

A white outline map of Lebanon is centered on a black background. A small, irregularly shaped area on the western coast, representing Beirut, is filled with a solid red color. The map shows the country's borders and internal regional divisions.

BEIRUT : THREE CITIES WITHIN ONE CAPITAL

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Abstract

Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, similar to many war destroyed cities, has undergone major transformations post-civil war. Lebanon today is very much a result of the differences between different religions and religious sects the country witnesses on a political and social level. These disagreements made way in every decision making process especially during its (re)construction. Different political groups worked on the transformation of different regions which lead to many contrasts present today in Beirut. The (re)construction of Beirut brought many lessons for future (re)constructions of countries. This topic has become more crucial in recent years as more destructions are caused by the increase in wars the world is witnessing. Most of the research conducted on the (re)construction of war torn cities either targets Western cities or focuses on one development area instead of looking at the whole image. This is especially relevant for Beirut's (re)constructions since the capital underwent different transformation projects by different groups. Therefore, the research group investigated is *How have wars designed modern Beirut's urban typology?* This paper studied three neighbourhoods in Beirut namely : Beirut Central District, Zokak el Balat and Haret Hreik. A comparative analysis was conducted to identify the similarities and differences these neighbourhoods had. Having an absent governmental body during the (re)constructions of Beirut allowed the political groups to demolish buildings according to their likings and incentives. Very often, the neighbourhoods studied underwent major transformations that completely changed the character of the area. The (re)constructions of Beirut were solely steered by private incentives of the various political groups. At the end of the day, it was the Lebanese people that greatly suffered from Beirut's makeover.

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Figure 1 Colonial development of Beirut (Rizk, 2020)

Introduction

Wars exist ever since humanity can remember; they are the reason behind the divisions and shaping of this planet. The borders of countries, the urban plan of a city and the architecture of a neighbourhood, all might have been greatly influenced by wars. Countries rise and fall after wars; some use the destruction created as an opportunity to develop. Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, similar to many war-torn cities, has undergone multiple episodes of transformation over time. The character of present Beirut has been influenced by the many colonizations and wars the city encountered. The most dramatic change to the city's character was after the civil war (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012).

1.1 Colonial planning

Beirut has constantly experienced changes in its architectural character and urban fabric, starting with its discovery by the Phoenicians around 3000 B.C. (Rizk, 2020). This city has been under the influence of several colonies such as the Roman, Ottoman and French. These colonizations have constantly had an impact on Beirut's changing character, as seen in *Figure 1*. There was a constant cycle of adjustments, addition and removal, by the ruling colonization at that time, of what the previous colonization had done to the city. Each colonization introduced new building types, typologies and city planning.

The Romans implemented a gridiron plan in which two main streets acted as the main axes of the city, where shops were placed around these axes (Rizk, 2020). During the Ottoman period, Beirut was known as the 'Port of the Levant' having its name after becoming a major sea-port during the 1800s. However, due to constant bombing during the Ottoman rule, partial demolition of the city's urban fabric occurred. There was an implementation of geometric streets and new building types were introduced that served the commercial and financial nature of Beirut at

that time (Rizk, 2020).

The last colonization was the French, who were present in Beirut after the first world war. The French imposed their urban models on the reconstruction of Beirut. They introduced building codes which allowed for the organization of the city. The French designed the first plan for Beirut named 'Plan Danger'. This plan introduced major circulation axes and new building types.

When observing the colonial planning of Beirut one can see that some of the influences of the historic colonizations are still evident in Beirut's urban fabric to this day. Beirut has been in a constant cycle of construction and demolition; therefore, it is considered a 'paradigmatic case of urbicide' and a 'symbol of city rebirth' (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008).

1.2 Beirut's civil war

Beirut's civil war was the result of the division of religious beliefs by the Lebanese people. The capital was split into two regions, having the West belonging to the Muslims and the East to the Christians (Rizk, 2020). This division was also physically present in the city through the Green Line, also known as the demarcation line, which extended from the city's north to south border (Rizk, 2020). This line was a border of separation between the two religions but it was also an empty land that functioned as a graveyard, as seen in *Figure 2*. It portrayed the failed efforts of peace agreements; hence, it was referred to as 'no man's land' (Makdisi, 1997). The war went on for 15 years (1975-1990) until an agreement was made between the different religious groups (Rizk, 2020). After the end of the civil war, no physical boundaries were separating the different religious groups; nevertheless, the war still left an imprint on the Lebanese, in which segregation between groups of people based on their religion was still present.



Figure 2 The Green Line during the war (Makdisi, 1997)

After the civil war ended, the Lebanese government asked for international aid to help with the reconstruction of Beirut (Schmid, 2006). Nonetheless, the reconstruction process faced many challenges in different aspects. The government had economic ambitions regarding making the city a business centre (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012). Some of the religious sects and people opposed those goals; therefore, the reconstruction of Beirut was adopted by different groups. Each group was responsible for the (re)construction of their area; still, minor governmental involvement was present during the process.

1.3 Research goal

"Instead of you traveling, the city travels. Look at Beirut, transforming from the Switzerland of the East to Hong Kong, to Sai-gon, to Calcutta, to Sri Lanka. It's as if we circled the world in ten or twenty years. We stayed where we were and the world circled around us. Everything around us changed, and we have changed."

This is how Elias Khoury described the new Beirut (Makdisi, 1997). As a result of the different colonization, wars and reconstructions of Beirut, this city can be considered a multi-faced city. Each colonization and war has left its imprint on Beirut's urban development. These imprints are either partially visible in the unearthing of archaeological sites (Rizk, 2020) or strongly visible in its current urban fabric and architecture. The multi-faced nature of Beirut goes beyond the influence of the aforementioned factors, it is also a result of the division in religions present to this day. Different groups also known as militias such as Hezbollah and Amal have made their own state within Lebanon, where they have imposed their own rules and little government intervention has occurred. The religious and political groups present in Beirut have each designed a part of Beirut to their liking and by their chosen architects, planners and developers. Some of these regions strongly portray the past heritage of Lebanon, while others have been completely transformed and modernized. This paper aims to investigate the influence the Lebanese wars

had on the character of Beirut. The plural of war has been used as the (re)constructions are not limited to the post-civil war developments, but also to the (re)constructions after the Israeli war in 2006 (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012). These wars are studied in accordance with the changes and (re) constructions the city experienced. Hence, the research question investigated in this paper is *How have wars designed modern Beirut's urban typology?* Wars are often perceived as shapers or influencers, but not as designers. That is not the case for Beirut, the wars, this capital experienced, have resulted in a division between the Lebanese. Groups of people from different religious sects emerged as a result of these wars, in return, they designed different regions of Beirut. Furthermore, the wars of Beirut have left their imprint on Beirut's buildings, whether that is by damaging or destructing them, which is still visible to this day.

1.4 Literature review

Wars have always been perceived negatively, and their influence on people and countries is everlasting. The manner in which countries and cities cope with wars is dissimilar. Every government has its own understanding of how to proceed with life post-war and this has been seen in many post-war reconstructions such as Hiroshima, Berlin, Rotterdam and Kuwait. Beirut, similar to the previously mentioned cities, underwent drastic changes post-civil war, 1975-1990. A corrupt government and a political party, Hezbollah, transformed this city once known as the "Paris of the Middle East" (Schmid, 2006) into a lifeless city that solely serves their interests and disregards the Lebanese people. Whether this reconstruction serves the citizens or solely the government is subjective. Many researchers have studied the transformations Beirut underwent. However, the study of how to and how not to transform a war-torn city has not been given much attention in many of the conducted researches. This will be the main concern of this research; it will be based on the analysis of the transformations the capital of Beirut experienced.

Most of the research conducted on Beirut's (re) construction focuses on the period directly after the civil war. Researchers such as (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008) and (Rizk, 2020) consider the starting point for understanding the transformations Beirut underwent is its colonial past. Surely the history of a city is of great importance since it is used as a starting point when analysing the city's elements to spot the changes made. Nonetheless, it is also crucial to focus on Beirut as a whole rather than just the Central District region. Research conducted by (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012) and (Fawaz, 2007) analyses reconstructions that occurred in other neighbourhoods. It discusses the influence different political parties had on the urban planning and development of these areas. Regardless, the research lacks a thorough architectural analysis of the neighbourhood's typologies. Neither study makes use of a timeline comparison that encompasses the transformations of the neighbourhoods over time.

In Lebanon, politics and religion have always influenced its 'development' (Schmid, 2006), which is another controversial topic. Solidere, a seemingly private real estate company was involved in the radical changes seen today in Beirut. The 'private' nature of the company is questionable because it was chartered by the Lebanese government since its establishment (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008). The research touches upon the establishment and legacy of this important transformer, Solidere, while emphasizing on the loose governmental policies and legislation (Clerc, 2012). Although many of the investigations are merely focused on the privatization of Beirut's (re) construction, little to no data on the costs and predicted profits of this project are discussed. It could be possible that the government has not disclosed any information regarding the financial aspects of the construction to prevent the Lebanese from further questioning their corrupt government.

Numerous research, such as those conducted by (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008) and (Rizk, 2020), have discussed the evolution of modern Beirut's architecture and urban typology. Major emphasis

is put on Solidere and the conflicting political parties that lead to creating different faces for the city. Regardless of the many profound papers and articles, the architectural exploration of those transformations is missing. An analysis of the changes in the appearance of Beirut's neighbourhoods before and after (re)constructions has not been conducted. This paper aims at filling this research gap by providing an exhaustive comparative analysis of three neighbourhoods in Lebanon's capital which will strongly portray the different characters created in this city. Research on those neighbourhoods has already been conducted by (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012) and (Fawaz, 2007) which will be used as a starting point for architectural and urban analysis.

