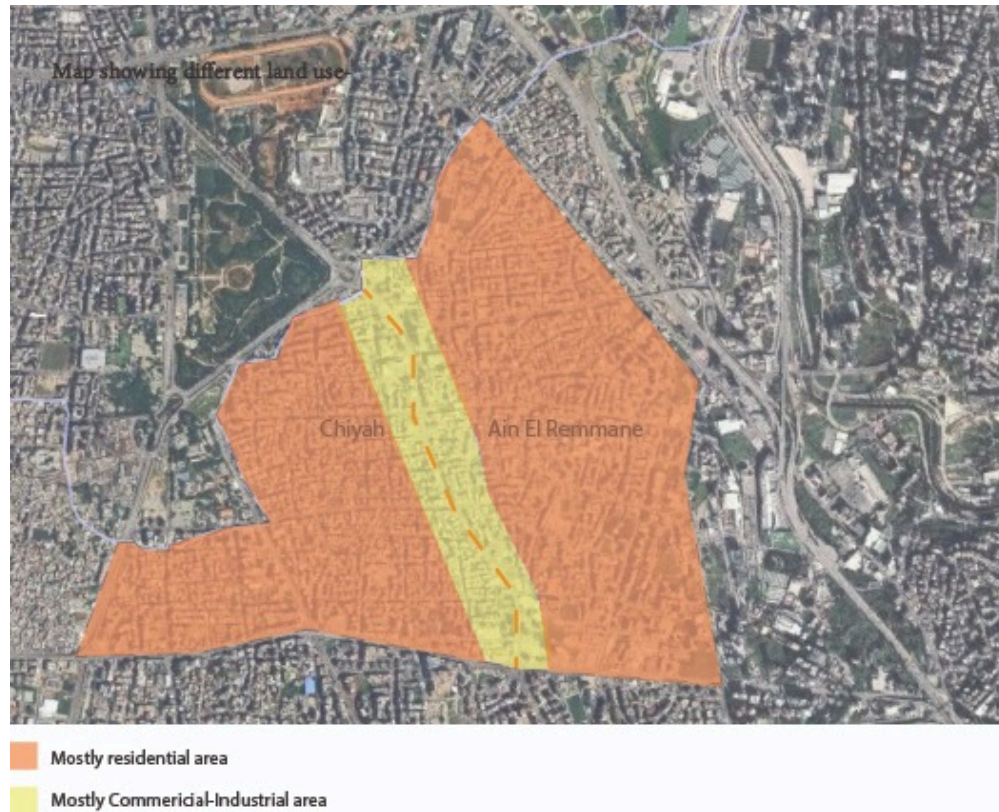
The fragmentation of these neighborhoods has practical implications for the daily lives of residents. For example, access to public services such as schools and hospitals may be limited due to their concentration in areas dominated by one particular group. This can be seen in Chiyah, where the lack of public schools has led to the proliferation of private schools, which can be costly for families with limited financial resources . This means that parents are reliant on subsidize offered by the government or by holding a job in the public sector. These jobs are not given based on competence but based on political help, what people call in Lebanon ‘‘Wasta’’. The figure below shows that both schools in Ain el Remanne and Chiyah are private schools.





*Figure 9*

Socio-religious fragmentation can also lead to tensions and conflicts over issues such as land and property ownership. This is evident in Ain El Remmane, where disputes over the ownership of land have led to clashes between diverse groups. These conflicts can be exacerbated by political and sectarian tensions, which are often intertwined with issues of land and property ownership. The figure below shows which areas are residential and which areas are mostly commercial-industrial. The commercial industrial area between the Old Saida Highway also serve to have a bigger bufferzone, thus a bigger seperation.



*Figure 10 Map showing the two main land uses in this area*

To address socio-religious fragmentation in neighborhoods like Chiyah and Ain El Remmane, it is important to promote greater interaction and understanding between diverse groups. This can be achieved through initiatives such as community events and cultural exchanges, which can help to break down stereotypes and prejudices. One factor that has contributed to this fragmentation is the history of Lebanon, which has been marked by conflicts and wars along sectarian and religious lines. This has led to the creation of neighborhoods that are inhabited by people from specific religious and sectarian groups. These neighborhoods have developed their own unique socio-cultural norms and practices, which can be at odds with those of other groups in the city.

Another factor that contributes to socio-religious fragmentation is the political system in Lebanon, which is based on a confessional system that allocates political power according to religious and sectarian identity. This system reinforces the divisions between diverse groups and



can exacerbate tensions between them (Kassir, 2018). The figure below shows a map with locations of Islamic and Christian political leaders posters distributed throughout the areas.



*Figure 11: Posters of political Figures*

The fragmentation of neighborhoods like Chiyah and Ain El Remmane can have practical implications for the daily lives of residents. For example, access to public services such as schools and hospitals may be limited due to their concentration in areas dominated by one particular group. This can exacerbate social and economic inequalities between diverse groups, which can further contribute to tensions and conflict. The figures below are pictures in Chiyah from a field visit.



