

ILLEGITIMATE SETTLEMENTS IN WEST BEIRUT:  
A MANIPULATION OF TENURE POLICIES AND CLASS STRUGGLE OVER LAND

by

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1985

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
URBAN STUDIES AND PLANNING  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIRMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER IN CITY PLANNING

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

June, 1988

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# ILLEGITIMATE SETTLEMENTS IN WEST BEIRUT: A MANIPULATION OF TENURE POLICIES AND CLASS STRUGGLE OVER LAND

## Abstract

Planners and politicians in Lebanon have been associating settlement formation with the inability of legal authorities to impose the law and the prevailing chaotic situation in the country since the civil war. In this study, I will argue that, since the turn of the century, settlement formation is also connected to the competition of various groups over land where technocrats and elites have been constantly using tenure and land policies to control land. This competition, though not specific to Lebanon, took different forms since the Ottoman period until the present time, where each period contributed directly or indirectly to settlement formation. The previous attempts to provide the poor with land titles have collapsed due to the lack of a support systems which help the poor overcome the complexities and the obligations associated with these titles. This study analyzes land policies since the late Ottoman period to illustrate the power struggle over land between the elites and the poor. The study will finally present the possible implications to granting tenure to settlers without a cohesive body of state support to maintain these titles. The arguments of this study are based on the following:

(1)- Historically, the Ottoman introduced innovations to existing forms of land tenure to maintain their revenues from agricultural land. These innovations were manipulated by established families and a rising bourgeoisie to acquire communal lands in rural areas. These policies contributed to the informal presence of peasants in urban areas.

(2)- The French attempted to spread equity and justice by rationalizing planning and institutionalizing land management. They superimposed secular public institutions on a harsh sectarian society. These institutions made extensive use of elites as administrators and legislators. The elites of each community competed over land and resources regardless of their poor's needs.

(3)- In the post-Independence era, land use and land tenure have been manipulated by elites and rising technocrats, who were influenced by western mode of development, to facilitate the process of capital accumulation and economic development. Legislations served certain groups and discriminated against others which widened the disparities in land ownership and income distribution.

(4)- After 1975, the total absence of the state, which led to the inertness of the elites' role in land control, encouraged the poor to invade public lands and to force their rights for better living conditions. Meanwhile, the state attitude towards informal settlements and access to land by the poor remained unchanged and was manifested in the latest 1986 master plan.

## Acknowledgement

To Allah, the All Knowledgeable and the Exalted in Might, I present my first and last recognition for guiding me and giving me the strength to accomplish this endeavor in a very short time.

I would also like to use this opportunity to thank all the people who opened the way for me for such an enriching experience. I would like to mention, in particular, Professor Lisa Peattie, my research advisor for being extremely helpful in directing the arguments of the study and structuring the constituents of the thesis. I am also doubly indebted to Professor William Doebele at Harvard University whose detailed comments have helped to sharp my ideas and enabled me to link history to the present land conflict in Beirut. The patience of both professors with my written English was unfailing. However, working closely and simultaneously with both of them was a rewarding and a very stimulating experience. Their commitment to academic life and students set for me an ideal which I wish to follow in the future. I am also grateful to Professor Llyod Rodwin who accompanied me during a whole year and who gave me his precious time advising me. I would also like to thank Professor Lawrence Susskind for being supportive since the initiation of this study and his continuous encouragements throughout the final term.

I wish, in particular, to put on record my thanks: to my wife Maha whose support and tenderness made it possible for me to accomplish this study, to my brothers Issam Kayssi and Jamal Abed, who invariably spared time and made the effort to listen to me and to discuss the arguments of this study, without them this study would not have been submitted on time, to my father Souheil and my uncle Rafiq Halabi who spared no pains to put me in touch with the institutions and people I needed to visit, to Dr. Wafa Charafeddine who supplied me with the valuable information on about the Ouzai corridor and the necessary maps and photos for the analysis; and to the support staff of the department of urban studies and planning at M.I.T., especially Rolf Engler and Mary Grenham, who supported me since I joined the program in September 1986.

Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Rafiq El-Hariri, my sponsor, and the people working in the Hariri Foundation. Finally, without the administrative and financial assistance of this foundation, I would not have been able to go through such a profitable and enriching experience.

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In The Name of Allah, The Merciful and The Compassionate

## INTRODUCTION

In Lebanon, policy makers and planners insist that settlement formation is the result of political rivalries, which prevented the state from enforcing the law since independence, and the chaotic situation since 1975. In this study, I will argue that settlement formation is also connected to the hegemony of various groups over land since the turn of the century where ruling classes have been constantly using influence, position, and money to serve their interests. Thus monopolizing access to land and controlling resources.

This power struggle involved two major players. The state-elite coalition, on one hand, sought to control land to facilitate the process of capital accumulation and economic growth. The poor, on the other hand, who considered land ownership as an amenity for social stability, were denied access to land. Each of the two groups viewed tenure and land policies differently. The first group used land policies as a tool to control development on the macro level, while the poor, who lost confidence in the legal system, considered these policies to be unjust and biased. This paradox emerged a gradual divorce between public policies and their application resulting at the end in the creation of illegal settlements.

To support these arguments, this study will analyze the state-elite relations and their manipulations of land policies since the late Ottoman period until the present time. The case study chosen will illustrate the implications of state policies on urban development and the various conflicts generated as the state becomes unable to enforce the law. Finally, this study will conclude with a set of guidelines, based upon historical precedents and present conditions, to be taken into considerations for future land policies .

During the Ottoman period there was an attempt to provide the poor with land titles at the cost of their collective land. In other words, they were given land that was already theirs. Assuming that the process was intentionally good, the poor soon lost their land due to the absence of a support system to maintain this ownership. The support system, which existed in the early days of the Ottoman rule, was slowly replaced by a feudal hierarchy, which the Ottoman developed to secure revenues on the local level. This hierarchy led in 1858 to a civil war, which obliged the Ottoman to undertake substantial reforms on the social and political level. However, the waning feudal system readjusted to the changes and reintegrated within the newly created institutions, which allowed it to shape the legislations of the future state at the cost of the poor's rights.

Since the independence the state adopted tenure systems which were a mix of Islamic doctrine, Ottoman and French innovations, and modern practices. This mixture has confused land tenure and so far has created many cases of illegalities since independence. In fact, the Ottoman and French innovations used in the system had themselves created illegal access to land during the pre-independence eras. Migrants and unprivileged groups formed illegal settlements using the confusion over land tenure.

Thus, failure of planning in Lebanon can be attributed to the will of legislators to overcome political rivalries, social segregations, and loyalty to religion by simply rationalizing planning. The failure of public policies to address the complexities of the situation resulted in the incapability of the state to enforce the law in some cases and its resort to negotiations over applying regulations in others. Furthermore, authorities' decisions in such cases were not based upon the extent of derived public benefits in each case. Rather, they were based on socio-political or religious affiliations of the settlers.

The case of the Ouzai corridor, located in South Beirut, is an illustration of the previously mentioned complexities<sup>1</sup>. Illegal settlements have existed around Beirut since the early fifties in the form of "Misery Belts". The area of study is the Ouzai-Khaldeh corridor (see map). It is situated on the southern periphery of West-Beirut. It is surrounded by the Mediterranean sea to the West, city of Beirut to the North, the Airport boulevard to the East, and the Airport to the South. It encompasses private, municipal and Waqf properties the ownership of which has been disputed for fifty years. Illegal invasions started in the late fifties but the settlement formation occurred in 1976 when approximately seven thousand non Lebanese<sup>2</sup> slum residents were displaced from the Eastern sector to the Western<sup>3</sup> sector of Beirut. To resettle they occupied existing luxurious beach condominiums along the southern littoral of West Beirut. In 1978, during a vast military operation by the Israeli Army in southern Lebanon, 250 thousand Shiite refugees migrated towards major coastal cities<sup>4</sup>, namely Beirut and Sidon, seeking temporary shelter (see Figure 1 map of Lebanon). In Beirut, they settled in and around the southern suburbs which became the largest concentration of this religious community in Lebanon<sup>5</sup> (see figure 2 map of Beirut) and contained three quarters of a million Shiite residents. The continuing outburst of hostilities in the south motivated the refugees to either initiate new settlements further north in the Jnah area, or integrate within the Ouzai corridor. The permanent stay of the refugees in the Ouzai area inflated the old settlement from 70 acres before 1975 to approximately 125 acres in 1980. In 1986 the Ouzai

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul-Aziz Saqqaf in the Middle East city describes these complexities as "Lebanon is an arab state, yet intricately linked to Europe. It consists of multi-ethnic and religious social groupings, yet its legal system is based on the french system. It has a secular system, yet it works on the basis of religious compartments. It has a highly urbanized society, yet it is fanatically tribalized. It is a "democracy", yet it has a pervasive feudal structure. It is an affluent society, yet it has some of the Middle East's poorest people" (Saqqaf, 1987: 257).

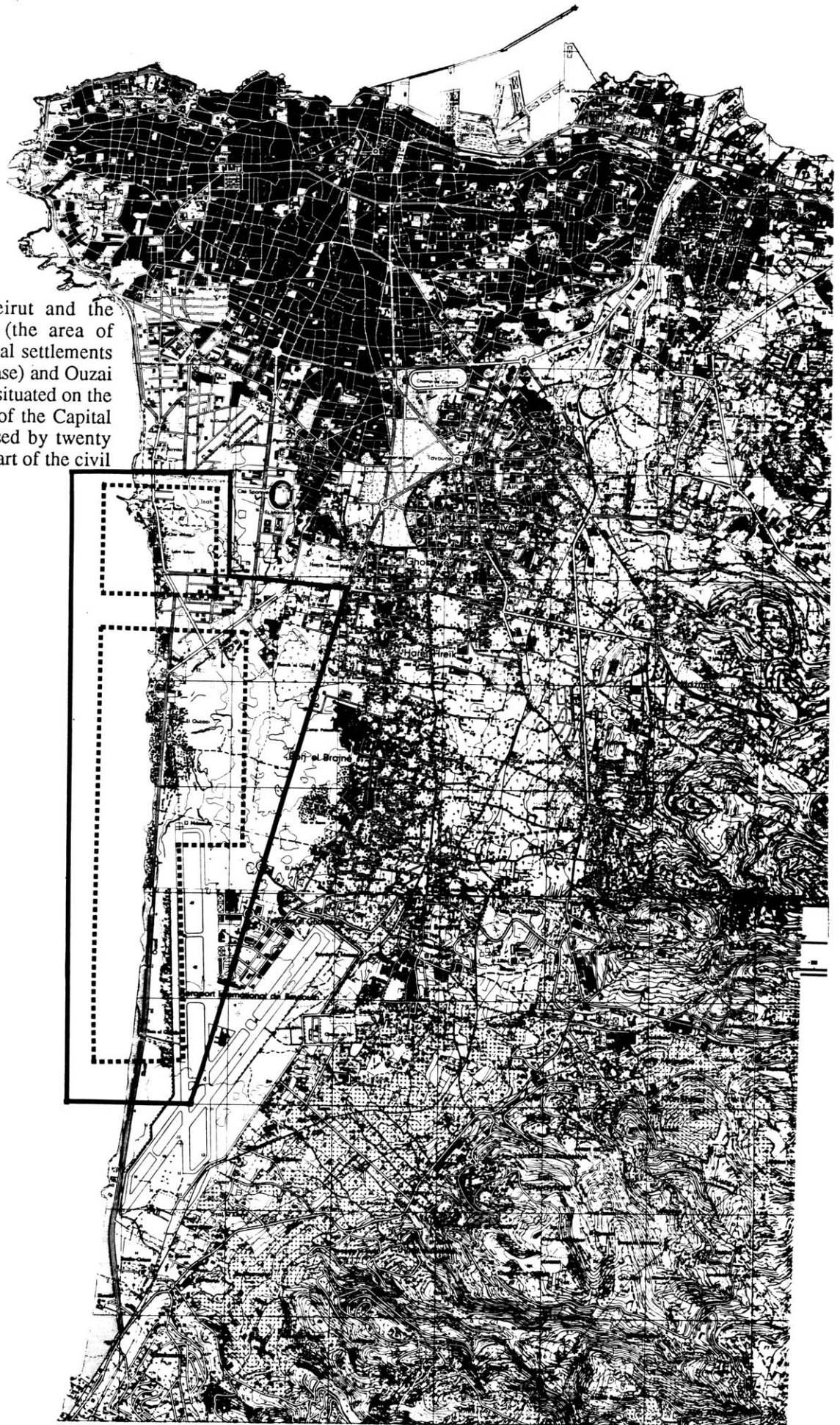
<sup>2</sup> The non Lebanese slum residents were Syrians, Kurds, and Palestinians.

<sup>3</sup> Source: social welfare agencies working on site 1984.

<sup>4</sup> Source: An-Nahar daily newspaper, March 11, 1978.

<sup>5</sup> Source: As-Safir daily newspaper, July 15 1983.

*Figure 1*  
The city of Beirut and the  
Ouzai corridor (the area of  
study). The illegal settlements  
of Jnah (upper case) and Ouzai  
(lower case) are situated on the  
Western littoral of the Capital  
and have increased by twenty  
folds since the start of the civil  
war.



settlement was growing along 2.5 Km covering 200 acres 56% of which is public land. The settlers created economic activities along the southern artery which crosses the settlements and links West-Beirut to the rest of the country. The artery is designed to be 70 meters wide. Illegal constructions rendered the boulevard 30 m. wide.

Today, the growing demand for cheap housing and industrial space encourages the settlers to maximize the use of land along the corridor and around Beirut International Airport. As the settlements densified, they started expanding towards West Beirut. In 1986 local authorities opposed the settlements' expansion towards the capital and released a general Master Plan for Beirut Metropolitan area in June 1986. The plan ignores the presence of the settlements and denies the right of original settlers over land. The plan implies that the settlements exist by default and should be removed as soon as the state can reestablish its sovereignty. On the other hand the settlers relied on the confusion in the tenure system to claiming legal rights over land. They insisted that the system has deprived them as a community from access to land during the last century. In the corridor, they presently were seeking social stability through access to vacant land, services, and opportunities. All this further aggravated the state-squatters relations<sup>1</sup>.

The focus of this study is to link the causes of settlement formation to historical processes that started with the privatization of collective land (Mushaa) during the Ottoman Period, to the institutionalization of lands during the French Mandate, and at last the hegemony over land by the old aristocracy and traditional leaders. In broad outline, the study stresses on the fact that the poor have succeeded in finding "a strategy" during periods of uncertainty where the state and its institutions have failed to do so during periods of prosperity. This study will conclude with a set of guidelines that should be

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<sup>1</sup> Anonymous sources stated that the original land owners had influenced the design of the Master Plan. As a result, the settlement residents became skeptical of all forms of intervention whether for studying, upgrading, or regulating the growth of the settlements.

taken into consideration while changing the tenure system. It will also propose a set of strategies the state ought to undertake instead of designing unrealistic master plans which complicate the conflict. These strategies will decrease the tension in the state-squatters relations until the reestablishment of order so that changes can be implemented without disturbing the future Lebanese structure.

Primary and secondary sources of information were used for this study. Secondary sources were used to document the socio-economic changes of feudalism in Lebanon and the types of land codes that existed during the Ottoman and French rules and their contribution to the present land tenure system. Primary resources were used to explain the physical characteristics of the settlements, the process of consolidation, and the different state measures to confront the growth of the settlements.

In January 1988, I conducted open-ended interviews with policy makers working at the national Council for Development and Reconstruction, political leaders, city officials, technocrats, neighborhood activists, and settlers. However, many difficulties have faced the development of this study. Population censuses are outdated, the last having been conducted in 1971. Data was hardly obtainable and sometimes inaccessible within the prevailing conditions. Base maps are old, yet I managed to obtain a classified drawing for the corridor prepared in 1983. Field work was extremely difficult, primarily because of the state of insecurity and instability and the suspicious attitude of the local militias towards any stranger. Interviews with residents and key persons have been possible through personal contacts and the help of political elements to whom I am deeply grateful.

This study is divided into six chapters. The first will review the various tenure policies innovated by the Ottoman since the 1858 land code. It also analyzes Ottoman tenure strategies and the different mechanisms used to provide the poor with formal

access to land. Specifically, this chapter this chapter links the failure of the Ottoman land policies to the lack of a comprehensive support system which help the poor maintain land ownership during economic declines. The second covers the period during the French Mandate. This section will describe the French attitude towards Ottoman tenure systems, and how the French attempted to undermine a pre-existing system by imposing another one based on Western practices with a flair of Islamic land tenure terminology. In general, the French institutionalized land and created secular public administration to a sectarian society which, theoretically, was entitled with provision of a the support system on an equity basis. Again, this chapter evokes the importance of traditional leadership, sectarianism and nepotism in the design and implementation of land policies. The third chapter describes the state interventions through planning from 1943 until 1974. The political development of this state has reinforced the position of old aristocracy in the decision making. The analysis of the political structure, the economic policies, and the planning strategies presented in this chapter helps the reader understand the growing disparities between classes and between regions in spite of the creation of a modern state. This pre-war era ended up depriving the poor from both a formal access to land and a support system. The fourth section analyzes the period between 1975 and 1988. This chapter will specifically look at the direct effects of the war on both the public sector and the economy. Two major points are stressed in this chapter. First, public institutions have been divided between the East and the West of the capital. Each community attempted to alienate the resources of the state into its sector of the capital leaving the rural areas to a total absence of state support, law enforcement, and development.

Section five uses the Ouzai corridor as an illustration of former land policies and class struggle over the control of land. This chapter look at the Ouzai corridor as the only remaining location for illegal settlements in Lebanon in the aftermath of the war.

This case shows that the poor succeeded in providing themselves with both access to land and a support system without state intervention. This chapter, finally, raises issues that are worth regarding in the future. The final chapter comes up with suggestions as to where do we go after understanding the problem of illegal settlements. This section presents guidelines for future urban land policies in Lebanon and short term strategies that the state ought to adopt in order to reduce the tension in state-Shiites relations.

