LAND DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES IN THE CONTEXT OF LAND SCARCITY:
CASE STUDY - BYBLOS, LEBANON

by
AVEDIS ASDOURIAN

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Signature of Author

Avedis Asdourian, Department of Architecture, May 16, 1986

Certified by

Reinhard Goethert, Research Associate, Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by

Julian Beinart, Chairman, Departmental Committee for Graduate Students
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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to provide a general understanding for guiding urban development in secondary cities in Lebanon. An existing site in the Byblos Metropolitan Area is utilized as a reference to this study.

The study includes a general description of the context of land development in Lebanon. It identifies phenomena that directly affect the development process in Lebanon.

The study then addresses questions of design, planning and the need for public intervention in Lebanon.

The study attempts to develop a set of general approaches/directions which can help provide a framework for decisions regarding the usefulness of specific kinds of public intervention in urban development.

THESIS SUPERVISOR: Reinhard Goethert
TITLE: Research Associate
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View of Ras Beirut, 1867-89.
INTRODUCTION

This section presents some of the basic phenomena of urban development and characteristics of planning in Lebanon. Then it lists some of the basic issues and problems that confront the urbanization process in Lebanon.
INTRODUCTION

Perhaps one of the most interesting phenomena of urban development in Lebanon is that some of its cities appear to be growing rapidly and doing relatively well in absorbing the growing urban labor supply while other cities within it appear to be doing very poorly. As for housing supply, it is not equally adequate for all income groups.

City size may be a relevant aspect in explaining such differences, but size is not the only factor, since some of the strongest contrasts may be observed between cities of comparable size.

The reasons for these diverging patterns of urban growth and labor absorption obviously differ from city to city. And for the most part they are beyond the control of local authorities within the city. For instance, some cities in Lebanon have been hurt by various unrelated developments. They were cut off from other parts of the country by changes resulting from the civil conflicts. They suffered from national policies which undermined their national locational advantage. They were victims of favoratism from politicians who were powerful enough to exert pressure on national policies.

What characterizes most of the planning efforts in Lebanon is the absence of a will to plan effectively, and more often than not, political "smoke screening." Most urbanization policy is unconscious, partial, uncoordinated and negative. It is unconscious in the sense that those who effect it are largely unaware of its proportions and features. It is partial in that few of the points at which the government might act to manage urbanization and affect its course and direction are in fact utilized. It is uncoordinated in that national planning tends to be economic and urban planning tends to be physical, and the disjunction often produces competing policies. It is negative in that the ideological perspective of the planners leads them to try to direct, retard or stop urban growth, and in particular to inhibit the expansion of the metropolitan cities.

Of these weaknesses, the lack of commitment and the lack of understanding are particularly damaging; competence in dealing with other problems can be improved over time through the process of "learning by doing."

At present, many of the objectives selected by policy makers address the symptoms and not the resource misallocation and severe regional disparities. The social and political objectives behind many announced spatial strategies are in clear conflict with the forces set in motion by national policy. The unintended spatial biases
of national policy are yet to be more systematically considered, and more perceptive approaches are yet to be developed by planners.

Better national or local urbanization strategies depend on improvements in the methods of planners. On the one hand are the national economic planners who are concerned only with the global or sectoral effects of their decision and ignore its spatial consequences. On the other hand are national physical planners, often in the ministries of public works or construction, who are heavily design oriented and, at times, appear more concerned with the maximization of their budget than with the overall economic impact of their grand designs. National economic planners must be made more aware that most of their decisions are not spatially neutral, and physical planners must acknowledge the limits placed on their plans by the state of the national/local economy, if spatial policies are to improve the urban environment.

View of Byblos and its suburbs from the hills.
BASIC ISSUES/PROBLEMS

A land problem is a divergence between the desired objectives and the actual performance of the land market. Thus, it is necessary not only to clarify objectives, but also to identify those characteristics which cause its performance to fall short of the objectives that have been set. Mentioned below are some issues/problems that face planning authorities in most metropolitan areas in Lebanon.

THE BYBLOS METROPOLITAN AREA HAS GROWN PHENOMENALLY in the last decade. Byblos city witnessed an unexpected influx of displaced people because of the civil unrest coming mainly from northern Lebanon and Beirut, seeking shelter and safer grounds. Byblos is relatively safer than the other parts of the country. This situation affected the city tremendously; it grew from a population of 18,000 to 42,000 in a matter of a decade affecting the layout, the demography and the land use pattern of the city.

URBAN SPRAWL IS VERY RAPIDLY CLUTTERING AND DESTROYING LAND and nature in Byblos. It is deteriorating the quality of life, with particular impact on the poor, the old, and the young. It is putting an overwhelming burden on the government.

LAND IS EXTREMELY SCARCE AND CONSEQUENTLY EXPENSIVE in Byblos. Relatively easy building sites are at a premium. The land is being engulfed with wasteful sprawl patterns. An affordable housing shortage parallels the increase in low-income population and the decrease of available land for building. Not confined to the low-income sector alone, the shortage of affordable dwellings faces even the middle-income group. Moreover, the housing demand is increased above normal population growth factors due to a decreasing family size in a shift from extended families to nuclear families. The private sector is unable to provide housing for families of an annual income below the level of L.L.50,000. Almost 75 percent of the families are under this category.

LAND USE CONTROLS TEND OFTEN TO BE NEGATIVE, pose serious enforcement problems, and are hard to individualize to specific sites. Some forms of indirect land use controls, such as those involving credit or taxation policy, may be more positive in effect, but still lack the specificity possible through the mechanism of tenure. Decentralization is not always a substitute for the more efficient and more equitable use of resources within cities, particularly in large urban areas.
CRITICAL LAND ISSUES

This section discusses, in general terms, the issues that confront the urban development process in Lebanon. It tackles the issues of land scarcity, value of urban land, private land market, and the high prices of land. It presents the concepts of planning and restrictions. Then it identifies some of the land use controls and their effectiveness. It concludes with some special land issues and problems.
LAND SCARCITY

The rapid process of urbanization that is occurring in Lebanon has created the problem of land scarcity in its metropolitan areas. Land plays a special part in the process of urban development because it is the only urban resource that cannot be greatly increased in quantity. Since the value of land reflects the access it offers to all these urban opportunities, its price will increase as cities grow. Urban development will therefore tend to give enormous capital gains or profits to the owners of urban land, thus preserving and increasing inequalities and perpetuating the existing structure of ruling and subordinate classes from generation to generation.

There is a close interrelation between the land tenure and land ownership patterns in Lebanon and the methods of determining and introducing land-use control measures. In Lebanon, there is a contradiction between the requirements of the public planning authorities to introduce effective and comprehensive land-use planning measures, and a large stratum of landowners who are opposed to any limitations made on their rights in the common interest.

The problem of establishing criteria for the allocation of land exists in Lebanon. The approach to the problem is affected by high rates of economic growth and the consequent increase in the standard of living, leading to more demands on land space. The efficient control of individual land ownership rights, coupled with possible public ownership, should primarily be directed towards reducing the amount of needed land held vacant by private owners in urbanized areas; however, it must also preserve areas designated for future development, in order to meet the urgent needs of the future as well.

Planned use of land for urban settlements would not only ensure a better quality of life within the communities in Lebanon, but should also prevent the wasteful use of agricultural land by permitting development only in appropriate areas.

A view of the Beirut-Tripoli highway intersecting Byblos.
URBAN LAND MARKET

The monopolistic character of the urban land market stems directly from the peculiar character of land, which as an economic good differs from most other goods. Each piece of land is unique and its value, for urban uses, depends on its location. The amount of land in the right locations is inherently limited; thus the demand for land in one location cannot be satisfied by the supply of land in another. There is no national market for land; urban land is limited in quantity and not transportable.

Certain elements can reduce, though not eliminate, the locational element in land supply. A good urban transportation system throughout the city region may serve to reduce the differential between centrally located and peripheral land, lowering the relative value of land in the city and increasing values in the region.

The most important factor influencing the supply of land on the market is the nature of the financial decisions made by private landowners about whether to use their land for construction purposes. The basis for a decision about the use of a good is the difference between the cost of holding the good versus the expected return from using it. But for land in both of these categories the costs are unlike those for most other goods.

Land is physically undepreciable and is not influenced by time. There is, of course, a distinction between raw land and developed land. Raw land is physically undepreciable. The structures built on land are depreciable, but the land on which this occurs is itself undepreciable.

The withholding of land as a financial investment is influenced by and further influences the permanent increase in land prices (which has greatly exceeded the general price inflation of recent years). The prospects of future increases in land prices makes the holding of land a profitable financial investment. The high rate of demand for land acts in these conditions to further restrain, rather than increase, the supply of land, since high demand assures future profits and leads to the holding of vacant land. Obviously such investments are influenced by the financial markets—a low interest rate encourages the holding of land, while a high interest rate may inhibit this. High property taxes may have the same effect, but the lack of other investment opportunities may lead to increased investment in land. Finally, a very high rate of inflation may encourage speculation in many types of commodities, such as land; however, a sudden change in the rate of inflation, leading to changes in interest rates, may temporarily end speculation.

The expectations of future capital gains from land use are also influenced by the policies and decisions of the public
authorities regarding land allocation, planning regulations and the taxation system. Policies that allow the landowner to keep all the additional value created through public decisions influence the withholding of land from the market in the expectation of land-use change. In such a way the expectation of planning decisions in the land market leads to the frustration of the planning program.

The demand of land, on the other hand, is essentially demand derived from the demand for the various types of structures (residential, commercial, industrial) built on the land. The demand for land is influenced by many factors, but the growth of population in urban areas and the increase in economic activity there are obviously central. The recent high demand for land is directly related to the increasing concentration of population in metropolitan areas.

Since the demand for land is derived from demand for other services, especially housing, not only the absolute size of population but also socio-cultural characteristics, such as household size and the standard and style of living, determine the desired amount of land. In recent years new needs and new services have created greater demands for land space. The desired residential environment has come to include more individual and collective green space. The increased use of the automobile has increased demand for land for both roads and parking, also affecting the needs of retail and industrial firms for land.

The height of new buildings indicate a shortage of urban land in desirable areas in Beirut.
VALUE OF URBAN LAND

The value of urban land may be measured by the level of attractiveness of a human settlement. This is influenced by the variety of employment opportunities and the level of services. The location factor includes the accessibility of different activities. The dominant factor, however, which encompasses the effect of different factors, is the expected or actual income from structures built on the land surface. The possibility of using the land for construction purposes, or the intensity and kind of land use, determines urban land value.

Investment in infrastructure and in public and private services, or the economic cost of land, creates the basis of urban land value. These investments form the basis of the economic cost of land. The difference in aggregate land values from this economic cost might be seen as one of the basic meanings of urban rent. These investments create a variety of employment opportunities and services, which will attract people to some areas more than to others. The level of attractiveness creates a demand for space for commercial as well as for residential use, which will be greater in some areas than in others. Therefore, the process of urban growth creates an additional land rent. This rent is created not by the additional investment of the landowner, as in agricultural land, but by the additional general investment in a large urban area. This additional investment creates the addition to urban land value that the particular landowner gets as land rent.

The impact of the land-use policies of the public authority, which play the deciding role in fixing both the type of land use and the intensity of use, is one of the main factors in setting urban land value. The same land values, however, may reach different prices according to the factors affecting the land market. In Lebanon, with a perfectly functioning free market, the law of supply and demand fixes the price. A high level of cultural services increases the attractiveness of a city and thus its aggregate value. Parks and the provision of green space also favorably influence land prices.

A panoramic view of Jounieh.
PRIVATE LAND MARKET

In Lebanon, the private land market, left to itself, has been unable to supply the land needed for urban development. This fact has been demonstrated by the high rate of increase in land prices in the cities of Lebanon, a rate that is higher than either the rate of urban growth or the general rise in prices.