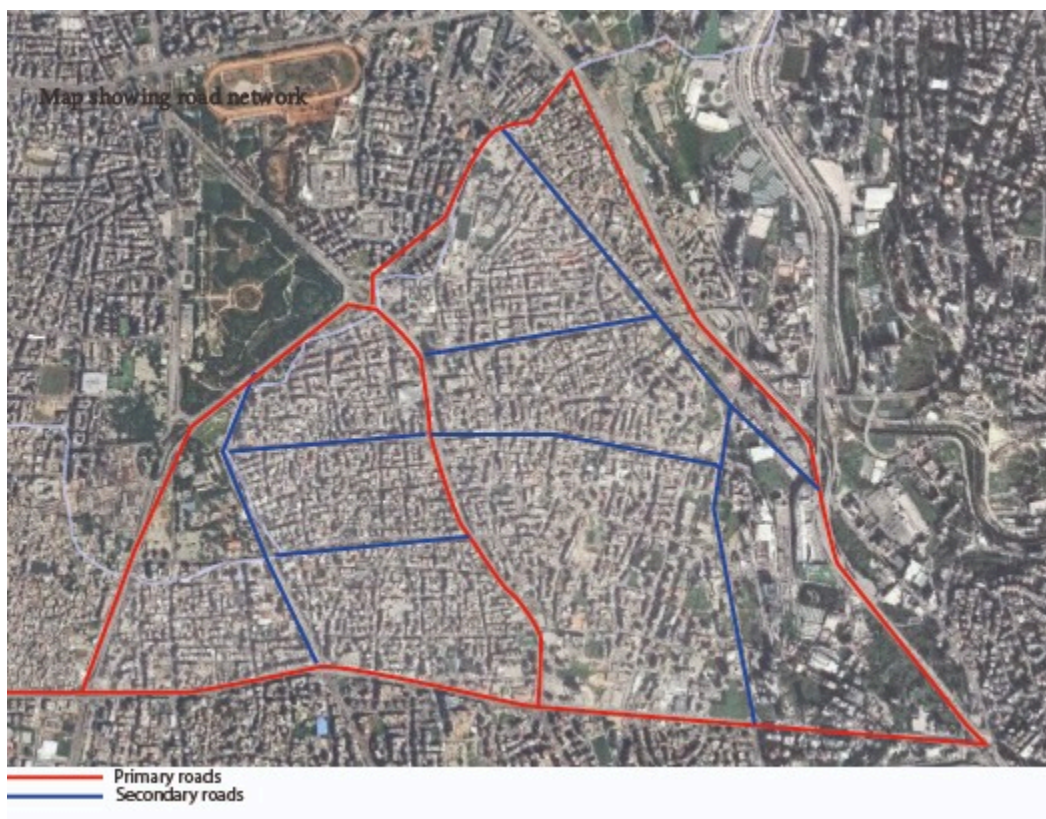
*Figure 12 – Old Saida road*



*Figure 13 Ruins from the civil war*



The road network diagram below illustrates that one can navigate around two areas without the need to enter the other. The primary roads are located either in the periphery or in the middle where the social division is taking place. As a result, it is possible to avoid the other area altogether, and in fact, it is often faster to do so. The physical separation of neighborhoods and communities through infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and walls reinforces social and economic disparities.



*Figure 14: Map of Primary and Secondary Roads of the Road Network*



*Figure 15: Location of the Municipalities*

The diagram below showing the location of military checkpoint. When I was walking in the area, I was surprised to see the number of checkpoints, their orientation, and their locations. For sure I felt back during the civil war day, and surely understood that traumas are not over yet. They were no army men when I was there but could surely be active very fast when needed.



*Figure 16: Map to show Lebanese Military Checkpoints*

Over the years, when we talk about Lebanese society, we cannot avoid analyzing the political factors of these neighborhoods, including the role of the authorities and community organizations for community intervention. Also, historical factors must be analyzed, including conflicts and tensions, especially the civil war, and what affected the post-war and what which will affect future generations.

## **5.Results and Interpretation**



## 5.1 Us and Them

What surprised me during my field work was the “Us and Them” topic, while randomly speaking to people in the streets and in local cafes. The tragic situation of the country, the effect of the crises and the tensions and stress that people are living in since 2019 is unimaginable and is hard to avoid this topic. While speaking to people from both sides of Ain El Remmane and Chiyah, the same concerns and problems were repeated, in the end we are all living in the same country, but when speaking about the other area, it is when the conversation would shift to “us vs them”. “They are taking their lands”, “They are eating us,” which a metaphor meaning that they are expanding and settling everywhere, as most of the people in Ain El Remmane would say. While on the side of Chiyah, the people would mention that “They left and didn’t come back.,” “They live differently than us and I would not see myself sharing the same neighborhoods since we have different lifestyles,” when speaking about his neighbor that lives 1 or 2 streets away.

The use of metaphors such as “they are taking their lands” and “they are eating us” reveal a deep-seated fear and mistrust that reinforces the “us and them” dichotomy. Similarly, the statement “they live differently than us” reflects a perception of cultural and social differences that are viewed as incompatible. This mindset has the potential to perpetuate conflict and hinder efforts towards reconciliation and social cohesion. During my tours in Ain El Remmane and Chiyah, I brought along with me an old friend who was affiliated with one political groups that lived in Chiyah, as I was discussing the situation with him concerning his day to day and relationship with the neighboring area of Ain El Remmane, he confirmed to me that there was no problem between him and them, He said, “On the contrary, everybody respects the other, I have friends from both areas, and many of the people of Chiyah go to buy their alcohol from the other area, and vice versa. They come to eat in our restaurants and buy cheap goods from our stores”. This was not surprising for me yet during my stay in Lebanon, when disagreement between the political groups occurred concerning investigation of the 4th of August explosion. Tension mounted again in the streets, and Lebanese army people had to pile up on the ex-green line of the civil war, to prevent escalation between people from Chiyah and Ain El Remmane. This shows again the people’s emotions and reactions are based on the political groups fights and not personal between them. In that sense, this fragmented planning of Beirut serves its purpose.

“I have seen the urban fragmentation of the neighborhood and the city, and the matter is different from what it was in the past. The matter is not limited to the difference in living conditions, but rather to the sharp decline in relations between individuals, as in the past people used to identify each other and help each other. But with all these divisions, everyone became interested in their own interests only. ‘’Affirmed S.H. This shows that the biggest impacts of the materialization of fragmentation in the cities is the on consciousness of the people between each other. It’s rather there to be engraved within the minds of youth, whereas there was a chance to reconcile with them, as they hadn’t lived the atrocities of the war, and could see the city as a chance for hope. During my meeting with N.C she had similar feelings ‘’ I am really worried about the city that we will leave to our children and grandchildren, and I hope to unite our city, not only the physical ties, but also the emotional and social ones that help build a solid, unified, and strong society.”

## 5.2 Territorial Markers

The neighborhoods that are socio fragmented usually enjoy a certain degree of financial and decision-making autonomy through their municipalities. Their territory is delimited by mapped administrative boundaries. But these administrative delimitations are easily visible, especially in the periphery of Beirut where these neighborhoods are vis a vis of each other. Here comes another territorial tool to differentiate the areas from each other and they are territorial markers. In this respect, Desmond Morris compares the marking of territory in humans to that of animals. In fact, a territorial animal occupies, alone or in a group, a space to which it defends access to its fellow creatures or to other groups by olfactory, auditory, or visual marking, and by aggressive behavior. The more numerous these markers were, the longer the occupation period was. Gustave Nicolas FISCHER attributes three main functions to these markers: to prevent intrusion, to transmit a message about the identity of an individual and to deliver information about our desire to enter into contact with others or not. If I would like to compare a Christian from Muslim Village. The center of the town would always be around the religious site. For instance, a Church for a Christian village and a Mosque for a Muslim one. Other forms of territory markers would be. Martyrs' photos, usually found in Shiite neighborhoods and villages, and photos of the respective political religious group leaders. It can also be a sculpture of the virgin Mary. Usually on entrances of the villages/neighborhoods. Another tool used in Beirut to mark a territory is by changing street names, and naming them after political and religious leaders, and even foreign political leaders, in relation with the geo-political war in the middle East. When spending time in the sites, walking through it, and looking vividly on the street level. I had noticed firstly on the old Saida road the separates the two neighborhoods, that there was a lot of military check points from the two sides of the road, overlooking each other. At that point of the day, they were empty, yet it was interesting to see how they were overlooking each other and forms a sort of psychological barrier that I'm going from one place to another. Politico-religious signs are ever present and can change the spirit of the place. From Martyr's pictures all around the entrances and inside of Chiyah residential neighborhood, along with pictures of the two main political leaders of Amal and Hezbollah parties, and Lebanese forces signs and quotes are in the side of Ain El Remmane.