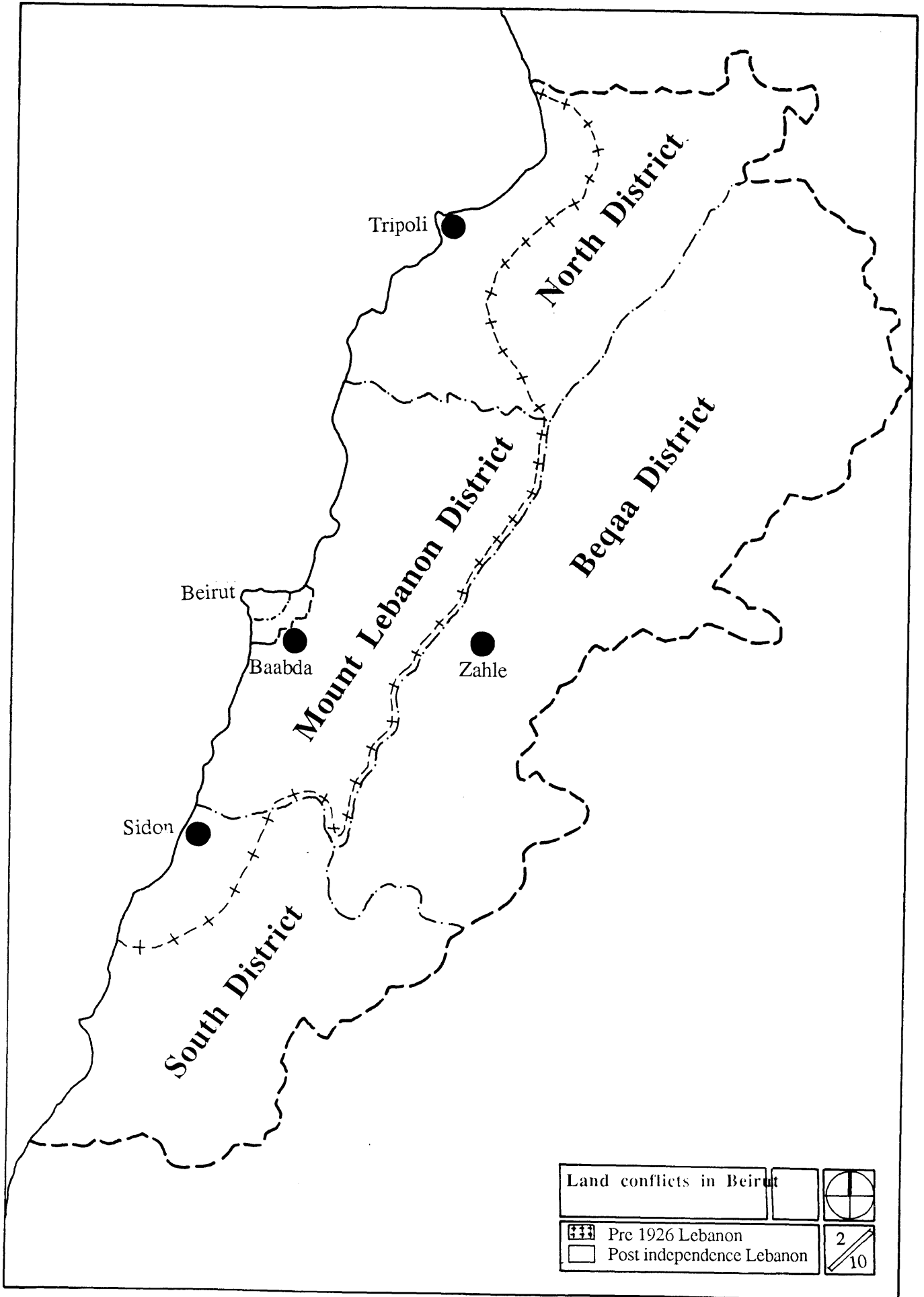
## CHAPTER I

## LEBANON DURING THE OTTOMAN PERIOD

### 1.1 Lebanon

Lebanon in its present form was conceived during the French Mandate, before that date it was referred as the area between the South of Tripoli to the North of Sidon and from the West of the Beqaa valley to the sea. Its population consisted of Christian, Druze, and Muslim communities who had to compromise regularly over the control of land and resources so as to make possible a minimum level of coexistence. "The distribution of communities was the following: Christian Maronites, Shiite Muslims, and Druze lived mainly in rural areas and villages, Sunni Muslims and Greek Orthodox were settled in large urban centers along the Lebanese coast" (Buheiry, cited in Khalidi, 1984: 293). Two modes of production coexisted in Lebanon. "One was an agrarian based economy in rural areas where Lords and peasants shared unequally crop revenues" (Buheiry, cited in Khalidi, 1984: 292). The other was "a mercantilist and industrial based economy in urban centers which reflects a combination of both oriental and western social characters" (Buheiry, cited in Khalidi, 1984: 293).

To be able to control this entity, the Ottoman governor had to innovate constantly the applications of Ottoman laws, which were derived from the Islamic doctrine, and maintain a balance of power between the different religious communities, chiefly, the Druze and the Maronites. Further, he developed a feudal hierarchy within each community to help him impose his political power and secure state revenues through taxing farm products. "This feudal hierarchy was not static and a pattern of fluctuating political influence emerged" (Baaklini, 1976: 31).



This hierarchy produced two categories of peasants: (a) Landowner peasants, with access to the silk trading centers in nearby Beirut, constituted the rural bourgeoisie. (b) Landless peasants were sharecroppers with small and often fractionned holdings. The landless peasants revolted in 1858 in Lebanon to undermine the feudal hierarchy. "Many of the long range causes or preconditions for the 1858 outbreak are, therefore, directly related to land tenure" (Buheiry, cited in Khalidi, 1984: 293). The eventual result of this revolt was a transition from landless to landowning peasants as will be discussed later. However, the land tenure system in Lebanon made it difficult for an expanding peasantry to acquire more land from established feudal lords.

## 1.2 Ottoman tenure policies before 1858

Classical Ottoman land tenure was based upon a combination of Islamic doctrine and Ottoman innovation. In Islamic Doctrine land is divided into two major categories:

1) *Mulk*": is a freehold property used to describe Muslims' lands. These Muslims either converted to Islam at the time of the Muslim conquest, or moved recently to the area. Muslims are required to pay 10% of the land revenues as "*Zakat*" (legal Alms) to the less fortunate of the community.

2) *Kharaj*": this category embraced all other land which belongs to non Muslims. Kharaj refers to the tax levied on their properties.

The galloping inflation in the Ottoman economy during the 19th century obliged the state to change the concepts of Mulk and Kharaj and, therefore, secure its revenues on as regular basis as possible by institutionalizing taxes on farm products. Mulk became the freehold of both Muslims and others who had chosen to retain their own religion (Christians or Jews), while Kharaj, which represented 87% of the lands of the Ottoman

Empire in 1528, became Miri (state) and Mushaa<sup>1</sup> lands that were given to peasants to cultivate. In return, peasants had to pay a form of tax ranging between 25 and 50 percent of the yield of the lands. This tax was generalized over the Ottoman empire regardless of the output of the land. The collection of taxes was assigned to individuals who would bid against one another for the privilege at periodic auctions which placed taxpayers at the mercy of tax collectors.

In Lebanon, the Ottoman governor innovated a new form of land sharing, in which the peasant became a land partner with either the state or the lord if he develop the land and pay its dues, to decrease the tension between feudal and the poor and, therefore, undermined any attempt by the poor to revolt. This tenure policy resulted in two forms of land sharing. "One does not involve the transfer of property to the peasant. It was applied by the Khazins family in the Kisrawan region and it only involved the sharing of crops. The other applied elsewhere in Mount-Lebanon where the proprietor would, after a certain period of time, concede a parcel of land to a peasant "Sharik" who was in turn obliged to plant it and share the proceeds with the proprietor as well as cultivate all the proprietor's land" (Latron, 1936: 50). After a lapse of between five and ten years, however, the Sharik acquired a quarter or a half of the land and trees in question as his own private holding. This second form of land sharing offered the peasants the possibility of acquiring land. However, in the period of transition from Ottoman to French rule the rights of these peasants were denied, as will be discussed in the following chapter. "In both forms of land sharing, the full burden of taxation was transferred from the proprietors to their Shariks. The partner would loose his accumulated rights if he refrained from paying taxes" (Khalidi, 1984: 294). The system of tax collection increased the number of landless peasants, who finally revolted in 1858 to undermine the existing feudal hierarchy.

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<sup>1</sup>Mushaa is a system defined by Warriner as "a stage of transition between the completely communal property system...and the completely divided property system" (Warriner, cited in Hamarneh, 1985: 77).

### 1.3 The 1858 Ottoman land code

Even before the revolt of 1858, the indirect eviction of landowners and cityward movement provoked by the tax system and its application by feudal landowners caused the Ottoman state to enact a series of reforms not only in Lebanon but throughout the empire. As far as land tenure was concerned, the communal system of ownership was totally abolished and three other categories were introduced. Hence, the code classified lands into five categories (Ziadeh, 1979: 8) :

1) Mulk land: Private property held in full ownership. Its ownership comprised two rights: the right of absolute ownership, and the right to the usufruct of land. Both of these rights belonged to the individual in this category.

2) Miri lands: Property owned by the state. Most of the agricultural land was classified as Miri land in which the absolute ownership belonged to the state and the right of usufruct to the individual. This land was either held as part of the royal-domain or was leased to individuals to exploit it and pay dues or taxes to the state through various conditions of tenure.

3) Waqf lands: "Land dedicated to God" or land held in perpetuity with the income devoted to the upkeep of a charity or the family of the constituter of the Waqf. However, in Islam only Mulk land and not Miri land could be transferred into Waqf land.

4) Mawat lands: "Dead land" or unoccupied land which has not been left for public use. This part includes land lying outside the confines of villages and cultivated areas. According to the Islamic doctrine any Muslim has access to Mawat land if he reclaims it.

5) Matrukah lands: "Abandoned land" derived from Mulk, Miri, or Mawat land and was reserved for public purposes.

In summary, the code replaced the communal system of ownership by private and state holdings. Further, the communal land of a village was not fully granted to all the inhabitant in spite of Article 8 of the code:

"A town cannot be granted in its entirety to all of the inhabitants, not to one or two persons among them...separate pieces are granted to each inhabitant and a title deed is given to each showing his right of possession"

(Sluglett in Khalidi: 413)

Traditionally, the town was owned collectively and access to agricultural land was restricted to the inhabitants of the village. Virtually, these lands could never be sold or leased to outsiders and, therefore, feudal and rich peasants could not acquire them. The fact that the article did not allow land to be granted to all peasants in the same village opened the door to local authorities, feudal, and established families from outside to benefit from the process of privatization. From the point of view of the Ottoman state the code was seen as a revenue-raising device, further it gave rights to peasants to hold land titles in their villages so as to restrain them from migration and to encourage agricultural exploitation for taxation.

Thus, large tracts of land passed into private hands not necessarily the poor. Two shortcomings of the code can be traced in this sense. (a) In times of falling agricultural prices, the poor peasant, who could not increase his production and thereby his revenues because of the lack of means and high tax rates, was forced to resort to moneylenders or rich merchants of Beirut to pay taxes. (b) The high interests charged on the peasant made him gradually economically and politically dependent on his creditor who could take over the peasant's title at a later stage. As a result, the Ottoman's strategies to give social stability to the poor by granting land titles soon collapsed. The severe economic conditions, which prevailed during the second half of the 19th century, forced these poor to give up their titles to a rising bourgeoisie. This process is neatly described by Baer (1982: 94-100):

"Merchants and money lenders gradually made themselves masters of newly emerging commercial activities of the peasants and became owners of their land. One of the reasons for this process was the fact that impoverished peasants could not leave their village to

seek a living in town because by 1860 industrial production was sharply declining and the peasant was forced to hang on to his farm, thus falling a prey to the usurers."

In broad outline, the principal changes which occurred to the structure of land tenure during this period are summarized by Charles Issawi: "the communal or tribal forms of land tenure that prevailed in most of the regions were slowly replaced by private ownership and subsistence farming gave way to production for the market" (1982:4). In Lebanon, two form of tenure developed as a result of the 1858 land code. One was absentee landlordism, where properties were cultivated by peasants whose ancestors used to hold usufructuary rights it, due to the privatization of Mushaa and the other was the introduction of the land registry which facilitated land transactions and, therefore allowed small title holders to sell their properties to outsiders of the community.

#### 1.4 Lebanon after the 1862 Protocol

The application of the 1858 land code was not enough to stop the continuing strife in Lebanon, between the Druze and the Maronites and between the poor and their lords since 1821. Pressure from France and Britain forced the Ottoman state to undertake major reforms to rehabilitate the political system while particularly preserving the rights of the Maronites. These political reforms made Lebanon an autonomous province in the Ottoman Empire and "brought equality of all sects and groups of people before the law" (Baaklini, 1976: 44). The head of the new province, who formerly was always a Muslim, became a Christian Ottoman assisted by an elected council (Central Administrative Council, or CAC) the twelve delegates of which represented the various sects and ethnic groups of Lebanon. Each village would choose a leader who in turn elected the CAC members in accordance with a sectarian distribution<sup>1</sup>. The creation of this institution has institutionalized the conflict

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<sup>1</sup> The CAC is constituted of: 4 Maronites, 2 Greek Orthodox, 1 Greek Catholic, 1 Sunni, 1 Shiite, and 3 Druzes.

in Lebanon between the various religious communities and permitted the waning feudal system to reestablish itself through new forms of governance.

"The CAC was entrusted with the assessment, distribution, and control of taxes...was empowered to administer government properties and the revenues derived from them. Finally, the CAC was entrusted with the supervision of State land."

(Baaklini, 1976:51).

Through the work of the CAC the aristocracy of Lebanon was protected from liquidation. Gradually this aristocracy turned its attention to commerce, trade, silk industry, and education as a means to preserve its economic lead and its power. By the end of the 19th century the Lebanese aristocracy (ex-feudal) rehabilitated itself and continued to play an active political role and, therefore, influence legislations to serve their interests based upon new economic sources.

To balance between maintaining the old aristocracy and serving the poor, the CAC created a complete cadastre<sup>1</sup> for all the Lebanon to determine land titles and settle the conflict over the peasant-confiscated lands by moneylenders. While Mulk properties were presumably registered adequately in the cadastre in some form or another, Miri is much less a positive description of the status than a blanket term to cover lands on which tax is due, and which are not defined as Mulk, Waqf, or Miri. This process allowed the rising bourgeoisie and new aristocracy to infiltrate the rural land market and perhaps reacquire properties they lost during the revolt. As pylons of the province's economy, the new elites used power and influence over the new institutions to alienate properties granted to the poor by the cadastre. The CAC condoned the elites' practices as long as their contribution to the economy was rendering Lebanon independent of the Empire.

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<sup>1</sup>The land cadastre completed in the latter part of the nineteenth century was to remain the basis of land title until the mid-twentieth century when the government decided to reconfirm land title by undertaking a new land cadastre. In the new survey, claims for land title remained, nonetheless, the records worked out by the CAC (Baaklini, 1976: 50).

To compensate the poor, the CAC provided long term land leases (99 years) for Miri land. As land became scarce the province authorities were skeptical in issuing leases at low rates. Further, "The scarcity of cultivable lands made law courts limit leases to seven terms each corresponding to three years" (Rafeq, cited in Khalidi; 1984: 380). Rich peasants, elites, and landless poor started to compete over leases by paying key money to local administrators, thus making the competition unfair for the poor, who theoretically were given access to these lands as a means to help them obtain a form of social stability and overcome the economic pressure in the Empire.

In summary, the CAC attempted to institutionalize the Lebanese political complexities and create governmental apparatuses to administrate the country as the Ottoman sovereignty started to enter its twilight. Their attempts succeeded on the political level but collapsed on the social side. They compromised between political stability and economic independence on one side and the rights of the poor to public land on the other. The introduction of institutional organizations administered by elites and the aristocracy permitted these groups to manipulate the CAC's legislation to maximize their benefits. As the agricultural economy was yielding lower revenues on the macro level by the turn of the century, the landless peasants, lacking all forms of social stability as well as access to land, migrated to urban centers to seek jobs in the industrial sector controlled by their former feudal rulers.

As mentioned earlier, merchants and money lenders became de-facto landed elites and possessed large domains in the suburban and rural areas. "The dominant families were becoming functionally independent lords running estate properties in which they have amounted to a virtual monopoly over both land and labor" (Khalidi, 1984: 415).

### 1.5 Final remarks

The Ottoman, with good intentions, granted each inhabitant of a village part of the collective land controlled by his community. The process, which forced individuals to claim rights over lands which were already theirs, had two goals: (a) It tried to sustain the poor's living conditions by giving them land on an individual basis. (b) The Ottoman wanted to restrain the poor from migration and, therefore, secure taxes from the new category of landowner peasants. This process, in my perspective, failed for two reasons.

First, theoretically the poor were given titles but were also overloaded with obligations on their properties. These properties became soon a burden to the poor in the absence of a support system from the state, which relied on the existing feudal hierarchy to administer the country. Eventually, it resulted in the transfer of these properties to individuals who could overcome regulations by using position, power, and money.

Second, the state interest in securing revenues regardless of the source made possible the acquisition of the poor's properties by the rich who could either cooperate or shoulder the obligations imposed on agricultural properties.

Finally, granting titles to the poor without providing a cohesive system of support created more distortion in the social hierarchy as has been the case during the implementation of the 1858 Ottoman land code. Due to this code, rich peasants and absentee landlords expanded their wealth and control over lands which they, previously, had no access to. The analysis of the Ottoman period helps us understand the nature of land relations in the Lebanese context. It, further, provides future insights on the implications generated when the state grants land to illegitimate settlers without the provision of a comprehensive support system, which can help them respond to the obligations associated with land titles.

## CHAPTER II THE FRENCH MANDATE; FROM 1919 TO 1943

### 2.1 Greater Lebanon and the new political order

After the withdrawal of the Ottoman army in 1919, the Central Administrative Council administered Lebanon during the transitional period between Ottoman and French rules. After establishing the Mandate the same year, the Lebanese were divided into three groups with regard to the future of the country. One, supported by Muslims and some Greek Orthodox, advocated an Arab state. The second called for the establishment of Greater Syria, which includes Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria, and was advocated by secular intellectual elements. The third group included the Christian Maronites and the old leadership of the province of Lebanon who envisioned an independent Lebanon including not only the area occupied by the Province, but also, the coastal strips in the North and South as well as the Beqaa valley in the East. The French terminated the role of the CAC because some of its members became sympathetic for establishing Greater Syria and replaced it with an advisory council to assist the French governor understanding the complexities of the society (Baaklini, 1976: Ch.1-2, passim).

As representatives of the developed world and to avoid socio-political problems generated by Ottoman practices, the French decided to manage Lebanon through the establishment of secular institutions, the first being the Advisory Council, in order to dissipate the sectarian and tribal affiliation of the people. This council acted as the sole representative of the Lebanese people until the amendment of the 1926 constitution.

"The 1926 Constitution consisted of one hundred and two articles under six major headings. The first heading contained the basic definition of the state. This section was divided into two parts, the state and its duties, and the citizens' rights and duties...this part of the constitution was a subject of bitter controversy..."