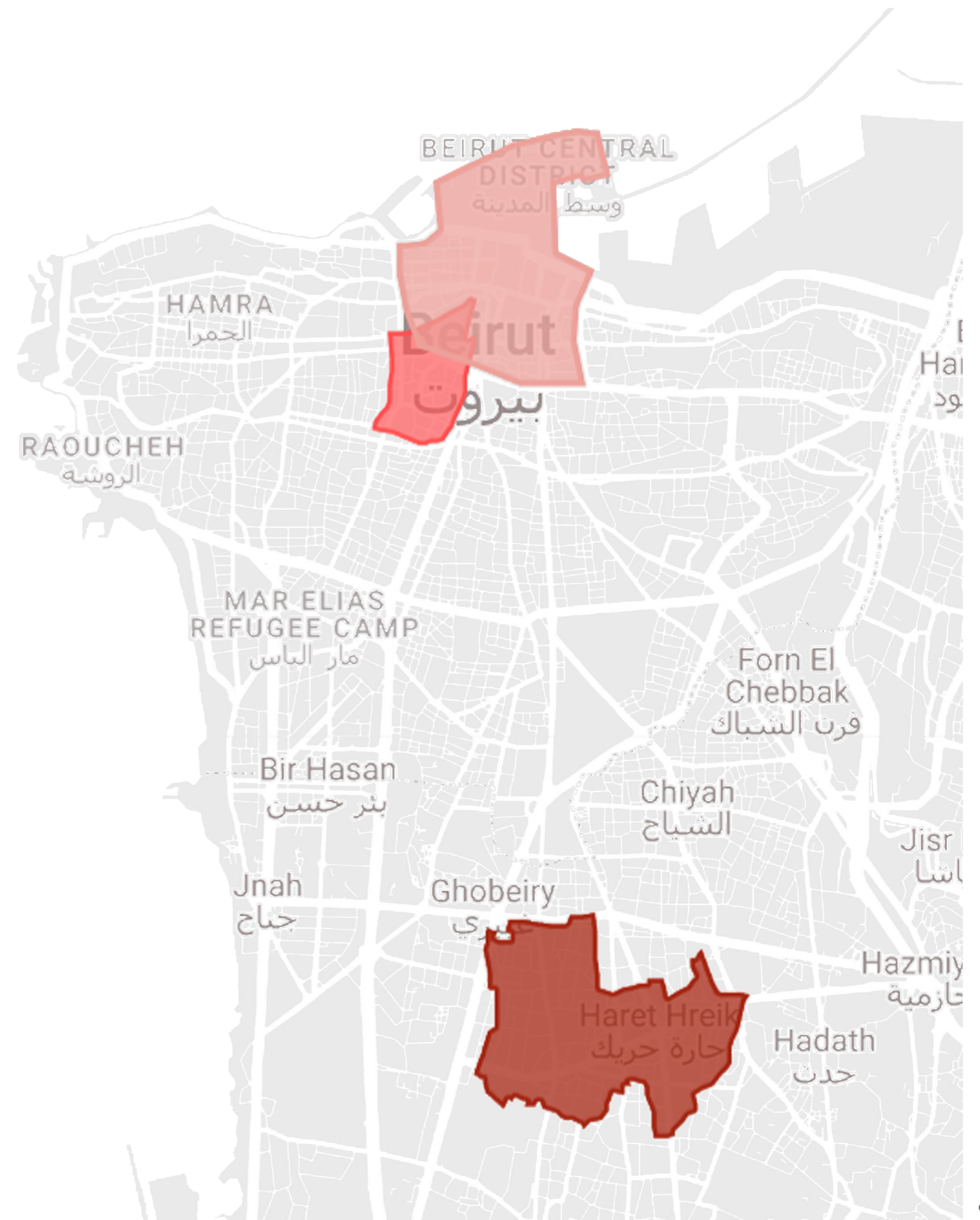
1.5 Method

To understand the influence wars had on Beirut's urban typology, the changes during its (re) construction phase will be analysed. Based on this, a comparative analysis of neighbourhoods from three districts in Beirut, namely Beirut Central District, Zokak el Blat, and Haret Hreik, is conducted. These districts are outlined in Figure 3. Each of the three neighbourhoods represents a different architectural typology and character. Differences in the architecture of these neighbourhoods can be observed due to the varied amount of demolition and conservation of buildings (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012). These differences also portray the contrasting characters of Beirut.

The first chapter will address the proposed plans during and after the civil war. This will outline the changes in the urban framework during those years. The second chapter discusses the realized plans for the three neighbourhoods. Subsections will describe the changes done to the urban and architectural design of these neighbourhoods. Lastly, this chapter concludes with an architectural comparison between the three neighbourhoods. The fourth chapter will project light on Lebanese opinions on the (re)constructions. The paper will be finalised with a last chapter on future (re)constructions which discusses the reconstruction of Beirut's port.

- Beirut Central District
- Zokak el Balat
- Haret Hreik

Figure 3 Neighbourhoods outline



Chapter 2 Beirut's (re)construction plans

2.1 Mid civil war plans

During the Lebanese civil war, plans for the (re) construction of Beirut were proposed at two historic moments. Those two (re)construction moments occurred in 1977 and 1982 and were aimed at reflecting the legitimacy of the new political actors during that time (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008). The 1977 plan was designed by the architect, Amin al- Bizri, where he proposed restoring the Mediterranean city image. This would have been done by restoring souks, opening the harbour and limiting building heights to 30 metres. In contrast to preserving the heritage of the city, he also aimed at modernizing the city by designing new public buildings to reflect the unification of the state and creating a new network system that connected to the existing urban fabric. Nevertheless, due to the continuation of the war, this plan failed to be implemented (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008).

After the Israeli invasion in 1982, the government sought again to reconstruct the city. This time a French architecture and urbanism company (IAURIF) was in charge of the (re)construction. The goal of the government was to implement a large urban project with sea reclamation and a master plan for metropolitan Beirut. Yet again, due to the ongoing war and the deteriorating quality of Beirut's St. George Bay, which was supposed to be a main part of the urban development plan, the design was never realized but it was modified (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008). When the construction firm, OGER, owned by Rafiq Hariri offered to clear up the bay, they also altered the proposed plan to radicalize it. When OGER was clearing up the bay area, they demolished many of the ancient souks and buildings, when their job was just to remove war-torn buildings (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008). OGER ended up demolishing 80% of the historic buildings, and it was said that this was done without any governmental authorization (Makdisi, 1997).

2.2 Post civil war (re)construction policy

Cities are typically rebuilt by the government; however, that is not the case with Beirut's redevelopment. After the end of the civil war, the Lebanese government issued laws and decrees mandating the establishment of a single firm to take over real estate rights in central Beirut. The most significant of these is Law 117 issued in 1991, which established the constitutional basis for such a firm (Makdisi, 1997). With this law, the Lebanese government renounced its involvement in Beirut's (re)construction and announced the privatization of this process. The state was still partially involved through its Council for Development and Reconstruction, which was pervaded by private interests (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008).

2.3 Post civil war (re)construction proposals

2.3.1 Elyassar redevelopment project

The Elyassar project concerned the southern suburbs of Beirut; it was designed by Dar al-Handasah (translates to House of Engineering). This project was described as the 'biggest urban planning' of the post-civil war (re)construction period (Clerc, 2012), outlined in Figure 4. Two-thirds of the region was intended to be restructured because of informal settlements. The redevelopment of the Southern suburbs has always been proven challenging because it is led by two militia groups Hezbollah and Amal. The areas under their control have their own set of rules and regulations.

The Elyassar project underwent negotiations between the Lebanese government and militia groups; nevertheless, the project was hardly implemented. The implementation of this project

was difficult since there were ownership disputes as the informal settlers had houses built on private land; therefore, with this project, they would have to be rehoused. Hezbollah, Amal and Beirut's southern citizens opposed this displacement. Consequently, the government's ambitions of unifying the capital and gaining control over the southern suburbs proved unsuccessful as only the infrastructural works of this project were executed (Clerc, 2012).

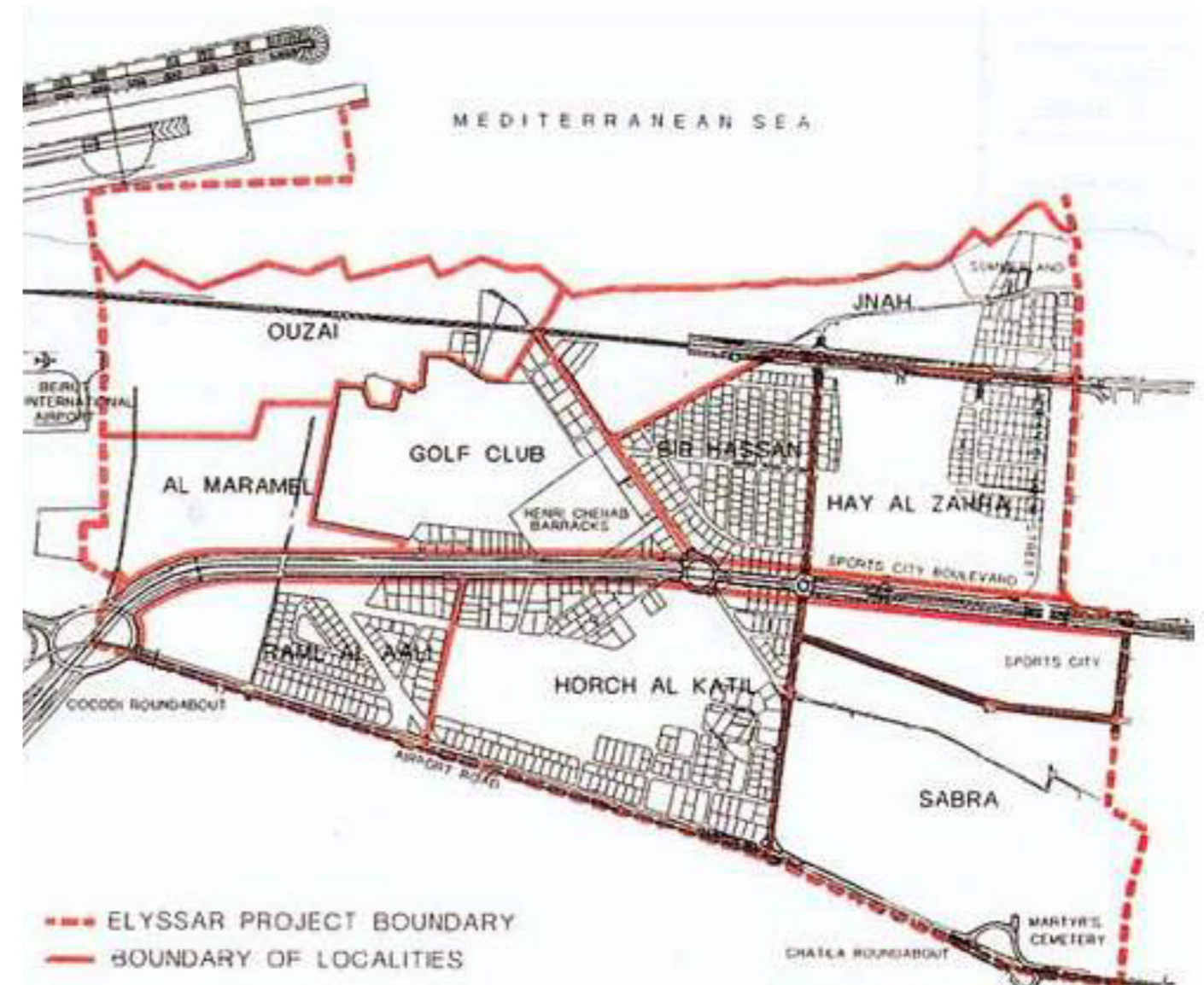
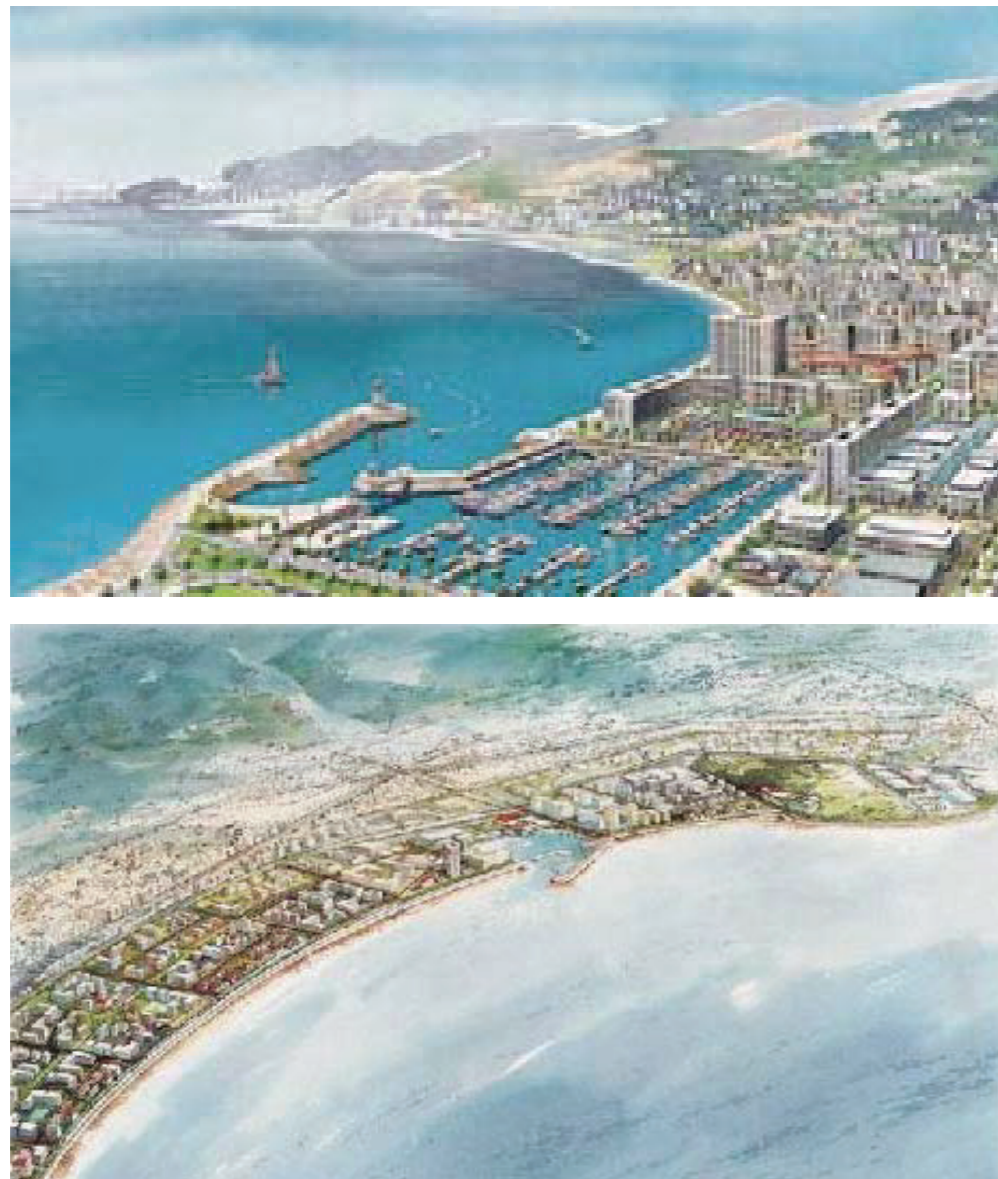