As price reflects the balance between supply and demand, continuously high prices indicate that the supply of land is lagging behind demand. The reason for this is the peculiar character of the urban land market. Land can be held as an investment with relatively little penalty—some maintenance costs but not necessarily depreciation. Thus, when demand for urban land is expected to be high, investors can rather easily hold land vacant in anticipation of future capital gains rather than develop it for current use and income. This speculative withholding of land in turn reduces the supply of land still further and forces prices up even more.

High prices for land have undesirable effects on the objectives of urban development. They force the public authorities to reduce the scale of their building programs for social housing, and they force both public and private development farther out into the city region, in a search for lower-priced land, which in turn spreads high land prices over a very large radius and also leads to greater urban sprawl, with its inefficient use of transport and other infrastructural services.

One of the main ways to achieve the objectives of land policy is to use measures that are directed towards avoiding undesirable development simultaneously with measures that will influence planned development. This approach was formulated by a United Nations seminar, as follows:

"The implementation of a comprehensive plan for urban land use is dependent upon the coordinated actions of public authorities in two main fields:

a. Direct public action to change the urban environment;

b. Influencing private decisions by legal, administrative, fiscal and other land development regulations.

Tools for influencing and controlling private decisions include zoning, subdivision control or other means to adjust property lines, and incentives and/or sanctions to ensure that development opportunities offered by the plan are actually utilized. Otherwise, a waste of infrastructure and possibly even a failure to reach the goals of comprehensive planning may result."
The ability of the public authorities to affect the private land market is limited by factors outside their control. A variety of land-use planning and taxation measures have been employed in Lebanon, but generally only certain restricted objectives have been achieved and the fundamental functioning of the private land market has not been affected. One reason for this is the side-effects that different policy measures have, and their often misunderstood interrelation. For example, the taxation of land profits has been seen as one of the main ways to deter speculation on land. But if the rate of increase in land prices is very high and the rate of property tax low, such taxation will not have its desired effects, because expected profits will exceed the tax and the land may therefore be withheld from the market and the supply restricted. Another difficulty arising from such a tax has been in determining accurately the actual price paid for land purchased many years before. In general, taxation must be seen in terms of its fiscal objective—freeing resources for use in the public interest in urban areas—as much as in terms of a specific policy goal.

Taxation can play a role in encouraging development—for example, through site value taxation and other measures that make it expensive to hold land vacant, such as taxation of changes in land use (from agricultural to urban) at the time the public authority makes the decision. However, these must be coupled with efficient administrative measures such as expropriation, if the taxation measures do not achieve their goals. Tax measures can also lead to a long-term redistribution of activity—for example, if higher tax rates are applied to land in the central business district.

Public intervention may in fact be the only way to restore the efficient functioning of the private land market itself. A distinction should be made between built land and vacant land; it is primarily the speculative holding of vacant land that public policy strives to prevent. Construction and productive use of land should be promoted, not hampered, by a proper public policy.

A luxury beach resort, Aquamarina II, in Tabarja.
HIGH LAND PRICES

Land tenure relations affect the supply of land available to meet the growing needs arising from the development of human settlements. The planning system whereby land is allocated for long-term requirements and short-term needs, along with other land-use regulations, tries to adapt the supply of land to established needs. The predominance of private or public land-ownership relations, however, influences the success or failure of such an objective.

The price level of land (since a high price indicates a shortage) and the location of residential and other land uses may be seen as two criteria of the effectiveness of land-use planning measures in Lebanon.

The actual criterion for implementation is whether the private landowner receives maximum profit. As a result of the profit motive, land in the most desirable areas usually is allocated for the most profitable uses, which are usually commercial. The prospective income from activities carried out in structures built on the land may explain the reasons why commercial land is more valuable than land put to residential uses. The prospective income in the former is based on the turnover of goods and services, rather than on the ability of an individual to pay, based on a portion of his personal income. Therefore, in some centrally located sections, such as the central business district, where turnover is higher, commercial land prices are very high. An additional factor that influences land prices in the central business district is the interrelation between different services that are all competing for the same space.

The extent to which public authorities succeed in isolating different sectors from each other will have an influence on whether high prices from one sector influence those in lower-priced sectors (owing to the expectation of a change in use).

The differences between the commercial and residential sectors stem basically from the fact that there is no substitute for some types of commercial land, particularly in the central business district. This leads to a monopoly element in commercial rents in that district. The amount of land available in the central business district which is influenced by building regulations and topography, also affects the degree to which monopoly conditions obtain.

The higher prices of commercial land may be affected by building regulations that restrain the extension of commercial land use. The limitation of commercial land in a restricted area within the city must therefore increase land prices considerably. At the same time it leads to
pressure to change land regulations that extend the high commercial land prices to new commercial centres erected within the city area or in the city region. The enormous extension of the services sector may be seen as one of the factors in the high rate of increase in land prices in recent years.

There are substitutes for residential land; however, since some land is more desirable than other land, a differential rent accrues. Desirability is not measured solely by distance, or even by accessibility (which accounts for the effect of an improved transportation system), but also by pleasing environmental features. Thus, some suburban land is more valuable than inner-city land if transport connections are good.

It is most important to understand, however, that in residential land there is also a chain effect by which high residential land prices affect the lower-priced residential land throughout the city. The higher residential prices in certain areas influence land prices in adjoining areas, since owners expect a change to a higher price. But the majority of the population is able to spend only a restricted amount for housing, since housing payments already make up a rather large part of the individual’s total expenditures. Therefore, they are either forced to move to less desirable (usually distant) locations or to accept a worse standard of housing where they are. This relentless search for cheaper land for housing, in turn, affects prices throughout the city region, where it is expected that more land will be turned to urban use. While outlying land will still be less valuable than more centrally located urban land, it will still be much more valuable in any urban than in non-urban use.

The prices already existing in the urban area therefore influence the determination of land prices in newly urbanized areas. In the urban market, with its limited supply possibilities, a small segment of the market can have a large effect.

A view of high-income luxury apartments/houses in Antelias.
NEED FOR PLANNING

One of the difficulties in Lebanon is the lack of coordination between different public authorities, and in particular a complicated administrative mechanism for the release of land for development. The private market mechanism allocates land when a private individual feels it will maximize his profit. The public sector can only function efficiently if there is some overall body responsible for the coordination of different public institutions at the local level, which may have different interests. The purpose of such a body is to ensure that land is allocated in accord with the planning scheme, while also taking into account any changes in conditions at the time of development. The coordination of local planning schemes at the regional level, and regional schemes at the national level, is one of the difficulties in the efficient implementation of plans in Lebanon. There is always a degree of uncertainty in planning, resulting from the difficulty of forecasting what the demand for different land-uses will be, a demand that depends on so many different and interrelated factors. Therefore, the permanent revision and adaptation of long-term and medium-term plans to changed conditions is necessary for the efficient implementation of plans; the close coordination of the plans of the national authorities with those of the regional and local planning authorities is necessary for this task.

Common sites in Beirut of buildings over-extending the sidewalks.
PLANNING DECISIONS

All of the capital gains that result from changes in land use are only made possible by the decisions of public authorities to allow development. It is the investment in infrastructure that creates the aggregate increase in the value of land in newly developed areas, but it is the planning decisions that determine the distribution of those windfall gains to particular individuals. One piece of land will increase in value a hundred times while an adjacent piece on which development was not permitted will be little more valuable than before. Therefore there is great pressure on landowners to try to influence planning decisions, sometimes through illegal means.

A distinction should be made between land values in the existing city and those in newly urbanized areas. Generally, growth in population and economic activities and the forecast for future development permanently influences increasing land values. However, the rate of growth is higher in the new and rapidly developing urban settlements than in older cities. Therefore, the rate of increase in land prices is generally higher in the newly developed urban areas than in the existing city, and thus the decisions of the public authority to change land use and invest in infrastructural works are most critical here.
CONCEPT OF RESTRICTIONS

All land-use planning measures play a role in preventing undesirable development by putting restrictions on land use. But these schemes are unable to require that development proceed according to plan at a certain time. Therefore, the development scheme is implemented when landowners are willing to use their land for construction purposes. As they are mainly interested in obtaining a high profit from the sale of their land, they prefer to wait until land prices rise before allowing development. The result is that only part of the needs for land are satisfied. The policy of public land acquisition is expected to give the municipality the dominant role in executing the development scheme by enabling it to acquire land on a large enough scale to supply all the needs created by the future expansion of the urban population.

In cases in which public land acquisition is restricted to certain specific purposes and locations only, it has no effect on the land market or urban growth patterns. There is a danger that the public authorities, including the planning authority, may use their powers to adapt the planning scheme not to the needs of the growing urban community but to the needs of vested public interests—in order to promote specific schemes by functional authorities for instance.

On the other hand, the public authority runs a risk in committing itself to such large-scale land acquisition over a long time-period, since urban growth patterns and needs may be very uncertain over such a period. This may be correct for private land acquisition to meet long-term needs. There is a good deal of uncertainty in forecasting the exact location of future growth. But it is possible to forecast the quantitative needs for different land uses over time in the large city-region. New transportation technology may influence the location of expansion and may change urbanization patterns.

In addition to appropriate land-use planning measures, efficient expropriation and compensation legislation may be helpful in creating large reserves of land for future development, if payment for acquired land is made at existing use value. A comprehensive land policy using different measures, combined with an extensive public land-acquisition policy, may create a basis for ensuring land for future urban growth according to the changing needs of the society. Obviously the results of such a policy are affected by the institutional structure of the responsible public agencies and their ability to effectively rise above their particular public vested interests and coordinate their activities in the common interest.
LAND-USE CONTROLS

The ownership and land-use rights that are held by individuals, and also by state and community bodies, are in themselves legally restricted by various land-use planning measures that seek to take into account the effects of one use on other uses in a restricted area. The interrelation between different land uses requires the establishment of criteria for using the land space according to the changing needs of the community. Different land-use regulations have as their objective the adaptation of the use of land to the present and future development needs of the community. The competition between different present-day uses and the permanent conflict between the pressure of immediate needs and forecasted future growth are reflected in the specific land-use planning regulations, and especially in their actual implementation.

One of the most important steps in efficient land-use planning is for local planning authorities to create a long-term development plan and also to establish a medium-term plan of execution. Such planning ideally should be carried out in the context of land-use planning undertaken by the national and regional planning authorities, who can coordinate the future development of different areas. Obviously the primary considerations for establishing an efficient long-term land-use planning scheme are accurate knowledge of actual land use, proper estimation of present and future needs, and the ability to implement the proposed scheme.

The existence of a readily available land register, showing the exact size and use of each site, and requiring the registration of any changes in use, ownership or building, is a precondition for knowledge of current use patterns. The forecast of future development depends on the availability of statistical data on population growth and economic activity both within the planning area.

Obviously one of the factors in efficient land-use planning is regular adjustment of the formulated land-use scheme and timing its implementation to new data on emerging urban development patterns. In reality, however, in Lebanon the actual patterns of land use are fixed by the decisions of the local authorities, who are more concerned with meeting present urgent needs and satisfying private and public vested interests than with the implementation of the planning scheme. Therefore, one of the conditions for the efficient functioning of the planning system is that ultimate control of the execution of local plans must be exercised by the national and regional planning authorities. Such control might involve general approval of the detailed local schemes and also individual approval for each application deviating from the scheme.
Obviously the precondition of such control is that the local authorities actually carry out their obligations under the law to prepare detailed plans. But local authorities are not interested in preparing such schemes owing to lack of qualified manpower. In such cases they make each planning decision on an individual basis and in some cases even after a private developer has already begun his building. Such procedures often result in financial arrangements being made between the developer and the local authorities, requiring some sort of contribution, either in money or land, in return for planning permission.