( Baaklini, 1976:62)

The adoption of this constitution created a state which coincided with the visions of the old leadership and the Maronites who in return could benefit from a whole corps of administrators and statesmen, who represented the aristocracy and the old leadership of the province and were trained by the CAC to manage a future independent country. Although these administrators were trained to manage the Lebanese complexities under a semi secular system, they did not enlarge their responsibilities towards new ethnicities associated with the Greater Lebanon. On the contrary, they were still operating under the narrow scope of tribe and religious affiliation, which restricted their interests to the area covered by the previous province.

In summary, I can say that the French had two obstacles before building the state: (a) One was the bias of the traditional leadership and the new aristocracy towards specific regions and classes, which threatened the integrity of the political stability and predicted future civil strife. (b) The second was the failure of Ottoman policies in granting land to the poor without a support system to help them maintain this ownership. To overcome these obstacles, the French introduced secular institutions to provide social stability for the poor on the basis of equity and justice upon all sects and groups.

## 2.2 The French administrative reforms<sup>1</sup>

The French started to reform the political structure by dividing Lebanon into five administrative regions [Beirut, Mount Lebanon, the South, the North, and the Beqaa]. In Beirut, they exchanged the Advisory Council with a Chamber of Representatives<sup>2</sup> directly elected by the people. The representatives elected the President who in return appointed the Prime Minister. The latter selected the members of the central government on the basis of

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<sup>1</sup> The information in this section are derived from interviews with Planners and politicians in Beirut.

<sup>2</sup> The representatives belonged to all sects and groups. The Chamber was constituted of religious compartments which were distributed according to the size of the communities.

their religious affiliation and political background, thus using the old leadership and aristocracy of each sect to participate in the political arena and manage the state. In each district the central government directly appointed a governor who supervised a district council elected by local mayors. This council neither had a legislative power nor the means to undertake regional development without the consensus and the financial assistance of the central administration. On the micro level the French formed municipalities to every 2000 residents and transferred the control of public lands, which were located within their cadastral limits, to their control. The municipal system aimed at providing the poor better living conditions, by offering public support and access to municipal land, without granting titles deeds to prevent the poor, in future, from selling these lands under economic pressure.

While all land was institutionalized, the application of the municipal system varied from one region to another. For instance, in some rural areas the municipality encompassed many villages (between 4 and 15) where inhabitants did not have similar political opinions or religious affiliations. Therefore, the French avoided the dominance of one community over the others by distributing the seats of the municipal council equally among the various groups. However, the mayor still belonged to the largest community. The members of the council used position and access to resources to benefit the key persons of their community and to insure their reelection. The poor, unorganized and unrepresented, became independent of the political system, thus losing the support system perceived by the French. In other rural areas, the municipal council was monopolized by a tribe or a large family, which restricted access to land and resources to its members or faithful followers. In this situation, the municipality protected the interests of that family vis-a-vis the district governor who condoned their dominance in return for their support. This family based municipality took in charge the establishment of order and political stability within their

cadastral limits. However, it has been reported that troubled relations between the district governor and rural municipalities had resulted in the privatization of public land by the municipal council as a sign of protest against the governor.

In urban cosmopolitan societies, the municipalities offered the opportunity to enter the political arena, thus creating a sense of competition among mayoral candidates, which made the role of the municipality more politically oriented than a regulator of supporting systems for the urban poor. Thus, the inhabitants, for their part, considered that the collective lands, which were transferred to public and private properties by the Ottoman land code, were returned to the community belongings. Therefore, in many villages the municipality was not considered as a governmental body. The elites, on the other side, relied on a rising professional class to carry-out the state's needs and goals for urban development based upon recent technologies.

In broad outline, the municipal system affected land tenure in two ways. First, the municipal council, as a governmental body, owned state lands registered under the 1858 land code. Unfortunately, the structure of the municipal system ended up serving selected features of the community and neglected the poor's rights to use these lands. Second, the responsibility of collecting taxes was transferred from outsider tax bidders to municipal councils. However, the cancellation of agricultural and property taxes, which were considered as sources of injustice, obliged the municipalities to depend on other sources of revenues; namely, by imposing additional charges on infrastructure, services, and construction permits and by leasing municipal land for agricultural, commercial, or industrial use.

In Mount-Lebanon and around Beirut, part of the state land was already leased since the Ottoman period. The transfer of ownership motivated the municipalities to update

the term of the leases through imposing higher rates and reducing the terms from 99 years to a yearly basis. These innovations enabled the municipalities to increase their revenues on a yearly basis, to conform with the current monetary system, and to provide equal chances to the poor to access land. The lessees rejected the modification on lease terms for two reasons. (1) The intentions of the municipal council towards serving the poor were untrue. They intended to increase their power and control by leasing these lands to supporters. (2) The change of the lease terms brought to an end their rights to access public land, especially that these rights had been originally offered by the CAC to compensate their loss of titles deeds derived from collective properties. The municipalities referred to law courts to resolve the conflict. However, they were ordered by the central authorities to confine to their role in helping the poor and not gentrifying public lands. Hence, the municipalities released two leases; one for the old tenants similar to the original lease, and the other an updated version to new tenants. However, one clause was added to the original form in which the lease is terminated after the death of the lessee, nevertheless, his family could lease the land, but only under the new regulations.

### 2.3 French attempts to rationalize planning

In the early thirties, the French realized that administrative reforms are not sufficient to implement the aspired support system for the poor. The weakness of annual taxes on farm products and on land necessitated the creation of an alternative source for public revenues. Therefore, they sought to rationalize planning by defining land uses and forcing development into more dynamic directions. To implement its strategies for development the Mandate authorities conducted a new cadastral and population surveys in 1932. The intent was to regularize the land market, update the 1858 land register, and prepare the required data to design a master plan, which would organize the present development of Beirut and forecast its future growth. The plan was proposed by Mr. Danger, a French planner:

"The Danger Plan prepared in 1932 was based on geographic, climatic, geological, and population studies of Municipal Beirut. The broad lines of the plan embraced major improvements to three main traffic arteries, the Tripoli, Damascus and Saida roads, and featured several proposed new roads and by-passes. Significantly, Mr Danger, 36 years ago, stressed the necessity to deal with Beirut and its surrounding communities as one unit. His recommendations concerned the protection of high areas, measures to be taken against drifting sand, the development of public gardens, the building of sanitary sewers, the organization of a refuse collection and disposal system, and a slum clearance program."

(Comprehensive Plan Studies For The City of Beirut, 1968: 5)

Implicitly, the plan motivated Beirut's authorities to think of the periphery as a future unit of the city, thus encouraging Beirut and Mount Lebanon authorities to mitigate and resolve conflict over municipal lands before further complexities were created. Mr. Danger classified the periphery of East Beirut as high density zone, mainly due to the presence of Armenian refugee camps and slums of poor peasants who settled in Beirut to work in the industrial sector. Along the Western littoral he suggested the development of luxurious resorts for high income groups to generate high revenues and, therefore, subsidize both the upgrading of infrastructure and slums clearance programs of East Beirut. The cadastre revealed large tracts of vacant lands along the periphery and without inheritors, which constituted a problem to Mr Danger who proposed to use them for public benefit. The French governor, however, seized the opportunity to win the support of religious institutions by distributing these properties equally among them. Such a policy has not only reinforced the position of religious institutions over municipalities and public authorities, but also introduced them into the land market<sup>1</sup>.

Unfortunately, landed elites and traditional leaders manipulated the French survey to rationalize land for their personal benefits. Interviews with municipal heads revealed that areas which did not have a clear tenure status and were neither claimed by the municipality,

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<sup>1</sup> Information obtained during an interview with Dr. El-Jouzou, Mufti of Mount Lebanon district.

nor the residents or the Awqaf were registered as private holdings and therefore taken out of the market for purpose of future speculation. Further, the intervention of the Governor in distributing land rendered the Master Plan worthless prior to its implementation. The consequences of the land survey had worsened the land situation as did the administrative reforms (i.e. creation of municipalities). This situation was best described by Michael Gilsenan<sup>1</sup>:

"When the French instituted a Cadastral survey in order to rationalize land ownership (from their point of view), regulate private property in land, and aid in the creation of an independent landholding peasantry as the motor of agricultural change and progress it was actually the lords who benefited. Collective holdings and rights were indeed fragmented, and often acquired by the Beys..."

#### 2.4 Failure of the French reforms

The creation of the greater Lebanon expanded the system of domination of elitist classes in ways that were in direct contradiction to French ideas of necessity of radical changes in land tenure and agriculture. This by definition entailed important political developments. The elites possessed controlling access to the apparatuses of the new Lebanese state. The substitution of the CAC by an elected Chamber of Representatives led to the emergence of new leaders who confined their loyalty to religion and sect rather than the state as a nation.

The birth of this "modern" state called for the emergence of a bureaucracy. The alliance between the rising elite and the landed elites made enormous demands on the real-estate economy. The elites extended their land holding beyond their local areas of influence, which increased their political control but failed to generate the necessary revenues. Even when development took place, it was used as an instrument of political control. The control of land and labor was reinforced in new ways. The landlords were able to use

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<sup>1</sup> Gilsenan Michael, Land and Labor in north Lebanon, in Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle-East, AUB press, pp.459.

access to the state to restrict basic services in transport, communications, electricity, education, health and water. These became "favours" personally and arbitrarily awarded through the increasingly elaborate networks of patron client relationships. Through this system, the elites succeeded in operating within the full complexities of both the modern state and traditional forms of domination. The inability of the peasantry to reclaim agricultural land was caused by the low revenues the agricultural sector yielded as the economy was shifting towards tourism and services (Baaklini, 1976: ch.3-4, passim and Barakat, 1977: ch.6-8, passim).

## 2.5 Conclusive remarks

As described earlier, the French administrative reforms could not overcome the political rivalries and the sectarian bias of the officials and leaders within Greater Lebanon, thus widening the disparities between the poor and the state. Access to land by the poor was constrained by many factors: (1) The availability of capital to cover front end expenditures for leasing municipal lands. (2) The political and religious affiliation of the individual in question. Consequently, the French incentives to bring reforms in land tenure have collapsed for several reasons:

First, the majority of municipalities were headed by established families which enabled them to monopolize the use of public lands for political and financial interests

Second, the government embarked in large urbanization and modernization projects in the capital, which required massive unskilled and low wage labor. Meanwhile, the agricultural sector was yielding lower and lower revenues which forced many peasants to terminate their leases and migrate towards Beirut seeking better living conditions. Consequently, the French strategies to establish a support system for peasants, which they were advocating instead of granting land titles, collapsed.

Third, the failure of the French to dissipate the political and religious conflicts within the new institutions resulted in a system in which traditional leaders and technocrats competed over power and resources and turned a deaf ear to the poor's rights for access to land. On the long run the French strategies proved to alienate land access and resources to the traditional elements of the former feudal system.

Fourth, on the macro level the new institutions relied extensively on the politicians and intellectuals who transferred their contradictions and rivalries from the provincial level to the state level, thus, creating disparities not only between the poor and the state but also between the different regions.

Fifth, the overlap between the municipal system of land control and the CAC leases generated conflicts between original tenants and the municipality. More importantly, this conflict caused the tenants to question the validity of new leases if the system was to change in the future (i.e.; after independence). For instance, municipal councils around Beirut considered the end of the Ottoman rule a termination of the lease term and, therefore, sold municipal properties to influential leaders. Subsequently, many tenants became illegals and considered by the law as invaders of private properties.

Sixth, the central government was based upon religious compartments. Government officials did not scrutinize the national responsibilities they had to carry out. On the contrary, they operated within the narrow scope of tribe and religion. The implication of officials' attitude was clear in the case of the Ouzai corridor<sup>1</sup>. The Christian dominated central authority was uninterested in resolving the dispute, which generated due to the change of lease terms, over property rights in the Ouzai corridor, because The area was historically and predominantly a Muslim neighborhood.

Finally, the support system advocated by the French has failed when applied independently from its socio-political context. The Ottoman, who ruled Lebanon for five

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<sup>1</sup> The case of the Ouzai corridor will be analyzed in chapter VI.

centuries, succeeded better in understanding the Lebanese complexities. Naively, the French imposed a secular system based upon religious compartments, in order to abolish sectarianism. This and other controversies distinguished the period of the French Mandate and created a sense of skepticism and uncertainty at the lower levels towards the role of urbanization and modernization in providing the poor with social stability and access to land at affordable rates.

## CHAPTER III THE POST INDEPENDENCE ERA: 1943 TO 1974

### 3.1 Political development in modern Lebanon

After independence the French-created Chamber of Representatives became the legislative body of Lebanon, while the President and the Council of Ministers became the executive power. These authorities were forced to find an alternative to the French apparatuses which used to supervise and direct public services. Therefore, they formed a civil service cadre to fulfill the demand for public staffing and supervise the implementation of planning adequately in the five Lebanese districts<sup>1</sup>.

The civil service conditions in the early years of independence period were much affected by the political atmosphere in the country, which was, on the one hand, a victorious feeling of satisfaction for the attainment of national liberation and, on the other, a cautious attitude toward consolidating internal unity among the Lebanese.

In view of these internal conditions, the ruling authorities tried to handle personnel and other administrative functions on personal basis and through a confessional understanding, extending favors and attracting new supporters for the regime, thus, transferring political rivalries and sectarianism to the various domain of the state. Further, the creation of job opportunities in the public sector allowed politicians to exercise influence in the employment process and to undermine concepts of competence and administrative needs.

Until 1959, there was no central personnel department to control and coordinate development. Nepotism in the appointment of civil servants and laxity in the enforcement of

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<sup>1</sup> The information in this chapter about the development of public services have been derived from "The Civil Service Reforms in Lebanon" by Bashir, 1977.

laws and regulations became normal practice. These conditions were expressed in statements by members of the opposition, who accused the existing political regime at that time of turning the state into a private firm<sup>1</sup>. In 1958, the regime of president Cham'oun concentrated on up-dating personnel regulations, introducing the system of examination restricting promotion to the higher grades from within, specifying cadres, and adjusting salaries. These were all significant achievements, but attempts to install machinery which would insure the proper application of laws and regulations and be independent of political influence were unsuccessful. The civil strife of 1958, which marked the end of Cham'oun's term, reflected the level of public frustration from the practice imposed on public institutions.

President Chehab, assuming office in September 22, 1958, thought of trying to divert the attention of the Lebanese from political issues by initiating an ambitious and comprehensive governmental reform program, encompassing administrative, social, and economic endeavors. His motive was to build "State of the Independence". These measures, along with the wide public confidence placed in the new president, undoubtedly helped the country to return to normalcy in a short period of time. He created the Central Committee for administrative reform which conducted its work by dividing itself into seven preparatory committees. Each preparatory committee was in charge of a certain area, and it was entitled to utilize the services of professional persons organized in a task force to help in research and drafting of the legislative decree projects. The task force was theoretically rational and not influenceable by traditional elements of the Lebanese politics. The outcome of that committee predicted a new era where equity and justice for the poor were maintained. Unfortunately, rational planning was constantly opposed by the traditional elites who mobilized the aristocracy and the established elites against income and land

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<sup>1</sup> For an elaborate account of these developments see issues of the daily news-papers An-Nahar, Al-Amal, and Telegraph published during the summer of 1952.

redistribution. The general feeling was that rational planning threatened the integrity of ruling classes in Lebanon.

Parallel to the administrative reorganization movement, the regime of president Chehab launched another attempt in the areas of social and economic planning. A French consultant firm, IRFED<sup>1</sup>, was contracted in 1959 to undertake research for the Lebanese government on social and economic conditions.

Later, it has become a tradition in Lebanon that with the beginning of a new presidential term of office every six years, the administration must undertake a review of governmental operations. This began before the establishment of the Civil Service Board and continued, in different styles, under the subsequent regimes. The administrative reform program, which was launched by president Charles Helou in 1966, centered on eliminating corruption in the administration through taking purgative measures against corruption. The general feeling of dissatisfaction held by the citizens towards the prevailing corruption in the administration, similar sentiment shared also by the newly elected President, helped the new regime to obtain a legislative mandate for carrying out the intended reform program. Unfortunately, the strong alliance between the traditional leadership and the private sector accentuated the degree of corruption inside the executive apparatuses and influenced the legislative decree projects.

On February 16, 1974, the Council of Ministers, influenced by the increasing demands of Muslims for better representation in the types of positions in the public sector, launched a comprehensive transfer program of employees in Grade I. The program was to relax the sectarianism of the individual post and to rotate positions held by Christians with those of Muslims. Reform steps were later halted due to the emergence of serious political

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<sup>1</sup> Institut de Recherches et de Formation en Vue de Developpement.

issues, which finally led to the widespread of the civil war from February 1975 until the writing of this study. Today the major demand of the Muslim communities is the elimination of sectarianism not only from the civil service but also from the entire governmental system. This demand is still, however, opposed by the traditional Maronites leadership and the old aristocracy because this process will disadvantage their position in the decision making since independence. Nevertheless, the unprivileged communities of Lebanon have not only increased tremendously in size but also trained qualified professionals and politicians to better represent them in the future state.

### 3.2 The Lebanese economic policies

Until 1974, Lebanese economic policy<sup>1</sup> had two main and related objectives: (a) To maintain relative financial stability. (b) To support the economic efforts of the private sector and provide it with opportunity to exercise the major influence on the rate and pattern of economic expansion.

The first objective was achieved (at least up to 1971). Lebanon's external economic policies, based on a simple exchange system characterized by the absence of restrictions on current payments, capital transfers, and a flexible exchange rate had, in large measure, helped maintain financial stability and generate a strong balance of payments performance, particularly since the authorities had adhered to cautious fiscal-monetary policies.

The second objective was served by the concentration of authorities largely on the building of the country's infrastructure and by their limiting the growth in the direct participation of the public sector in the national economy. While the role of governmental policy had grown it did not exercise a decisive influence on the rate and pattern of private

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<sup>1</sup> For further information about the Lebanese economic policy refer to "Financial Policy and Economic Growth: The Lebanese Experience". Makdissi, 1979, part I: 30.

domestic expansion. This is not surprising since the public sector did not have well-defined socio-economic goals. Its role in the social field, while existent, appeared to be achieved by ad-hoc actions. Instead of leading, the public sector was led by evolving domestic pressures.

The government's policy decisions towards the private sector were not governed by well-defined criteria, except perhaps for the belief that financial stability was a companion for private initiative and was beneficial for the country as a whole. Judging by actual policies, governmental support for private initiative took two main forms: the building of the country's infrastructure, and the nonhindering of private enterprise except in relatively few areas which were reserved for public sector operation (e.g. public utilities and tobacco marketing). Regulatory mechanisms were enforced in respect of several economic activities (rent control, prices of certain basic foodstuffs, tobacco production, transportation fees, etc.) and direct public participation included irrigation works and other projects. While governmental influence was on the rise, nevertheless private enterprise remained largely free from governmental supervision and direction. Lebanon's postwar economic growth could indeed be mainly attributable to the efforts of the private sector. By comparison to many other developing countries the public sector tended to expand rapidly (not necessarily on account of economic factors) with a surge in the dominance of the governmental policies.