Figure 4 Elyassar Plan (Akkermans, 2012)

2.3.2 Linord redevelopment project

Linord's redevelopment project targeted Beirut's eastern coast and the Metn-Nord landfill (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008), as seen in *Figure 5*. At the time this project was introduced, minor elements were implemented. Some of the landfills were cleared out and a grid of streets replaced them. Recently, news was out that the Council for Development and Reconstruction will continue the project from where it was stopped. The project will be divided into packages as the Council for Development and Reconstruction ordered. Linord entails the construction of new ports and a marina; as well as the reclamation of a coastal strip for use as a commercial, residential, and tourist destination (Chamoun, n.d.). To this day very little of this project was realized and no information was disclosed. Perhaps this project's future might be intertwined with that of Beirut's exploded port.

Figure 5 Linord Development (Chamoun, n.d.)



2.3.3 Dar el Handasah's plan

Before the establishment of Solidere, Dar el Handasah designed the redevelopment of Beirut's centre. The design was heavily criticized by the Lebanese for its complete demolition of the centre. Henri Eddé's design proposal would have modernized Beirut's centre and disconnected it from the other areas. It called for the design of a separate island which would function as a trade centre, as visualized in *Figure 6*. He also proposed the design of a wide boulevard which would rival the Champs-Élysées. As a result of the vast public opposition, the Council for Development and Reconstruction disregarded Dar El Handasah's plan and asked for a new master plan (Makdisi, 1997). In 1993 Dar el Handasah issued a statement stating that 80% of Beirut's downtown area buildings were severely damaged and irreparable (Makdisi, 1997). Based on this, demolitions in Beirut Central District started straight away before the approval of their improved plan.

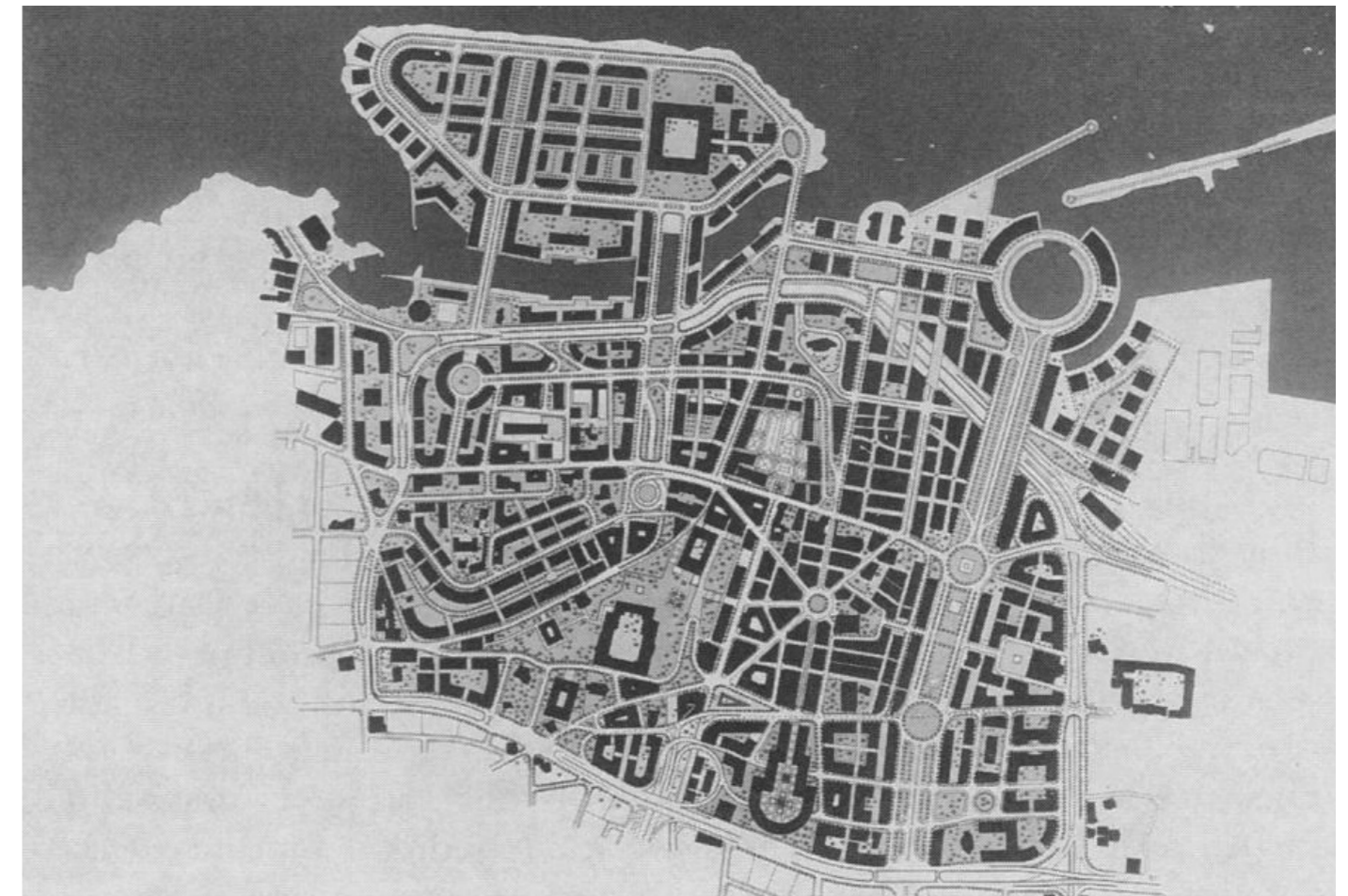


Figure 6 The 1991 plan (Makdisi, 1997)

2.3.4 Solidere's master plan

Before outlining the final proposal, which determined Beirut's destiny, the establishment of Solidere will first be explained. The 1991 decree, introduced in section 2.2, was not issued to help the establishment of Solidere, the private real estate company which was in charge of the (re)construction of Beirut. Nevertheless, the law made it possible for powerful individuals to establish in 1992 the firm, Solidere, which serves their private interests (Makdisi, 1997).

Solidere's capital is divided into two types of shares. This is important to be explained to show the neglect of the Lebanese people in the (re) construction process. The first type of shares was given to the owners of seized property in downtown Beirut. These shares were 'proportionate' to the value of the property, which was determined by Solidere's board (Makdisi, 1997). The second type of shares was issued to investors; regardless, strict rules were present for owning the second type of shares as it was mostly limited to either Lebanese or Arab investors (Makdisi, 1997). The largest share of the company belonged to businessman Rafiq Hariri, who became prime minister of Lebanon in 1992 (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008). Upon the conversion of the Lebanese people's leases into shares, they lost their rights to occupy or return to their properties. The people who refused to sell their properties to Solidere were faced with many restrictions when it came to managing their properties. Many owners were forced to refurbish their buildings which greatly benefited Solidere since they were paid 12% of the property's value. Furthermore, property owners were limited to the refurbishment of their property because the plans and designs had to be done by Solidere's designers and approved by them (Makdisi, 1997). Therefore, it is safe to say that Solidere did everything to evict the Lebanese from their homes and to remove any obstacles from their (re)construction plans. This enabled them to completely erase the heritage character of Beirut and manipulate its social fabric (Salaam, 1994). Because the government gave up their role of decision-making during the (re)construction, Beirut was redesigned according to Hariri's goals. Rafiq Hariri has always aimed at modernizing Beirut, even before the establishment of Solidere, during the OGER times. His ambitions were to 'rebirth' the

economic city of Beirut (Makdisi, 1997) to create a commercial centre of the Middle East (Salaam, 1994). In the public's eyes, the (re)construction was privatized; it was steered by militias and political leaders (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008).

Although Dar el Handasah's plan was approved in 1992, due to the change in the government, which was replaced by Hariri and his cabinet, the plan was partially implemented. The only plan that was greatly realized was Solidere's plan which concerned Beirut Central District. It covered around 1.8 million square metres with 600,000 square metres reclaimed from the sea (Makdisi, 1997), see Figure 7. Solidere, which was responsible for the realization of this project, based its master plan on Dar el Handasah's plan. Solidere's designers, led by Oussama Kabbani, attempted not to deviate aesthetically from the established street look, city centre, or surrounding communities (Makdisi, 1997). In contrast to the 1991 plan, Solidere focused on reintegrating the central district with Metropolitan Beirut. This is done by preserving and (re) constructing old souks, heritage buildings, and low- and middle-class residential areas. Moreover, a policy was introduced which limited the heights of tall buildings. The designers focused greatly on portraying the redeveloped Beirut to be similar to the neighbouring regions and not 'as a foreign body in the heart of Beirut' (Makdisi, 1997).