Generally land-tenure relations are the basis for approved changes in the planning scheme. The planning scheme fixes how land should be used, but not when. Thus while it limits the freedom of a private landowner to use his land, it does not limit his freedom to decide not to use his land as planned for development. Therefore, the situation in Lebanon is that only part of the land planned for development is actually used by the landowners; for various personal or financial reasons, the others prefer to wait. An important part of the land planned for development is not used; and therefore the local authorities are obliged to accept the development of land not designated for such use in order to meet the community's needs. The real decision about planning is taken by the individual landowner who has the legal property rights and not by the public authorities who represent the community interests.

All land-use planning controls depend on the existence of up-to-date planning schemes. In order to overcome the difficulties or unwillingness that some local authorities have in preparing such schemes, owing to the lack of skilled manpower, the national planning authorities have been given the power to prepare such schemes for the local authorities, if the latter have not presented their own plan after a fixed time limit. In addition, the national or regional authority must approve any building permit issued by local authorities.

An additional factor in the non-implementation of planning schemes is the financial weakness of local authorities. The pressure of a continually growing urban population on the public services provided by government, particularly housing, may lead the public authorities to ignore their own planning regulations in order to erect isolated housing projects on the outskirts of the city, if they can obtain land nowhere else.
SPECIAL CONTROL MEASURES

One type of efficient land-use planning measure has as its objective the concentration of planning efforts in certain designated priority planning areas. Such an approach allows the use of some special control measures where it is undesirable or impossible to use them in all areas of human settlements. Such restrictions may be desirable for administrative or planning considerations. For example, imposing construction on all designated land throughout urban areas may create a situation in which land is abandoned rather than used for building where there is not enough demand to justify construction. Another reason for such restrictions may be the lack of financial means for the public authorities to actually expropriate all the land to which they are legally entitled. This type of legislation allows the planning authorities to fix different land-use coefficients in certain areas without changing the overall detailed land-use plan for urban areas.

The usefulness of such measures and their side-effects depend both on the substance of the measures themselves and on the administrative method by which such special planning areas are designated.

On the other hand, the designation of special areas as protected for environmental reasons, where building is not allowed, may be seen as a positive example of the use of such measures to affect future land-use patterns. The objective is to avoid unnecessary consumption of land for present needs, which will lead to irreplaceable losses of space suitable for future recreational use, thus achieving a long-term balance between different types of land use. Designating certain coastal and mountainous areas as protected reserves are efficient measures that preserve some areas from the pressure of short-term development needs.

The institutional relations and the coordination of different authorities is of great importance for the effectiveness of special land-use planning legislation. In order to avoid contradiction with the general planning framework, generally the same planning authorities must be responsible for the declaration of such specially designated areas as are authorized at the national or provincial level.

There is always the danger of a conflict between the local requirements and the national interest, which is often connected with the conflict between urgent present needs and the requirements for the future. The knowledge of the existence of such conflicts of interest may lead to the establishment of a mechanism for making a careful cost-benefit analysis, taking into account both economic and social aspects before taking any decisions on land use.
CONTROLS AND THEIR EFFECTS

Special land-use controls in designated areas may ensure price control within these areas through the use of various measures. Although such control often fuels speculation about future development in areas adjoining the planning area, such controls are able to prevent undesirable development from occurring within the area itself.

The approval of densities that are higher than allowed in the planning scheme for some buildings (which leads to higher values for that land) may reduce the supply of land in adjoining sites, owing to the expectation of a change in density regulations on those sites. Such decisions also have a negative environmental impact, creating more traffic, both pedestrian and vehicular, on the limited road surface and also reducing the light available to surrounding buildings.

Planning decisions that allow the conversion of residential land to commercial use too rapidly also lead to a restricted supply of land in the inner-city, since owners all expect that they too will benefit from such a change and thus refuse to develop their property residentially. The high prices prevent any further residential development while the neglect of deteriorating property produces blighted areas, with negative consequences for low-income groups.

If the additional value created through the planning decision is not transferred to the public authorities, the conversion of agricultural land into land for urban use, which requires planning permission, may lead to high land prices for adjoining agricultural land, owing to the expectation that such land might also be used for urban development. Such a situation in turn forces those seeking cheap land for housing to go even further from the city limits. Thus, buildings are erected without services in isolated locations. This leads to higher infrastructural costs, owing to an inefficient transportation network, and to price increases in all the undeveloped land between the new projects and the urbanized area.

Planning for green belts by denying building rights would help to make the use of vacant land within build-up areas more attractive and to eliminate fragmented development. Preemption rights and positive price controls on land may restrain the supply of land to the market when the free market price is considerably higher than the fixed prices that public authorities will pay in areas in which such rights apply. While all these various uncoordinated planning decisions may have a negative impact on prices and on the environment, there are some positive examples of planning schemes that have been carefully implemented with positive results. One important
factor is an efficient expropriation procedure, whereby the urban extension plan serves as the legal authority for expropriation. In addition, by carefully regulating the change of land from agricultural to urban use, speculation in land as a commodity may be eliminated, provided that landowners know their land will be expropriated if needed for urban use. Such regulation could be ensured by allowing changes in land use to occur mainly through the acquisition of public land by local authorities.

The continuous and high rate of increase in land prices has many effects. First of all, the increasing cost of land is reflected in a general rise in housing costs, of which land costs are a component. This puts a strain on the low-income groups in the population, forcing them to acquire housing further away from the city, raising their transportation expenses and requiring them to travel. High land prices are also responsible for high densities within the city and for lack of open spaces for parks and recreation. Finally, these high prices mean that many people will not be able to afford any land, and hence lead to squatting.

The level of commercial land prices is less influenced by policy measures and more by the role of a city in the international economy (financial, commercial and tourist). The highest commercial land prices were found in Beirut, for example, as it was one of the leading centres of the world financial market.

The impact of commercial land prices on residential prices depends on many factors, among them the careful implementation of land-use regulations that make it difficult to change the use of land from one to the other. This results in a large differential between commercial and residential price levels. On the other hand, the flexible implementation of land-use regulations, allowing changes in use to be made easily, leads to higher residential land prices as a result of the added value of an expected change in use.

A mixed-income residential area in Beirut.
SPECIAL LAND PROBLEMS

The rate of urban population growth, and usually urban concentration as well, is very high in Lebanon. At the same time, owing to high inflation rates, lack of alternative investments, and weak taxation and planning systems, investment in land is relatively more attractive in the country. The combination of these factors results in a greater degree of speculative holding of land, with greater increases in land prices, which in turn encourages this type of investment. The degree of the problem created by the private land market is accentuated by the inability of government institutions to respond to the problem.

The pressures on land prices in the cities of Lebanon are accentuated by the existence of small areas of foreign-oriented commercial and expensive residential land use. The fact that land-use planning regulations are usually weak encourages land speculators to believe that they will be allowed a land-use change that will put them in this high-priced and highly profitable sector, and thus further fuels speculation and has a chain effect on land prices.

It is essential to develop a scale of priorities that determines which measures are the most important to implement in order to meet their development goals and new methods of financing urban development.

Several different strategies may all be of use in dealing with the problems of the city. First, there are measures to influence the private land market and restrain the high rate of increase in land prices that is making land too expensive for large sectors of the population. Secondly, there are measures to influence directly the development of areas of urban extension in order to ensure a more satisfactory pattern of land use there.

The first strategy depends on the existence of accurate evaluation and assessment machinery for the preparation of an accurate and up-to-date land register. Without such information, urban land-use control measures will be ineffective. It is possible to adapt this method by preparing the needed information on the basis of special training. The experience of using permanent land evaluation and publishing the results shows that the costs of such a system are smaller than the results—a higher income from the taxation of land profits. The corrected land evaluation is also one of the basic elements for paying compensation and shortening the legal procedure in the case of expropriation.

An efficiently organized land register would show exactly the size of the land site, ownership of the site, and the price of the land according to different time periods. The system of permanent land evaluation and the publication
of the land value in special maps might allow taxes to be collected according to real land values. Such a system might also ensure that evaluators make more honest land evaluations, since their work would be controlled by the public, which could compare the land value map with the real land price in the market.

Given effective land mapping, there are some measures that can be taken to affect the private land market and restrain price increases. Primarily these are stricter and more comprehensive zoning control and the taxation of land profits. The objective of the first is to limit the areas that are affected by pressure for speculative land purchases; the taxation of land profits seeks to reduce the rewards of investing in land. However, given the greater pressures of the private land market, it is difficult for Lebanon to bend the market to public goals. Instead, policy measures are often themselves modified, owing to the pressure of the private land market and the need to supply land for urban growth.

With adequate information, taxation is one of the ways to restrict the increase in land prices and to transfer a part of the additional value created through urban growth to the community. The lack of permanent land price evaluation or of a system to control evaluation through publishing land value maps prevented taxes from being collected according to the official established rates. Some countries use the more efficient method of taxing vacant land in urban areas at the market value. One of the good examples of such a system is the Syrian Arab Republic, which introduced a tax rate that is graduated according to the value of the vacant site.

The above measures all attempt to influence the land market in existing urban areas, which will have a long-term effect on the further development of the city region. But the urgent need of the city, where two-thirds of the population cannot afford any land at all, is for development policies that directly affect the new, growing areas of the city and the members of the population who are without services.

It is more important to ensure for future generations an adequate pattern of city growth than to attempt to meet all the housing needs of the present. The first objective of the public land policy should be to secure enough land, with service, for all in the urban areas. This intervention must be based on the transfer of land needed for future urban development from private or church to public ownership. Ownership itself is not enough: it is important that the public authority does not itself develop a vested interest in disposing of the land for its own profit, and releases enough land to meet all the needs arising from urban growth. Thus there must be close coordination with the planning authority.
The major obstacles to such a policy are the opposition of the landowner strata, on the one hand, and the lack of financial means to carry out such a scheme, on the other hand. It may be possible to reduce the financial expenditure of the public authorities for land acquisition by introducing different legislative measures.

Another method for reducing the public expenditure is through the participation of the landowners in land development schemes. The participation method is based not on making monetary payment for the acquired land but on awarding construction rights or even building space, not necessarily directly on the site belonging to the landowner but in the area in which the site is located.

Schemes are important to be carried out not only in existing city centres but also, and perhaps primarily in rural areas, where the creation of new urban settlements as the centre of development in a rural region, is one of the conditions for balanced development of human settlements.

In summary, both the high rate of urban growth and the high rate of increase in land prices resulting from a speculative private market, require that land policy concentrate its efforts on publicly owned land in areas of urban extension. Given the limited financial resources of the public authorities, such land should be developed on a comprehensive basis, but through site-servicing and other schemes that do not involve large public financial commitments. Only comprehensive development will ultimately influence the private land market; and only by such comprehensive development can the public authorities ensure that neither social segregation nor squatter settlements will become permanent features of urban life.

*For more information on the issues discussed in this section refer to: World Bank Reports by H. Richardson, D. Shoup, W. Doebele, and Dunkerly, and publications by J. Linn, W. Doebele, H. Darin, and B. Renaud. (See REFERENCES on page 87)

High-rise buildings on very steep slopes overlooking the Bay of Jounieh.
General view of Byblos and its port in the 1940s.

SOURCE: Lebanese Archives
THE SITUATION IN LEBANON

This section presents general informational background about Lebanon, that directly or indirectly have an effect on the urban development. It starts with a general data, the living conditions, and the economy. It continues with the housing issues and the government involvement in it. Then it discusses the political system, the bureaucracy and its barriers. It concludes with the nature of "planning" in Lebanon.
GENERAL DATA

The number of people in Lebanon is unclear. Since obtaining independence in 1943 Lebanon has preferred not to conduct a population census, owing to the fear that the results might strain the political formula by which it is governed. The last census of the Lebanese population of 793,426 with a Christian majority on the ratio of 6 to 5. This has been the basis of the political formula for assigning political and administrative offices for nearly five decades. Since 1932 population estimates and projections have had to be made on the basis of administrative records and studies by foreign consultants.