### 3.3 Failure of economic policies

It is observed that Lebanese public sector did never operate within a national policy framework. Thus, economic policies aimed at maintaining relative financial stability and providing the private sector with the opportunity of playing the major role in economic expansion. It was also noted that in the later years of the period under review longer-term

developmental planning became more pronounced (i.e., Six-Year Plan 1972-1977). However, the prevailing state of insecurity in the country prevented the implementation of such plans. Unfortunately, the economic assumptions were too optimistic for a turbulent environment.

The major failures<sup>1</sup> of Lebanon's economic policy were much more manifested by the absence of important socio-economic objectives which should have been sought than by the record of achievement in quantitative terms, though shortcomings were also noted here. To have avoided these failures would, of course, have demanded a radical change in the attitudes and behaviors of the national authorities. Such a change would, in turn, have implied an official willingness and ability to think in terms of policy coordination (i.e., in terms of drawing up national targets - both external and internal) and the elaboration of well-defined and consistent means to attain them.

### 3.4 Modern planning attempts

Returning back from the 1970's to the 1940's: in the mid forties, the authorities realized the need to organize the district of Beirut. The update of the Danger Plan was carried out by Mr. Ecochard<sup>2</sup> in 1944.

"The plan was based on exhaustive studies embracing Greater Beirut from Nahr el Maout to Ouzai. The studies included all utilities and were based on population statistics and estimated suburban expansion. Details of the proposed road network were also included. Treating Beirut as part of a region provided a certain degree of comprehensive planning. Popular housing, and extensions of the industrial area were proposed. A zoning law divided the city into 12 areas, commercial, industrial and residential sections of different densities".

(Comprehensive Plan Studies For The City of Beirut, 1968: 5)

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. Chapter: 6-8, passim.

<sup>2</sup> French planner hired in the early forties to organize Beirut. His plan is referred to as "Plan Ecochard".

According to his plan, Ecochard proposed the allocation of Beirut International Airport and the creation of a new town along the Western littoral of Beirut. The proposed road network linking Beirut to its periphery increased speculation on land since all properties would become accessible by the modern modes of transportation. Ecochard's propositions affected to a great extent the use of the fringe. Elite classes, with access to state intentions for development, had a better understanding of the Plan repercussions than low income groups and slum dwellers in the East part of Beirut. A high official of the National Planning Board<sup>1</sup>, who was a fresh graduate at this period, mentioned that for a decade the elites attempted unsuccessfully to influence decision makers to enact repressive zoning regulations. These regulations were meant to force residents with long term leases to leave and owners of properties below the standard size to sell. Further, they included high fees on construction permits, low Floor Area Ratio (F.A.R.) and allowable built up area, and the use of specific finishing to create a certain character for the area.

In 1950 the state benefited enough from the economic prosperity of the country to accumulate the required capital to undertake urban development projects in the metropolitan area. Yet, the Ecochard plan needed updating to conform with the rapid growth of the city. Egli, another French planner, presented a report based on the recommendations of Ecochard.

"The Egli Report prepared in 1950 was an appraisal and proposed revision of the Ecochard Plan, with special reference to previous road proposals of Ecochard. It adopted most of the main roads proposed by Ecochard but moved the commercial ring southwards. A new zoning law dividing the city into 5 areas was proposed. This report formed the basis for further studies which resulted in the General Master Plan - now in application".

(Comprehensive Plan Studies For The City of Beirut, 1968: 5)

Egli zoned the Western littoral for luxurious residential areas bounded by large public complexes [Sporting City, Golf Club, and the airport]. The similarity between Egli's

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<sup>1</sup> The official insisted on keeping his name anonymous for administrative purposes.

and Ecochard's recommendations enforced the convictions of the elites, who could foresee the effects of such a plan, towards the future of Beirut. In the mid fifties the state adopted the General Master Plan which was prepared by a special committee studying earlier planning proposals:

"The General Master Plan examined earlier schemes of the «Plan Directeur» and develop a unified plan of public improvements within the limited financial capabilities of the Municipality. The resulting recommendations were confined to major roads and their connections to Beirut's approaches. Detailed planning proposals were omitted as two important elements of a Master Plan: provision of open spaces and the siting of public buildings... In 1954, a building and zoning code was prepared; and after discussion and modification, was adopted..."

(Comprehensive Plan Studies For The City of Beirut, 1968: 5)

The thriving Lebanese economy supported by a strong private sector, flow of foreign capital, and confidence in the monetary system encouraged the state in embarking into extensive urban development projects in and around Beirut. By the late fifties the airport and the Sporting City were constructed and luxurious residential quarters appeared along the airport boulevard (see map). The rising importance of West Beirut and its littoral increased the competition over land. The building boom encouraged speculation through which the elites, the poor, and the municipalities wanted to share its fruits. In 1963, the IRFED mission published a report concerning the social, economical, and physical aspects of the country. It was an epoch making document for Lebanon and paved the way for the development of the period which followed. The IRFED study revealed that most of the slum dwellers were Muslims, who migrated from unprivileged regions of Lebanon, and that was widening the disparity not only between the rich and the poor but also between the two religious communities

The IRFED report influenced the " Plan Directeur de Beyrouth et de sa Banlieue" which was prepared in 1963 and parts of it ratified in 1964. This plan, prepared by Mr. Ecochard in cooperation with a team of local architects, was based on the recommendations

of the IRFED Mission, namely the suggested zoning and area classification codes. The report urged the authorities to resolve the conflict over the Ouzai area as land invasion and illegal invasions had been intensifying since 1958. The major guidelines of the report were:

"A tremendous amount of work has gone into the preparation of the regional highway network. Provision for through traffic in the region is one of the assets of the plan - a feature which is in harmony with highway planning and design. Broadly, the suburbs of Beirut are divided into main zones: A-1, A-2, B-1, B-2, E-1, E-2, D, and G of which the first is strictly residential the second and third are residential with some light industry and commerce and the last are strictly industrial".

(Comprehensive Plan Studies For The City of Beirut, 1968: 6)

The zoning of Beirut was influenced by the rising need to expend the urban development of the Capital. Further, the plan did not take into account the provision of land for the poor or even the traditional claims over the lands, the current realities, and the ongoing conflicts over land control. These aspects prevented the plan from conforming to reality and therefore led it to fail before being amended. A former general director of state budgeting, Mr. Mohamad-Ali Itani, stated that "the adoption of the zoning regulation characterized the area with illegal developments. The historical events<sup>1</sup>, previously stated, provided the poor with excuses to invade land which zoning classified it for luxurious housing and, therefore, made it valuable". In summary, the Executive Board of Major Projects reported in 1968 that:

" Locating of refugee and workers camps in low lying properties in the city and its suburbs has created major problems of environmental sanitation ad congestion which could have been avoided had land use controls been developed and enforced during the past twenty years. Now it is necessary to provide planning and programing solutions to the existing conditions, particularly housing, at great cost and serious social disruption..."

(Comprehensive Plan Studies For The City of Beirut, 1968: 17)

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<sup>1</sup> These included: privatization of Mushaa land, distribution of land to Waqf authorities, transfer of Miri to municipal control, and the subsequent modifications of lease terms...



As stated, the report referred the settlement formation to the lack of rational planning and the enforcement of the law. The report suggested the creation of public housing as a means to halt the settlement expansion and, therefore, disregarded the effects of land tenure in initiating the Ouzai settlements. When I asked the general director of the national planning board, Mr. Mohamad Fawaz, about the role of planning authorities in resolving land conflict, he stated that "The nature of our work is actually limited to the design and upgrading of legal environments".

### 3.5 Effect of social pluralism, economic policies, and planning on slum formation

The social class structure in Lebanon, as indicated earlier in this study, is pyramidal in that the great majority of the Lebanese are poor, a small portion are middle class, and very few are ultra-rich. The government-sponsored study conducted by the IRFED Mission revealed that 4% of the Lebanese received about one-third of the total national income in 1960. Since then constant reference has been made to the "4 percent class" ruling Lebanon and monopolizing its wealth. In spite of the great wealth that has been pouring into Lebanon, rendering it the finance center of the area, prosperity has continued to be confined to some areas and groups, and the gap between the rich and the poor has continued to widen and deepen. Mount Lebanon and some neighborhoods in Beirut had been growing prosperous at a much more rapid pace than the South, the North, and the Beqaa' districts.

Two poverty belts (see map of misery belts) inhabited predominantly by Muslims emerged in Lebanon and bear evidence of the disproportion of wealth and rewards. One belt, which contained poor migrants from the South, the Beqaa', and the North, extended along the southern periphery and surrounded the prosperous Mount Lebanon. The disparities are many, including the availability of schools, roads, hospitals, and other facilities. The other belt has surrounded Beirut, for its suburbs were converted into over

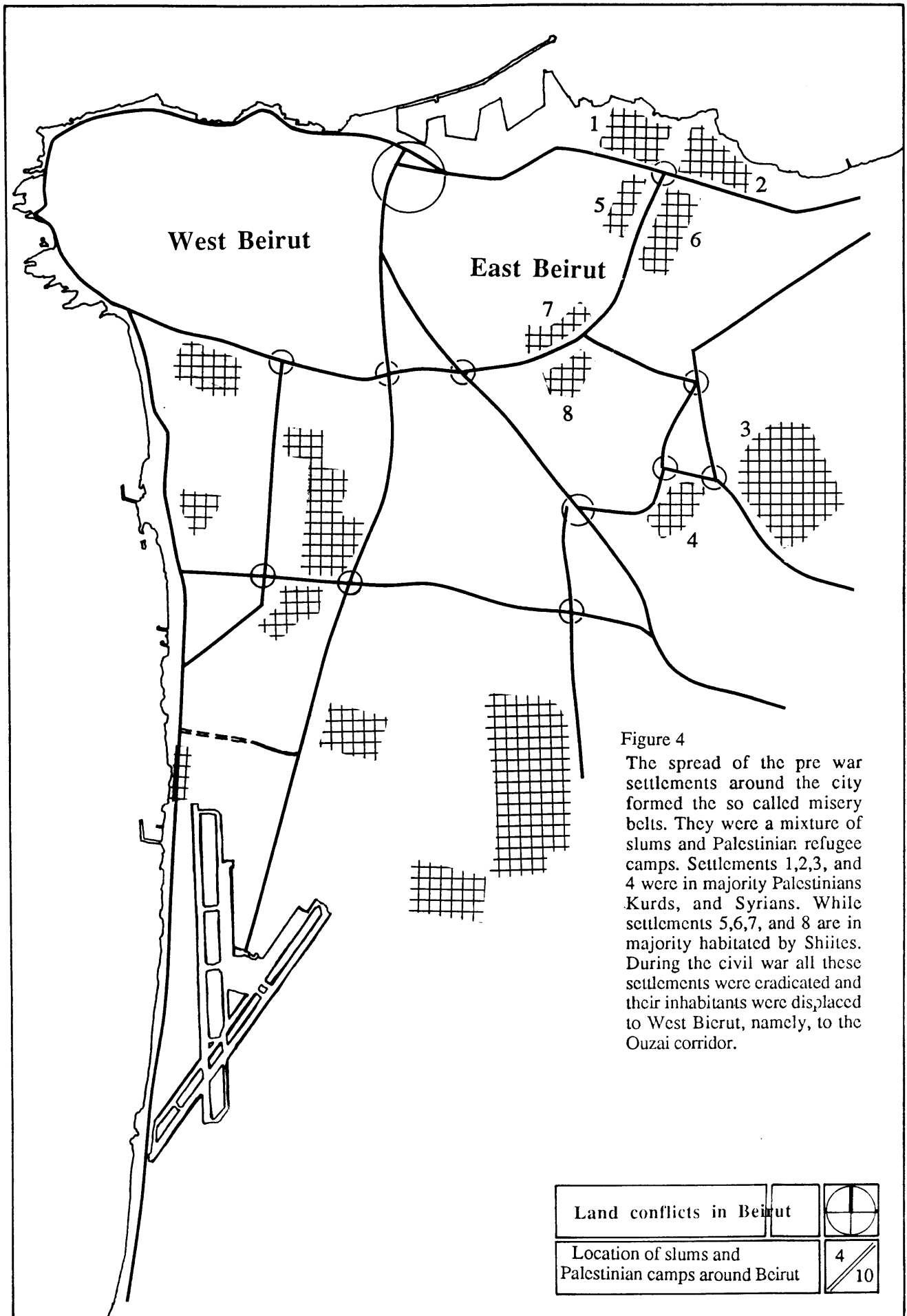




Figure 4

The spread of the pre war settlements around the city formed the so called misery belts. They were a mixture of slums and Palestinian refugee camps. Settlements 1,2,3, and 4 were in majority Palestinians, Kurds, and Syrians. While settlements 5,6,7, and 8 are in majority inhabited by Shiites. During the civil war all these settlements were eradicated and their inhabitants were displaced to West Beirut, namely, to the Ouzai corridor.

Land conflicts in Beirut	
Location of slums and Palestinian camps around Beirut	 4 / 10

crowded and poverty-stricken slum areas. A large number of young families have been moving from villages into these neighborhoods. After, such areas as Ghobeiry, Chiah, and an-Naba became overcrowded; quite often one single room would be inhabited by ten persons, and swarms of children filled the narrow dirty streets. Furthermore, these uprooted Lebanese communities found themselves close to or intermingling with the Palestinian refugees and other disinherited and destitute groups. The disinherited found themselves sharing the same destiny. The socio-economic disparities coincided with religious affiliations. The fact that the bulk of the destitute were Muslims contributed to further aggravation of religious differences and polarization of the two communities. Further aggravation was caused by increasing inflation which hit the lower classes.

The IRFED report refers to the appalling low levels of existence in many of the settlements<sup>1</sup> around Beirut, a level the implications of which were to become more obvious in the constant troubles between the poor and the state that marked the 1968 to 1973 period especially.

### 3.6 Summary

In broad outline, the politicians and leaders of the post-independence era were not on the level of managing the state of Lebanon. They turned the state of Lebanon into a private firm, spread corruption and injustice, and manipulated public policies to the benefit of the private sector. Unsuccessfully, the state attempted to reform its institutions which were created by the French and blindly adopted by the successive administrations. By the end of this era we realize that Urban land policies were a minor issue in this whole scenery of administrative and planning reforms.

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<sup>1</sup> These areas are also called as the Misery Belt of the capital. They consist of refugee camps, squatter settlements, and slums.

The problems generated by public agencies such as nepotism in the civil service, corruption, and elites' subjection of natural resources are not recent in Lebanon. The role of traditional leadership old aristocracy has influenced the building of the nation since the late part of the Ottoman period and, specifically, the creation of the Central Administrative Council.

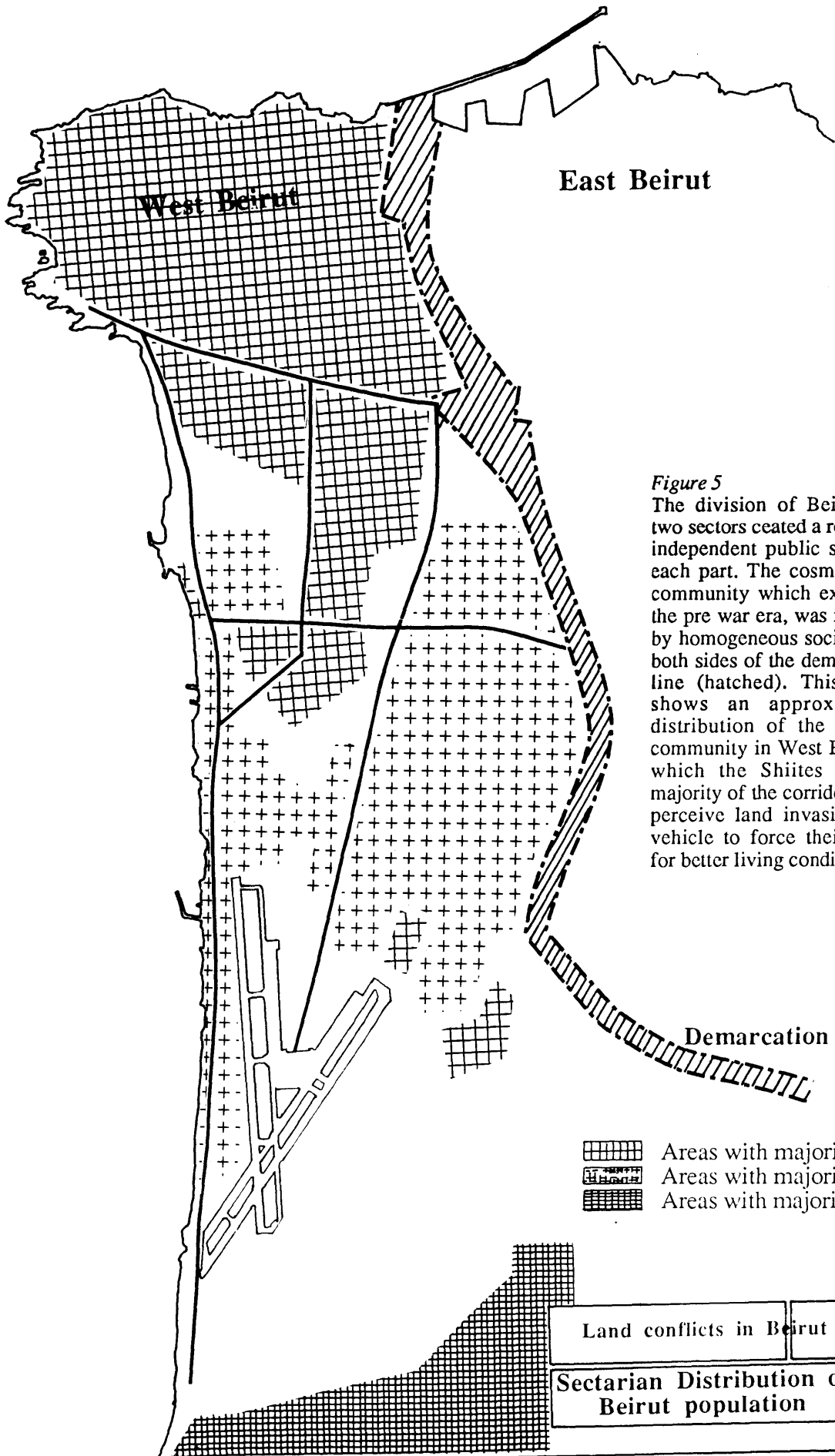
Finally, the failure of public policies and planning schemes to respond to the needs of the poor for better living conditions made them support the opposition of each administration. The development of slums can be perceived as an alternative solution which the poor undertook in the absence of unbiased public policies. This absence made this part of the society foresee land as a vehicle to force their rights for better living conditions.