Another interesting point is that main streets are on the main line of divisions. While a Church exists near the border of Ain El Remmane and Chiyah, as it has a historical meaning and with pressure from opposing political groups, no mosque exists in Ain El Remmane. There 3 one mosque in Chiyah and 8 Churches in Ain el Remmane. Also exist one old church, The Mar Mikhail church, which is in Chiyah, near the border between the two the neighborhood, and is only a mere remembrance of the old urban fabric. In addition, Lebanese forces (Affiliated with Christians) office exists near the border between the two neighborhoods and a Haraket Amal and Hezbollah office exists in Chiyah. Another big marker, situated in the neighboring area to Chiyah next to the to the frontier between the two, would be the military cemetery for Hezbollah martyrs (Rawdat Al Shahidan).

### **5.3 Social Practices with the Periphery**

There's also forms of spatial practices that B.J affirmed that is there to show a certain cultural identity in these two areas that are governed by censorship and surveillance, and residential mobilities determined by the simple reason of affiliation to a political group opposed to the one controlling the neighborhood. Individuals or communities may use several types of spatial activities in places that are marked by censorship and monitoring to claim their own cultural identity. To represent and preserve their cultural heritage's distinctive characteristics, these practices may involve the use of real spaces, symbols, or artistic displays. Residential mobility, however, could be affected by one's affiliation to a political group that challenges the ruling power in situations when political control reaches the neighborhood level. The area's residential movements may be influenced by this political allegiance, which may cause social splits and the development of politically homogeneous communities.

During my walks in the area, I saw communal/sectarian displays of strength that are interpreted through a variety of spatial practices, transcribing specific communal identities into the atmosphere and materiality of the city, for instance the procession of vehicle convoys broadcasting the speeches of communal elites, the shooting of fireworks to greet the televised speeches of communal elites, the setting up of barricades, the act of smoking Chicha on a street corner to spread a particular political message.

## 5.4 Narratives Coming from The Periphery

Socio-spatial divisions are also incorporated into spaces of representation, particularly in terms of discourses and all kinds of narratives about cities and imaginaries. In other words, space is a producer of narratives, and reciprocally, narratives contribute to the production of space, insofar as they influence the practices of inhabitants, such as crime narratives, which lead users to avoid certain places and contribute to reinforcing urban segregation in a divided society (Caldeira, 2000). Conversely, narratives can generate a transgression of the boundaries and divisions of the dominant socio-political order (Certeau, 2011). Indeed, "the narrative passes through where the map cuts...and it passes through," "injects mobility into what is fixed, links spaces, and introduces otherness into boundaries by opening the inside to its other". The idea that urban narratives are inherently spatial suggests that they are closely intertwined with the physical and social structures of the city, and that they can have a profound impact on the ways in which people experience and interact with urban spaces. As such, it is important to consider urban narratives as an integral part of the framework for understanding socio-spatial divisions in urban environments.

An important factor to take into consideration is how socio-spatial divisions are embedded into spaces of representation. This relates to the means in which social injustices and divisions appear in stories and discussions about cities. For instance, the way crime narratives are written can influence individuals to avoid certain districts, so promoting urban segregation in a fragmented society. These narratives have an impact on how people live in cities and what they do, which in turn contributes to the social and physical divisions that exist there. I had met many people who had never been outside of city center Beirut, and I can feel that these peripheral area are too far away and are too dangerous to visit.

On the other hand, such narratives also have the power to defy and overcome these limitations and divisions. Narratives can upend and undermine the dominating socio-political order by introducing mobility into fixed spaces and separation into borders. According to Certeau's viewpoint, narratives have the ability to introduce new possibilities and perspectives for urban settings.

Urban narratives are thought of as being essentially spatial, which implies that they are tightly related to the societal and physical structures of the city. People's perceptions and experiences of urban environments are shaped by these narratives, which in turn affect how they interact with one another and behave there. A deeper knowledge of the intricate processes at work in urban environments is acquired when urban narratives are viewed as a crucial component of the framework for comprehending socio-spatial divisions. Understanding how narratives shape experiences and interactions in urban settings is very vital to fully understand and appreciate the intricate social dynamics and spatial dynamics of cities.

Another factor influencing the narratives, would be the media, and specifically the Television station. In Lebanon it is also known that to each political religious party, its own television, that they invest in it, therefore controlling the information that comes out from it. Followers of these political group usually only watch their own station, as it would give in their biased opinion, information that they can trust, and they will reject any information coming from other station. H.H mentions a case where one local station specifically wanting to project a French documentary ‘‘ Hezbollah l’enquete interdite ‘‘ done by France 5, was out suddenly not working everywhere in the area, for people to avoid seeing the documentary. He says: ‘‘ I opened the channel to watch the basketball league, to find out that station is not working, So I asked my brother in Law if I can watch it as his place, but he told me that it wasn’t working also’’ He mentions that some people used to their influence on local cable and satellite owners, to remove the channel for one day.

## 5.5 Confessional Political Model

Lebanon's confessional political model was created during the French mandate as power sharing between diversities with Lebanon and it used to be celebrated as model of effective democracy B .J affirms that this model has shown incapacity of working when we define identities according to sectarian identities and allegiances, which he identifies as the reason that we find these fragmentation between Chiyah and Ain El Remmane but also between other neighborhoods because we are reducing all identity affiliation to one, which transforms all the discussions into the lens of sectarianism rather than to see it in different way which are more important like economy and the sustainability and class struggle. N.C also mentioned that during the meetings with public officials and decision maker, any proposed project would be rejected if doesn't satisfy all sects, and this is tricky because you must transform the project, whether by duplicating or dissecting it for every sect to have a piece of the pie. At the same time Mr. J.T mentioned that any project that needs to be implemented, would be given to these same developers who are affiliated with the political religious parties, regardless of the scale. He said that it is the same people who are doing all the projects, this contradicts their needs to divide projects between different neighborhoods and then giving the execution rights to the same people. I remember during the uprising of 2019, discussion regarding the confessional political model was a big topic, the people acknowledged that this system has not served the people but the political class, it's based on a demographic count that was done in 1943 and that was never repeated, which also discusses today's legitimacy of such system. As according to N.C if we do the demographic count today, it will give us another quota system. The political polarization of Beirut as a result of the nation's volatility and hybrid sovereignties has caused the city's urban sprawl to be overridden.