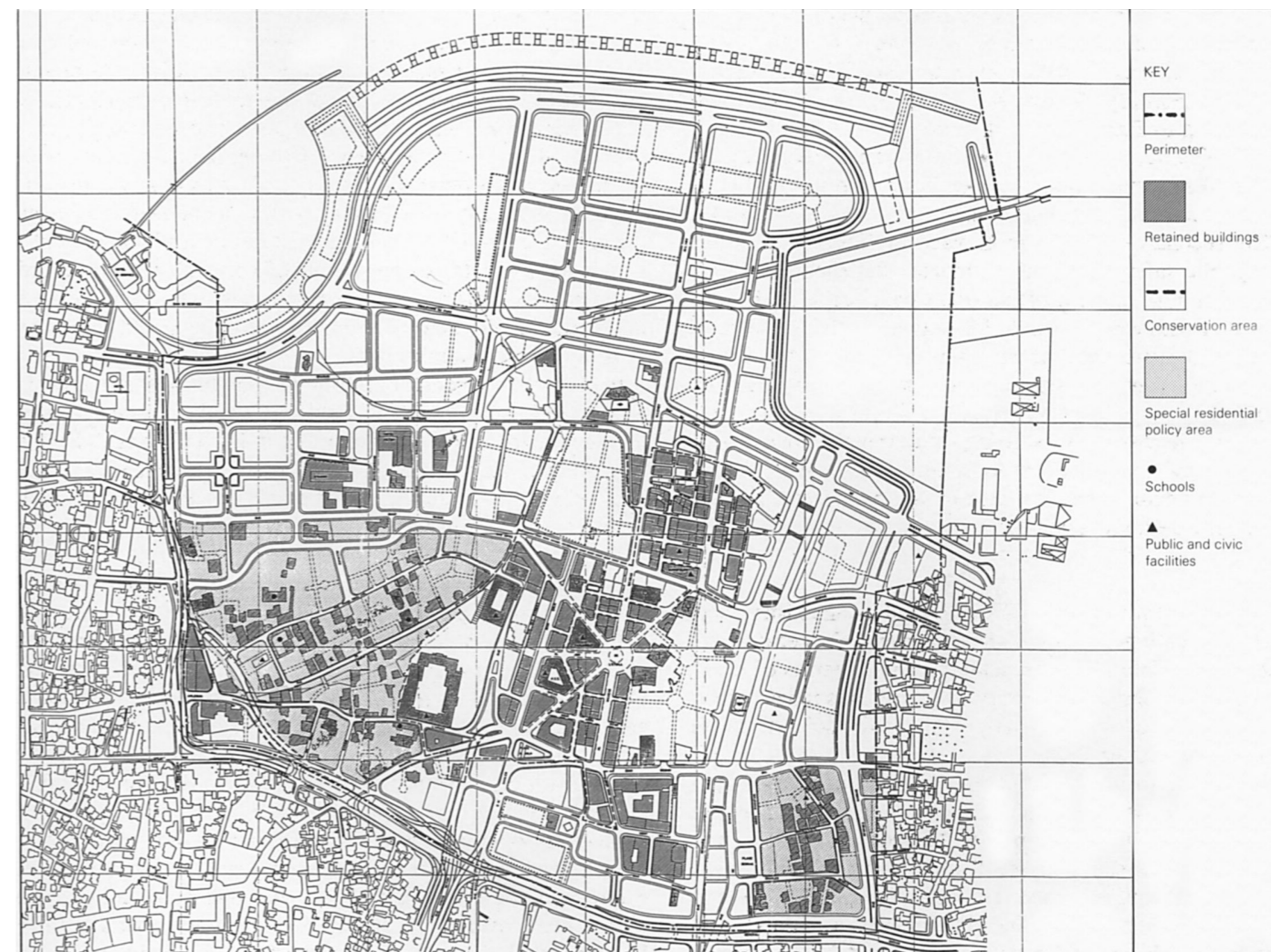


Figure 7 Solidere's masterplan (Salaam, 1994)

Chapter 3 Beirut's (re)constructions

The transformation of cities is typically identified by the extent of (re)constructions that have occurred. Governments devise a plan for the re-development of their war-torn city depending on the severity of the damage that has occurred. These plans would be based on the inspection and assessment of the destructions and the importance of the areas where these occurred (Felix, 2019). In Beirut's (re)construction, that was not the case. In response to Hariri's vision, of creating a 'Hong Kong of the Mediterranean' and restoring Beirut's commercial importance (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012), the capital has lost its identity (Rizk, 2020).

The civil war left Beirut with many losses, whether that was of its citizens or its rich historical heritage. Instead of repairing the demolished buildings and preserving the capital's colonial history, Solidere, which was entirely responsible for the (re)construction, decided to erase these historical remnants. During the (re)construction of Beirut, which started in 1994, the demolished buildings were more than the ones demolished during the 15-year-long war (Makdisi, 1997). It is said that around 1200 of the damaged buildings were demolished (Becherer, n.d.); however, many of them could have been repaired and preserved. Initially, the government had made a list of buildings to be preserved; nevertheless, many corrupt landowners found a loophole through this and were able to demolish and construct new buildings (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012).

The post-war reconstruction of Beirut cannot be restricted to just the civil war. In 2006, Israel attacked Beirut's suburbs, which is the centre of the Shia Party, Hezbollah. The war ended after a month but left major losses. The death toll reached over 1000 people (Swift, 2022), 265 buildings were damaged and thousands of people were displaced from their homes (Fawaz, 2007). The (re)construction after this war were much more complicated than those of the civil

war. This is predominantly a result of Hezbollah's control of the southern suburbs of Beirut. Therefore, the rivalry between the Lebanese government and Hezbollah led to a slow (re)development of the suburbs.

As a result of the politico-sectarian polarization present in Beirut, the (re)constructions created many different characteristics in this historical city (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012). To highlight these differences and the implications they have brought to the Lebanese people, three neighbourhoods namely, Beirut Central District, Zokak el Balat and Haret Hreik, will be analysed and compared.



Figure 8 Beirut Central District before and after Solidere's (re)construction (Chami, 2012)



3.1 Beirut Central District

Beirut Central District witnessed one of the most dramatic transformations of all time (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008), as 80% of it was razed directly after the end of the civil war (Makdisi, 1997). The very few buildings preserved were religious ones which belonged to religious communities, known as *waqf* (Nsr & Verdeil, 2008). Beirut already had a mixture of different characteristics and urban grids superimposed on each other due to its colonial history. Yet, many of those characteristics were wiped out or have become less evident. The implementation of Solidere's plan has brought Beirut's centre many new architectural and urban typologies.

3.1.1 Urban typology

The (re)construction of Beirut Central District, outlined in Figure 8, introduced a change to its urban tissue (Felix, 2019). This change was the first step towards completely modifying Beirut's centre and introducing a new character to the

city. The change in the urban tissue was made possible by the reclamation of the sea and the demolition of many buildings in the centre.

Before the end of the civil war, Beirut Central District was greatly parcellated. This was influenced by the hierarchy of streets, which divided the area into parcels of different shapes and sizes. One of the defining characteristics of the Beirut District area before the war which has been preserved is Place de l'Etoile. This square is recognized by its round centre and diagonal streets. It dates back to the French Mandate, and it is the only element of Beirut's history seen today. As demolitions progressed, which is visualized in Figure 9, it became easier to manipulate the area's parcellation. The demolitions and new Solidere plan brought a reduction in the urban density of the Central District. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean Beirut's centre housed fewer dwellings. The new building typologies introduced allowed for density reduction while accommodating a lot of dwellings.

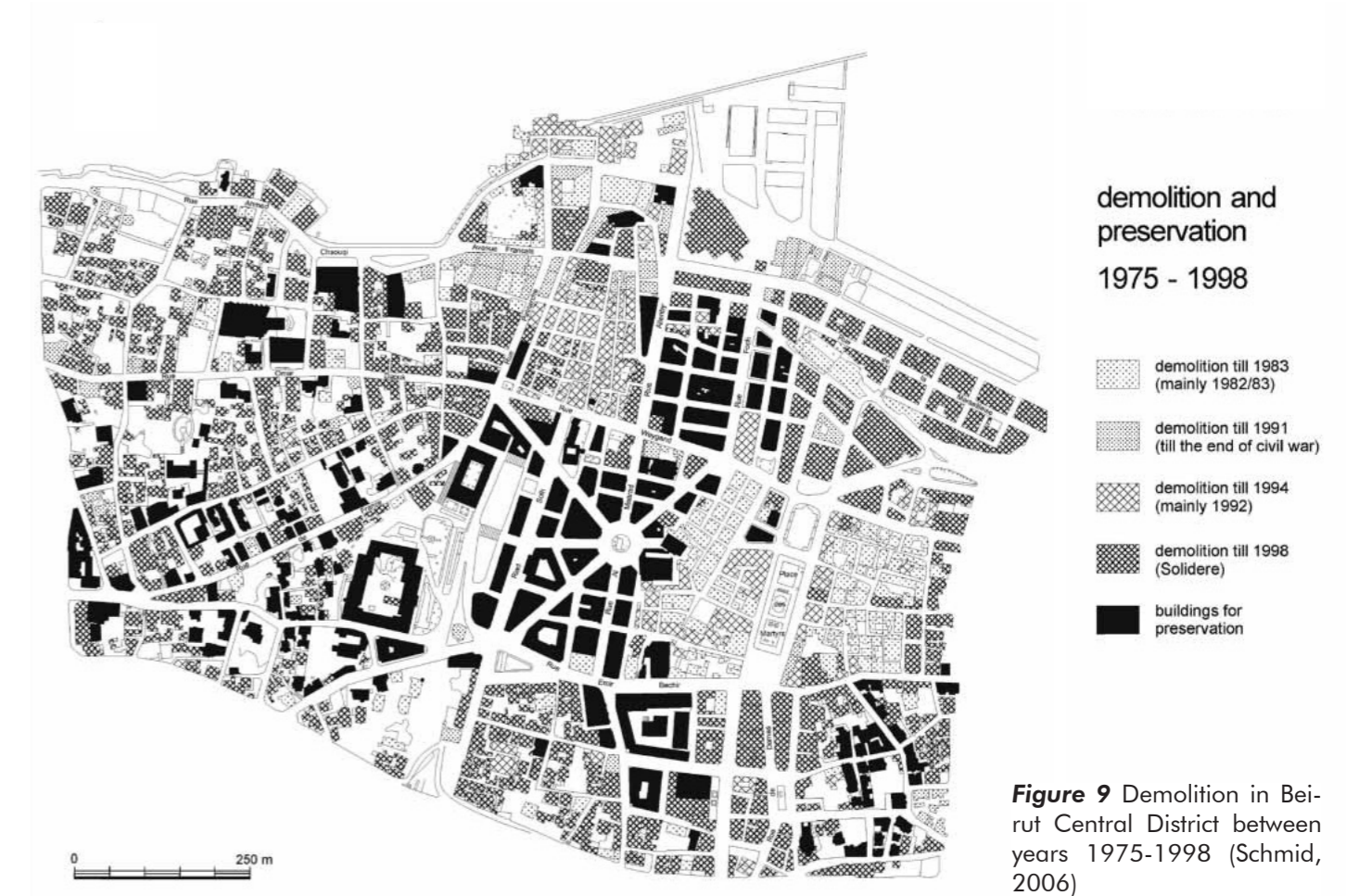


Figure 9 Demolition in Beirut Central District between years 1975-1998 (Schmid, 2006)

3.1.2 Architecture

Beirut Central District architecture can easily be distinguished from the rest of Beirut because of its dissimilar typologies. The architecture of the (re)constructions can be divided into two types, heritage buildings and recently constructed ones. As seen in *Figure 9*, the Lebanese government paid very little importance to the heritage buildings of the country. The only law present that protects heritage buildings dates back to the French Mandate and concerns monuments constructed before 1700 ("Under Destruction", 2011). Heritage buildings were identified and listed by the government. These went down from 1016 in the year 1995 to approximately 250 buildings ("Under Destruction", 2011). Other buildings that have a historic past, ones that belong to the Lebanese memory, are identified by the people and have no laws to protect them. In reality, even the laws placed to protect heritage buildings can be neglected as owners can find a way around them.

When the civil war ended, many heritage buildings were severely damaged, and the ones that survived the razing of Hariri were renewed. The conservation process consisted of renewing the façade and replacing any missing elements (Felix, 2019). This allowed the presence of certain historic characteristics in some regions of the Central District. Those were identified by their historic architecture, dating back to the different colonizations, and the narrow street design, as seen in *Figure 10*. Still, to this day, some damaged buildings in downtown Beirut have not been renewed; they symbolise the fifteen-year-long war, which is reflected in the heavily damaged buildings and the bullet marks imprinted in its architecture.