## CHAPTER IV THE POST 1975 ERA, THE CIVIL WAR

### 4.1 Effects of the war on the public sector

The post 1975 era is marked by the continuing strife between the different communities over the control of decision making in the country. Many factors led to this war, namely, the nepotism prevailing in the public service which expanded the power and control of traditional leaders and old aristocracy over the state legislations, the lack of social stability and formal access to land for the poor, the continuing suzerainty of the Maronites over the state resources, and the growing frustration within the Muslim community towards political representation and allocation of development projects in areas predominantly occupied by Muslims. The war encompasses complexities and contradictions which have been accumulating since the latter part of the Ottoman period.

The war has dramatically affected the economy, prevented legal authorities from imposing the law, displaced communities from across the demarcation lines and redistributed them on the basis of their sectarian affiliation, thus, creating homogeneous societies and political entities within each of the Muslim and Christian communities. As far as the public sector is concerned, its role became limited to maintaining the old and overburdened infrastructure and facilitating small scale administrative services. Tax revenues were reduced to null, which restricted the state capabilities in providing basic support to communities in distress. Hence, many of the poor took advantage of the chaotic situation to acquire land illegally and, therefore, force their rights for better living conditions, rights which has been denied historically by feudal and established landed elites. The case study in the following chapter will illustrate the invasion process and the nature of land conflicts generated by historical claims of the settlers.



*Figure 5*  
 The division of Beirut into two sectors created a relatively independent public sector in each part. The cosmopolitan community which existed in the pre war era, was replaced by homogeneous societies on both sides of the demarcation line (hatched). This figure shows an approximate distribution of the Muslim community in West Beirut in which the Shiites are the majority of the corridor. They perceive land invasion as a vehicle to force their rights for better living conditions.

After 13 years of ongoing rounds of fights between the two sides of the Capital, the public sector was forced to operate under two apparatuses each located in the East and the West of Beirut. This aspect imposed a certain character on this sector. Each community attempted to divert the state resources to its part of the country, which created more distortion in the allocation of resources. For instance, a Shiite tribe leader from Hermel<sup>1</sup>, who lives in the illegal settlements, stated that they never felt the presence of the state since the early sixties except for preventing the cultivation of "hashish". The total absence of the state, since 1975, allowed many tribes to recultivate this plant together with opium. The revenues derived from narcotic cultivations reached 20% of the total GNP by 1988 and is threatening to multiply by ten folds by the end of this decade. Consequently, the tribe leader pointed out that before the war politicians fought against the poor to channel national resources into private interests, while today they are fighting each other over position and power. Subsequently, our agrarian based economy is providing a support system to the community which the state was not able to do during its apogee.

#### 4.2 Economic constraints of the post war era

The attempt to assess the economic impact of this war faces at this juncture certain important constraints, a major one being the nonavailability, as yet, of reliable estimate of the damage which was sustained by the Lebanese economy. However, the war has disrupted many aspects of the urban fabric. The following are the major affected domains<sup>2</sup>:

- (1)- Severe and widespread damage to physical assets and, therefore, to existing capacities of production, (e.g., damage to farms, business establishments, public utilities, etc...).
- (2)-Drop in the national income owing to damage of physical capacity, disruption of the transportation network of the domestic and the foreign trade channels, the departure of

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<sup>1</sup> Hermel is a Shiites county west of Beqaa district, its residents and the local tribes have since a long time complained against the absence of the state to urbanize the area.

<sup>2</sup> Samir Makdissi, Financial policy and economic growth, the Lebanese experience, 1979: 125...130.

business firms and capital, and reduced governmental and private expenditures.

(3)- Drop in the level of employment which, however, did not imply a rise in the level in domestic unemployment. That is, unemployment caused by the damage of the production capacity, the disruption or closure of businesses and the reduced stream of expenditure should be balanced by the exodus of the labor force from Lebanon (basically non-skilled or semi-skilled non-Lebanese labor and both Lebanese and non-Lebanese skilled labor and professionals) and rising employment in the various military-political organizations. As a result to the exodus, the remittances of the Shiites expatriates will serve funding the development of illegal settlements.

(4)- Adverse intangibles, in particular: loss of confidence on the part of the private sector, loss of human resources and change of distribution (at least temporarily) of asset holdings as a result of physical destruction and/or pillage.

(5)-Adverse financial development manifested in increased inflationary pressures, temporary closure of banks and the narrowing of the banking sector, the narrowing of the exchange market and its partial fragmentation as a result of the de-facto partitioning on the country, the emergence of entangled debt problems and creditor-debtor relationships including the disruption of credit facilities, and the reduction of the central bank activity to a minimum level.

(6)-The rupture of the administrative setup. It is noteworthy that the Ministry of Finance continued to make payments (with some delay) to governmental employees and to members of the Lebanese armed forces, though the army has split up. In practice ministries and public bodies ceased to function as unified organs. They were partly replaced by local bodies which made of certain existing governmental apparatus and whenever possible, of governmental personnel. In the West sector, the governmental apparatus was apparently Islamicly oriented, as was the case with Christians in the Eastern side. It facilitated the provision of services to illegal settlements as a compensation to the losses refugees

encountered through forced displacement. This practice was perceived as an informal approval by the government to settlements formation.

(7)- The forced movement of groups of people from their traditional districts of residence to other districts in the country as a result of the war. This movement has not only intensified the problem of housing, but also created an additional social problem of immediate socio-political consequences. The first is the illegal acquisition of private and public properties. The displaced groups from East Beirut to its West were more fortunate than vice-versa. The availability of vacant land in the Ouzai corridor helped the to resettle those of the East, while the displaced Christians were unprivileged with their relocation in the East sector as vacant lands were not available in tracts which permit the relocation of large masses.

#### 4.3 The creation of the Council for Development and Reconstruction-CDR<sup>1</sup>:

Two major obstacles were facing the state in the post war era before undertaking development and reconstruction: One is the lack of consensus on fundamental issues and particularly on the national identity of Lebanon (whether it should be linked to the free world or to the Arab League). Second is the loyalty of the Lebanese to their sectarian, kinship, and local communities rather than to the country as a whole.

To overcome these obstacles the state created in 1977 a new governmental body, the CDR<sup>2</sup>, different in structure from regular public institutions. The CDR launched Lebanon's first reconstruction plan which envisaged the expenditure of LL 20 billion over an 8-year period in order to overcome the ravages and destruction resulting from the hostilities of 1975-76. In February 1983, the CDR prepared a new and revised construction

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<sup>1</sup> The information about the CDR are derived from interviews with officials in the council, and a report on "The Reconstruction of Beirut" by the Middle East Economic Consultant, June 1985.

<sup>2</sup>Council for Development and Reconstruction: this council was created in 1977 to undertake major reconstruction and development projects on the national level. Its role was to propose conceptual guidelines for urbanization in order to meet the needs of unprivileged groups in the rural areas.

plan which took account of the additional and considerable damages and destruction due to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon during the summer of 1982. The implementation of this revised plan was put back by the renewed fighting in various parts of Lebanon in the second half of 1983..

On the overall, the reconstruction plan contains a cost analysis for rehabilitating the housing stock. Unfortunately, the provision of new dwellings was tied to the general reconstruction framework, which made impossible the implementation phase without a national "entente", especially that the plan is developed around the CBD. Consequently, the persisting delay in rehabilitating the damaged structures and the provision of new dwellings, or compensation, to displaced groups left the housing market to the private initiatives. After each round of fighting, people reconstructed their residence using private sources.

Its establishment was for the purpose of planning and guiding the future reconstruction and growth of the national economy. This board was expected to influence to a large extent the type and character of Lebanon's development path, addressing itself, as it should, not only to the technical problems of planning but to various socio-economic issues facing the country.

Thus, linking the housing program to the reconstruction plan showed inefficiency in coping with the present demand. Moreover, private initiatives were not taken into consideration to reduce the costs of housing suggested by the plan. Yet, the CDR officials did not propose any policies to lower the real cost of construction through the control of building materials and land prices, nor to adjust building regulation to fit the financial capabilities of the poor.

On the economic level the CDR had to deal with issues related to debtor creditor relationships. How should they be regulated, particularly as concerning outstanding debts during the period of the war? At the government level, what size of current budget can be contemplated with or without foreign aid? Given shortfalls in revenues, to what extent can the authorities resort to deficit financing to cover expenditures?

On the development level the CDR considered new approaches to undertake urban and regional development, upgrade existing infrastructure, and provide resources on an equity basis. It dealt with issues related to the state role. Should the public sector consider joint ventures with the private sector and, if so, in which areas? Is there a need for new financial and other public institutions to support the governmental program? How to improve the availability and terms of foreign aid?

The CDR attempted to upgrade the legal areas of the southern periphery to discourage expatriates from investing in the illegal settlements. Unfortunately, the continuing round of fighting in the country interrupted the CDR programs while remittances from expatriates to their families in illegal settlements were always available despite the high degree of insecurity.

#### 4.4 Final remarks

It is very hard at this stage to assess the long term effects of the war on slum formation. The war has displaced slum dwellers from East Beirut and relocated them in West Beirut.

This aspect earmarked the waning of the leadership control over land. Since this war, public policy has been dramatically affected by the increasing religious segregation between the Lebanese. It is becoming harder and harder for the state to draw policies to fit

all sects and ethnic groups of Lebanon. The future of this country in this perspective is totally unclear. However, it is interesting to research the variable alternatives which provide social stability and support system while maintaining the rights of other groups to accumulate wealth.

In an attempt to create the Council for Development and Reconstruction to play the above stated role, the government did not scrutinize the importance of changing tenure policies instead of rehabilitating the support system of the poor which was intended by the French. Ironically, the war has proven not to affect the ways public policy in being drawn by established leaders. Their perception of equity and justice will always skew these policies to the benefit of one group and, therefore, will always create illegalities.

## CHAPTER V      CASE STUDY: THE OUZAI CORRIDOR

### 6.1 Building the corridor

#### *1.a The period from 1950 to 1969.*

The recent development of the "Ouzai-Khaldeh" corridor can be related to intensive urban development projects undertaken by the state in the fifties. The major centers of the periphery were the only urbanized areas, namely, Chiah, Ghobeiri and Bourj el Brajneh (see map).

The allocation of a sport complex on the municipal limits of Beirut and the golf club in a two miles miles aimed at creating a luxurious and highly serviced residential area between the city and the airport (see map). The pre-existing conditions in the east suburbs, such as a prominent industrial zone and a rapidly expanding refugee settlements made the city perceive the south of Beirut as a new and highly urbanized city. However, the expansion of this area was blocked by the international airport to the south which rendered the area not only speculative but restricted to a certain clientele who could afford the compliance with zoning regulations and building codes.

Dr. Wafaa Charafedine, an architect planner, related the development of the corridor to three major factors: first, the presence of large public facilities in the area such as Beirut International Airport, the Gulf Club, the sports complex, and the Lebanese University complex. Second, government officials made municipal and public land accessible to developers through illegal transfer of ownership. Third, the state use of the term Mushaa (collective) to describe municipal land encouraged residents to acquire land in the corridor. Consequently, the land conflict in Ouzai is not a direct product of displacements, but a

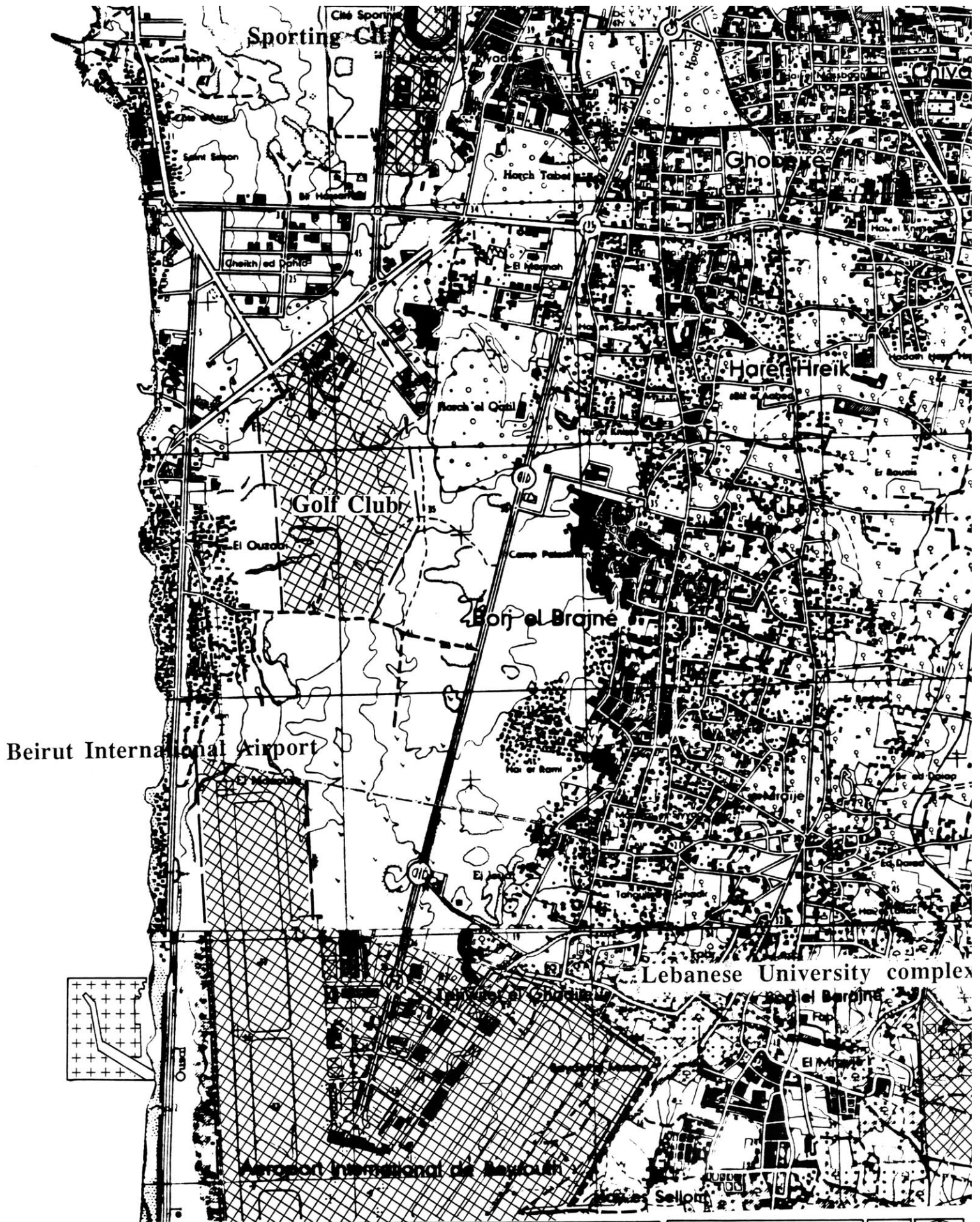


Figure 6  
**Main facilities of the Western Littoral**

Legal complexes
 
 Illegal container sea-port -

Land conflicts in Beirut



combination of state policies towards urban development, corruption, and misuse of terminology.

By the end of the fifties (58,59)<sup>1</sup> and early sixties the Ouzai area witnessed a sudden and unstructured urbanization process. The events of 1958 resulted in the formation of three illegitimate<sup>2</sup> settlements: Ouzai, Ramel, and Hay el Sellom around the northern borders of the airport<sup>3</sup>. During the latter parts of the sixties, these settlements consolidated into permanent structure and were informally provided with services. The state consent on the existence of the settlements aimed at preventing a new social conflict between unprivileged Muslims (not differentiating between Sunni and Shiite) and the government.

*1.b The period from 1970 to 1975*

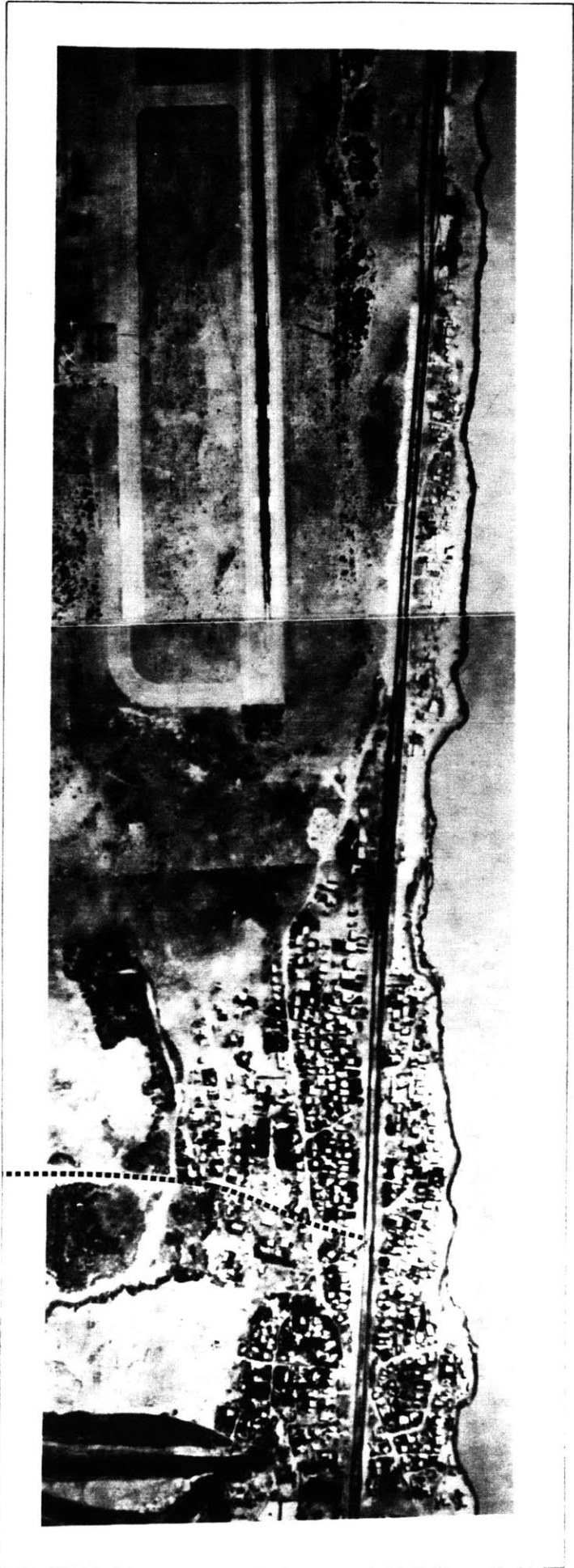
In the seventies, the illegitimate sector began to expand rapidly together with the Palestinian camps in the surroundings. Farid Salhab, a former general director of transportation, states: "In one year the illegitimate sector increased by ten times, from a surveyed and informally consented 64 structures to 640 permanent structures. Corruptive administration, feudal hierarchy, and obsolete exclusive powers have paralyzed the state control over settlements' growth. It is paradoxal to admit that over a year no officials, building inspectors, or police patrols have noticed the massive constructions on the southern gate of the capital".