## 5.6 Frontier of War

This takes us to the theory of the war yet to come developed by architect and urban planner Hiba Abou Akkar. In one of her interviews, she describes war anticipation and the “fear of the other” speech, mostly used by political groups as the biggest generator of these socio-religious divisions. People would rather live in areas controlled by their own people as it makes them feel safer in case a war has started. For all I can remember during my life in Lebanon, is that the idea of war has always been part of our lives. Whether it’s an internal conflict reminding the people of the trauma of the civil war they still hold with them, or of an outside invasion. This happened on multiple occasions since the end of the war. From series of assassination starting in 2005, with the assassination of Prime minister Rafik El Hariri, to the 2006 war Israeli war on Lebanon. Whether in times of peace in war anticipation or times of war with violence, both have shaped Beirut Geographies. It is interesting how Israeli bombed what it defined as areas of Beirut belonging to Hezbollah, and many of the buildings levelled were in Haret Hreik (which is considered the capital of Hezbollah, but just 20 min away by car from the city center of Beirut). Surrounding areas, such as Hayy Madi/Chiyah, which were seen as extensions of these areas of Hezbollah control, were likewise targeted, yet the neighborhood of Ain El Remmane was not targeted. Also, interesting to see that other areas in Lebanon were living as if the war were not happening in their country and spending their time on the beach, as they were sure that these areas would not be bombed. Most recently, Shiite neighborhoods have also been the target of suicide bombings by Sunni extremists, as according to when of the residents of Chiyah, I interviewed that such bomb being detonated on the road separating Chiyah and Ain El Remmane. These case studies show that politico-religious groups as entities with their own geo-political relationships and interest, triggering instabilities and certain areas. One would understand how this detail might empower fragmentation. According to Hiba Abou Akar, spatially in times of peace, war is not a war of tanks and bombs but fundamentally a geopolitical territorial conflict, where the fear of domination from one group to another is fought in over land and apartment sale, and through zoning planning and infrastructure.

I had noticed during my walks that the area of Chiyah had very similar buildings with synchronized building heights and materials, almost identical in some parts. While the other part

Ain El Remmane had more variety of styles and building heights. One of the new projects that caught my attention was an enormous tower in Ain El Remmane that is being built parallel to the ex-green line, The Saida old road, surprisingly much higher than all the buildings in that area. One of the neighborhood residents had mentioned to me that many people with sniper were shooting from there during the conflicts of October. These images would be a reminder of the civil war, when the “Bourj el Murr,” unfinished tower became a sniper land in Beirut and had full view of the city. In addition to the armies check points from both sides and on each entrance, overlooking each other. There were no army people when I was doing the field work, yet there’s the psychological barrier.

## 5.7 Boundaries

The highway on the southern side draws the line of the end of Chiyah, and the old Saida road, separates Chiyah from Ain El Remmane. Also, it was nice to notice the ministry of Justice, which was the area that protests against the fourth of August investigation were being held and before the street war erupted on October the 14th. It is situated between the two neighborhoods in impartial way, as it is public ministry that should serve all parties in Lebanon. It's also interesting to see that Chiyah and Ain El Remmane areas are more of a residential zone, while the center part in between has industrial zone spirit to it, with a lot of car garages and car dealers.

The political-administrative dimension of the border takes shape in visible spatial structures such as enclosure walls, fences, gates, surveillance and monitoring cameras (Escallier, 2006). Boundaries can be generated by actions of militarization's of urban space, as for example in the case of cities becoming the main targets of a deliberate policy of urbicide (Abujidi, 2014; Graham, 2004; "The Urbicide of Beirut?" 2009). They can be modulated by urban planning practices, in a context of urban conflict (Rokem & Boano, 2018), as in the case of cities in ethnic-national discord.

These divisions are perceived as the result of the spatial actions of these competing communal political groups, represented as determinants of spatial practices and intercommunal relations, coexistence, interaction, or conflict (Verdeil, 2013). Thus, these dominant groups impose spatial identities (political and confessional) in the vulnerable social space, which consequently conveys political, economic, religious, and social symbols and also values in the materiality in the atmosphere of the city (Chbat, 2011) according to political intentions, which is very much conveyed in what can be observed in Ain El Remanne and Chiyah, which can be seen especially through political and religious symbols.

On the other hand, the former demarcation line during the civil war (1975-90), Saida Street, which maintains a role in the administrative distribution of localities as well as the Christian and Muslim communities in Beirut, and which still plays a structuring role in the representations and in the practices and strategies of the actors. In addition to this, there are the roads, particularly the



heavy infrastructures that materialize spatial divisions, separating relatively homogeneous neighborhoods from a confessional point of view.

## 5.8 Real Estate Market

The government's decision to provide relocation funds to families who were still squatting in abandoned buildings after the civil war was an important part of their initiative. One specific area where these families were living was Chiyah/Ain el Remmane. However, instead of implementing a comprehensive plan to help displaced, low-income residents find housing in the city, the government at the time chose a market-led approach. Families were typically given short eviction notices and small compensation packages, with official packages ranging from \$5000 to \$7000 per family. Some families were able to obtain additional funds through their political affiliations<sup>18</sup>.

The government's compensation program was intended to assist those displaced by the war in "returning home" to villages they had left over two decades ago. However, for many of these individuals, their preferred home was now Beirut. Consequently, the government's policy compelled most families to search for alternative, low-cost housing on their own in an exceedingly competitive market while facing the possibility of imminent eviction. Frequently, this resulted in families being left with no option but to purchase or rent apartments in al-Dahiya and peripheral areas surrounding it<sup>19</sup>. These factors together helped transform these areas to lucrative real estate markets.

One of the people that lived in Chiyah mentioned that his parents bought from their house from a Christian family when they first moved before the war erupted, he also told that himself bought his house in same area 15 years later after the war ended from a Christian family two. He said that they never came back and were eager to leave everything behind when they left. He compared to the situation of a member of his family who had a house in "East Beirut" and left it during the war, but still kept ownership of it, till today. I spoke to an Architect who had built two residential building in the neighboring area of Tayounneh, He had mentioned that he would

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<sup>18</sup> Bou Akar, "Displacement, Politics, and Governance."

<sup>19</sup> Sawalha, *Reconstructing Beirut*.

not be able to build in Chiyah even if he wanted, as he is not affiliated with any of the main political religious groups in that area.

Lebanese Muslim social and political activist Muhammad Awwad reported that the municipality of Al-Hadath, a Lebanese village in the southeast suburbs of Beirut, forbids the sale and renting of property to Muslims in a post on Facebook on June 18, 2019. Although today most of the population there are Muslims, the town was historically a Christian community, and Christians still hold a majority in the municipality.

Al-Hadath Mayor George Aoun noted that the municipality had already implemented the prohibition in 2010, after it was discovered that, since 1990, 60% of the town's residences had been owned by Shi'ites, in an interview with the Lebanese website [elnashra.com](http://elnashra.com) on June 21, 2019. He asserted that the ban was widely supported by town residents as well as by Lebanese officials, including President Michel 'Aoun and the leaders of the country's Shi'ite movements, Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri and Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah. He claimed that the ban was designed to preserve the town's demographic diversity.