The rugged and highly diversified topography of Lebanon is perhaps the reason behind Lebanon's heterogeneous communal structure. For centuries, religious minorities in the Middle East sought refuge in the mountains of Lebanon, where they developed, with a minimum of interference, autonomous confessional structures within the universal Islamic state—Umayyad, Abbasid, or Ottoman. Its entire decision-making process is conditioned by its religious composition. The Muslim communities consist of the Sunnis, Shi'as, and Druze, while the Christian communities consist of Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Syrian Orthodox, Assyrian and Chaldean Catholics, Armenians, and diverse Protestant groupings.

The Lebanese, more than any other Arab people, are dispersed throughout all regions of the world. About two and one-half million Lebanese citizens reside in foreign lands, constituting a diaspora of direct importance to the modernization of Lebanon. One-third of these live in the United States; a little more than one-third live in Latin America, principally Brazil and Argentina; the remainder are distributed throughout Africa, Europe, the oil-producing countries of the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand. Emigration to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Libya is usually of temporary nature. Almost all such emigrants returned to Lebanon, before the civil conflicts, after they had accumulated enough capital to start them off in a business venture at home.

The reasons for emigration have been various: some have wanted to escape confessional conflicts, some to avoid working the barren mountain slopes, and others, as education broadened their vision, have seen better opportunities for raising families in lands beyond the seas, and last but not least, the conflicts in the past eleven years forced thousands of families to flee the country for safety reasons. The New World has provided the Lebanese with opportunities to engage in work they would not have undertaken at home. Status, face-saving considerations,
and modes of life prevailing in Lebanon have rendered it difficult for the average Lebanese to indulge freely in menial work. Yet in foreign climes they have been ready to do any job without the fear of cultural constraints. They have been able to live simply in their adopted country and year after year save money until they have accumulated enough to invest in, with the dream of returning to their old country.

The fact that most emigrants before the civil war were Christian and Druze was largely due to their religious minority status. Muslims tend to find security in being members of the dominant community of the Middle East, and to prefer it to a minority status in a foreign land. Remittances from emigrants helped finance the education of many poor villagers and sponsor the establishment of schools, libraries, and charitable organizations. The wealthier among those who returned often invested in business, industry, or modern farming, another significant contribution to development and modernization. About 50,000 original emigrants were estimated to have returned between 1944 and 1962.

An important result of Lebanese emigration has been to loosen class immobility. Poor families living as clients of rich landlords have been able, using funds obtained from relatives abroad, to purchase land from the landlords, send their sons to schools, and undertake business ventures.
LIVING CONDITIONS

During the late 1960's, the general standard of living in Lebanon was comfortable and higher than in any Arab country. Regional variations existed in the standards of housing and sanitation and in the quality of the diet, but most Lebanese were adequately sheltered and fed. Known for their ingenuity and resourcefulness in trading and in entrepreneurship, they have shown a marked ability to create prosperity in a country which is not richly endowed with natural resources. Economic gain is a strong motivating power in all social groups. Those who have risen from humble beginnings to the ranks of successful merchants or businessmen are accorded much social approval and recognition. The economic and social advantages enjoyed by a relatively small high-income group are subject to some criticism; nevertheless, many persons in low- and middle-income groups strive to attain similar advantages.

Many problems affecting the general welfare, both in the countryside and in the urban areas, in the late 1960's stemmed from high prices and the massive movement of the rural population to the cities. The rural exodus has been linked to rapid soil erosion, fragmented landholdings, and a distinct preference of most Lebanese for urban living and for urban occupations. The population increase in the cities, especially in Beirut, has created severe housing shortages for those who were unable to pay the high rents of modern apartment buildings. It also aggravated the problems of urban transportation and planning. The cost of living, which had been steadily rising since the 1950's, diminished the purchasing power of already small rural incomes and threatened the consumption patterns of low- and middle-income groups in the cities. Of special concern were the high rentals and school fees and also the prices of food and clothing. Many urban households lived on a deficit budget, and indebtedness was widespread in some parts of the countryside. The steady rise of prices and the lack of low-cost public housing were a source of public concern and the subjects of many political debates.

Because of urbanization and the growth of industrial employment, family units, notably in the cities, have become somewhat less cohesive and are less able to function as a self-sufficient welfare unit. Since the beginning of the 1960's the Government has begun to assume some of the welfare functions traditionally carried out by the family and by local religious communities. More than 160,000 persons insured under the Social Security Law of 1965 have become eligible for family allowances and severance benefits. A major program for the rehabilitation of depleted rural areas was launched in
1962, and the first phase of large-scale public housing project study was begun in 1967. Of a total 1,080 million Lebanese pounds (at time when L.L.1=$0.3246) projected by the Five-Year Development Program 1965–69, some L.L.317 million was allocated to social services, including urban renewal, public health, low-cost housing, and social security.

Because of the gentle climate and a generally adequate diet, health conditions are relatively favorable. Poor food hygiene and inadequate sanitation in many areas, however, have resulted in a high incidence of gastrointestinal and parasitic diseases. Medical facilities and personnel are adequate; in 1966, there was 1 physician for every 1,400 inhabitants. Because the majority of physicians and hospitals were located in the cities, mostly in Beirut, health services were not readily available in some rural areas. This disadvantage, however, was reduced by the availability of motor transportation in most parts of the country. The most remote village is less than 75 miles from Beirut and much less than that from other urban hospital facilities.

A survey of educational and cultural levels, social conditions and standards of housing, health and sanitation was prepared by a French study group for the Lebanese Government in 1960. The survey revealed that in the less developed regions the deficiencies were traceable to poor sanitation, the absence of electricity, and to the lack of social services.

The rising trend in the cost of rent, education, food, and clothing is a major source of concern for salary and wage earners. An official cost-of-living index is lacking, but it is estimated that this index rose by 4.4 percent between 1964 and 1965.

Rural housing and food, although variable in sophistication, are generally adequate. Cash incomes, however, are insufficient and often fail to cover the cost of basic personal and household items. Since education is important, many villagers must borrow money to send their children to secondary school. The importance of family ceremonies and festivals necessitates hospitality and expenditures frequently beyond the resources of the individual farmer, which may lead him into debt. Exorbitant interest rates are charged for borrowed money.

Soil depletion and the lack of potable water supplies are among the difficulties of daily existence in the less developed areas. Subsistence farmers, who make up about half to one-third of the agricultural population, consume most of their produce as food. The rest sell varying proportions of their crop for cash, which is spent for cooking oil, salt, tea and spices, and such personal items as safety razors, soap, combs, and toothbrushes.
In the prosperous villages, notably in those near the coastal cities in Mount Lebanon Province, the farmers supplement incomes from cash crops by the sale of handicraft items and by wage-earning periods in the nearest city. In these villages, personal items, such as flashlights, transistor radios, wristwatches, and toilet articles, are widely used, and most families have at least some manufactured household goods. Local recreation facilities may include a sport field and a hall for amateur theatrical performances.

City dwellers may choose from a variety of employment opportunities in factories, offices, hotels, and in trading and service establishments. Despite the relatively easy access to cash earning jobs, few people in the middle- and lower-income groups can afford to purchase luxuries. Those who manage to accumulate extra money, usually by working at several jobs concurrently, prefer to spend it on modern appliances, articles of personal adornment, and on recreation. The first concern of most families, however, is to save money to send at least one of their children to secondary school, preferably to a private one. Recreational and cultural opportunities available in the cities, especially in Beirut, also much sought after. The Lebanese enjoy concerts, theaters and film shows, nightclub performances, and conversations with friends in a coffeehouse.
THE ECONOMY

The economy is based on private enterprise subject to few Government controls. It is strongly service-oriented and depends heavily on income from abroad.

Trade, banking, tourism, transportation, communications, and miscellaneous other services generate about two-thirds of the national income. Agriculture, industry, and construction account for the remaining third. About one-fourth of the national income is derived from the sale of services to foreigners.

Agriculture employs about half the labor force; industry, less than one-tenth; yet their contributions to national income are approximately the same. The Labor Code of 1946 provides standards for working conditions and guidelines for labor relations. Enforcement of this code is lax, and the position of labor is weak.

Direct participation by the Government in economic activity, apart from its policy and regulatory functions, is relatively minor. It operates a few public utilities through autonomous agencies and carries out a small number of development projects. Taxation is predominantly indirect. A little over one-tenth of Government revenue is derived from income taxes.

The distribution of income is uneven. Four percent of the population receives about 32 percent of all income, while 50 percent of the population receives only about 18 percent. A similar situation exists within individual economic sectors. Analysis of the economy is hampered by a lack of essential statistics.

Lebanon's economic system had been largely conditioned by its strategic location, ethnic heterogeneity, and external contacts. Its generally laissez-faire economy stood in contrast to the growing socialization of the economics of other countries in the Arab world. Its free market, the diversity of its product, and its various invisible incomes (private capital inflows, transportation, and tourism) had been a source of strength and stability to the economy, providing Lebanon with higher standard of living than most countries in the Middle Eastern region, and continued economic progress in spite of recurrent political crises. The contribution of the various sectors to the domestic product shows that Lebanon was essentially a service economy. Almost 70 percent of its gross domestic product came from so-called tertiary sources and only about 25 percent from agriculture and industry.

Banks had played a relatively minor role in Lebanon's industrial development. In 1965 banks supplied only about
35 percent of total industrial capital outlays made in that year. Although relatively stable politically before 1975, Lebanon had not succeeded in attracting significant Western capital for industrial investment. Of the comparatively small amount of non-Lebanese capital invested in industry, 55 percent was Arab (Saudi, Kuwaiti, Syrian), 25 percent European, 9 percent American, and 11 percent came from diverse foreign groups.

Capital was generally secured from immediate family savings, the pooled resources of cousins or friends, emigrants, business profits, and foreign speculators. While banks which supply capital at high rates of interest were often available, there was no one major source to supply long-term loans at low interest rates.

Agriculture was the poorest paying sector in the country. It was possible for extensive landowners to depend on agriculture exclusively and be relatively well off, but small landowners who have no income other than that of their land tend to be poor.

Land ownership varied in size according to geographical location. In the mountainous regions the landholdings were small, while in the plains properties were larger. About 80 percent of the agricultural land was owner-operated, 18 percent being operated by tenants and the rest operated collectively by a village, an institution, or a waqf (trust). Lebanon's laissez-faire economy set few limits on land ownership and no restrictions on the kinds of crops grown.

The limited role of government has been a positive factor prompting modernization in the past, by permitting the private sector and entrepreneurial incentives to develop unhindered. Modernization also has been encouraged by such coordinated forces as the radical elite, communications media, foreign consultants, and business enterprise itself. Business firms as agents of change deserve special notice.

History and physical location, together with extensive cultural connections with the West and the Middle East, have made Lebanon a major trading and exchange center in the region. In 1967 the Beirut Chamber of Commerce and Industry listed 6,380 registered business firms in the country, including major banks, insurance companies, airlines, oil companies, and chemical industries. Lebanese, Syrian, Saudi, Kuwaiti, and Western entrepreneurs in Beirut provided the city with the experience of some of the region's finest business innovators, who often have had extensive dealings in Europe, Latin America, the United States, Africa, and the oil-rich countries of the Middle East.
HOUSING

An extremely important process of social change, by no means unique to Lebanon, had been the growing migration from village to city. In the past, the village, tribe, or farm was the principal unit of habitation. In pre-civil war Lebanon, a typical village consisted of some 500 houses, built close together around a church or a mosque, with the village land lying around it all and most inhabitants engaged in agriculture. The village is administered internally by a municipal council, while its relations with the central government in such matters as registration of births, deaths, and testimonies are conducted through an elected mukhtar (mayor). Except in rare cases, villagers own their homes and enough land to guarantee them basic subsistence.