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<sup>1</sup> In 1958, the country was ravaged by a limited strife between Muslim nationalists and the army. The clashes ended with the presidency of Camille Chamoun. No displacements were reported as a result of the riots, however, new migrants occupied vacant municipal land and consolidated their structures into permanent before the reestablishment of order.

<sup>2</sup> Illegal settlements are defined as a combination of legal ownership of the land and structure noncomplying with governmental rules for development enacted through zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations or building codes. Illegitimate developments are defined as a combination of illegal ownerships of land and illegal structures.

<sup>3</sup> These settlements constitute the nucleus of today's settlements.



*Figure 7*

Aerial photography of the Ouzai corridor by 1962. Houses were scattered over a distance of 650 m. Until 1974 the corridor counted only 640 illegal construction and the roads were improvised by early residents (dotted line represents Ali Nasser street). The pictures shows a sense of self imposed setbacks and frontbacks between the illegal constructions.

The substantial administrative reforms in the early seventies, namely in the civil service, employment, and education introduced new job opportunities for unskilled labor. The increasing tension in South-Lebanon between Israel and the P.L.O. accentuated Beirutward migration, where they sought income stability and social security. Income stability lies in the jobs provided by the airport, university, sports complex, and a prominent industrial sector in the direct environs, while social security stems in a permanent shelter acquired in the southern suburb. Hence, in the mid seventies the area became a magnet for southern migrants as it provided illegally subdivided lots and housing at affordable rates.

The outbreak of the civil war in the late seventies has affected the urban and social fabric of the area. Contrary to former practices which were characterized by illegitimate constructions and land invasions, displaced groups from demarcation lines and East Beirut settled within vacant structures. The settlement process took two aspects. The first is the invasion of luxurious condominiums on the southern littoral by Arab tribes and Kurds who originally were slum dwellers in the East Sector. The second is the overdensification of legal quarters which necessitated illegal additions to existing structures in order to accommodate the displaced masses.

"At every armistice a dynamic reconstruction process takes place in each neighborhood, street, or building. What has been constructed illegally during the war is renovated legally in truce."

(Abdul-Ahad; URBA no.196, July 1983: p.p.64-66)

The state was unable to compensate the losses in the southern suburb thus condoning illegal additions if additional charges are paid. The frequent outburst of hostilities prevented the state assessing the number of illegalities and collecting fees. During the forced absence of authorities, illegal constructions responded to the growing demand for commercial space to substitute for destroyed Central Business District. The religious segregation of urban communities transformed the southern periphery into a homogeneous

Shiite Community. Consequently, Shiite expatriates in Africa and the Arab Gulf were motivated to increase their investments in a thriving informal sector within the southern periphery.

*1.c The period between 1978 and 1982*

In March 11, 1978 a vast military operation undertaken by the Israeli army in the South, displaced 32,000 Shiites families from 14 villages (Orient le Jour, March 20, 1978). The influx ended up with 250,000 of which 72% came directly to Beirut. At the beginning the refugees were scattered in and around West Beirut and were divided into three groups: the first occupied dilapidated structures near the demarcation lines or invaded vacant units in the city, the second stayed temporarily with relatives in the southern suburb until the end of the operations, and the third received tents from social welfare organizations and were temporarily allowed to camp on municipal land in the Ouzai corridor. As the military operation was coming to an end, the Ministry of Interior sponsored organized travels to help the poor families return to their villages, only 3500 families responded to the program. The reburst of hostilities between the two Beiruts cancelled the program and gave way to refugees to remain in the capital.

Due to the tension around the demarcation lines, the refugees were forced to reevacuate and resettle in the Ouzai with their compatriots because the existing housing stock in the city and the suburb could not accommodate the demand for shelter. Thus, illegitimate invasions seemed to be the only alternative in the lack of public support to refugees<sup>1</sup>. However, the refugees refused to describe their relocation as illegitimate. An interview with a 1978 settler revealed the confusion over land tenure in the Area. Hassan

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<sup>1</sup> One should not deny that the state mobilized all available resources to help the refugees. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the hostilities in the capital by June shifted the political attention towards the internal conflict. The permanent settlement of refugees in the corridor was temporarily ignored by the state.

Nehmeh, a 78 years old man, stated:

"In my village municipal land is not different than the old form of Miri and Mushaa. As a matter of fact all villagers use Miri, Mushaa, and Kharaj terminologies to describe communal and municipal land. We have access to these lands on a quota basis, and we consider the municipal council a form of community organization since it is represented by members of the community...the Ouzai corridor encompasses municipal lands which we consider accessible to all member of the Muslim community, namely the Shiites. Further, the municipal representatives are Shiites and they should know that land is accessible to who ever reclaims it".

The refugees' perception of land tenure is confused due to the introduction of the municipal system under the French mandate. As stated earlier, the municipalities around the Beirut area played a different role than the ones in rural areas which restrained the accessibility of the poor to communal land. This perception strengthened my belief that the modifications imposed over the previous land tenure systems had created a confusion over land use and, therefore, generated settlements considered by the authorities as illegitimate and by the settlers as a legal right to access land.

#### *1.d The post 1983 era.*

In 1982, and during the Israeli siege to Beirut, all settlers moved back to the South and by the time they returned a new administration was ruling the country under President Gemayel, a Maronite leader of the extreme right. The new administration embarked on a slum clearance project under the supervision of a Franco-Lebanese team. Their attempts to upgrade the legal slums were rejected by the Shiites military factions because the state was upgrading legal slums to cover its practices in other domains, namely the redevelopment of the corridor without considering the existence of the settlements. An Important Shiites clergyman, stated during a Friday speech, that the Ouzai settlers have legal rights over this land and the state ought not deny it.

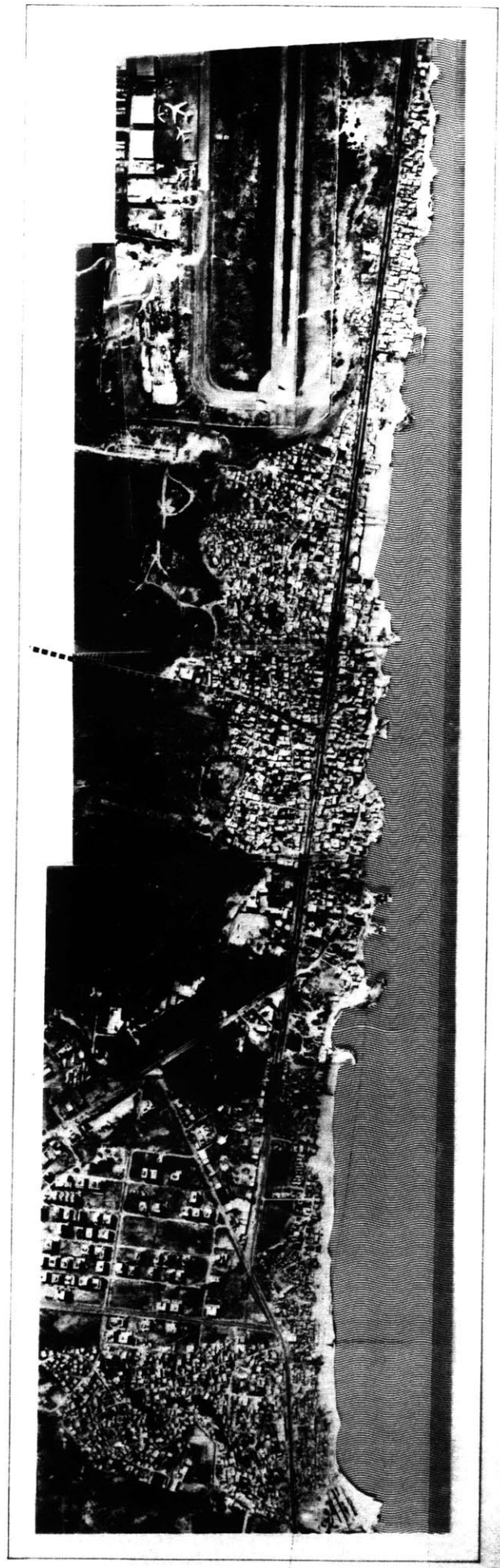


Figure 8

Updated aerial photography of the Ouzai corridor in 1983. The illegal constructions have bordered the runways which forced the authorities to build a concrete fence around the airport. Further, primary and secondary roads have been laid without infrastructure (dotted line shows Ali Nasser street). The Ouzai settlement extends along 2.5 km and contains approximately 10,000 housing units. The sense of order which prevailed before the war have been replaced by overdensified quarters.

The answer to the question, where did these rights come from, was obtained through a series of interviews with settlers like Mr Nehmeh who all expressed their confusion about the land tenure system and the role of the state in providing access to land for the poor. However, this confusion points up the difference between the state's perception of tenure and the settlers' understanding of the tenure system is responsible in creating settlements.

Historically, the Ouzai corridor was transformed, in one decade, to a mix of industrial, commercial, and housing sectors. The structures represent 40% of the built environment in the southern periphery. Over seventy percent of the corridor structures were built during the period 1978-1988. Such a thriving illegitimate sector attracted more low income groups to the area as well as political concern toward incorporating settlements residents Shiites military factions and, therefore, influence the ongoing conflict<sup>1</sup>.

Remittances sent back by migrant workers to their families were mostly invested in commercial activities. Ali Nasser, an illegitimate shop owner states: "We need a secure monthly income to survive this period of uncertainty. Yet, we cannot depend on the state for our basic needs such as hospitalization, social security, jobs and subsidies. Commercial investments guarantee enough revenues to make us independent of any agency". Other settlement residents, who preferred to be kept anonymous, affirmed that "the corridor provided the poor with large tracts of unused land to establish housing and industrial activities. Historically, the poor had access to the land and so do we". Thus, "land was used as a production input and a consumption good" (Harvey, 1982: ch. 11) to deprive the poor from exploiting it.

## 6.2 Consolidation as a response to repressive state practices

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<sup>1</sup> The percentages has been drawn from data provided by Dr. Charafeddine.

Despite the flow of capitals from expatriates, the state has been instrumental indirectly in upgrading and developing the settlements. The government was indirectly subsidizing the residents, through the provision of infrastructure free of charge, by upgrading the Ouzai boulevard. Officials reported that they modernized the boulevard because it is the Southern entrance of Beirut and not because of the illegal settlements. Thus, the state still neglects the presence of the settlements by advocating former proposals of the sixties. Each administration proposed a new Master Plan, the last being released in 1986, which recommended the expansion of the airport over 40% of the Ouzai settlement<sup>1</sup> and, therefore, threatened the integrity of the commercial strip. These practices were not recent. In the previous chapter I analyzed the state's interventions through planning. In this section I will review the law's which prevented the poor from access to land.

In May first 1950 the state passed the first building regulations concerning the corridor. This law required the following:

- 1500 sqm is the minimum plot size (an area which makes most of the plots in noncompliance.
- Only 30% of the plot is buildable.
- The dimensions of the main façade are:  $L \geq 30m$  ,  $H \leq 16m$ .
- Set backs from the both sides are 6m.
- A minimum of 20m is required between the building and the property limits from the back.

A Muslim former Minister stated that the law coincided with former visions concerning the future of the corridor. It, naturally, restrained the poor from constructing their land or selling it individually. The unsellable lots (existing lot averaged between 350 to 700 sqm.) were subdivided illegally and sold during periods of uncertainty to migrants who accepted the risks derived from constructing in the corridor. The process of illegal subdivision and construction intensified with the massive displacements from South Lebanon. In January, 1983 the newly appointed administration attempted to organize the

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<sup>1</sup> Law N° 1107 of 10/26/1983.



slums by force and passed the following law:

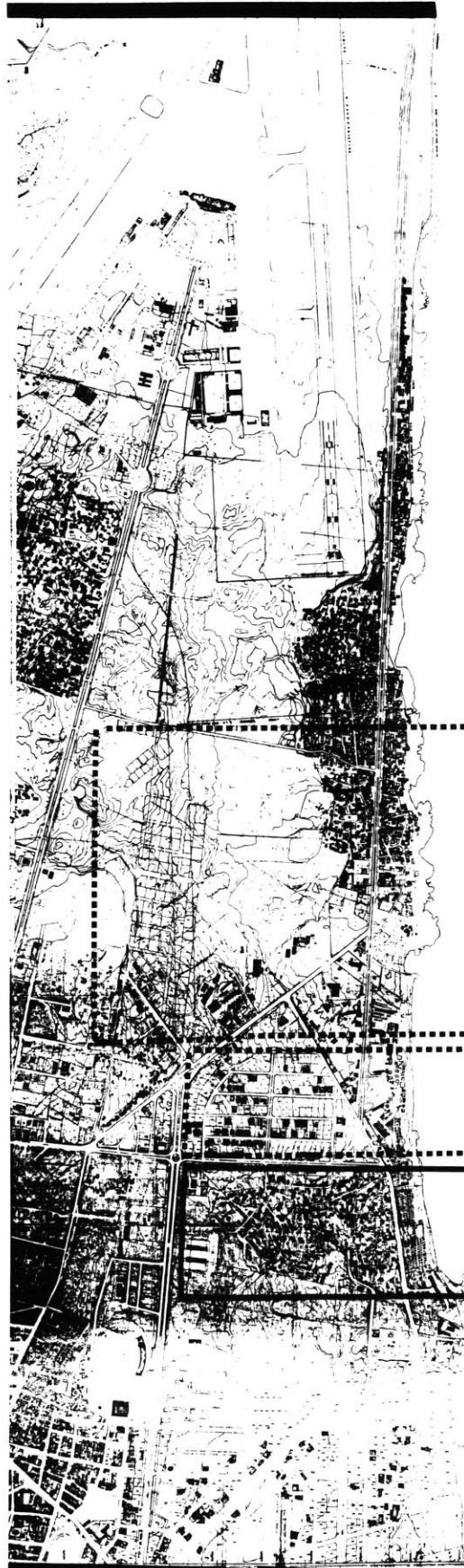
"...all constructions and / or additions, either vertical or horizontal, will be demolished and without compensation on the following premises: -Others' properties with no written document from the legal owner. -Public properties.-Inside expropriated zones and approved "traces" of public projects. -On private holdings owned by the state, municipalities, or public institutions".

This law, known as Law N° 13, considered any construction after 03/26/64 illegal. Apparently, the authorities attempted to differentiate between the pre-1964 settlers and others who invaded land during the sixties, seventies, and eighties. Naively, the authorities wanted to differentiate between squatting and the problem of tenure by maintaining the dispute over land restricted to 640 cases and that all new settlements should be removed. However, the post-1964 settlers insisted that the issue is the right to have access to municipal land and that they were not squatters.

In addition, the state adopted two other strategies to minimize the problem of squatting in the corridor. They either included Khaldeh (i.e.the Druzes area) in the definition of the corridor which decreased the density from 650/ha. to 150/ha., or released population censuses which did not coincide with reality. While the state, headed by President Gemayel, ranged the number between 15.000 and 20.000, many other sources<sup>1</sup> presented a range of 45.000 to 50.000 resident. The decrease in the number of persons involved in the conflict should have had an impact on the amount of foreign aids allocated to the corridor and the persons eligible for aid creating, therefore, disparities among settlers. Contrarily to the expectations of the authorities, foreign aids were allocated through private agencies to avoid the corruption in public institutions. Thus, funds were based upon private resources and not the public censuses.

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<sup>1</sup> The various sources are: As-Safir, July 4,1983. Random sample testing presented by the General Directorate of Planning, Juin 1984. BECOM.



*Figure 10*

The legal subdivision of land shown in this area is far beyond the plot sizes provided within the settlements (compare the size of the plots with the ones inside). However the incapability of the owners to conform to regulations kept this area undevelopped and used as a Golf Club.

Another example of an executed subdivision. The plot sizes are designed for high income housing with wide front and setbacks.

The Jnah settlement has developed around Az-Zahra hospital. The presence of this settlement across the street from the high income housing neighborhood has dramatically affected land prices in the area.

The state attitude towards the settlements , consequently, complicated the problem and the residents became convinced that resolving land conflicts in the corridor should be not treated as an independent phenomena from the overall Lebanese situation. Today they refuse to cooperate with a state which resources are manipulated by a minority, its policies are formulated by established elites, and its practices are irrational. They viewed that equity and justice cannot be implemented yet in Lebanon.

### 6.3 The consolidation process

#### *3.a Building on municipal land*

Before 1976, the construction of a shelter in an overnight was more important than its location. Subsequent to occupying a plot, the family builds a 35 sqm. room using concrete blocks for walls, wood struts and zinc sheets for roofing. These materials allowed the family to expand its structure according to the state of insecurity in the country. After 1978, the choice of a location along the boulevard became the primary interest of the settlers. The head of the family starts by allocating a desirable site and defines it either with stones or with a primitive steel fence. The process is supervised by senior occupants or neighbors who indirectly represent the socio-political organization which select residents on the micro level. Later, the design and execution is bid to local contractors who then take the responsibility to deliver the finished house in record time. These units include sanitary and kitchen equipments similar to these provided within units in the legal areas.

#### *3.b Building the private properties*

Private properties in the area are divided into two categories: 1) Ones that are owned by inheritors in the form of shares, 2) The others are individually owned by Christian elites. In the first category, many of the occupants bought shares equivalent to the plot they

use. Contrary to Jordan, as described by Razzaz<sup>1</sup>, families settled first in the corridor and then negotiated for land price. However, small Christian shareholders who owned land in the corridor were not in the position to retain their properties for further speculation for two reasons: First, the economic pressure prevailing since 1984 forced middle income families to trade land for capital. Second, the increasing religious segregation between East and West Beirut prevented Christian landlords from developing their properties in the West sector. The second category allowed the intervention of real estate brokers who mediated between Christian elites and Shiite investors. For instance a 3000 sq.m. property had many Christian and Muslim shareholders. A politically empowered broker bought all the Christian's shares equivalent to 2000 sq.m. at low prices, defined the desirable area equivalent to these shares, then he subdivided it into eight 150 sq.m. parcels and eight 100 sq.m. parcels, and later sold them at market value. Many residents were capable to afford prices of small lots that do not comply with building codes. The development of private properties is somewhat different from the one on public lands. Building standards seemed more homogeneous, as well as the layout and the setbacks. However, the prevailing sense of organization in the settlements is also related to the concern of early settlers about the layout of the roads and self imposed setbacks<sup>2</sup>.