He noted that the choice was in accordance with the constitution and aimed to maintain peace in the town, noting that President 'Aoun and Free Patriotic Movement leader Gebran Bassil had personally phoned him to express their support. He issued a warning that he would quit if the restriction was lifted. (Shanee, 2019)

## 5.9 Property and Land Sale

During my field research, former Christian residents of Chiyah shared with me that initially, most of Chiyah's land was sold to Shiite developers by Christian landowners who were displaced or had migrated. According to them, the Druze landowners only followed suit. One of the residents, explained that it was difficult to accept the idea of coexisting with other sects, particularly those that may pose a threat to their traditions and way of life, as they were still recovering from fifteen years of civil war. They preferred to leave to the eastern side and follow the reality that civil war had created than to come back to their old houses and co-live with other residents. Some of them had immigrated from Lebanon, and in 15 years had lost attachment to their land and opted to sell their land or houses to Shiite developers who were in the market to create low-cost housings. According to old Chiyah residents, real estate brokers who operated in in that area after the war were politically linked, and their practices had played a role in the area's urbanization. Several individuals I spoke with believed that Hezbollah and its allies had intervened to manipulate land prices. One journalist was noticeably clear in making these accusations. He claimed that the majority of real estate agents in the suburbs were associated with Hezbollah and that "they engage in what we call in the market 'price-fixing.'"<sup>20</sup>

This involved real estate agents collaborating to set a fixed price per square meter, which eliminated competition and established a sort of monopoly. The Ruins of buildings destroyed during the civil war in the Chiyah area. I had asked one of the people living there why it has not been renovated, knowing how developers in these area work as Hezbollah was looking to create as much as possible of low-cost housing projects to create housing for the war displaced people. The person confirmed that Christian church banned its demolition. He mentioned that if the ruins stayed intact, the land was bought by the church. In case it was demolished and replaced. A Shia developer would develop it. During my interview with N.C, she had mentioned that developers

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<sup>20</sup> Price-fixing is "the setting of prices artificially (as by producers or government) contrary to free market operations" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). In the United States, price-fixing is a federal offense, and perpetrators may face criminal prosecution. Price-fixing is considered a violation of laws relating to business competition because it stalls the "free market" and excludes other businesses from competing against the price-fixers.

are going to Sao Paolo, DC, or Sydney to buy lands and housings from Lebanese who immigrated during the civil war and never returned. On the other hand, the Christian Church is trying to overturn these transactions. Public officials are changing zoning laws to make these investments unprofitable, and some local municipalities are prohibiting land sale to people from the different religion, which is non legal action to do by legal actor. We will be looking at these more about the strategies used in this conflict in other chapters .

## 5.10 The Rise of “Al Dahyah”

Given all of the prior perceptions, Beirut is best described as a "multi-nodal" city (Lynch, 1960) because these neighborhoods are strategically formed by the concentration of people who share things like identity, ethnicity, and socioeconomic differences. Due to social and material compression, as previously mentioned, these similarities have subsequently increased senses of recognition. The primary locations for my research are situated in or close to the southern suburbs of Beirut, which are collectively referred to as al-Dahiya (the Suburb) which is a node for the Shiite community. In 2001, Mona Harb defined this area as a geographical zone that extends south from central Beirut to the airport, and east to the agricultural fields of al-Hadath and Choueifat. Al-Dahiya is known as Hezbollah's stronghold in Beirut, and it is densely populated by individuals who identify as Shiites. The name Al Dahyah carries an emotionally charged message that is often reinforced in media and conversations among Lebanese citizens. These discourses describe "the Suburb" as a belt of poverty marked by illegal urbanization, squatting settlements, and lack of development. The three residents of Chiyah whom I interviewed, considered it part of “Al Dahyah” Yet in the residents of Ain El Remmane would not accept this assumption, even though, geographically speaking, the area is considered as the suburbs two. But the political and religious affiliation with Al Dahyah, is what they don't want to be related too. Additionally, all the residents of Chiyah have more connections with other neighborhoods from “Al Dahyah” like Haret Hreik and Ghobeiry, whether it's a professional relationship, As the wife S.H has a cosmetic shop in that area, or friends that they see on daily basis. But the two residents of Ain El Remmane, admitted that they had no reason to go there unless they are going to grab a meal, as they affirmed that there was more variety there.

## 5.11 The Periphery

Peripheries are constructed and governed by different social, economic, and political conditions than the metropolitan center, which can both exclude them and destabilize it. However, peripheries have also been seen as spaces of hope due to their exclusion, where new movements for citizenship and rights have emerged. These areas have a sense of volatility and incompleteness, but they hold potential for progress and change. However, the issue of sectarian identity and spatial competition has brought about a darker reality in cities like Beirut. In Beirut, this has been mainly caused by the rapid growth of "Al Dahyah" into neighboring areas that were previously inhabited or owned by people of other sectarian affiliations, particularly Christians. This expansion has created the social, political, and economic conditions where al-Dahiya is now seen as a new center, defining the peripheral status of the surrounding areas. As a result, al-Dahiya's growth is perceived as "Shiite encroachment" on the territories of other sectarian groups, which challenges their existence in the city. This feeling of encroachment has resulted in interface zones marked by friction, which escalated into battle lines by May 2008.

J.T mentioned that "The effect of fragmentation found its impact on his students and their families, as the challenges that come with the ill-conceived and unbalanced division affect the education process. In areas that suffer from weak infrastructure and insufficient services, it is more difficult for students to obtain an environment conducive to success. Plans must be put in place so that all students in the capital have equal access to education, regardless of their social and economic background.". Like many others I had spoken too over the years, J.T believes that access to good and equal education is colossal to solving the socio-religious fragmentation issue on the periphery of the city. Religious political organization have been also building school facilities, yet usually they are also religious schools, with students that belong to one religion, with photos and appreciation the political leaders within the schooling system.

## 5.12 “Laissez-Faire” Planning

Although there is still only a minimal amount of planning and application of land use rules, Lebanon has always been known for its "Laissez-Faire" approach to organization and planning, which results in the unplanned growth of urban areas. This strategy resulted in metropolitan regions that were random and unfragmented. Additionally, it resulted in issues with the environment, including bad infrastructure, extreme crowding, and a lack of public places.

This approach has several negative effects, including the fragmentation of urban areas, where developers are free to build wherever they see fit, using the lands in ways that are incompatible with one another, causing severe overcrowding, in addition to the absence of shared transportation networks that connect different areas. In contrast to the city. Additionally, there is a lack of infrastructure, including water and sewage, for which new projects are not really necessary to offer these services by builders. As a result, slums have grown in risky regions. The loss of open spaces, which are essential to the community's health, was another consequence of this strategy. Public green spaces are frequently sacrificed to profit and invest in the construction of new buildings because the builders are not required to supply these places. This causes a great deal of environmental damage and continually adds to pollution.