In spite of the push from the village and the pull by the city, there was not, in pre-civil war time, a discernible shortage in housing; Beirut had many vacant apartment buildings whose landlords would have rather kept an apartment vacant than rented it at a low price. Many oil-rich, non-Lebanese landlords had purchased luxury buildings in Beirut as security and not necessarily as a source of added income. Often a part of such buildings was reserved for the landlord or his family for occasional sojourns in Beirut. Keeping the apartments unrented made the building easier to sell, a factor of considerable importance, since Lebanese law protects the tenant in many ways. Once a rental contract is made it is extremely difficult for the landlord to raise the rent or evict a paying tenant. For these reasons a landlord must have carefully considered the amount of rent and the type of tenant if future legal difficulties were to be avoided.

Rent was relatively high and trade unions had been pressing the government to build low-cost housing. Yet the government's 1965 decision to undertake housing projects for the poor had met a great deal of skepticism, even by the poor, since housing had been an exclusively private enterprise. The skepticism had been justified. Attempts to start projects had ended in failure with some abandoned for lack of funds or by diversions of funds to other projects.

The major Lebanese cities, like most modern ones elsewhere, faced rapid development requiring new technical skills and organizational capabilities. Such resources were rare and their build-up was slow, tedious, and unassured. Generally speaking Beirut has a modern mechanism for every service it performs, yet somehow the historical character of the city determines actual performance.
RURAL HOUSING

The rural housing is usually a two-level limestone structure with a flat earthen roof. The two levels are generally superimposed, but in hilly areas they are staggered so that the roof of the lower level forms a terrace which is flush with the floor of the upper level. Separate entrances provide access to the upper and lower levels, respectively. Inside, staircases are lacking and the upper level is reached by a wooden ladder or by a series of stones which project from the wall. The flat roofs are ornamented with potted plants and are used as a reception area for guests. During the summer months when the interior of the house becomes overheated, many families sleep on the roof under a tent made of brush. Most houses have only one room each on the upper and lower levels. The latter serves as a stable or storage room. The upper level, sometimes supported by masonry pillars and arches, is used as living quarters. There are few windows. Most of them are unglazed and close with wooden shutters. Inside, the houses are dark; to make the rooms appear lighter the plastered interior walls are whitewashed or are painted a pale blue.

Dwellings with red tile roofs are typical of the relatively successful rural resident. These structures indicate prosperity and prestige and are usually owned by persons whose relatives have earned money abroad. Many of the
tile-roofed houses have only one room on each level. Others have additional rooms upstairs and more windows, although these are usually unglazed.

More elaborate versions of the tile-roofed house are owned by wealthy villagers in the rural communities of Mount Lebanon and North Lebanon Provinces. The floor plan is rectangular although it is sometimes modified into a slight U-shape by building additional rooms on either side of the front door. One of these added rooms may be a kitchen; the other, a washroom. On the upper level is a central living room from which one or more rooms open to each side. Windows are surrounded by an ornamental triple arch and often have colored glass panes, divided by lead mullions which form round or pointed arches. Shutters, made of rectangular panels, may be drawn over the windows. Doors are sometimes made elaborate with ornamentation.

The living quarters of a simple rural dwelling are divided into a front and back section. Curtains, or a tall cabinet with doors and drawers act as room dividers. The furnishings of the front portion may consist of a long wooden bench, with a back and arms which are sometimes fitted with hard, flat cushions. A table surrounded by wooden stools is in the center of the room. Some families also have a large, rectangular dining room table placed against one wall in the front part of the room.
URBAN HOUSING

Adaptations of the moderately prosperous traditional rural dwellings may be found in the older sections of provincial towns and of the larger cities. Since the 1940's, however, the number of these buildings has diminished. Those which survived are often in a poor state of repair and are inhabited by families of modest means. The homes of wealthy urban residents are patterned after modern European-style villas. They are usually built in the suburbs and are surrounded by spacious gardens.

The massive migration of the rural population to the urban areas created acute housing shortages in the larger cities, especially in Beirut, during the 1960's. The population increase in the capital also placed considerable strain on public services. Water shortages were frequent, and sanitation services were overburdened and often inadequate.

This movement also precipitated a boom in high-rise apartment house construction, consisting mostly of seven-story structures, with each floor having three or four apartments, equipped with complete bathroom and kitchen facilities. Although these apartments were freely available, they were renting for prices that only wealthy Lebanese and high-income foreign technicians could afford. Middle- and lower-income groups lived in smaller, two- to three-story apartment buildings, which were erected during the early 1940's. Many lacked adequate sanitary and kitchen facilities. One bathroom was often shared by several tenants. Workers from the countryside lived in small wooden shacks in suburbs. As the low- and middle-income group failed to find housing in the central sections, several suburbs formed around the capital.

Traditional houses in Beirut.

High-rise apartment building in Beirut.
GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSING

Since the 1960's the Government has been active in urban renewal and public housing. To relieve traffic congestion and parking problems in Beirut, a Master Plan was submitted by city planners and was approved by Government decree in 1952. It provided for a radial system of streets leading from the commercial center to the outer portions of the city, and it designated land to be set aside for seven public parks.

The Popular Housing Law of 1965 provided for the rehabilitation of substandard dwellings and introduced new methods for financing low-cost housing construction, whereby the Government extended guarantees of mortgage payments to builders of these units. The dwellings were to be constructed on land owned by the Government or on property which the Government has the right to expropriate. This housing may not be rented, but must be purchased by the tenants on an installment plan, which may extend over a period from 8 to 13 years.

The long-range purpose of the housing program is the creation of small, self-sufficient communities which include schools, shops, and recreational facilities. According to Government officials, an estimated 40,000 housing units should have been constructed between 1965 and 1972 under the law. In 1967 the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs announced plans to commence the first stage of the building program with the construction of some 4,000 units, of which 1,200 will be in Hadeth, a southern suburb of Beirut; 1,300 in Mekalles, another suburb to the east of the capital; 500 in Tyre; and 1,000 in Tripoli. Eligibility to purchase the dwellings was limited to applicants with incomes ranging from L.L.2,500 to L.L.12,000 per year. The cost of an apartment varied from L.L.4,200 to L.L.22,500, depending on its size. None of these were realized.

A view of the entertainment/hotel district in Beirut (1975).
SANITATION

The major cities, including Beirut, Sidon, Tripoli, Baalbek, and Zahlah, about 25 miles east of Beirut, have chlorinated potable water. The supply of water is generally adequate along the coast and in the mountain areas, but there are shortages in many villages in the Bekaa Valley and in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, along the boundary with Syria. In the mountain districts snow-fed springs are abundant, and nearly every village has one of these springs in its immediate vicinity. Spring water is used for drinking and for irrigation. In the villages of the interior, water is obtained from wells or from cisterns filled with rainwater. Many of the wells and springs, however, are contaminated by sewage.

Some villages and small towns have communal water sources, which also serve as collecting points for water sellers who serve remote communities where the water supply is inadequate.

Sewage disposal systems operate in some of the major cities along the coast, but treatment plants are lacking. In Beirut raw sewage is discharged into the sea, although plans for a disposal plant were in progress 1967. A few of the large towns have garbage collection and disposal services, but in the crowded sections collection is frequently neglected. Garbage is collected by the latest-model garbage trucks. Before it reaches the trucks, however, the garbage is piled on street corners and occasionally strewn in the streets by children, animals, rain, or wind.

Toilet facilities are lacking or are inadequate in many rural areas. Cesspools or septic tanks are used in the smaller towns. Open-pit privies serve as latrines in the villages. Night soil is used as a fertilizer.

There are extensive legal provisions regarding sanitary standards for various foods, including milk and meat, and for the inspection for restaurants and slaughterhouses. These provisions, however, are not always enforced because of the shortage of trained inspectors.
Lebanese politics, like the society it represents, is a mix of tradition and modernity, feudal vestiges and capitalism, confessionalism and secularism, democracy and plutocracy, rugged individualism and narrow communalism.

In the past, competition for parliamentary seats was limited to the major families with special political influence in their respective areas of origin. Despite the entrenchment of such traditional norms in parliamentary politics, the electoral scene was slowly changing. First, voter participation was found to be increasing. Second, there was a broadening of political recruitment and an increase in the number of presumably more qualified professional people.

With respect to the presidency, although the formula excludes all non-Maronites, the fact that the election is carried out directly by parliament for a six-year term usually ensured the election of experienced men. Of the seven presidents elected since independence, the first two were outstanding lawyers, the third was the head of the army (elected to restore normalcy in the wake of 1958 civil conflict), the fourth was a prominent journalist and diplomat, the fifth was a prominent za'im (chief) and an experienced politician, the sixth and seventh, were the outcome of the civil conflicts to satisfy a broader range of self-interest groups (in this case Syria and Israel), were a lawyer and a businessman respectively.

The Constitution gives the president substantial powers and a major role in national consolidation assigned to him by tradition. The president is expected to provide national leadership and to reconcile divergent factions. He performs this delicate function through the cabinet, the mechanism through which prominent representatives of the confessions are brought together to govern in a spirit of consensus. Since the president selects a prominent Sunni leader to form a cabinet, and since he usually presides over the council of ministers, it is primarily his leadership and only secondarily that of the premier that determines general policy orientation.

In all political systems money becomes translated into power. Lebanon's entrepreneurs and traders participate in the governing process in many ways, by running for a seat in parliament, by helping finance those who would favor their liberal economic policy, and by cultivating the attention of presidents, premiers, and cabinet ministers. Through the services of a pertinent bureaucrat, they may evade, delay, or "bend" a policy measure they consider contrasting to their interest.
THE BUREAUCRACY

Reforming the bureaucracy and instituting development projects under the mantle of planning have been two important responses of the Lebanese government to modernizing needs. Governmental response to the need for better housing, education, agriculture, industry, tourism, and welfare services of all kinds must be implemented by the bureaucracy. Hence, from the 1960s and on Lebanon’s successive cabinets have been attempting changes in the national bureaucracy that would enable them both to implement the development projects more effectively and to raise the level of public service more generally.

Bureaucracy, like the governing bodies, is restricted by personal, factional, and confessional considerations. As a result, it can make only limited contributions to modernization.

The Lebanese bureaucracy has grown with the increasing responsibilities of the state from 4,000 employees in 1930 to about 25,000 in 1972. The Constitution states that the president appoints all officials except those whose method of appointment is otherwise defined by law. Presidential appointments require the signature of the prime minister and the approval of the cabinet. The president is not the head of the bureaucracy, nor is the prime minister. Rather the cabinet, as a council of ministers presided over by the president, controls the bureaucracy, acting as its manager and supervisor. Although bureaucrats once appointed tend to be entrenched the council of ministers holds ultimate control over them.

The politicians who usually head ministries are usually so involved in political manoeuvring that they depend heavily on upper bureaucrats (directors-general of ministries and directors of services) to formulate programs and manage the affairs of their respective ministries. Upper bureaucrats, therefore, play key roles in the execution of policy. They can speed those policy measures they approve or slow down or arrest those which they dislike.

Upper bureaucrats are permanent while cabinets change frequently, and ministers depend heavily on bureaucrats for policy formulation and execution. The great majority of upper bureaucrats are well educated. The education of these bureaucrats, however, does not free them of the formalism and ritualism prevailing in the traditional Lebanese culture. In their relations with the public, they reflect many of the traditional attributes which hinder the effective operation of modern governmental services.

*For more information on the Lebanese Bureaucracy refer to E. Salem’s "Modernization Without Revolution."
Different categories of bureaucrats could be grouped as follows:

1. The Petty Official: Belonging to the lowest rungs of the bureaucratic ladder, the petty official usually holds an elementary school certificate, is a clerk, and is married with a large family. His appearance, judging from his tie, shirt, and suit (all important criteria of status in the Lebanese bureaucracy), usually betray his limited means. His skills are principally clerical and he is accustomed both to accommodating his superiors and to benefiting from the citizenry.

2. The Petty Intellectual: Consisting of school teachers on the state payroll, this category draws from the lower middle class. The petty intellectual tends to be a successful member of an extended family who, through his own effort, has received an education and secured government employment.