#### 6.4 The creation of a thriving land market in the corridor

In the early eighties, both the decline in oil prices and the Gulf war affected the demand for land dramatically. Contracts of hundreds of Shiites in the Gulf were terminated with the persistence of the Iran-Iraq war. Consequently, the southern periphery faced a new influx of skilled workers who returned with their live savings and perceived land as a secure source of investment. Thus, demand for land exceeded the supply in the corridor

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<sup>1</sup> Razzaz Omar, MCP Thesis, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> The same process was formerly described by Collier in *Squatters and Oligarches*, 1974: 152.

and prices boosted dramatically.

The settlements offered both permanent structures non-complying with building codes and illegally subdivided land at low prices which attracted low and middle income Shiites migrants. The persistence of the war in Lebanon hyperinflated the economy. Meanwhile, the Lebanese pound was dramatically losing its exchange rate against the dollar (i.e.: in Jan. 1984, £L4=\$1; in Jan. 1988, £L490=\$1). Returning expatriates found that land is a secure and stable capital investment in the absence of other alternatives. Therefore, land prices in the West Beirut increased by 15 fold while the land value in the settlements increased by 20 fold, however these values remained below the legal market.

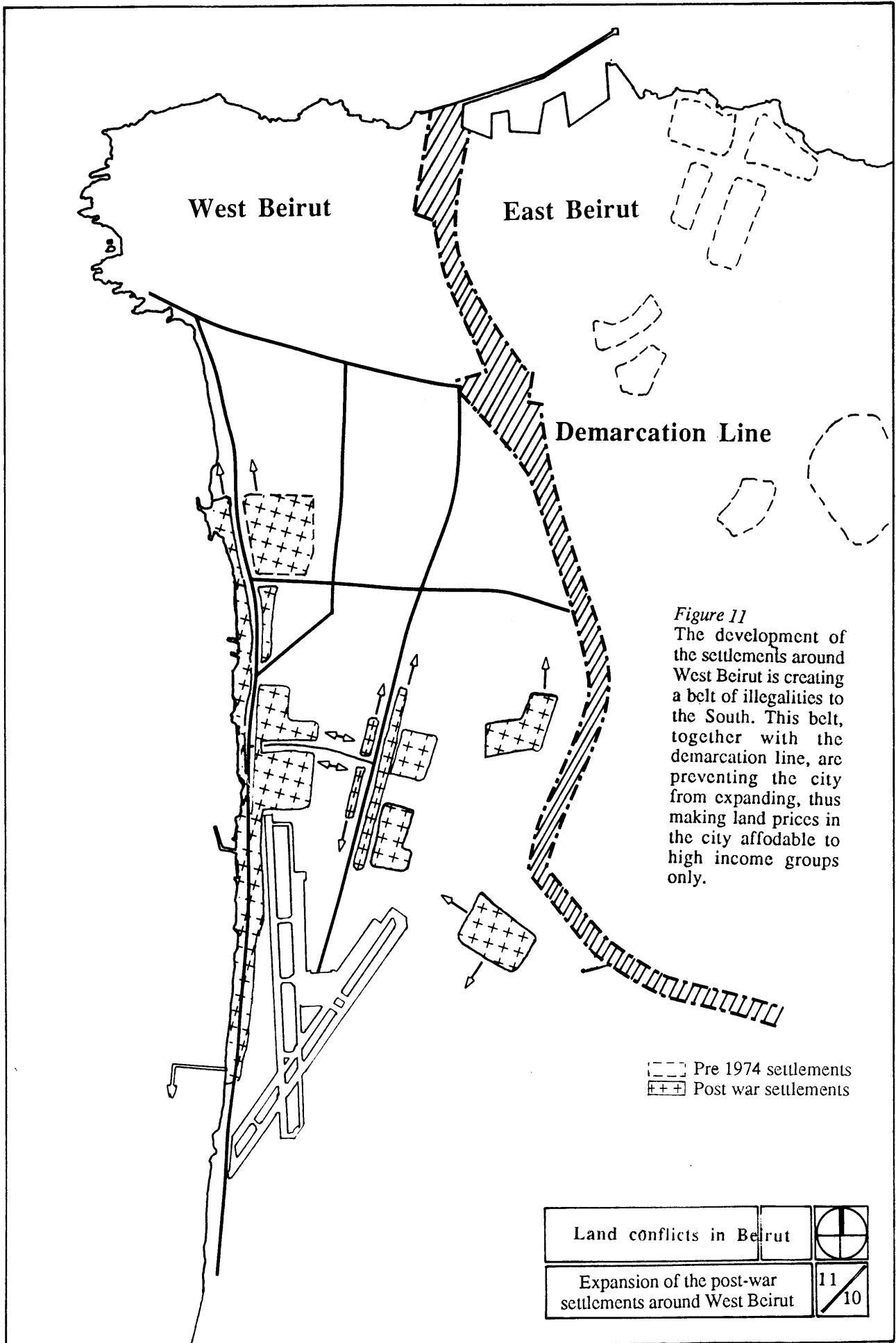
The scarcity of municipal land was created by a rising number of absentee settlers who, in the early eighties, withheld large properties for speculation. The increase in the demand for municipal land encouraged them to subdivide these lots. A survey conducted by a local newspaper<sup>1</sup> traced the change in the average lot size from 550 sqm. in 1980 to 140 sqm. by 1987. The decrease in sizes reflects the thriving land market in the corridor and the average demand for plot size.

The demand for land in the settlements necessitated the expansion of the corridor towards the East and the South where municipal land were available. Two constraints faced this expansion; to the East the established Shiites family "Nasser" owned most of the properties and protected their domains with military elements, to the south the Druze rejected the socio-political expansion of the Shiites together with the settlements. These constraints increased the hegemony over commercial and industrial spaces in the corridor.

As theories confirm, original settlers (1978 refugees) sold their plots, which have direct access to the boulevard, to the highest bidders. They relocated in less desirable areas

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Safir, July 1987: ten consecutive editions.



in the corridor where the character tended to be more residential. Abu al-Hassan, a soldier of fortune, considered this process a blessing from God. In 1983, he moved off the highway to a residential cluster and sold his former unit at a price which enabled him to start a small business. However, contrary to conventional planning theory and practice, the high degree of insecurity and instability in the country encouraged settlement residents to increase their investments in the housing, industrial, and commercial sectors. Thus, insecurity lead to consolidation and tenure becomes a minor concern for the growth and the development of the settlements.

#### 6.5 The present urban fabric of the corridor

As described previously, the corridor was subject to several planning schemes since the fifties. It was primarily conceived by Ecochard as a “Ville Nouvelle” (new town) between the airport and the city of Beirut, Egli zoned it as a luxurious residential area bounded by large public complexes, and the IRFED report proposed it as a mixed use area: residential along the airport boulevard, and touristic along the littoral. However, conflicts over land tenure and historical events in 1958, 1978, and 1982 created informal settlements. These settlements started over 24 ha. and reached 70 ha. before the civil war. After 1982, the return of Shiite expatriates from the Gulf countries accelerated the growth of the settlements. The corridor offered a profitable land market during the absence of legal authorities and, therefore, extended along 2.5 km. of the Western littoral and occupied an area of 200 acres.

##### *5.a The Ouzai settlement*

The corridor contains two major settlements, the Ouzai and the Jnah. The Ouzai settlement is composed of 51% public land, 12% private land, and 33% shareholders who constructed arbitrarily on lots equivalent to their shares. The total housing units in the Ouzai

are 7000 units approximately<sup>1</sup> distributed over 3500 structures. Dr. Charafeddine reported that the occupancy rate is six and the vacancy rate<sup>2</sup> is about 8%. Thus, the population number is about:

$$[7000-(8\%)]*6=[7000-560]*6=38,640 \text{ residents}$$

This number, therefore, coincides with the data obtained by the various sources about the population size of the corridor, hence, the official numbers are not adequate and do not reflect the intensity of the conflict.

The Ouzai settlement extends along the southern entrance of West Beirut. It expanded lately along Hussein Nasser road to encounter the illegal settlements along the airport boulevard. The major facilities in the area are:

- The Ouzai Mosque combined to an Islamic center (the land belongs to the Sunni Waqf),
- Two Shiite Mosques illegitimately constructed, one on the Ouzai boulevard and the other on the Airport boulevard.
- Two Husseinyyats (Shiite Islamic Center),
- Two permanent posts for the Amal movement (illegitimate construction),
- One permanent post for the Hezbollah (illegitimate construction),
- Center for social development (Sunni Waqf),
- Rehabilitation center for the physically handicapped (Sunni Waqf),
- Two private beach clubs with restaurants (privately owned with legal tenure and construction).

Most structures have two levels, the first is restricted to commercial activity, and the second contains two housing units. Constructions on the West side of the Ouzai boulevard have direct access to the sea. They transformed the sand beaches into part of their private domains. Hence, the existing private beach clubs benefitted from the situation to exert high entry fees on members. The area has the potential to be a touristic area which might secure

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Office of social development.

<sup>2</sup> Vacancy rate is due to absentee landlordism.

revenues to municipalities and local businesses. The problem of the Ouzai settlement extends beyond inappropriate investments. The lack of public services, the overcrowded use of land, and the invasion of retained land for the airport's expansion are the major features of the area.

### *5.b The Jnah settlement*

The Jnah is relatively a recent development which only encompasses municipal land. The area is located on the immediate South West boundary of West Beirut. Its expansion is threatening both private and municipal properties of the capital. Dr. Charafeddine related the initiation of the settlement to the following:

- The first wave of invasions occurred in 1958 after the civil strife. Twenty houses were built around an existing church<sup>1</sup> (Our Lady of Jnah, now destroyed).
- In 1975, the municipal council of Ghobeiry granted the high Shiite Council 15,200 sq.m. to build a hospital for the poor Shiites.

The construction of the hospital (Az-Zahra) attracted labor and small businesses to the area. After the end of the constructions, labors and businesses consolidated their shacks into permanent structures. They took advantage of the chaotic situation during 1978, 1983, and 1984 to consolidate their settlements. Migrants from the Beqaa region in the East of the country bought parcels in the area through phony real estate agents who assumed legal rights over these lands. The conflict over the Jnah settlement accentuated when the state attempted to evict and destroy the structures in 1983. As a result, the residents, of Shiite affiliation, incorporated into Amal and Hezbollah to insure a political and military support for their "rights". The Jnah contains approximately 8000 residents in 1600 structure. As in

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<sup>1</sup> It appears that early settlers in Jnah settlements were Christians. These sites were legalized in 1962 as they were connected to electricity, water, sewage, and telephone systems.

the Ouzai, the character of the buildings is the same and commercial activities are restricted to the main streets.

#### 6.6 The choice of the corridor for illegal settlements

To conclude my argument, I had to understand whether the Ouzai had been chosen for its location or because of the availability of municipal and disputed land. The spokesman of "Hezbollah" in the corridor explained why they moved to the corridor and how he was politically involved:

"Since 1975, the southern suburb became geographically limited. The growth rate in our community is very high and the average household is seven. Due to the massive displacements we had to find an alternative to the overdensified Southern suburb. As a militant I invaded first a vacant unit in the city. Then to survive the economic pressure I needed land to start a business. The cheapest 200 sq.m. I could find in the legal areas were 40,000L.L. (\$4000 in 1984). I was told by my relatives that a similar plot is worth 10,000L.L. (\$1000 in 1984) in the Ouzai and it has direct access to the street which makes business possible. When I settled in the corridor I was told about our right to use the municipal land as is the case in the village... "

I understood later that the invasion of private properties was due to the inavailability of remaining municipal lands along the boulevard. Settlers on private properties were accumulating the required capital to purchase from landowners the shares which represent their lots. It is perhaps clear now that the genesis of illegal settlements has two requirements: one is the need for land by the poor, and the other is the availability of municipal or public land which were derived from Mushaa or Miri.

#### 6.7 Concluding remarks

The political involvement of settlers is still opposing the state's decision to redevelop the corridor. This redevelopment was induced in the new master plan released in June 1986 which neglects the problem over land tenure in the Ouzai. The transfer of land ownership from Miri and Mushaa to municipal control deprived the poor, living within

municipal limits, from access to land. The conflict over land ownership started in the early fifties between municipalities and landed elites on one side and the poor on the other which kept most of the municipal land undeveloped. The conflict has been later accentuated due to the massive invasions of lands and the state practices in dealing with the problem.

Thus, informal urban development along the southern littoral should not be seen as an independent phenomena of the overall political conflict in Lebanon. Settlement formation should be tied to the dramatic modifications on the system of land tenure which did not take into account the diversity and the complexity of the Lebanese society. First, large tracts of land have been intentionally kept unused while demand for land and housing was rapidly increasing. Second, the lack of taxes on vacant properties increased speculation and kept opportunity costs low. Third, the confusing state of land ownership in the corridor encouraged local residents to reuse land and claim historical rights over its title. Fourth, the flow of financial capital through remittances to lower and middle income groups trapped in an overdensified suburbs provided them with incentives to seek better living conditions in the corridor during periods of state weakness.

The present war has facilitated land invasions and created a thriving land market with illegally subdivided lots. Municipal councils and Christian landed elites in the corridor are the main losers in this process. The municipalities are not collecting fees derived from construction permits and land transactions to help recover the cost of services in the legal densified areas. The religious segregation imposed by the war restrained Christian elites from managing their properties and, therefore, control the land market. Summing up, none of the legal owners is benefiting from the ongoing urban development and as the religious segregation is accentuated, Christian owners are more likely to give in to offers, by Shiites estate brokers, at below market prices.

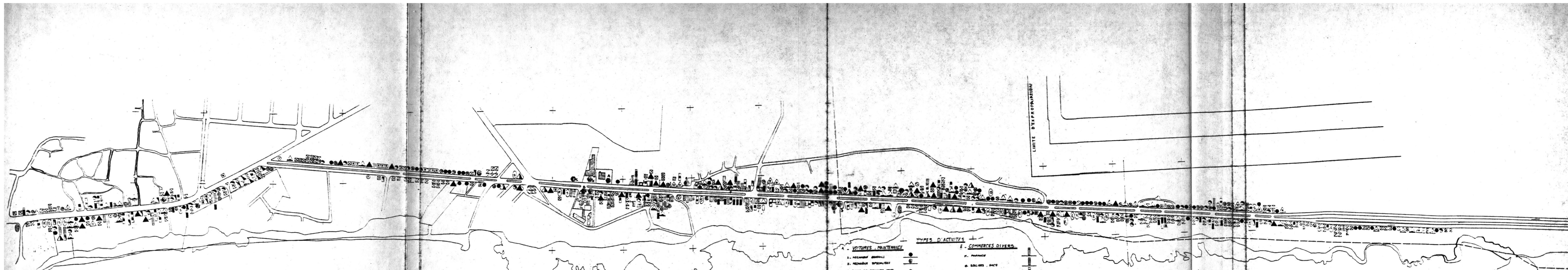
The transfer from the communal form of ownership to municipal control resulted in the invasion of public land, while on the other hand recent illegal acquisitions of private properties are argued by Shiites settlers in terms of social justice. They accuse Christian elites to accumulate capital by monopolizing national resources since independence and purchasing large tracts of land on the Ouzai corridor illegally at prices below market value.

The effect that the illegitimate developments had on the economy during periods of uncertainty was positive for several reasons. First, it provided construction jobs to unskilled labor. Second, capitals were invested in small businesses and industries in an area which has been neglected by the state during periods of economic prosperity. Third, the illegitimate settlements in the corridor provide approximately 10,000 housing units for low income families<sup>1</sup>. Fourth, the creation of commercial and industrial axis within settlements has provided West Beirut with small scale businesses and industries which replaced the loss of similar services formerly provisioned by the east sector.

As a result, the settlers' perception of access to land and justice did not change despite the fact that the state exercised repressive policies. Doebele described similar situations in the developing countries "While tenure is generally considered as a legal category, it is, just as fundamentally, a matter of the state of mind of the persons concerned" (Doebele, 1978:110). It is clear that "The legal system has significance only as far as the state can enforce it and, thus, force the different groups to conform to the law of the state" (Razzaz, 1988:35). When institutions are rendered inefficient and the central government autonomy has been entirely eroded by ongoing hostilities and internal political strife, the state faces two alternatives. It either adopts repressive policies to control the conflict and, therefore, realizes its inability to implement them, or acknowledges the gap

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<sup>1</sup>Survey done in January 1988 by the author.



**Figure 12.**  
 The commercial strip of the Ouzai boulevard extends along 2.5 km. The money generated from the corridor constitute a support system to the residents. The type of services provided is similar to the one in the industrial sector of East Beirut. However, the religious segregation between East and West Beirut has made many Muslims dependent on the corridor for industrial, commercial, and housing purposes. The availability of an illegal container seaport introduced import export activities in the region. Unfortunately, this map is only concerned with the main artery and, therefore, does not show the elaborate industrial activities in the inner streets of the corridor. (source of the map: Dr. Charafeddine, 1986).

**EQUIPEMENTS**  
 - ÉCOLE, LYCÉE, ... ETC.  
 - HÔPITAL, UNIVERSITÉ  
 - CENTRE SOCIAL, DU SPORTIF  
 - CENTRE DE RÉCÉPATION PHYSIQUE, CENTRE MÉDICAL  
 - ADMINISTRATION PUBLIQUE, STRAITS-DE-PAIX, ... ETC.  
 - PARLEMENTS DES PAYS LOCAUX

- TYPES D'ACTIVITÉS**
- A. VOITURES, MAINTENANCE**
    - 1. RÉPARATION GÉNÉRALE
    - 2. RÉPARATION SPÉCIALISÉE
    - 3. PIÈCES DE RECHANGE, Outils de réparation
    - 4. PNEUMATIQUES, Outils de réparation
    - 5. STATION D'ESSAI
  - B. SERVICES DIVERS**
    - 6. BANQUE
    - 7. BUREAU DE TRANSPORT, ENTREPRISE
    - 8. COIFFEUR, COIFFERIE
    - 9. COIFFEUR
  - C. ACTIVITÉS DE LOISIRS**
    - 10. RESTAURANT
    - 11. BAR
    - 12. PLAGE, PISCINE
  - D. COMMERCE D'ALIMENTATION**
    - 13. BOUTIQUE, PÂTISSERIE, ... ETC.
    - 14. PÂTISSERIE, BOUTIQUE
    - 15. ÉPICERIE, LE GÉNÉRALISTE
    - 16. BOUTIQUE D'ÉPICERIE DE FINE
  - E. COMMERCE DIVERS**
    - 17. BIJOUTERIE
    - 18. BIJOUX, Outils de réparation
    - 19. BIJOUX, Outils de réparation
    - 20. BIJOUX, Outils de réparation
    - 21. BIJOUX, Outils de réparation
    - 22. BIJOUX, Outils de réparation
    - 23. BIJOUX, Outils de réparation
  - F. ACTIVITÉS INDUSTRIELLES ET ARTISANALES**
    - 24. GALVANI, Outils de réparation
    - 25. PÂTISSERIE
    - 26. PÂTISSERIE, Outils de réparation
    - 27. Outils de réparation, Outils de réparation
    - 28. Outils de réparation, Outils de réparation
    - 29. Outils de réparation, Outils de réparation
    - 30. Outils de réparation, Outils de réparation

between what the law requests and what is enforceable Thus submitting to consolidation.