The “laissez-faire” approach relates to a market-driven ideology since Lebanon’s government is incapable to reach consensus and to produce rules that control transactions. It’s also related to zoning, Which N.C told me during my interview with her: “Politicians don't seem to value planning in a progressive manner; rather, they seem to value planning that serves only their own interests. Due to the conventional "laissez-faire" routine's dominance, Beirut has shown to present a customized-hybrid type of planning as a result.,” which is visualized by the randomness of planning, and the reason many people I encountered in Lebanon, don’t believe that there is planning in Lebanon. And even the people who are aware of DGU or urban planning committee, compare it to Railway administration that exists within the budget of the country, even though there are no functional trains. Mr. J added to the topic “ The "laissez-faire" strategy has increased the state's decentralization, sped up the development of ghettos and informal communities, and



revealed numerous inconsistencies in the structure of the city.’’ Which is true when you situate in the informal settlements that exist within the periphery and neighboring the area of study.

“The lack of appropriate planning and coordination has led to the emergence of great challenges for the population, especially in the periphery. This unequal distribution has led to stark differences in living conditions, which impedes access to justice and the rule of law. Evidence for this is the situation of justice in Lebanon, as it is not always achieved. For several considerations, it is difficult for people to access legal representation and services. Therefore, it is necessary that we work to address the challenges and ensure that everyone in Beirut has access to justice and the rule of law, regardless of location, economic background, and all social groups.” Noted R.G. It shows that also that the lack of access to legal representation, could make the situation of fighting for your rights in Lebanon even harder. People through the help of the political organizations, could abuse their rights within the city, privatize public spaces, relocate people from their houses, and yet there is not a lot of chance in fighting these decisions.

J.T suggested that the impact of urban fragmentation in Lebanon and Beirut is exceptionally large. In recent decades, many neighborhoods and new developments have appeared, as they are far from being studied and planned, which has led to a lack of infrastructure, and dispersion in the communities. This severe lack of structure broadened the division between regions with the inability of individuals to move easily from one region to another and this is unrelated to the fear of discovering the unknown, especially here in Ain El Remanne and Chiyah, as they are regions that have a past whose legacy is still present. This fragmentation leads to ineffective use of land and even resources.

### **5.13      Beirut a City for Sale?**

While the theory of laissez-faire policies is believed to be the main motor to planning and construction in the city. Another theory shows that the urban a highly interventionist state strategy, fueled by the Central bank Circulares and regulatory changes in Building and property laws provided more incentives for building activities to happen in Beirut. Studies done by the urban lab in Beirut, A finished apartment in a sizable housing development has replaced the small land parcel that could be developed over a number of years as the exchanged housing commodity. Furthermore, in order to obtain the necessary capital for land purchase and building construction, the production of this new type of housing involves capital-intensive housing production methods that depend on bank loans. However, access to bank loans is only available to developers with political connections, clearly placing local homebuilders who historically constructed these neighborhoods out of reach (Fawaz 2009).

## 5.14 Zoning

Zoning rules and policies plays a big rule in a cities harmonious development, but recent reports have showed that it can also be stimulator of segregation and inequality in a city. In the United States, the cost of housing has become a significant issue that has garnered a lot of attention due to the negative impact of zoning policies. This is particularly relevant in 2021, where home prices have increased by almost 20 percent, and rents have also risen significantly, leading to concerns about a rise in homelessness. Previously, this issue was only limited to coastal cities, but now, the crisis has spread to previously affordable cities, resulting in record-high home prices. Scholars from various fields have come to a consensus that poor zoning policies are partly responsible for this situation. Therefore, the problem created by poor zoning rules is more homeless people.

In Lebanon, the problem would be different, Politicians and reformers would think of ways to change the zoning rules to spike the prices up and prevent “the other” of affording a house in a different neighborhood. According to Abou Akkar (2019), that one of the tools used in territorial wars, was shifting with zoning regulations, in noticeably brief time. For instance, in an analogous situation in the periphery but between the different political religious groups In Sahra shouEIFat, the conflict is between Shiite and Druze. In 2004 zoning regulation plans allowed that hollowed concrete façades and corrugated and tin sheets to be approved. In architectural point view these are cheaper materials more convenient for social housings. On the other hand, in 2008, in a short amount of time zoning and regulations changed to: Façades to be cladded 60% natural stone, 60% of roofs with red tiles and prohibited to have more than two apartments per floor per block, these changes increased the construction cost significantly. This was a way to fight in that area in the periphery the Shiite expansion on historical Druze territory.

I spoke with someone named M.M, who had experience working with zoning in the outskirts of Beirut as part of their job in the Ministry of Urban Planning. M.M described the process of zoning as both completed and unfinished, pieced together and torn apart, negotiated, and fought over. The practice was compared to delicate collage, easily breakable. When I observed one of the

zoning maps created by M.M for the area, I noticed that the lines were going left and right, with industrial zones in the middle of residential zones ones, and lines that twisted and turned around individual properties, while excluding others. It was later revealed that these lines did not represent the typical separation of residential and industrial zones, or protected areas of agricultural land from urbanization. Instead, these lines served as physical boundaries of segregation between different sectarian groups. This description perfectly exemplifies how the process of urbanization in Beirut's southern peripheries is shaped by the anticipation of future conflict. The transformation of this area from a poor periphery to a violent and environmentally degraded frontier involves the interplay of construction, zoning, and militarization. According to Abou Akar (2019), This also shows that while having this flexibility to change zoning as M.M described, it can also create self-sufficient area's in terms of activities, as you can build a school and industrial zone , residential areas, football courts and other activities, all intertwined in one neighborhood, thus creating no need to go to other areas you're not "comfortable with, as you have everything near you. Negotiation and conflict that shapes urbanization. This process is influenced by various factors such as channeled markets, changing zoning laws, government policies influenced by neoliberalism, outdated voting laws, and the activities of religious and political groups both inside and outside the government, the process of lacework has interwoven the city of Beirut and its southern peripheries with more distant areas, creating a second-tier periphery. While planning methods and expertise are necessary to manage the contested territories, they can be challenged by the pressure exerted by sectarian groups, compromising the efficacy of instruments such as zoning maps. planning process does not follow any zoning model. In Lebanon, the predominant model of planning once involved concentric circles of urban growth, from a dense center to a less dense periphery, within a progressive notion of time and space. But as a logic of territorial organization, lacework is a mutative process through which existing categories are split over and over, creating new subcategories whose aim is to facilitate urban growth while absorbing conflict, when possible.