Solidere attempted to reintroduce Beirut's heritage, in the hope of silencing many opposing Lebanese views on the (re)construction. It is difficult to identify whether historical buildings are classified as heritage buildings according to the Lebanese government as no information has been disclosed to the public. Demolition of a

once-historic building also wipes away its historic value and memory. Solidere's dismal attempt at bringing back Beirut's heritage consisted of several different attempts based on the historical building. For instance, if the building was already demolished, they reconstructed one with many of its historical elements, almost a replica of the building. For instance, the Bank of Beirut, in *Figure 11*, was demolished after the civil war, but because of its presence in a historical district, Solidere commissioned its reconstruction (Builders Design Consultants, n.d.-a). Minor changes can be observed in the façade of the building. Besides that, the building spaces were also changed to accommodate the new function which is an office building.

The introduction of contemporary architecture gradually made its way into Beirut Central District. Before that, contemporary architecture was imposed on heritage buildings. To illustrate this clash in styles, *Figure 12* presents the 'restoration' conducted by Lebanese architect Nabil Azar. The building is located on a historic site portraying two architectural styles, the old and the new. Therefore, the design of one façade follows the old architectural principles, that façade was maintained and kept as it is (Builders Design Consultants, n.d.-b). The other façade represents breaking free from traditional construction methods.

Solidere certainly did not stop there. They further manipulated Downtown Beirut's character by introducing Western architecture. Solidere held competitions for different developments, where international architectural firms participated. Lacking patriotism and knowledge of Lebanese architecture, the architects introduced new forms and building typologies. High-rise buildings swayed Beirut's skyline from once being shaped by low-rise buildings to towers and skyscrapers. Small houses and villas were replaced by luxurious apartments bought by foreigners and only occupied during the holidays; thus, they were left abandoned for a very long time.



Figure 10 Restoration of a historic street (Felix, 2019)



Figure 11 Reconstruction of a historic building (Foch Street, 2012; Builders Design Consultants, n.d.-a)



Figure 12 The clash of Architectural styles (Felix, 2019)

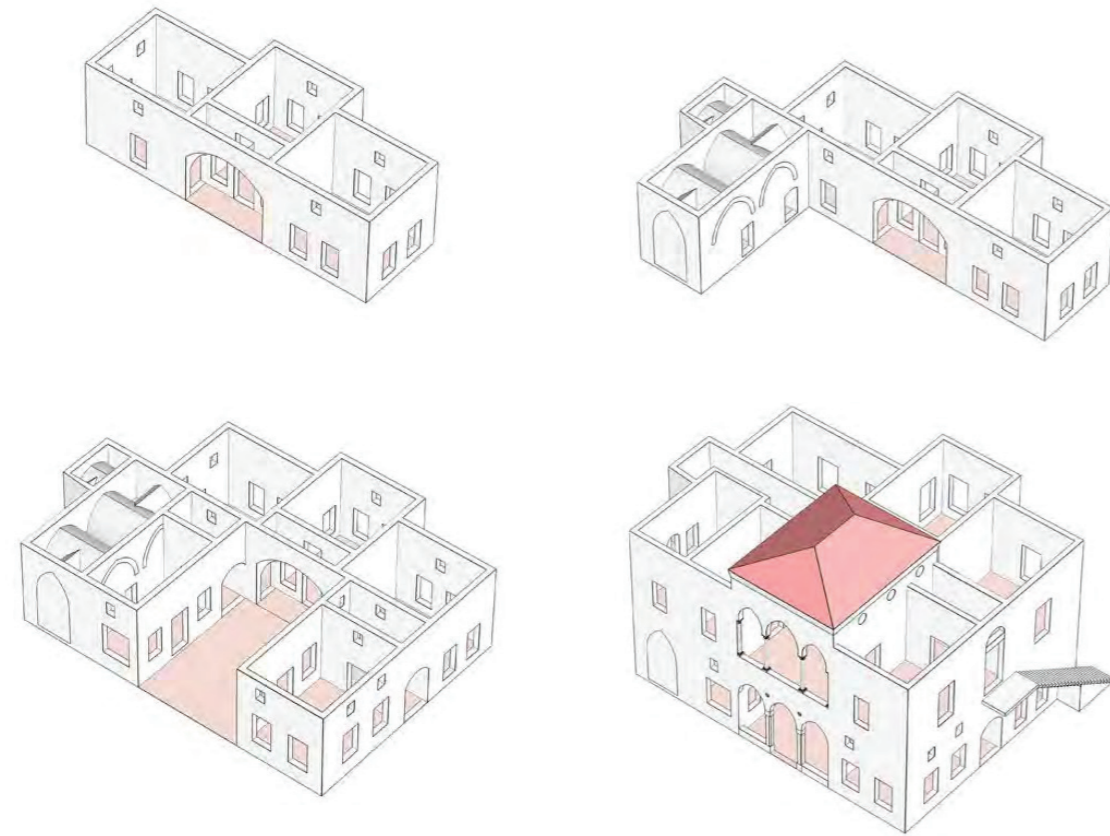


Figure 13 Triple Arch House typology (Chahine & Dagher, 2021)

The most common historic dwelling typology is the 'triple arch house' also known as the central hall house. This typology, seen in *Figure 13*, revolved around a central courtyard in the house (Chahine & Dagher, 2021). Back in the day, courtyards were a very popular characteristic of Arabic homes in Levantine countries. They were used for various purposes throughout the day, varying from guest areas to a family space to a space for chores (Chahine & Dagher, 2021). The central hall houses are designed with arched rooms and halls known as *iwans* (Chahine & Dagher, 2021). This house typology was able to expand vertically and horizontally if needed. Over time, due to the discovery of new materials, these houses were constructed from concrete instead of stones.

foreign investors and an empty island designed by politicians for their private interests.

The 'triple arch house', Beirut's known housing typology, is barely recognised in the Central District as a result of the emergence of apartment blocks. Apartment buildings reduced the open spaces present in the capital because they lacked the courtyard design, as interpreted from *Figure 8*. Instead, massive and tall blocks were built to fit the same house program once present in Beirut. Instead of having multiple layered houses, the apartments would consist of a spread-out program, which typically covered half a floor. The design of these apartments consisted of a gradient in functions which also represented a gradient in the private and semi-private thresholds. One end of the apartment contained all bedrooms while the other had the living and dining rooms. With this apartment typology, there has been a disconnection between the rooms as there is no longer a unifying central space which was occupied most of the time. Instead, the zones were created which made it easier to disconnect and separate the inhabitants from one another.

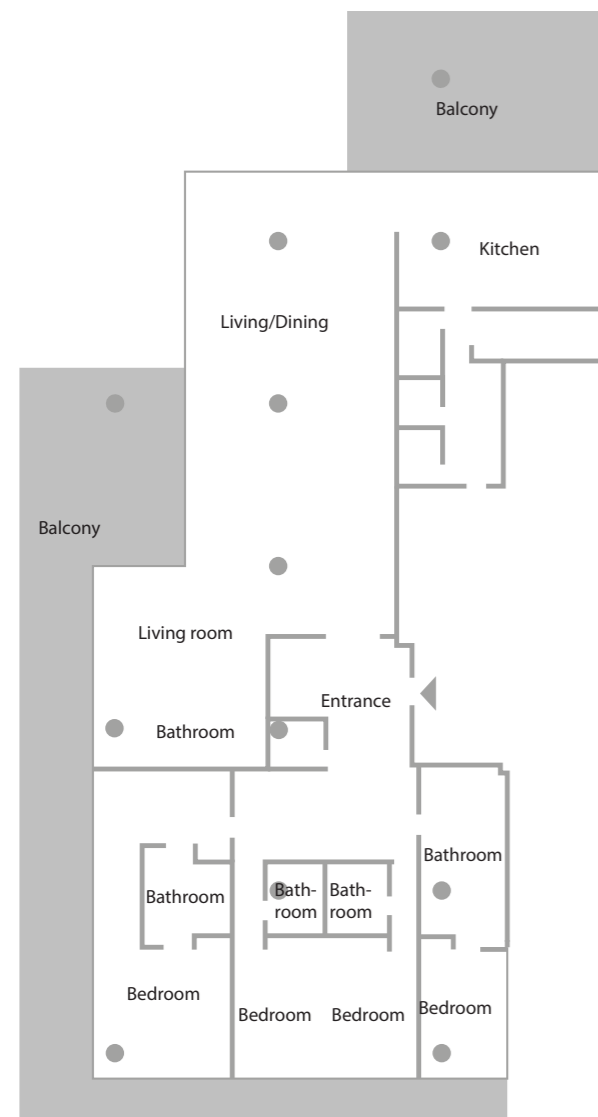


Figure 14 Apartment typology and its building morphology. Drawn from (Properties in Downtown Beirut, n.d.)

The new developments introduced in Beirut Central District have led to the gentrification of the capital (Rizk, 2020). Low and middle-income people were forced to live outside of the capital in response to the high property values and rental costs. Beirut District became home to rich and

3.2 Zokak el Balat

Zokak el Blat, one of Beirut's pericentral districts, is known as a neighbourhood of contrasts. Zokak el Balat was defined and identified in 1920 by the French Mandate; hence, it has undergone multiple transformations over time (Chedid, 2012). It is divided into two regions by a major street: Serial and Patriarchate (Chedid, 2012). This division which led to two different neighbourhoods within one neighbourhood was due to the overlap of Solidere's boundary with Zokak el Balat, as seen in *Figure 15*. Although no physical boundaries divide these two areas, a distinction is visible in terms of the architecture and urban plan of the area. The northern region, Serail, was (re)constructed according to Solidere's plan for the (re)construction of Beirut Central District (Chedid, 2012). Patriarchate was not designed nor (re)constructed according to an urban plan or framework; therefore, it lacks urban cohesion. The only zoning plan still in effect dates back to 1954 and concerns the formation

of concentric zones which resemble a gradient in building heights (Chedid, 2012).

Zokak el Balat is perceived as a heavily gentrified neighbourhood because of the influence of the many wars it experienced. Starting with the civil war, Serail was greatly damaged as it was on a close periphery to Beirut Central District, this area was also known as a 'no man's land' and was greatly abandoned (Chedid, 2012). During the civil war, the Israeli attack on Beirut also heavily influenced this neighbourhood's demographics. Many informal settlements were introduced to Zokak el Balat which led to an increase in Shia concentration and an increase in Amal and Hezbollah's power (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012). It can be said that the result of this contrast in Zokak el Balat is due to the various wars the neighbourhood experienced and the different political parties involved in its (re)construction.