3. Traditionally Oriented Petty Official: The traditional bureaucrat, lacking in academic qualifications, usually owes his position to an influential za'im, although the practice of flooding the bureaucracy with unqualified employees as a means of solving employment problems is less serious in Lebanon than in other parts of the Arab East. The traditional official fits the caricature often depicted of the bureaucrat as clean and tidy, a newspaper in hand, a shoe-shine man at his feet and an errand boy serving him. The acceptance of bribes and presents is conventional, provided these are offered with style, for the image of the bureaucrat as a "clean" person, not susceptible to bribery, must be kept intact.

4. High-Level, Modernist Official: This type includes the university graduate who tends to occupy a top position in the bureaucracy and is anxious to follow a middle course between professional commitment and accommodation to a lax system. As a result he tends to be overworked, being caught between the concentration of powers in his hands and the inefficiency of his subordinates. This high-level modern official works closely with the political leadership, which is needed to assure promotions, and maintain or secure desired positions.

5. The Radical: The radical consists of individuals emerging from among the most efficient members of the high-level modern group. The radical often rejects established procedures and bureaucratic patterns. While the radical reformers in the bureaucracy are few in number, their responsibility and potential for effecting change are substantial.
Many development projects have often been delayed or poorly executed because of inefficient bureaucratic supervision. A number of major barriers will need to be removed before the bureaucracy can assume a greater role in modernization. Two categories of barriers may be distinguished, one administrative and the other socio-cultural. As a rule, the former are easier to resolve than the latter in that they can be overcome directly through legislation. Socio-cultural barriers, in contrast, may be so deeply rooted in custom and traditional behavior that they defy legislative correction.

ADMINISTRATIVE BARRIERS

Administrative barriers are the institutional and behavioral patterns that impede the effectiveness of the bureaucracy and consequently hinder its contribution to modernization.

a. Centralization: The Lebanese bureaucratic structure, modelled like the French, is highly centralized. Minor administrative matters from outlying areas tend to be referred to the capital, slowing the bureaucratic process, overburdening and depriving the upper-level bureaucrats of opportunities to assume more creative administrative roles. Lower-level bureaucrats rely excessively on their superiors, thereby diminishing even their local effectiveness. Lebanese often complain of administrative circuitousness—the large number of offices they must visit and long list of signatures they must collect before a routine transaction can be completed. Upper bureaucrats are as involved in routine as are the petty bureaucrats and must affix their signatures to hundreds of ordinary transactions daily. Decentralization and deconcentration of powers have been mistrusted because it is believed that local officials tend to be too inexperienced to assume final responsibility for administrative action, a point of view which is both self-justifying and self-defeating.

b. Outmoded System: Added to excessive centralization and concentration are barriers in financial administration, employee training, and personnel. Budgeting is inadequately related to program planning. The Ministry of Finance and the Court of Accounts exercise unusually detailed controls over day-to-day expenditures. The hand methods of accounting used are slow. Educational preparation for bureaucratic positions has been limited and is too classical to meet practical needs. Many laws designed to modernize the bureaucracy have been passed in the last two decades but not all have been put into effect. New positions are often left unstaffed, presumably because of budgetary considerations. Role duplication is pervasive. Information available to ministry does not systematically and routinely flow to others, not only because of inefficiency, but also at times because of the personal and political rivalries of ministers. Poor coordination between offices may place the burden of completing a transaction on the citizen,
who may have to follow his transaction personally from office to office.

c. Technical: Still other administrative barriers may be physical and technical. Inadequate buildings, rudimentary storage facilities, and antiquated filing systems are standard elements on the Lebanese bureaucratic scene. Lack of central heating or air conditioning, poor lighting facilities, and inadequate office furnishing contribute to low morale. The offices of many directorates are interspersed throughout the city, thereby hindering control and supervision and making for more complicated procedures for the public. Machines such as typewriters, calculators, or computers are not available in sufficient number, partially as a result of budgetary limitations. But, in addition and perhaps more important, the bureaucracy is unable to use effectively the machines it has or to respond to the potentials of modern office technology. Although modern office equipment are found in a number of offices, a great amount of work is still done by hand.

SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS

Socio-cultural barriers are the deeply imbedded customs and attitudes of the people which form traditional barriers against rapid modernization and which determines the orientation of the government and the bureaucracy.

a. Confessionalism: Since confessionalism, nepotism, bribery, and an attitude of laxity all have deep roots in the fabric of Lebanese society, it is not surprising that political administration faces pervasive obstacles to effectiveness. The Lebanese Constitution is ambivalent regarding the role of confessionalism in the bureaucracy. As a result, positions in the bureaucracy are distributed among the various sects in accordance with strict traditions and regulations. Sectarian policy has fostered corruption and political interference in the bureaucracy, made the bureaucracy a refuge for unqualified individuals, and weakened internal supervisory controls. A superior may not be able to discipline a subordinate belonging to a different sect, and executives may hesitate to delegate authority for the same reason. In both cases the smooth functioning of administration is obstructed.

b. Nepotism: Nepotism in Lebanon, as in many developing countries, is related to strong family loyalties. Given the purely traditional perspective that still prevails in Lebanon, it is not only socially permissible, but mandatory that a za'ım appoint members of his immediate and extended family to prestigious posts in the bureaucracy. The qualified son of an ordinary citizen has little chance to win a post when pitted against an equal or less-qualified son of a prominent leader. Although it is no longer possible to appoint sons and cousins to high posts in the administration if these are obviously without qualifications,
a qualified system of nepotism continues to prevail, super-imposing added constraints and external loyalties on the bureaucracy. A bureaucrat who owes his appointment to confessionalism and nepotism is likely, at the bidding of either patron, to delay, derail, or otherwise obstruct regular administrative procedure.

c. Bribery: This is not easily defined, since an act of bribery in one culture may be an extension of social niceties in another, providing another source of practical conflict with standards of objectivity and impersonality. While some social scientists rationalize the role of corruption in developing nations, reformers in these nations usually have been dedicated to its elimination. Lebanese, and indeed, Ottoman, experience proves that legislation usually has been an ineffective remedy. In a culture where the peasant is expected to bring his superior a gift (usually a sample of his produce) before he may ask for his wastah (intercession), and in which personal elements generally are decisive, the possibility of completely removing bribery—a lubricant familiar to the citizen seeking his way in the unfamiliar bureaucratic situation—is dubious. The costs of bribery in Lebanon are probably high, in particular when it involves bureaucrats taking "cuts" for awarding government contracts or receiving payments for waiving administrative regulations. There can be little question that funds badly needed for modernization purposes have been thereby dispersed to other destinations.

d. Laxity and Influence: Perhaps the most serious bureaucratic barrier to modernization — more so than confessionalism, nepotism, or bribery—has been its spirit of laxity. The Lebanese bureaucrat often comes to work late, shows little interest in his job, goes home early, and takes maximum advantage of loose regulations affecting leaves with pay. Government administrative policy is itself lax, giving twenty-five official and religious holidays and twenty working days vacation per year for its employees. Working hours, from eight in the morning to two in the afternoon, are shortened further by the hour or so taken by the bureaucrat himself from both ends of the day.

The government is inhibited from undertaking programs beyond the bureaucracy's constrained capacity to implement. The public does not look to the government to evolve major programs of development, and efficacy of government intervention to redress socio-economic imbalances through development is impaired, if not undermined. Lebanon's bureaucracy — personalized, confessionalized, and factionalized—is adequate for highly traditional services requiring a minimum of specialization, but not for a modern state such as that demanded by its intellectuals. Political reform is difficult because the political ruling class does not want to introduce changes that might compromise its power. Therefore it attempts to reform the bureaucracy as an alternative.
PLANNING

Planning is one of the ideas usually associated with modernization that is gaining acceptance in developing countries. It entered Lebanon in a very rudimentary form in the 1930s, and has, since the 1950s, become more conspicuous. The Lebanese government has adopted development planning, as it has adopted bureaucratic reforms, mostly in answer to demands and forces largely outside the strictly formal structure of government and bureaucracy. Believing that the laissez-faire system has been responsible for the relatively prosperous economy of Lebanon, members of the governing class nevertheless are aware that not all Lebanese regions and groups are sharing equally in this prosperity, and therefore that there is special need for government to correct the imbalance. Development planning has been accepted as complementary to laissez-faire in this sense.

In accepting development planning, Lebanon's governing class has proved its flexibility in accommodating change, absorbing the demands of pressure groups, and translating these demands into institutions that may operate under the constraints of all the traditional rules imposed by the political formula. Such acceptance has always been in a manner that would both ensure the continuity of the class in power and deflect the course of such potentially revolutionary groups as disgruntled intellectuals and radicals of the right and left. Development planning as applied in Lebanon may be examined as an aspect of bureaucratic reforms, or as the interjection of new ideas and institutions into the bureaucracy: it is more a technique translated into offices and programs than a basic ideological change. Confessionalism, pluralism, and consensus do not naturally lend themselves to strong central controls no matter how objective or rational these controls may be.

Although development policy is politically expedient, usually it has been applied haphazardly, inconsistently, and at a lower key than has been typical in countries committed to planning. Development planning by its nature tests the ability of the entire political-bureaucratic structure to accommodate change efficiently and on a large scale; thus the Lebanese example shows conflicts between conditions of pre-development planning and its ruling political formula. In short, Lebanese planning has assumed Lebanese characteristics, often hanging between the legal form of planning and sheer anarchy in application.

Like other developing nations, Lebanon did not adopt planning to remedy internal imbalance only, but also to improve its international status. Planning has become a means for receiving aid from wealthy nations and international organizations and foundations. The need for
money and expert advice often accounts for the adoption of planning ideas by countries that neither understand nor believe in them.

The nature of Lebanon's "planning" is, in a sense, a reflection of its economic policy. Lebanese planning has never been intended as an instrument of state socialism, but, rather, as an aid to the role of public sectors in stimulating growth while keeping competition alive.

Planning as an instrument of modernization only can be as effective as the political leaders permit it to be. The Minister of General Planning is rarely the most important figure in the planning process. Like other ministers, he depends on the president of the republic and on the premier for his continuity in office. Lebanese cabinets generally have been short lived; yet, judging from the variety of men who have assumed the position, no specific criteria have governed the appointments. They may be Christian, Muslim, or Druze; lawyer, engineer, or businessman, with some knowledge or none at all of planning. They may believe in planning as a mechanism of radical reform or may scorn it as irreconcilable with the Lebanese way of doing things. Lacking a power base, the successive ministers of General Planning have had no major impact on the planning process. To be effective, the minister must have the backing of the president, his colleagues in the cabinet, and a dozen directors-general who are closely related to the planning process. Given Lebanon's tradition of governing, plus the atomized and personalized elements pervading the bureaucracy, such backing is not easily obtained.

The director-general of the ministry can provide stability and management, but not leadership. The latter requires effective communication with many clusters of power beyond the administrative structure of the Ministry of General Planning, and for this, a person of cabinet rank is necessary.

In drafting its development plans the Ministry needs ramified data. While data compilation has been improving since 1960, it is still inadequate for rigorous planning. The 1965 plan, with projects pooled together with a minimum of coordination and research reflects the looseness of its data base and the lack of rigor with which such data were treated. For example, the public-housing project was incorporated in the 1965 plan with a minimum of study as to its need or feasibility. Like some other projects, the public-housing project was haltingly begun, then forgotten, and then begun all over again.

Even a small planning staff, if well educated and highly motivated, could be extremely effective if strategically located in the government hierarchy. In this regard, too, planning in Lebanon is handicapped. The Ministry is located on the outskirts of Beirut, well away from important ministries with which it must work closely.
Yet, distance is an important factor in communication in Lebanon, where direct personal contact is essential for expediting business.

Similarly outside the government, the Ministry's capacity for offering useful guidelines to private business is also highly limited. Not only is the private sector more extensive and efficient than the public sector, but any attempt on the part of the Ministry to influence the private sector beyond simple regulative procedures would be resisted.