## 5.15 Results and Interpretation

Metaphors like "they are eating us" and "they are taking their lands" reflect a pervasive fear and mistrust that serves to further divide "us" and "them." These analogies allude to the imagined encroachment of one group into the resources or the territory of another. Similar to the previous example, the phrase "they live differently than us" conveys the idea that cultural and social distinctions are incompatible and contribute to the "us vs. them" mentality. This also offers a contrary viewpoint held by someone connected to a Chiyah political party, though. This person asserts that there is no conflict or hostility between residents of Chiyah and Ain El Remmane. In actuality, there are friendships and interactions, such as people shopping for each other and traveling to each other's locations. This suggests that interpersonal connections and exchanges can go beyond the apparent splits that result from political disagreements. The fragmentation of Beirut, both geographically and socially, is believed to be of divisions and concentration on self-interest, rather than a sense of community and mutual support, are to blame for the deterioration in interpersonal relationships. The effects of this fragmentation are most felt by the younger generation, who may not have personally witnessed the horrors of war and may therefore be more likely to view the city as a symbol of hope and unity. The aforementioned issues and opinions put forth by people highlight the necessity of bringing the city together not only on a physical level but also on an emotional and social level. Communities that are strong and cohesive are considered as being essential to ensuring a better future for both the present and future generations.

These groups force on the delicate social space their spatial identities, which include political and confessional commitments. This encroachment communicates political, economic, religious, and social symbols and values through the city's physical features and ambiance. This idea is supported by the political and religious symbols found in Ain El Remmane and Chiyah. It is also important to note the Saida Street's significance as a former line of demarcation during the civil war, as well as its ongoing function in administrative distribution and the separation of the Christian and Muslim communities in Beirut. The road system itself is emphasized as a concrete illustration of geographic divisions that separate areas according to confessional loyalties.

The subject of social fragmentation and regional divisions in Beirut, Lebanon, is examined in this thesis. The stark contrasts in cultural and social norms, as well as fear and a lack of interpersonal trust, serve to reinforce it. These differences include how to use things like religious sites, political figures, and street names to distinguish between one region and another. This dispute is based on the sustainability of the conflict and obstructs efforts for a real and effective reconciliation between the parties. As a result, psychological and unconsciously formed barriers are built, further intensifying division. These divisions are not caused by social cohesion but rather conflict.

Borders, the real estate market, the sale of land, and the "Al Dahyah" phenomena and propagation in Beirut's Chiyah neighborhood are all topics covered in the work. Houses in neighboring communities. Politically connected real estate agents who operated throughout the war were crucial to zoning. Many thought that Hezbollah had altered the price ranges.

The passage also emphasizes the church's exhortations against destroying the artifacts in the Chiyah region and making offers to purchase the property. Some local governments forbid the sale of land to particular religions. Because of their coexistence with other groups that represent a threat to their traditions and way of life, the "suburb" emerged.

The importance of the peripheral in Beirut and its historical growth over time are also examined in this study, as well as the movement of the city's poorest citizens there as a result of urban reform and development initiatives and the establishment of various social groups. These shared areas are considered as places for gathering and coexistence, but in Beirut they were created as a result of persistent clashes between organizations. Political and religious struggles to establish spatial dominance.

The unrestrained urbanization and serious socioeconomic and environmental issues that resulted from the lack of planning and land use regulations emphasize the potential for the creation of new movements for citizenship and rights. However, disputes are quickly triggered by the identity question, the meaning of identity, and the varying ethnic backgrounds.

The examination of the different works dealing with territorial dynamics in Beirut, raise the lack of questioning of the social dimension of space, as well as these dialectical relationships of the different types of territorialization for the interpretation of socio-spatial divisions.

## **6. Finale**

## **6.1 Reforms**

After the civil war ended in 1990, general planning was done with fragmentation in mind when examining both formal and informal urban politics employed throughout the nation. After years of implementing these politics and forms of government, division lines have grown even more pronounced and difficult to bridge, especially during this period of national crisis when the economy, the environment, and society are all in disarray. At the time, urban politics should have been focused on bringing people back together immediately after the war. Today people are speaking about the creating a federal system, not knowing that such system is based on cohesion and understanding of the other. Some people are speaking about separation also. In this section, I'll outline a few city-scale interventions that could be utilized to help remove these obstacles while drawing inspiration from instances in other cities that have faced comparable urban challenges.

### **6.1.1 Urban Acupuncture**

In a city as populated and urbanized as Beirut, spaces and vacant lots have become scarce, which is why the concept of "urban acupuncture," which can be applied in places like Beirut, is another method for bringing disparate urban districts back together. Urban acupuncture, according to Lerner (2014), comprises implementing small-scale treatments to address specific urban concerns and encourage change. The objective is to target locations in the urban fabric in order to cause a ripple effect of positive change throughout the city, much like how acupuncture stimulates specific areas on the body to promote healing. This approach can be particularly effective in cities like Beirut where it is difficult to carry out significant operations like major surgery due to political, technical, and financial constraints. Also because of the limitation of free spaces caused by heavy urbanization in the city. On the other hand, urban acupuncture interventions can alter the socio-spatial dynamics in the urban fabric and promote development on a smaller scope.



Cities all over the world have recently made large expenditures in bringing together fragmented metropolitan areas. These projects are considered as "major surgery-like" operations that many cities, including Beirut, cannot afford since they call for large demolitions and restorations. Cities can, however, opt for a tactical plan that calls for making small, gradual changes to the existing infrastructure (Harb & Legrenzi, 2014). This plan calls for reusing unused space and transforming it into public areas that promote social interaction and raise the quality of life in the city. Compared to large-scale initiatives, these interventions can be completed with fewer resources and at a cheaper cost. There have been various initiatives to bring together scattered urban places in Beirut through deliberate interventions. For example, the neglected and filthy Beirut River has been transformed into a bustling public space as a result of the Beirut River Solar Snake, a piece of public art that spans the whole river. (Salamey, 2016). The initiative, which has received recognition for its innovative approach to urban regeneration, was a collaboration between the Municipality of Beirut and a group of artists and architects. Another example of urban acupuncture in Beirut is the "Paint Up" initiative, which involved painting the exteriors of buildings in the Gemmayze neighborhood to revitalize the area and promote community contact. (Hage, 2013). The initiative, which was spearheaded by neighbors and artists, is credited with reviving the neighborhood's cultural scene and bringing neighbors from the different profiles together.

In Ain el Remmane and Chiyah, There's many old houses and buildings in Ruins from the war, that if renovated and re-used into other functions, like becoming a cultural center or a coworking space. This could be one step closer into creating a more cohesive society.

### **6.1.2 Trans-frontier Municipalities**

Trans-frontier municipalities offer a promising solution to urban fragmentation, including in cities like Beirut. These administrative entities facilitate the coordination and management of shared resources and infrastructure across borders. While trans-frontier municipalities have been successful in various contexts worldwide, including Europe, Africa, and Latin America (UN-Habitat, 2014), they could also be applied to

neighborhoods in Beirut. By creating cross-neighborhood administrative entities, planners could promote greater collaboration among communities and streamline the development of common infrastructure and resources, alleviating the fragmentation caused by the city's political and sectarian differences.