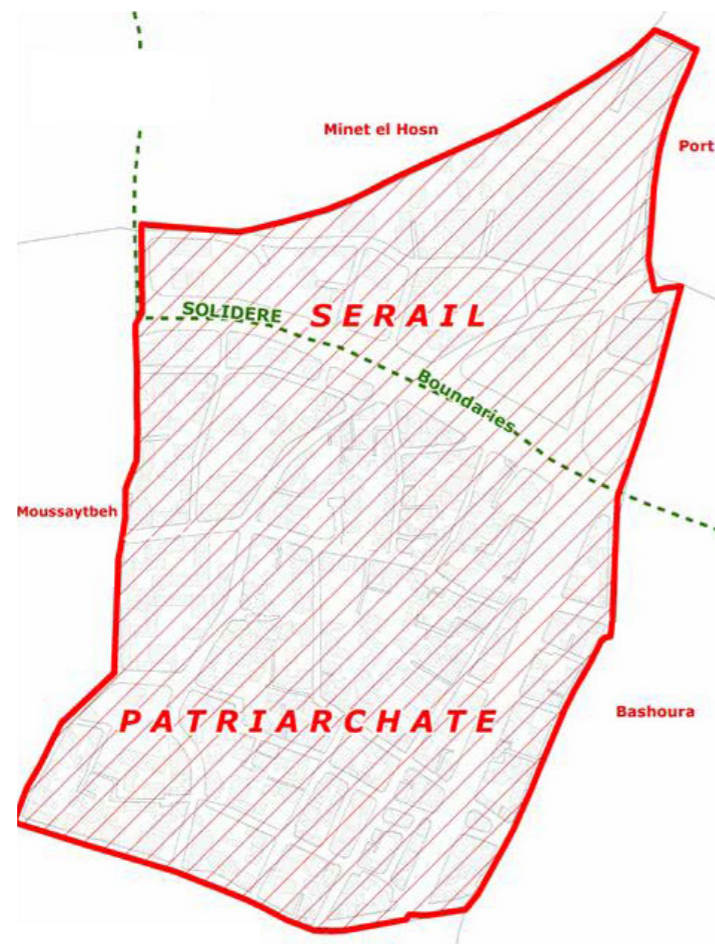


Figure 15 Division of Zokak el Balat (Chedid, 2012)

3.2.1 Urban typology

The (re)construction of Zokak el Balat did not alter its urban fabric; however, its urban morphology and open spaces were greatly impacted. The change in architectural typology, explained in *section 3.2.2*, influenced the development of this neighbourhood. Solidere commissioned the demolition of houses and villas to construct tall apartment buildings. This was deemed more profitable to property owners so they were in favour of this change (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012). The changes in Zokak el Balat's urban densification, outlined in *Figure 16*, reveal that Zokak el Balat had a gradual reduction in its urban density before the civil war and this mostly affected Serail.

The largest demolition phase occurred upon the introduction of two new axes in Zokak el Balat. This occurred before the start of the civil war and resulted in the razing of almost 235 buildings to make room for the integration of the two defining axes (Chedid, 2012). Nonetheless, the second largest demolition happened during post-civil war (re)construction which accounted for the demolition of 151 buildings (Chedid, 2012). As mentioned earlier, Serail was more destructed in comparison to Patriarchate because of its close connection to Beirut's centre. The reduction in the densification of Serail did not lead to a lower population density because the tall buildings accommodated a large number of apartments. Zokak el Balat consists of irregular parcels which are shared by its road network. The absence of an urban framework in Patriarchate resulted in the formation of an irregular grid in the urban plan of Zokak el Balat.



Figure 16 Changes Zokak el Balat's densification (Chedid, 2012)

3.2.2 Architecture

As mentioned in the previous section, the change in Zokak el Balat's building typology altered its urban morphology. The design of Serail under Solidere introduced the architectural clash present today in Zokak el Balat. Serail was designed to match the 'insular urban development' of Beirut Central District (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012). Similar to the (re)construction of downtown Beirut, the (re)construction of Zokak el Balat required first the demolition of many heritage buildings, which date back to the Ottoman Tanzimat and French Mandate (Chedid, 2012). Very often the demolished heritage buildings were the unclassified ones, although even if it were listed for protection, it still could be demolished (Chedid, 2012). The heritage buildings that survived the razing were either left abandoned or restored to repair some of the damage. The demolitions in Serail were led by Solidere following their master plan; on the other hand, since Patriarchate did not have an urban plan for its (re)construction, the demolitions that occurred there were unplanned. After razing around 28,000 m² of land post-civil war, a new building typology, which was high-rise apartment blocks, emerged in this neighbourhood.

Plans for Serail's (re)construction were steered by creating a continuity of Beirut District's architecture; nonetheless, Patriarchate was also influenced by this. Developers and property owners followed the trends present in the northern region of Zokak el Balat. After the civil war, many of the constructed buildings were at least 4 levels; however, as time progressed the buildings were designed taller, reaching up to 13 levels or more (Chedid, 2012). Because the (re)construction of most of Zokak el Balat was unplanned, the erection of tall buildings created many issues in terms of the living quality of the neighbourhood. As seen in Figure 17, traditional houses were placed between high-rise apartment blocks which influenced sunlight and shadows.

Most of the apartment buildings served as residential ones, but in some of them, a commercial

function was present in the plinth of the building. Although these tower blocks already introduced a new character to Zokak el Balat, an effort was put into the materials used. Previously, traditional houses were made from stones, and many of the newly built buildings were coated with natural stone to match this traditional look (Chedid, 2012).

The traditional housing typology in Zokak el Balat is similar to that of Beirut centre, the central hall house. The houses are based around a courtyard configuration, where rooms are placed according to their function, visualised in Figure 18. In Zokak el Balat's central hall house typology the plan is very symmetrical, and the courtyards are usually oriented on one side towards the mountain and sea (Chahine & Dagher, 2021). The courtyard in this housing typology serves merely for access and orientation. Furthermore, semi-private rooms such as reception and guest rooms are located near the entrance, placed along the northern main façade.

The apartment blocks reinvented the central hall house typology. When analysing a typical floorplan, in Figure 19, it can be seen that the apartment configuration revolves around the entrance. The entrance space acts as an orientation point similar to the courtyard principle in traditional homes. The balconies, present sometimes in central hall homes, on higher floors, are replicated in apartment buildings typology. Nevertheless, the difference with the apartment typology is that they are not oriented in any direction towards Beirut's sea or mountains.

Zokak el Balat has been transformed over time to appear as a new neighbourhood with many high-rise buildings planted. In reality, some of its history is still present in the traditional and heritage buildings that have withstood decades-long demolitions.



Figure 17 Old and new buildings in Zokak el Balat (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012)

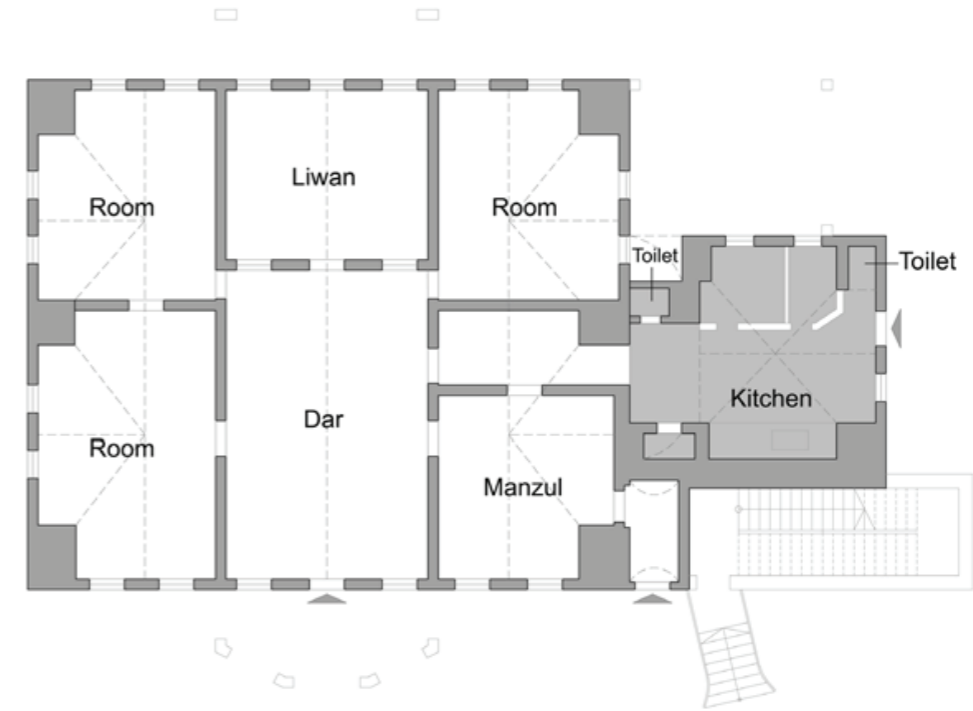


Figure 18 Floorplan of a traditional house in Zokak el Balat (Chahine & Dagher, 2021)



Figure 19 Apartment typology. Drawn from (Sinno, 2022)

3.3 Haret Hreik

Haret Hreik, located in the Southern suburbs of Beirut, is home to a large population of Shia Muslims. This neighbourhood is under the control of Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of the political and Islamic party, Hezbollah (Fawaz, 2014). The demographics of this neighbourhood greatly changed during the civil war; after many Shias fled different parts of Beirut to find safety in Haret Hreik. This led the Christians residing in Haret Hreik to move out to a different area after receiving many threats (Fawaz, 2014). Hezbollah is known for its opposition to Israel, this rivalry led to a month-long war in the summer of 2006 (Fawaz & Ghandour, 2007). The July war affected other Shia neighbourhoods; however, this section focuses solely on Haret Hreik. The war razed 265 buildings, demolished 3000 housing units and displaced 20000 people (Fawaz & Ghandour, 2007).

Haret Hreik is considered to be a 'state within state'; therefore, there was a clash between stakeholders when it came to (re)constructing it (Richani, n.d.). The Municipality provided financial aid to those who lost their homes; they also aimed to be involved in the (re)construction of this neighbourhood by providing a legal framework for this process. Moreover, the Municipality aimed to implement some of its construction laws which concerned building heights, maximum built-up area and public and private spaces (Fawaz, 2014). Nevertheless, Hezbollah refused any governmental involvement in the (re)construction of Haret Hreik. Their goal was to (re)construct the neighbourhood as it was before the war and their design decisions were merely steered by their political benefits.

Several months after the truce, Hezbollah established the construction agency Wa'd, which translates to promise. Wa'd was responsible for the entire (re)construction of Haret Hreik; they appointed architects to design the neighbourhood under their supervision (Fawaz, 2014). Hassan Nasrallah pledged to (re)construct the neighbourhood 'more beautiful than it was'

(Fawaz, 2014). Designers from Wa'd claimed that their goal is to bring back the memories of the place, in reality, their goal was to get the neighbourhood back to its original political state. Therefore, the entire (re)construction of Haret Hreik was privatized and focused on individual dwellings; the creation of public and open spaces was neglected.

3.3.1 Urban typology

Haret Hreik is a densely built neighbourhood consisting of many illegal settlements and other forms of residence. It consists mostly of residential buildings with a commercial plinth; other facilities are scattered around the neighbourhood to create a serviced area (Fawaz & Ghandour, 2007). The central area in this neighbourhood is of significant importance. Firstly, it is shaped by four highways which give it a distinctive shape. It is seen to represent the public by having a church and a mosque right next to each other (Fawaz & Ghandour, 2007).

Haret Hreik consisted of many apartment buildings, near each other. This led to poor daylight and ventilation. The (re)construction, seen in Figure 20, did not resolve these issues, in fact, it further deteriorated the neighbourhood's quality. It can be interpreted from the maps that Haret Hreik's density increased during its (re)construction.

Some of Haret Hreik's citizens envisioned the (re)construction to create a more beautiful-looking neighbourhood (Sewell, 2021). They wanted more public engagement between citizens and more open spaces. They imagined a neighbourhood with less congestion and more greenery (Fawaz & Moumtaz, 2020). However, their expectations were certainly not met by Wa'd's (re)construction plan. The post-July war (re)construction got rid of the only park in the area (Sewell, 2021). This further congested the neighbourhood and densified it.