So far no plan has been fully implemented. The 1965 plan has been handicapped by the financial crisis that shook the banking community and affected credit in 1965 and 1966. Public funds allotted for development projects had to be diverted to meet such urgent situations as repaying small depositors for their banking losses. While the June War (1967) did not involve Lebanon directly, it adversely affected tourist trade and industrial development. The incidents in 1973 and the major civil conflicts that started in 1975 curtailed every hope for advancement. Implementation of projects also has depended on politically delicate choices of priorities, not always made consistently. As one example, while government has invested in the Tripoli International Fair as a measure to appease Tripoli, construction of the requisite highway between Tripoli and Beirut has been delayed, but completed during the civil war in the late 1970s.

In regard to individual projects, many of the small ones, such as those dealing with drinking water, land survey, and electrical work, are part of the ordinary work of any government and have been undertaken slowly and intermittently since the formation of the Lebanese state. On the other hand, tourism has given impetus to projects dealing with road building, fairs, and antiquities and has been an area in which the public sector's role has been notable. Investment in road building always has had high priority in Lebanon, not only to facilitate tourism but to satisfy the demands of the sect leaders. Roads connect Beirut with all the major tourist attractions and resorts.

Limited government is a value shared by za'ims and many members of the clubs who have a special stake in laissez-faire. Established a couple of decades ago, planning seems to have progressed as it was originally intended: to complement the private sector but not to enforce central controls over the economy. In a country in which powerful communities jealously vie with each other, in which a growing bourgeois class requires ever greater and more efficient social services, and in which rising levels of living have become an insistent political force, the need to accommodate change, however amorphically and reluctantly, becomes overriding. Lebanon seems to have a unique way to entertain modernization ideals.
View of Byblos and its vicinity in 1983.
THE SITUATION IN SECONDARY CITIES
CASE STUDY: BYBLOS

This section starts with a general introduction of Byblos. It discusses housing issues in the context of the civil war and the grim economic situation that Lebanon is passing through. It deals with socio-economic and cultural issues and the historical background of the city. It includes several different illustrations to describe the city and the site. It concludes with a general discussion of urban development issues.
BYBLOS INTRODUCTION

Byblos is witnessing rapid urbanization since the outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon in 1975. An increasing number of people in search of safer grounds are pouring in the metropolitan area of Byblos. The majority of people are coming from the northern provinces of the country, either fleeing the civil unrest or looking for jobs.

The population of the city of Byblos grew from 18,000 to 42,000 within the last 10 years. The rapid expansion of urban areas is consuming mostly the narrow coastal plains and partly the interior mountainous regions.

One of the most salient demographic features of Lebanon was the uneven geographic distribution of its population (1970 estimates). While it had an overall density of over 500 persons per square mile, density soared to about 68,000 per square mile in Bayrut muhafazah, but diminished to 123 persons in al-Biqa muhafazah. In Jabal Lubnan, the density was 1,106. The rural exodus was and still is a major factor in the country’s soaring rates of urbanization. About 58 percent of the population lived in urban agglomerations of 10,000 or more, while 42 percent lived in rural areas. For the last ten years or so, the civil war was the major factor that forced thousands of people to move from their areas to other areas either by force or seeking refuge from the bloody war.
HOUSING ISSUES

The housing stock suffered extensive damage during the civil war in the last eleven years. As a result of the fighting, around 150,000 units of housing were damaged or destroyed. Dislocation resulting from the destruction accentuated the housing problem, increasing the number of refugees to an all-time high of 500,000 people. Many of these refugees squatted in illegal settlements around Beirut, causing a rapid deterioration of the suburbs. Apartments vacated by their residents fleeing the Lebanese civil war are in no time taken over by refugees. With the absence of government control, the local militias retain the power to allocate vacant apartments in their immediate areas to people of their own choice.

Almost all of housing in Lebanon is provided by the private sector. Only 25 percent of the population could afford the market prices of housing. There is practically no public housing. All of the government housing policies were never implemented. There is no participation of the private sector for low and middle income housing due to: lack of specialized institutions in long term credit; the unwillingness of the government to guarantee private investments; the desire of developers and speculators to make exhuberant profits. The growth tendencies are towards areas which are relatively safe from sporadic fighting and bombardment.
THE ECONOMY

The present economic situation in Lebanon is grim. The civil war in the country have drained Lebanon out of its resources. The different services, such as trading, tourism and transit trade, came to a halt depriving the economy from its important revenues that are necessary to sustain the country economically. Furthermore, the increase in smuggled imports through ports not under government control has deprived the Government of its customs revenues. The public debt increased dramatically in the past five years. Moreover, at the rate of deficit financing that has characterized the budget and the rates of interest paid on public debt, the total public debt projected by the end of 1986 will exceed $10 billion. One of the most important factors preventing the collapse of the economy is the extensive remittance of the Lebanese citizens who fled the civil war and the unstable situation to work in the neighboring wealthy countries and who do still support their families still residing in Lebanon. In summary, if Lebanon does not pull itself out of its dilemma at some point in the next few years, the Lebanese economic system characterized by free ownership and a free foreign exchange system could easily disintegrate. If that situation arises, Lebanon will then have no driving force towards development and will certainly become an impoverished nation.

One of the major sources of income in Byblos was tourism. Since 1975, the income generated from tourism trickled down to a minimum. Other sources of income include fishing and agriculture. The region sustains a dualistic economy that reconciles traditional and modern elements. The traditional agriculture sector employs almost two-thirds the labor force and generates only one-third of the income. In recent years, the region became an attractive place for some industries like textiles, food processing, plywood and furniture manufacturing, and others, because of the relative security it enjoys from the rest of the country.

View of the Byblos harbor.
SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

Socio-economic differences, while not obvious, have certainly not been eradicated because of the civil war. The uneven distribution of wealth and economic opportunity has resulted in wide regional differences in living standards and patterns of living.

SOCIO-CULTURAL ISSUES

Lebanon has a heterogeneous society, composed of ethnic, religious, regional, and kinship groups. Primordial attachments and local communalism antedate the creation of the present territorial and political situation. Its entire decision-making process is conditioned by religious composition. Rivalries between the different religious sects and interest groups, each with different foreign affiliations, have seriously destabilized the country.

A modern building in Byblos built with some traditional material (stone) and style (arched windows).

A commuter train, recently put in use on already existing tracks between Byblos and Dora.
LOCATIONAL MAP OF BYBLOS

Mediterranean Sea

Byblos
Amchit
Fidar
Halat
Tabarja
Bay of Jounieh
Jounieh
Ghazir
Ajaltoun
Antelias
Bikfaya
Beirut
Beirut-Tripoli
Highway
Nahr
Ibrahim
Kartaba
Ain el Siman
Baskinta

0 1 000 5 000 10 000m
1:200 000
GENERAL BACKGROUND

LOCATION

Byblos is located on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea, approximately 35 kilometers north of Beirut, the capital city of the Republic of Lebanon. Its latitude is 34° 8' north, and longitude 35° 40' east. It is on the same latitude as that of Los Angeles, California. It enjoys a Mediterranean climate with warm summers and mild winters, where the temperature ranges between 10° and 33° C with an annual precipitation averaging between 4 and 15 cm., with the exception of the months of July, August, and September.

Byblos is a secondary city in the Republic of Lebanon. Lebanon, which is a small territory of 10,452 square kilometers, has a highly dense pattern of settlement. Lebanon is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the west, by Syria to the north and east, and Israel to the south. Its scenery is breathtakingly beautiful and varied. Behind the narrow, humid, fertile coastline, where most of the population lives, lie the well-watered Lebanon Mountains. The prodigiously fertile Bekaa Valley lies to the east between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon Mountains which border Syria.

GOVERNMENT

Administratively, Lebanon consists of six muhafazat (governorates): Bayrut, Jabal Lubnan, al-Shuf, ash-Shamal, al-Janub, and al-Biqa. These are administered by the Ministry of Interior through the muhafiz (governor), who represents the central government in the region. The muhafazat are further divided into 26 qada (districts), each of which is presided over by a qa'im-maqam (district chief), who, along with the muhafiz, supervises local government in his respective region.

Municipalities (communities with at least 500 inhabitants) elect their councils, which in turn elect mayors and vice mayors. Villages and towns (more than 50 and under 500 inhabitants) elect a mukhtar (headman) and a council of elders, who serve on an honorary basis. All local-government officers serve four-year terms.

The city of Byblos is in qada Jubayl (Byblos), which is in muhafazah Jabal Lubnan.
HISTORY

Byblos, modern Jubayl, also spelled Jebeil, biblical Gebal, an ancient seaport in Jabal Lubnan muhafazah (governorate), Lebanon, it is possibly the oldest continuously inhabited town in the world. The name Byblos is Greek; papyrus received its early Greek name (byblos, byblinos) from the fact that it was exported to the Aegean through Byblos. Hence the English word Bible is derived from byblos as "the (papyrus) book."

Systematic excavations were begun at Byblos by Pierre Montet in 1921; in 1926 Maurice Dunand resumed the work and continued it for many years. The excavations revealed that Byblos was occupied at least by the Neolithic Period (c.8000–c.4000 BC), and that during the 4th millennium BC an extensive settlement developed. Because Byblos was the chief harbor for the export of cedar and other valuable wood to Egypt, it soon became a great trading centre; it was called Kubna in ancient Egyptian and Gubla in cuneiform inscriptions. Egyptian monuments and inscriptions found on the site attest to close relations with the Nile Valley throughout the second half of the second millennium. During Egypt's 12th dynasty (1991–1786 BC), Byblos again became an Egyptian dependency, and the chief goddess of the city, Baalat (The Mistress), was worshipped in Egypt. After the collapse of the Egyptian New Kingdom in the 11th century, Byblos became the foremost city of Phoenicia.

Byblos has yielded almost all of the known early Phoenician inscriptions, most of them dating from the 10th century BC. By that time, however, the Sidonian kingdom, with its capital at Tyre, had become dominant in Phoenicia, and Byblos, though it flourished into Roman times, never recovered its former supremacy. The Crusaders captured the town in 1103 and called it Gibelet, but they later lost it to the Ayyubid sultan Saladin in 1189. Byblos today is a sailing centre and fishing port.

The renovated old market in Byblos.
MAP OF BYBLOS
General view of Byblos in the 1950s.

SOURCE: Lebanese Archives
Same view of Byblos in 1986.

SOURCE: Lebanese Air Force
THE BYBLOS-FIDAR SITE

The Byblos-Fidar site is chosen as a reference for analyzing the impact of urbanization in secondary cities of Lebanon.

The B-F site is located in the southern fringe of the Byblos Metropolitan Area. It is approximately 35 kilometers north of the capital city Beirut. It is right on the Mediterranean Sea coast.

The B-F site abuts the Beirut-Tripoli highway on its eastern side, with some access to it. It has southerly access over the Fidar bridge to a residential and agricultural area. It has northerly access to the Byblos downtown area. There is no westerly access to the site except by boat.

The main transportation services, buses and taxis, running on the highway or the main road offer services to neighboring areas and the downtown of Byblos. Recently a commuter train service was put to use on already

A view of Byblos and its vicinity in 1986.
existing railroad tracks, connecting Byblos to Dora, a suburb north of Beirut.

Gross area of the site is approximately 55 hectares. It has a rectangular shape, sandwiched in between the Beirut-Tripoli highway and the Mediterranean Sea.

The B-F site is directly on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The site is irregular on its eastern side with ledge slopes varying from 10% to 50%. The western side, it is mostly sandy beaches with some ledge outcroppings in the middle area. The surface is covered with cultivated land, bushes, trees, sandy beaches, greenhouses for growing vegetables, few housing, and one main road. The soil at the coast is composed of sand, and the upper area of agricultural soil.