Here, two questions are raised to understand the importance of land as a secure investment for the poor.

- 1) Did the settlements improve the living conditions of the poor? if so,
- 2) To what extent was land access instrumental in achieving these improvements?

## **CHAPTER VI WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

During the development of this study, it has been clear that the land conflicts cannot be treated independently from the socio-political changes that occurred since the turn of the century. The four periods, which distinguished the development of Lebanon, offered different types of land relations between the poor and the state. This variety of land relations affects future departures when addressing the problem of access to land by the poor. These strategies are summarized as follows:

a) The Ottoman granted Mushaa land to the poor in the form of private and registered holdings. However, this privatization did not provide the poor with the required support system they need to face economic declines and, therefore, maintain land ownership. The consequences were dramatic. Only the lords could afford the obligations associated with private properties, namely the taxes, thus expanding their properties.

b) The French attempted in a very short period, relative to the Ottoman period, to introduce reforms to a complex society. They created institutions which provided equal access to land among the Lebanese but without releasing tenure, and associated these lands with the needed support system to establish a form of social stability. The reforms were manipulated by the established aristocracy. Thus, they widened the disparities between classes and between regions.

c) The modern state adopted a "laissez-faire" economy in which the private sector would undertake development using all means, while the state would support the poor. Sectarianism and corruption prevented public revenues from being channelled to help the poor. On the contrary they were invested into modernization projects which increased demand for vacant land. Consequently, the poor, lacking all forms of social stability, had neither a support system nor tenure or formal access to land.

d) The post war era presents a turning point in land accessibility. The departure of foreign capital to finance development and the absence of the state, over which traditional elites alienated land, released the pressure over land and permitted the settlements of displaced groups in and around old settlements.

The last phenomenon gave the poor a chance to force their rights for better living conditions and, therefore, establish both a social stability through acquiring land and a support system by building a network of commercial and industrial activities. Whether it is

the right way of doing it or not, the poor have succeeded in finding "a strategy" during periods of uncertainty where the state and its institutions have failed during periods of prosperity.

### 6.1 Where Do We Go From Here?

The state legislative and executive bodies are divided among the two Beirut where the East is ruled by Christians and the West by Muslims. Any attempt to force changes, at the moment, might result in new skewed policies either to the benefit of the settlers or to the one of the landed elites. However, it is essential to draw a set of guidelines that should be considered as the state embarks into rehabilitating its policies and strategies for development in the aftermath of the civil war:

- 1) The development of the study suggests that land relations should be approached by understanding both, the nature of the struggle over land between the various classes and sects and the effect of tenure on urban development. These aspects contributed in a one way or another to the rapid expansion of illegal settlements.
- 2) Since the informal settlements are restricted to the Shiite community, basing policies on the concept of invaded land and illegal presence is likely to produce an opposing and radical attitude by the settlers against any state intervention. Doebele points out that policies should only be viewed as their actual effects at a given time under given circumstances.
- 3) The historical analysis suggests that neither a system where land has been nationalized and fully controlled by the Ottoman and French, nor a system where the market has been determining the allocation of land during the post-independence era has proven sufficient for solving the problem of providing the

poor with formal access to land. Further, the previously applied strategies were unable to halt the widening disparities in the land ownership and income distribution. The present phenomenon should be carefully analyzed and assessed as to what extent the settlements have responded to the needs of the poor.

4) The cancellation of Islamic property tax by the Ottoman, and the Ottoman property tax by the French, has left the Lebanese state with no property tax revenues since 1943, which had increased speculation on land dramatically. Consequently, large tracts of resourceful land were taken out from the market, and hence, depriving the poor from access to land. The authorities should reconsider the use of Islamic form of property taxes based upon equity as an instrument to reduce speculation, instead of keeping the 2/3 of the municipal budget heavily dependent on the construction permits and state funds.

5) Doebele, (1978:123) also pointed out that no specific tenure is good or bad except as viewed as to its actual effects at a given time and under given circumstances. Subsequent to the last two points, the poor have succeeded in responding to their needs during periods of uncertainty. However if a property tax system was to be applied and the state was to legalize the tenure by turning it into individual freehold, two repercussions might evolve and are described by Razzaz (1987:47).

First, if the same conventional approach is used in zoning, subdivision regulations, and building codes, the effect would be to limit the ability of middle and lower income groups to obtain housing and land. This was shown in the Ouzai area where most empty plots were zoned as low density, upper income residential plots. As for the existing buildings, limitations on vertical and horizontal expansion have been

introduced. This rendered the area as a whole much less responsive to future demand for low income housing, a pressing present and future need of the urban masses.

Second, private freehold will bring the land prices in the area to the formal land market level and introduce speculation. The settlers will be able to monopolize and control the price and transfer of land in the area.

Hence, the provision of tenure in the settlements is very critical. The state is skeptical to release tenure because of the fear that the settlers might sell out in order to make profit. The most important is to avoid the Ottoman tax mistake and to provide conditional tenure for instance.

6) The previous point suggests that the state must define its goals and needs towards urban development while taking into consideration the existing conditions and, therefore, encourages citizen participation before deciding on land policies or tenure systems. The concept of public hearings applied recently in the United States has helped the authorities to increase citizens' participation in the decision making process and, therefore, decrease the number of obstacles that face implementation.

Though the aim of this study is to highlight the importance of changing the tenure and land policies in Lebanon based upon historical precedents, which will take a while before being considered seriously, it is, however, necessary for the state to use mechanisms which reduce the tension between state-squatters relations. Following are guidelines to be considered for setting up short term strategies:

(A)- The lack of municipal resources and the unjust state strategies for development made the level of services provided in the legal areas similar to the one self-provided by the settlers. However, the construction type prevailing in the corridor

reflected the interest of the residents to create livable neighborhoods. Despite the political involvement of the residents in local military factions, they do not reject any legal arrangement to obtain titles deeds. Accordingly, the authorities should consider negotiating land tenure of both municipal and private lands if they are sincere towards controlling the development of the settlements. Residents, as well, should support state interventions which regulate the growth of the settlements and introduce facilities to upgrade the image of the littoral. Shiite leaders approved the concept of negotiation provided that bulldozing is out of question. Further, they will be willing to negotiate over land titles and improvement fees on the condition that the state offers reasonable and subsidized<sup>1</sup> prices.

(B)\_ The previous point suggests that technical and bureaucratic procedures, besides the influence of established landed elites on legislations, have not solved the conflict over tenure and development rights in the corridor. It is perhaps time for the conflicting groups to consider a process of mediation where each group is resigned to reach a solution which does neither undermine the state's authority nor the poor's rights for better living conditions.

(C)- The state must recognize its inability to enforce regulations and order in the corridor during the last fifty years and its incapability to do so in the foreseen future. Therefore, the state must not release Master Plans, such as the 1986 one, which contained repressive zoning and building codes that limited the potential of development of the lower income groups.

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<sup>1</sup> The estimated cost to upgrade the corridor in 1984 was £L. 125 million equivalent to \$25 million. In 1988 it is estimated around £L. 17.76 billion equivalent to \$ 48 million. However, the estimated revenues from construction indemnities in the corridor in 1984 were £L. 86 million equivalent to \$ 21.5 million (source: The Middle East economic consultants, report on the reconstruction of Beirut, June 1985,:103).

(D)- Following the latter recommendation, the state should try to understand the different claims existing in the settlements. The historical analysis revealed three types of residents: (a) residents with rights over Mushaa' properties, (b) residents with historical and legal rights over private properties, and (c) squatters who invaded land during recent state weakness and who claimed historical rights.

(E)- Many mechanism can be used to facilitate development in the proper sense. First, the state can negotiate over the FAR, the allowable built area<sup>1</sup> (land coverage ratio), and zoning regulations that would attract developers to invest in a specific area. Second, the scarcity of land in Beirut encouraged housing developers to perceive land in the corridor for future developments, thus the state can provide a density increase for them inspite the fact that they pay an extra charge that would be transferred to upgrade the settlements, and allocate a certain percentage of their projects to low income housing.

(F)- The survey done by Dr. Wafa Charafeddine in 1984 suggests that the economic strip is vital and important to the area. My recent visit to the site in 1988 enforced my belief that the area's best use is a mix of tourism, commerce, and residential. The littoral, a unique seashore in the metropolitan area, offers the possibility of creating viable and profitable resort centers (Centres Balneaires). The injection of such facilities requires a spatial reorganization of the waterfront. The experience of the East Sector, where investors purchased municipal land to allocate their projects, has been totally successful. Since the state still owns vacant lands in the area which can be leased or sold to Shiite investors who are willing to develop the region. In this perspective, the legal presence of large projects will facilitate the

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<sup>1</sup>This term is translated laterally from the Lebanese building code.

incoming of financial corporations to the corridor (i.e. these financial institutions have been skeptical in opening branches along the Ouzai boulevard).

(G)- The present physical conditions in the area requires substantial intervention by planners<sup>1</sup>. The fact that the majority of the settlers used densification as a strategy to consolidate, yet only few took the incentive to impose front and back setbacks which disproportioned the density in the corridor. Further, they protected their environment with plants and gardens. According to Dr. Charafeddine, the density around Ali Nasser street reached 500 persons/ha (1987:93) and decreases to 150 in the area between Ouzai and Jnah.

(H)- One of the long term strategies that is interesting to look at is land sharing<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, this device permits the state to increase the use of land while relocating the residents in better structures and provide them with tenure. Landed elites can, therefore, have access to the part of their land and construct touristic and commercial facilities depending on the location and scale of the projects. This process is supervised by the state who negotiates over regulations using the previously mentioned mechanisms, if both the poor and the elites interests are served.

Finally, it turns out that a look at land conflicts of the last few years only does not give the observer the full facts of land tenure situation in Lebanon and is therefore of limited value. It does, however, shed some light on the factors which might direct development in ways that the society, as a whole, can benefit the most. Thus, development should not be viewed as alternative arrangements of profit maximization, but rather a way of organizing human resources.

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<sup>1</sup>See aerial photographs.

<sup>2</sup>An explanation for these concepts is provided in appendices II and III respectively.

## 6.2    Postscript

During May 1988, at the time this is being written, armed conflict has broken out near the Ouzai corridor, specifically between the Amal and Hezbollah Shiites factions, over land control and the tenure of the legal Southern Suburb of West Beirut. Some 200 persons have already been killed. The bitterness now created will surely make compromise solutions even more different than before.

## Appendix I

The detail of the political structure of Lebanon during the Ottoman period is described by Baaklini (1979, ch. 1, passim):

The *emir* (prince) at the top of the pyramid received his investiture from the Turkish *wali* who acted as the representative of the Ottoman Sultan. Each community had its *emir* whose autonomy extended over a defined area. This principedom was manifested through political, religious, or elitist leadership. Access to land and resources was partially restricted to followers and "fideles" of the group leader. Thus, land was granted to faithful followers despite their religion and sect. After the *emir* came the *Muqati`ji* (the district governor) who could be either a *Muqaddam* or a *sheikh*. The *emir* belonged to the *muqaddam* group but was considered *primus inter pares*. The *Muqati`jis* power varied in accordance with the wealth of the region he controlled and the power he was able to mass when needed. Usually a *Muqati`ji* controlled a large piece of land, comprising several villages, through his deputies who were entrusted with tax collection (some of the *Muqati`ji* families are still prominent in Lebanese politics today) (Baaklini, 1976: 34). This political structure resulted in perpetual conflicts between the landed elites who were in perpetual competition to maintain their ranks and control over land titles. The social and political crisis in the heights of Mount-Lebanon affected to a greater extend access to land and crops by poor peasants.

Whoever became a regional or local administrator would transfer part of his grants to religious institutions to insure their spiritual and institutional support as their influence over the masses was growing. The Maronites, in particular, had an organized religious institution, founded in Rome and influenced by western modes of equity and social justice. By the turn of this century, these institutions (Christian and Druze) owned a considerable amount of land in Mount-Lebanon. The rising influence of religious institutions as modern organizations based upon equity and freedom threatened the integrity of the feudal families.

## Appendix II

The commander of the Druze militia in Khaldeh prevented, in June 1985, the construction of an illegitimate resort along the waterfront. He personally supervised the demolition of 25 shops which were constructed in an overnight. He stated that "the Ouzai settlements will not be allowed to expand into our territories (Khaldeh). He compared them to the cancer disease as they will soon fill out the land with their community and, therefore, increase their military and political power in the area". He affirmed that "if illegitimate developments occur in Khaldeh, the Druzes ought to be the beneficiaries and not the Shiites". I realized that the Druzes are intentionally rejecting the process of illegal developments in their areas to be able to attract investors in search for formal access to land in the direct environs of West Beirut by offering competitive land prices to the ones in the corridor. However, these strategies have not been so far successful for several reasons. First, the airport represent both physical and visual barriers between Khaldeh and West Beirut, therefore, people are reluctant to live beyond it. Second, before 1982 Khaldeh was considered a neighborhood unit with upper middle income Sunni groups (i.e. two former Sunni Prime Ministers used to live there), after the Israeli invasion many houses have been destroyed and stolen by local residents (majority Druzes) which enforced the belief that any person's assets are endangered if located outside his community. Third, since the expectation of the law being enforced is minimal, small scale entrepreneurs prefer to invest in the corridor instead of Khaldeh though revenues generated in this area are higher by 20 fold<sup>1</sup>. Fourth, the Shiites have proven to be active in developing commercial activities (see map of commercial activities along the Ouzai boulevard), therefore, the Druzes are not only withstanding the physical expansion of settlement but also the trade competition the Shiites will bring along.

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<sup>1</sup> This approximation was given by an entrepreneur in the Corridor who formerly had a shop in Khaldeh

## Appendix III

The following summary on Community Land Banking has been introduced by Shann Turnbull during a workshop for the Special Interest Group in Urban Settlements (SIGUS) at M.I.T., April 1987.

### What is a Community Land Bank (CLB) ?

A CLB is a basic unit of local government in the form of a self financing corporation which owns all the land in its precinct and whose stock is only owned by the residents who also obtain an equity interest in their dwelling.

### CLB Structure

1. Units of a CLB common stock are issued pro-rata to the area land occupied by each dwelling and only residents can vote the stock with one vote per person (co-operative principle).
2. Each dwelling unit can be freely sold by its owner subject to the CLB buying back from the vendor the common stock associated with the dwelling and issuing this stock to the purchaser.
3. Ownership of a dwelling and its associated common stock can be obtained either by a cash purchase or through usage (-at say 4% p.a.). As a corollary, ownership of dwellings and common stock is lost at the same rate without usage.
4. The price of:
  - a) dwellings is determined by market values and the value of the associated CLB stock,
  - b) newly issued common stock is determined by market values and calculated on the same basis as a mutual fund or a Real Estate Investment Trust (R.E.I.T.), and
  - c) redeemed common stock is determined by usage which could mean a discount from its current new issue price of say 5% for every year less than twenty that the vendor owned the dwelling.
5. Ownership of a dwelling is provided by a perpetual lease ("strata title") with all other private land improvements owned through a limited life lease of say 40 years with the CLB capturing all residual values.

## Appendix IV

The workshop presented by Shlomo Angel introduced a new concept of Land Sharing as an alternative conflict resolution over land rights. This workshop was presented to the Special Interest Group in Urban Settlements (SIGUS) at M.I.T., April 1988. Participants in the workshop worked for three days on simulating negotiations for a land sharing case study in Central America. Final outcomes were based upon financial analysis and potential physical development of the site.

A summary of the Land Sharing concept is described in Shlomo Angel and Somsook Boonyabancha paper, May, 1987.

Land Sharing - the partition of the land into two parts, one for the use by the landlord and one for the use by the present occupants of the site - can be a pragmatic and constructive resolution of conflicting claims. It becomes a realistic compromise between landlords and slum dwellers when the intentions of landlords to repossess the land become clear to the residents, and when the residents decide to resist their eviction. The five alternatives then open to the latter, arranged on a spectrum of decreasing desirability, are as follows:

1. Struggle to resist eviction and to remain on the land, occupying it in total;
2. Negotiate a land sharing agreement with the landlords and reconstruct houses on part of the land;
3. Agree to resettle on an alternative site, usually on the urban fringe;
4. Agree to receive compensation for clearing the site; or
5. Leave the site and settle elsewhere without any compensation or assistance.

The initial position of the landlord is normally at the end of the spectrum, whereas the slum dwellers are at the beginning.

In general, the land sharing strategy involves five principles. First outlined in 1982, these are presented in a revised form:

1. Community Organization: Negotiations for land sharing require that slum dwellers mobilize, to counter the threat of eviction, to enlist the support of outside organizations, and to create the indigenous leadership necessary to represent the community in negotiations. Community participation is also required in planning for the site reconstruction, in the allocation of plots, in the demolition of existing structures, and sometimes in rebuilding the houses.
2. A Land Sharing Agreement: This requires a binding agreement to partition the land. Usually the land parcel with the best development potential is allocated to the landlord. Other parts are allocated to the existing residents to rehouse themselves. Such an agreement must guarantee secure land tenure on the parcels allocated to the residents, and may specify the necessary payments and time schedules for implementation.
3. Densification: Rehousing the existing community on a smaller site requires increased residential densities. If the original density in the slums was already high, the new density will be even higher, unless some of the residents are excluded by the new scheme.
4. Reconstruction: The increase in residential density and the need to clear part of the site usually necessitates the reconstruction of houses, unless the original densities are low enough to permit infilling of vacant plots on the site. Rebuilding may require new forms of construction, using more permanent or more solid materials to achieve the required densities and to upgrade the quality of houses.
5. Capital Investment: Reconstruction requires capital from the domestic savings of the residents or loans from outside sources. To be economically feasible, land sharing schemes cannot rely on massive subsidies and must arrange for housing within the peoples' ability to pay. This may occasionally require cross-subsidies within the land sharing scheme, utilize some of the development gains to partially offset housing reconstruction costs.

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