Integrating planning and administration across different sectors would allow planners to address concerns regarding infrastructure, housing, and transportation in a more comprehensive and integrated approach. For example, integrating a bus station in the old Saida road that would be utilized by both the Chiyah and Ain El Remmane neighborhoods would not only solve transportation issues but also create a meeting point for residents. While implementing trans-frontier municipalities in Beirut may pose significant political and administrative challenges, the potential benefits of improved coordination and collaboration across multiple communities and agencies make it a worthwhile consideration in addressing urban fragmentation in the metropolis.

In a recent interview with Beirut Banyan, Lebanese journalist and economist and Journalist Albert Kostanian shed light on the relationship between culture and infrastructure in cities. According to Kostanian, culture is shaped by the infrastructure of a city. He provides an example of how public transportation can teach people to respect the people they share space with and the environment around them. However, in Lebanon, the lack of infrastructure for public transportation has prevented the development of such values and made it difficult for the Lebanese to create structured movements. He acknowledges that although hints of infrastructure have existed in Lebanon in the past, the dominant economic and social culture has always been against such notions. The culture was anchored towards private initiatives, limiting the state's role to a minimum scope. He further elaborates that the Lebanese culture is against regulation, but in order for true capitalism and a true liberal model to be developed, regulations are necessary.

These insights highlight the importance of infrastructure in shaping a city's culture and values. Without adequate infrastructure, it becomes difficult to promote values such as respect, collaboration, and sustainability. Therefore, it is crucial for cities like Beirut to invest in infrastructure that promotes these values and creates a shared space for people to

interact and learn from each other. By doing so, the city can overcome its fragmented nature and promote a more cohesive and inclusive society.

### **6.1.3 Participatory and Inclusive Approach**

Medellin, Colombia, serves as a compelling case study for how urban planning can effectively address socio-economic fragmentation. The city was once notorious for gang warfare and drug trafficking, earning it the title of the world's most violent city. However, through innovative urban planning initiatives, Medellin was able to transform into a model for urban rehabilitation. One such initiative was the construction of a cable car system, which connected slum areas to the formal economy, providing residents with access to previously inaccessible jobs and opportunities. Additionally, the city invested in public infrastructure such as parks, community centers, and libraries, in the areas most affected by poverty and violence. These interventions aimed to improve the city's physical infrastructure while also promoting community involvement, social cohesion, and a sense of belonging. Through participatory budgeting initiatives, citizens were actively involved in the planning process.

A collaborative and inclusive approach is necessary to address the socio-religious issue in Beirut. Inclusive approaches aim to incorporate diverse needs, perspectives, and experiences from numerous populations into planning and decision-making processes. One example of an inclusive and participatory approach in Beirut is the NGO Beirut Madinati. Founded by urban planners, architects, and activists, the organization prioritizes the needs of the public over those of corporations and elected authorities. They advocate for a democratic approach to urban planning that involves citizens in decision-making processes. Another example is the neighborhood of Karantina, which was severely damaged by the explosion. Beirut Urban Lab has been working with residents to rehabilitate buildings and create a new urban space where residents from different profiles and ages can draw and discuss how they imagine their neighborhoods.

Inclusive and participatory urban planning can help bridge the gap between diverse groups and promote social cohesion. By involving members of the community in decision-making processes, it promotes a sense of ownership and responsibility that may lead to more enduring and equitable solutions. It also creates a sense of identity for everyone involved, which can disrupt the multiple identities existing today through different political alliances. In this way, political parties would not oversee neighborhood decisions on behalf of residents.

#### **6.1.4 Policy changes**

To effectively reduce the territorial markers aspect of the city, policy changes such as designating specific areas for political signs and posters, while banning their placement everywhere else, could prove to be effective. By doing so, the visual clutter caused by these markers can be significantly reduced, resulting in a cleaner and more organized cityscape. Neighborhood would be harder to identified to any political religious parties, unlike the situation today where you can directly identify towards which political side the people are leaning.

On an urban planning level, it is imperative that zoning rules and divisions are further organized and studied. Currently, any type of building can be constructed anywhere, leading to the creation of self-sufficient areas and a decrease in the need to venture into other neighborhoods. However, this also results in the formation of gated communities, which presents new challenges. Therefore, it is essential to implement more thoughtful and strategic planning measures to ensure the sustainable development of urban areas.

## 6.2 Conclusion

Through the examination of the case study of Chiyah and Ain El Remanne, it is evident the urban culture in the post-war period played an effective role with the social and religious division in these areas. The lack of competent planning and land use policies throughout the history of Lebanon led to irregular development and development became more random, which resulted in very large social, economic, and environmental problems. At the societal level, the existing divisions between religious and social groups are only expanding, which led to the reinforcement of the discourse of the existence of segregated groups and lack of a united nation. A sense of separation and identities based on nearby affiliations and sectarian differences were enhanced due to the fragmented urban growth and the associated socio-spatial divisions.

However, there is always hope for the emergence of new movements of citizenship and belonging to the homeland instead of the sense of belonging towards a certain region or sect and belonging to the state and the provisions of everyone under the law that will work to bridge the large gaps between the individuals of the region and the one homeland. It is important to recognize and focus on utilizing the common spaces in the periphery by individuals for spaces to be used for coexistence, which, as a result, leads to the formation of communities that are inclusive within a respectful pluralism of all that transcends religious, social and class differences and to grow a sense of unity that is visibly missing. Giving the people a say in their own cities and neighborhoods. Would clearly be beneficial for creating common identities.

Today more than ever, sectarian tension is on the rise, which unfortunately, implies that although there is huge potential for of positive improvements, it will always be a challenging feat with many conflicts that constantly need to be addressed. However, this is only emphasized on the importance of constantly and actively working towards reducing sectarian divisions that plague the country and to create a sense of a united identity and belonging that will span all divisions and boundaries.

It is very vital to take note of the drastic, negative consequences of an irregular urban development that result from both social and religious divisions that were studied throughout the areas of case studies.

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# **Annexes**

## **Interviews:**

### **Residents**

**B.N:** Resident of Ain el Remmane - Age 26

**S.H:** Resident of Chiyah - Age 47

**H.H:** Resident of Chiyah: Age 51

**W.Z:** Resident of Chiyah: Age 25

**Y.B:** Resident of Ain el Remmane: Age 30

Among Other random discussions with residents

### **Experts**

**B.J:** Expert in the field of urban fragmentation in Beirut - Professor in Urban planning - 52

**N.C:** Worker at the ministry of urban planning in Lebanon -57

**J.T:** Architect and developer from within that area - 49

**R.G:** Lawyer specialized in Building codes and laws. 44

**F.O.:** Engineer - 37

**M.M.:** Lawyer - 36

**E.M:** Retired professor in architecture and urban planning – 68