The (re)construction of Haret Hreik solely focused on providing residential units. Although the neighbourhood offers several commercial spaces for daily life services such as shops and supermarkets, they avoided designing other functions

to provide residents with leisure activities. Actually, it has been said that after Hezbollah was in control of Haret Hreik the vibrant commercial character of the neighbourhood became absent (Fawaz & Moumtaz, 2020).



Figure 20 Changes in the urban densification of Haret Hreik before and after the July-war. Drawn from (Fawaz, 2014)

3.3.2 Architecture

The aim of Wa'd was to (re)construct the demolished buildings and offer new residences to several thousand displaced people. They certainly did succeed at reconstructing the neighbourhood very quickly since the (re)construction lasted up to 6 years and all residents had a home (Sewell, 2021). The goal of this reconstruction was never to introduce a new character to the neighbourhood; in fact, the architects focused on bringing back the old character of the neighbourhood before the July war (Fawaz, 2014). That being said, the 'new' design of the neighbourhood, which Hassan Nasrallah claimed to introduce 'modern' buildings was never executed (Fawaz, 2014). In reality, Nasrallah just wanted to build the demolished buildings as quickly as possible to gain the trust of Haret Hreik's citizens and to strengthen his power in the area.

The reconstruction of Haret Hreik was a replica of how the neighbourhood looked previously. The same volumes and building typologies were introduced in the neighbourhood. Although the building heights violated the building decree, the heights of the new apartment buildings were kept the same. Not only that, but the tall apartment buildings resulted in poor living quality in the neighbourhood because of the issues they brought. Yet, Wa'd disregarded that and still constructed tall apartment blocks.

The building typology of Haret Hreik consists merely of building blocks to house a large number of residents. The conversion of this typology into houses or villas during reconstruction would have been impossible since many residents would have been displaced. The apartment buildings had the same architectural design as the older ones, this is seen in *Figure 21*. Around 189 buildings were constructed in harmony with the surrounding buildings (Fayad, 2022). Neutral colours were used to match the character of the neighbourhood and the buildings erected were clad with natural stone.

The new buildings were constructed following the same design principles as the surrounding apartment blocks. The (re)construction did not explore a new apartment layout. One can see a connection between the apartment plans and the old traditional Beiruti houses described in the previous sections. The rooms, again are designed around a central area, in this case, the lobby, which serves as a separation between the semi-private and private rooms.

The design of apartments forsakes the individuality that is usually present in houses and villas. The only representation of the individual is usually portrayed in the balconies, but in the case of Haret Hreik, that is difficult to spot. The closure of balconies using glass panels or shutters was made possible; nonetheless, the cheapest and most common way of doing this is by using curtains (McGuirk, 2015). This was very common in Haret Hreik to create privacy in the Muslim household considering most women wore veils.

The (re)construction of Haret Hreik was an actual reconstruction in which the demolished buildings were rebuilt following how they used to look before. This project did not introduce a new character to the neighbourhood, nor did it make the people feel foreign in Haret Hreik. Despite that, this reconstruction project has been described to be neoliberal, in which all design decisions were conducted in favour of Hezbollah's benefits and not the people (Fawaz, 2014).



Figure 21 Reconstruction of Haret Hreik model (Schäfer, 2017)

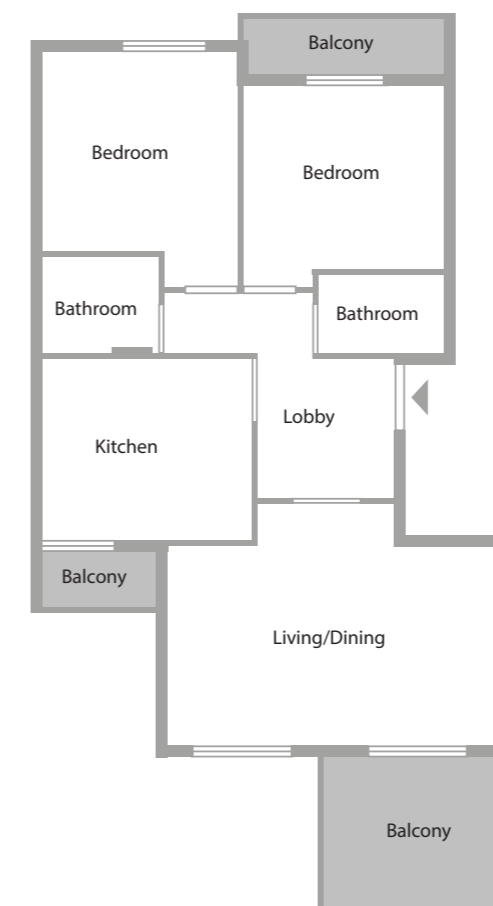


Figure 22 Apartment typology and its building morphology (Schäfer, 2017)

3.3 Comparative analysis

Earlier in this chapter, three (re)constructed neighbourhoods in Beirut were introduced. Their (re)construction varied in terms of the parties involved and the aims of the (re)construction project. These projects introduced a new character to the area and had major impacts on the Lebanese. Some similarities can be identified between these neighbourhoods; still, many differences have been recognised after analysing these three neighbourhoods.

Beirut Central District introduced a completely new face to the city, the heritage of the area was almost entirely erased. The new typology and architecture introduced made Beirut Central appear as a commercial and touristic centre. Out of all three neighbourhoods, it is the most 'modernized' area. The architecture and urban principles introduced there was a collection of Western principles implemented in an Arabic Capital. The term 'modernized' refers to the introduction of the Modernism Architectural Style, in which

ornamentation is neglected, high-rise buildings are constructed, and glass and concrete are the most common materials of this construction. The Central District can also be perceived as an area consisting of many architectural clashes because many of the buildings were designed in different periods and some belonged to colonizations from before the independence of Lebanon.

Following this, Zokak el Balat is also another neighbourhood of clashes; however, its architecture is not seen to be very 'modern' as described earlier. In *Figure 23*, the difference, between the modern architecture that was introduced in Beirut District and Zokak el Balat, can be seen. Although they were developed by the same company, Solidere, one can notice a significant contrast in terms of the materials and volumes. Perhaps the only reason this neighbourhood was actually (re)constructed is because it is located at the periphery of the Central District.



Figure 23 View of Central District from Zokak el Balat (Bruno & Yazigi, 2012)

Haret Hreik was reconstructed by a different company and political party. In comparison to the other two neighbourhoods, it experienced very minor changes. Nevertheless, Haret Hreik is the most dense neighbourhood out of all three, when comparing the maps. This neighbourhood does not have a clash in styles as there are very few historic buildings in that area. The design of the apartment blocks in Haret Hreik and Zokak el Balat looks alike. Both neighbourhoods have rectangular volume, natural colours and stone cladding. Haret Hreik does not have different dwelling typologies or varied public functions. This neighbourhood is solely made up of apartment blocks. Its design does not introduce public functions nor open spaces and parks.

The only similarity that can be interpreted from the (re)constructions of these neighbourhoods is the reinvention of the traditional Beirut house, the central hall house. The plans of most apartments consist of central halls or rooms which determine the division of the layout of the dwellings. The Beirut houses follow the design principles of other Arabic homes which are based on privacy and separation between the guest-friendly areas and the private rooms. Another similarity to traditional houses is the balconies. Some neighbourhoods, similar to the ones analysed, often lack public and open spaces. Though many Lebanese people like interacting with their neighbours and seeing what is going on in the streets. Therefore, the design of these balconies enables them to interact with passers-by or their neighbourhood, while they carry out their daily chores such as hanging laundry on drying racks on the balcony. The balconies also allow them to have 'eyes on the street' which creates a safe environment.

The design of Beirut Central District, Zokak el Balat and Haret Hreik all differ because they have been built according to the motives of political stakeholders. These motives were studied and concluded to be different based on the political party involved. Moreover, when reading about the (re)constructions it is identified that all projects have been constructed in opposition to

many building decrees; therefore, the Municipality has always had little to no involvement which is perhaps why there are many dissimilarities between these neighbourhoods.

Chapter 4 Opinions on the (re)constructions

4.1 Solidres's (re)constructions

The aim behind the different (re)constructions of Beirut has always been to develop its regions in favour of a political party. This led to the creation of a capital that served the powerful political persons while neglecting the Lebanese. There were two different views concerning these transformations. Some were in favour of them and some opposed them. The extent of opposition depended on the severity of the transformations certain regions underwent.

Beirut Central District underwent the most drastic transformation in history, which resulted in a new downtown. Many Lebanese opposed the (re)constructions as they required major demolition of heritage buildings. However, these people were not able to strongly voice their opinion at the time, due to the financial constraints of creating powerful campaigns (Schmid, 2006). An example of one of the posters for an opposing campaign is seen in Figure 24. The text translates to

"Beirut...Woe to a nation whose heart is removed and does not revolt!..."

The poster highlighted the capital as being the Paris of the Middle East (Schmid, 2006). However, since many of Solidere's stakeholders were political or governmental figures they ensured that the media would be filtered. There was a restriction on what was being said or written in newspapers and TV media. This was made possible by the introduction of an audio-visual law in 1996 (Schmid, 2006).

Due to the widespread of Solidere's campaigns and their control over the media, their (re)construction plan was getting more accepted by the Lebanese. A survey conducted by the researcher Schmid showed that two-thirds of the participants supported the (re)construction project

(Schmid, 2006). Following this line, a columnist for the New York Times once wrote an article titled *"The Beirut I knew Wasn't So Different"*. He confined his evaluation of the (re)constructions to the core functions and purposes of the city. In his opinion, as long as the downtown provided the same facilities, it has not changed (Kifner, 200 C.E.).

In the beginning, Solidere's (re)construction plan was strongly opposed; however, after some time, the Lebanese started accepting it. That was not necessarily because the plan proved to be successful after several years, but it is a result of their strong advertisement campaigns and great political power. In reality, the people were not able to properly voice their opinions as they did not have a platform to do so. Also, the Lebanese had little faith in having the government listen to their complaints; therefore, the majority of the Lebanese gave up on opposing the (re)constructions and just accepted it. However, it is seen that even after almost 30 years, some Lebanese, such as Mugraby, still criticize the (re)constructions. He claimed in a Lebanese newspaper that

"Solidere is a Lebanese form of vigilantism under the colour of the law. It violates the Constitution, which prohibits the confiscation of property without prompt compensation and only for the public good. Most of the people who were hurt were not strictly the property owners but the occupants or leaseholders, whose rights were taken away by law 117 and given to Solidere." (Irving, 2009).

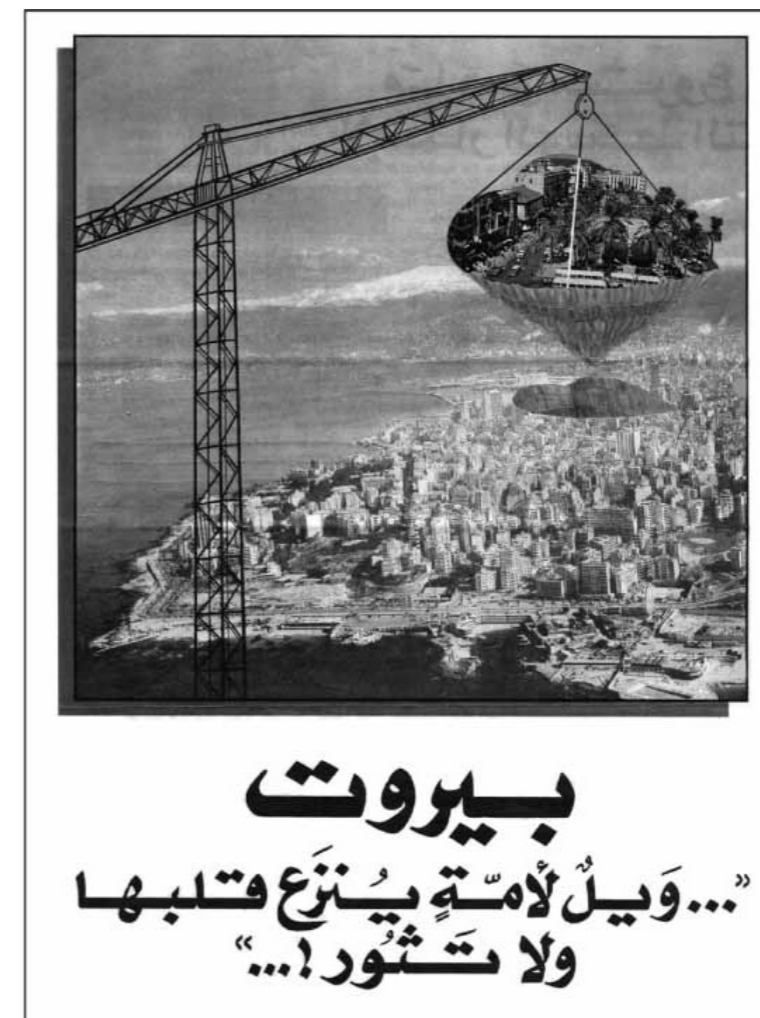
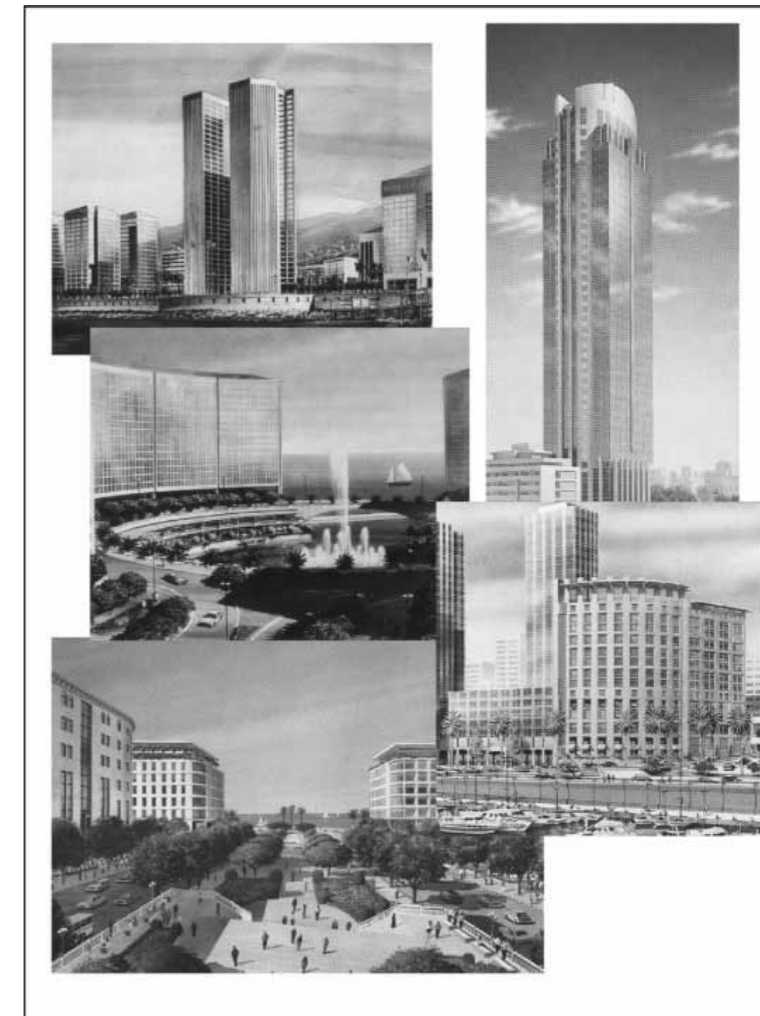


Figure 24 Solidere's advertising campaign vs opposition poster (Schmid, 2006)

4.2 Hezbollah's (re)constructions

The reconstruction of Haret Hreik was not opposed and rarely criticized. The leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, used the (re)constructions as an opportunity to gain more power and strength in the area. Therefore, he focused on what the people wanted, which was bringing back the old neighbourhood. Many said that the (re)constructions enabled them to design their 'dream' homes, as Wa'd was flexible enough to accommodate what people wished for. Hassoun said during a tour around Haret Hreik

"I used to dream of an apartment where the living room was separated from the dining area and where the kitchen would be much bigger and Wa'd gave me that." ("FEATURE : Hezbollah Builds Loyalty, One Apartment at a Time ," 2009)'.

The criticism of the (re)construction was about the design principle and the quality delivered. A Haret Hreik resident complained about

"low-quality housing, un-cleared debris, insufficient parking, and the lack of greenery and public space, notwithstanding mosques."(Lob, 2020).

Others condemned the inequality present during the (re)constructions. Some people claimed that Wa'd mainly serviced individuals who supported Hezbollah (Lob, 2020). At the end of the day, the (re)constructions of Haret Hreik were only criticised by a minority of the citizens. During the process of reconstruction, there was no opposition to Wa'd. Many of Haret Hreik's citizens were satisfied with the reconstruction as it was done very quickly and the people did not have to stay displaced for long ("FEATURE : Hezbollah Builds Loyalty, One Apartment at a Time ," 2009).

Chapter 5 Beirut Port's unknown future

On August 4, 2020, the world witnessed one of the largest explosions which happened in the port of Lebanon's capital, Beirut. This fatal explosion led to 200 deaths and left over 300,000 people homeless (Issa, 2022). Around 73,000 apartments and 9000 buildings were left damaged (Issa, 2022). Almost three years later and no signs of (re)constructions can be seen. Many designs have been proposed however those have all remained on paper (Baalbaki, 2022).

In early 2022, the current Prime Minister of Lebanon, Najib Mikati, announced that Lebanon is open for international (re)construction proposals (Ahmed, 2022). According to Mikato, this will be made possible by the implementation of a new law, which he hopes will attract companies to invest in the (re)constructions (Ahmed, 2022). In response to that, many international countries raced to take initiative in (re)constructing the port; it is thought that this is steered by the international government's geopolitical motives. Beirut's Port is one of the most important ports in the Mediterranean, and it has been considered "the gateway to the Middle East" (Larroque, 2020). Therefore, if the (re)constructions were to be adopted by any international company, the port will be designed in favour of their political incentives. Nonetheless, six months after Mikati's announcement, the Lebanese Public Works and Transport Minister announced that the (re)construction will start after the completion of a master plan approved by the World Bank (Bruno, 2022). Hence, even after six months, no signs of progress in the (re)construction of Beirut were seen.

The Lebanese certainly did not wait for the government to start repairing the damages of the explosions. After the blast, many people started renovating or reconstructing the damaged parts of their homes. Directly after the explosion, a group of architects started a Beirut Heritage Initiative (Issa, 2022). They aim to preserve the

heritage of Beirut after the blast.

"The preservation of the social fabric there was a priority."

Said an architect who is part of the Beirut Heritage Initiative (Issa, 2022). They also worked on rehabilitating many of the damaged homes, as seen in *Figure 25*; however, they were doing this without any aid from the government. Initially, when the organization was set up, they received some financial help from people and other organizations, but the amounts they were receiving gradually decreased after some time (Issa, 2022).

The future of Beirut's Port is still unknown after almost three years of the explosion. As of now, no master plan has been disclosed by the government; therefore, one cannot tell at which phase the government is at when it comes to (re)constructing the port. Furthermore, the government, yet again, is initiating a new law to allow international companies to (re)construct the port. This is similar to what was done after the civil war in 1991. Moreover, the influence of international designers and companies in the (re)construction of Beirut, can still be seen to this day. Therefore, by allowing international companies to completely (re)construct the port, the government is only allowing Beirut to further diverge from being the heritage capital, it once was.



Figure 25 Refurbishing damaged heritage buildings (Issa, 2022)

Conclusion

The once 'Paris of the Middle East', Beirut has been greatly shaped by its history. This heritage city is home to many races, religions and beliefs. Religion is what has greatly influenced Lebanon's development over the years. Its influences can be observed ever since the fifteen years-long civil war. The war was a major turning point for Beirut, as nothing went back to how it was before. The civil war was a turning point for Beirut's urban and architectural characteristics. This paper aimed to study the changes Beirut underwent over time, this has been studied by the research question *How have wars designed modern Beirut's urban typology?*

Beirut's major (re)construction project did not begin directly after the civil war. In fact, amidst the shooting and bombings during the civil war, the government was already working on (re)constructing the city. However, their ambitions of (re)constructing the city, during the war, were limited to the proposed urban plans. Beirut's (re)construction began after the shootings stopped. Although the civil war ended in 1990, still to this day the divisions between the different religions exist. The (re)constructions of Beirut post-civil war just made matters worse. The division between the Lebanese expanded but now it has become between the different working classes. The (re)construction of Beirut by the real estate company, Solidere, played a major role in this.

Solidere focused on a specific region in the capital, which entirely covered Beirut Central District and part of Zokak el Balat. This company was led by political leaders with large, private goals. That being said, it was known from the beginning that their (re)construction decisions would greatly influence their ambitions. With that, a large part of Beirut, mostly Beirut Central District, was transformed to be similar to Hong Kong and Dubai. Central District became a major touristic area, shaped by high-rise buildings and skyscrapers, reflecting Solidere's international character.

These (re)constructions partially made their way through Zokak el Balat, which created a clash of styles and characters. This neighbourhood partially appears to be one for the rich with its westernised buildings and apartments; however, a major region of the neighbourhood still houses some heritage and low-rise buildings. Solidere cannot only be blamed for ruining Beirut's heritage character. In late 2006, the war between Hezbollah and Israel led to a new construction project in Beirut's southern suburbs. Nevertheless, this time the neighbourhood character was not changed, it was reconstructed to how it was before the war. Despite that, the neighbourhood cannot be said to have been designed back to a healthy or good character. Hezbollah greatly manipulated Haret Hreik before the war with Israel. The illegal squats and settlements present since the civil war have ruined this neighbourhood, which once was home to a rich cultural history.

The neighbourhoods analysed were designed by different political regimes for different motives. This led each to have its character despite minor similarities in some of the design decisions. Regardless, after the many mistakes the government took during the (re)construction of Beirut in the past 30 years, it still has not acknowledged the damages it made to the city. It seems like the damages will further carry on in the (re)construction of Beirut's port. The same factors unfold in this transformation. A new law is established and international firms are welcomed to take responsibility for this (re)construction. One can only speculate that this will further raze Beirut's heritage character and implement a new face to the city. If the government makes the same mistakes as the post-civil war (re)construction, a fourth face to Beirut will be seen in the near future.

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Figure 7 Solidere's masterplan

Figure 8 Beirut Central District before and after Solidere's (re)construction

Figure 9 Demolition in Beirut Central District between years 1975-1998

Figure 10 Restoration of a historic street

Figure 11 Reconstruction of a historic building

Figure 12 The clash of Architectural styles

Figure 13 Triple Arch House typology

Figure 14 Apartment typology and its building morphology

Figure 15 Division of Zokak el Balat

Figure 16 Changes Zokak el Balat's densification

Figure 17 Old and new buildings in Zokak el Balat

Figure 18 Floorplan of a traditional house in Zokak el Balat

Figure 19 Apartment typology

Figure 20 Changes in the urban densification of Haret Hreik before and after the July-war

Figure 21 Reconstruction of Haret Hreik model

Figure 22 Apartment typology and its building morphology

Figure 23 View of Central District from Zokak el Balat

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