The B-F site is bounded to the north by the downtown and the ancient ruins of Byblos, to the west by the Mediterranean Sea, to the south by a low- to middle-income residential area and agricultural land, and to the east by the Beirut-Tripoli highway and beyond it cultivated land and the hills with residential areas.
The B-F site is zoned for residential, resort/recreational, and light commercial development. Allowed coverage of the site is 50% for residential, 20% for resorts, and 30% for commercial use. Coefficient of land exploitation varies from 0.4 to 2.0. Maximum height of buildings is 20 meters for residential, 10 meters for resorts, and 17 meters for commercial buildings.

The site enjoys views of the Mediterranean Sea, the ancient ruins of Byblos, the capital city Beirut at a distance, and the mountains in the rear. It is surrounded by agricultural land and residential areas and adjacent to commercial and industrial centers.

The B-F site is owned by private speculators and the Maronite Church. The land value is estimated at L.L.500-1,000 per square meter.

Some utilities exist on the B-F site. All other utilities are available in the area for any type of development. Commercial and community facilities are available in the city.
The Beirut-Tripoli highway bridge over the river Fidar (above). A view towards the south shore of the Byblos-Fidar site (below).

A view towards north from south of the B-F site off the main road (above). A view of the central area of the B-F site (below).
A view of the central area outcroppings of the B-F site (above). A view towards north, the ancient ruins of Byblos (below).

A view of the northern sandy beach area of the B-F site (above). A view of the northern tip of the B-F site from the hills (below).
Aerial photograph of the Byblos-Fidar site in the early 1970's (above). The Site Plan in 1985 (below).
DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

There is a serious danger of a general shortage of land for future urban development in Lebanon and it is not simply a local one. Given that the shortages exist locally in some areas, they are not caused by an absolute shortage of land, but they are the result of the lack of planned land use and land allocation that results from too much reliance on the private land market.

It is necessary to evaluate the public institutions dealing with land-use problems. The performance of the existing institutions and their policies should be adequate enough to meet the new demands. The role of the public authorities should not be limited only to regulation, but they should be given the authority to take the initiative in influencing future urban growth through direct intervention in the land market. The present policies that control what should be built at a given location are not able to control the timing of future development. An active urban growth and land-use policy should be more desirable. Governmental institutions should be adapted to the growing needs of the urban society.

The expected outcomes of urban development under current procedures are very grim. Squatting has become a major problem in Lebanon. Besides having the traditional reasons for squatting, the civil war in Lebanon that is going on for eleven years has made it even worse. The Lebanese Central Government has lost most of its power in most areas of the country. This is a major reason why local public authorities should take on the major responsibility.

On the other hand, the private land market is maximizing its profit by taking advantage of the lax situation caused by the civil war. Most of the construction does not abide by the existing building codes. Building officials are reluctant to object to most of them because of "contributions" made to the treasury or to them personally for a "fair" treatment. A lot of owners take advantage of the periodic chaos that results from the eruption of fighting by adding extra floors on top of their buildings. The means of controlling should be addressed seriously.
Some factors are briefly discussed below:

LAND UTILIZATION

The utilization of the land in urban dwelling environments is a complex process; it involves the users as well as the public sector; it has wide social, political and economic implications. Under the current procedures in Lebanon, the expected outcome is large-scale urbanization that will engulf traditional cultural patterns. A more rational land utilization is fundamental to environment, housing, public utilities and growth.

INCOME GROUPS

The existing private land market in Lebanon serves only the middle- to high-income groups. Public authorities should show some serious consideration in their planning schemes to provide the low-income group with a chance to benefit from overall development.

INTENSITY OF LAND USE

Density is the ratio between the population of a given area and the area. The lower the density, the larger is the land area required for a given population, which results in higher costs per capita in land and infrastructure. At the opposite extreme, very high densities not only may put an excessive load on the services, but what is more serious, could create negative and destructive social conditions. Both cases are common in Lebanon.

CIRCULATION

The circulation network in Lebanon does not satisfy the needs of present-day traffic requirements. Although many new main roads and highways are designed and constructed, they do not render justice to the real needs.

URBAN LAYOUTS

The block is the characteristic element of urban layouts. The most common block type in the Lebanese cities is the grid block. They are popular, developed progressively, and with varied lot sizes.

UTILITIES

Utility systems in Lebanon are not always adequate. And with the present trend of construction it will be very difficult to maintain the standard of service they provide.

DEVELOPMENT MODE

The progressive mode is the common traditional procedure of the construction in Lebanon.
A view of Fidar in south of Byblos.
APPROACHES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

In response to the issues mentioned in the previous section, this section deals with different approaches for control of future urban development by the local public authorities. It lists several measures of planning and methods of taxation, to ensure future needs of land and income. It gives the reasons for direct intervention by the public authorities. Then it lists additional approaches that will reinforce the control of urban development.
APPROACHES FOR CONTROL OF FUTURE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The problem of establishing criteria for allocating land for different purposes and the method of implementing planning decisions are two of the major problems in Lebanon.

It is of great importance for the future to have more efficient land-use patterns that are possible only through a good planning and its implementation. Urban development on an unplanned basis has created fragmented sprawled development, which leads to excessive use of space for a dispersed transport system. Fragmented development that leaves large amounts of vacant land in the city region is also very significant.

The three approaches mentioned here are considered to be important measures to improve the situation in urban development. The efficiency of these measures would be successful only when the local public authority attains more executive power and seriously enforces them.

Three approaches should be considered regarding urban development controls:

1. Planning measures for development;
2. Taxation methods; and
3. Direct intervention by the public authority.

These measures seek to ensure that the local authority will implement land use schemes on a planned basis when the central Lebanese Government is unable and in no capacity to do so. But such policies can only be efficient if the legal framework obligating the local authority to conform to the requirements also contains sufficient administrative sanctions against landowners who do not respect the planning procedure.

Each approach is discussed in detail in this section.
PLANNING MEASURES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The strength of the private land tenure system in Lebanon affects the measures to bring the use of land into accord with the planning scheme in particular areas. It is significant that the respect with which legal planning regulations in Lebanon are treated is not a function of the system of land tenure but of the general attitude towards government legislation.

One of the means of ensuring that land will be available for development at the right time in areas of urban extension is through legislation that recognizes even a long-term development scheme as the legal basis for expropriation of land planned for future urban use.

Some planning measures for urban development are as follows:

a. Specific areas should be designated for future urban development, and any changes in land use prohibited in those areas. Land prices should be fixed at a level that existed a few years before areas of land use were designated; those areas should be designated on the basis of population growth and economic development, as projected for the next few years, and on the basis of the land requirements resulting from those projections. The designated areas should first be fixed in areas of urban concentration and projected future population growth, as well as in areas planned for new development.

b. Land should be used according to a development scheme, in order to reduce vacant land within the city and city region. A time limit should be set for starting and finishing building projects, with expropriation in the case of non-use of the land and reallocation for building use.

c. Priority purchase should be awarded to the public authorities when a landowner is interested in selling his property in an urban area. Priority right should be awarded to inhabitants of rural areas, enabling them to purchase land that a local farmer is interested in selling.

d. Norms should be established for collective needs and for residential and commercial land uses, which the land authority cannot change without the approval of the regional authority.
TAXATION METHODS

The financial weakness of the local authorities is a factor in the non-implementation of planning measures. The pressure of a continually growing urban population on the public services provided by the local government may lead the public authorities to ignore their own planning regulations. Taxation would be an important method for the local authorities to obtain necessary funds to pursue their projects.

Taxation on land, like other types of taxation, has the fiscal purpose of ensuring an income for the public authorities. Taxation on land has two additional purposes: to give to the community the additional value created through the planning decisions and investments of the public authorities, and to serve as a means of increasing the supply of land needed for urban development.

Even though taxation, in its basic form, exists in Lebanon, the taxation methods mentioned below are new methods in the Lebanese context and none of them exists now:

a. A tax on vacant land in urban areas should be established, which would

   1. Introduce a yearly progressive property tax with a rate that rises according to the amount of time the land is held unused;

   2. Fix a tax rate that rises according to the value of the site, awarding exemptions on sites of low value or on small sites of low value that are used for the owners' family housing;

   3. Fix a time limit on non-use of land for construction, permitting idle land to be expropriated after the time period has expired.

This taxation method makes it expensive to hold land vacant and increases the supply of land to the market and hence reduces land prices. Obviously it is necessary to collect this tax regularly and to expropriate the land of those owners who avoid the tax.

b. A tax on changes of land use should be established, which would

   1. Fix a hundred percent tax on additional value created through land-use changes that allow higher densities than planned, or that transform land from residential to commercial, or from agricultural to urban;
2. Be collected when the decision to allow a change in use is made.

This taxation method will discourage the change in land use and keep it conforming with the established planning schemes.

c. A land profit tax should be established, which would

1. Introduce a fifty to seventy percent profit tax according to the level of profit, based on the difference between the selling price and purchasing price, adjusting the purchasing price to the consumer price index;

2. Control the declared selling price on the basis of a periodic evaluation;

3. Introduce a supplementary tax on the difference between the declared selling price and the prevailing market price based on published evaluation maps and information on land price trends collected periodically by the land-evaluation office.

The increase in land prices would be slowed through the introduction of this taxation method that reduces the possibility of making high profits from land.

d. A land property tax on commercial enterprises should be established, which would

1. Introduce a property tax on commercial land use that would be several times higher than the property tax on residential land use;

2. Introduce a progressive rate according to the turnover of commercial enterprises.

This taxation method is purely to benefit the public authorities from the gain in commercial activities.

e. A municipal income tax should be

1. Introduced as an additional percentage of the general income tax, in order to increase the fiscal base used by the municipalities to finance their general development objectives, including land policies.

This taxation method would be an additional income for the public authorities.

f. Taxation on finance infrastructural works should be introduced, which would require that owners of sites designated for urban development pay a charge for the construction of roads, sewerage and the like, according to the size and value of their sites.

g. A system of land evaluation should be developed, based on a periodic, published, systematic land evaluation made of the whole region at the same time and using the same criteria.
DIRECT INTERVENTION BY PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

The ability of the public authorities in Lebanon to affect the private land market is limited by factors outside their control.

Besides introducing the new planning measures and taxation methods, it is important for the local public authority to have the power and determination to implement them. Otherwise, a waste of infrastructure and possibly even a failure to reach the goals of comprehensive planning may result.

The experience of almost all countries shows that the most efficient way to supply the needed land to the market is through the direct intervention of the public authorities in acquiring land, carrying out development works and supply land for present and future urban needs.

In order to prevent or limit excessive undesirable development, the public authorities should intervene directly in the following areas:

a. Scope and timing. All land needed to meet a certain period of time’s worth of future urban development and recreation needs should be acquired in advance. This would help avoid unforseen future developments, as in price increases, and unnecessary aggravations for both landowners and public authorities.

b. Financing. A special fund should be established, made up of the income from land disposal, taxation revenue and special government loans. This would be the resource budget for the public authority’s expenses.

c. Legal aspects of acquisition:

1. Compensation should be based on the value of the land a few years before public acquisition; a coefficient to ensure the real value of invested capital in land should be introduced, and compensation made by allocating construction rights for some minimum space in the newly planned area;

2. Expropriation procedure should be established, whereby a structural plan serves as a legal basis for expropriation; land should be taken in possession before the end of expropriation procedure;

3. Thirty to forty percent of the land needed for primary and secondary infrastructure should be expropriated without compensation from developers.
ADDITIONAL APPROACHES

Measures that prevent undesirable development and even restrain increases in land prices in large areas of urban extension, nevertheless cannot ensure the supply of land needed for future development.

These four additional approaches are complementary measures to the three discussed earlier. Unlike the first three, these additional measures do exist in some form or another in the present Lebanese land policies.

Other approaches could be considered also:

4. A land register;
5. Public land-development policy;
6. A policy for land use within the city; and
7. Regional development.
A LAND REGISTER

The following recommendations are made with regard to establishing a land register:

1. Land mapping to describe each site and showing its size, use, ownership and value should serve as the basis of the register. It would include permanent registration of land use, land value and land-ownership changes;

2. Permanent evaluation should be based on the general trend of land-price transactions and land-use legislation;

3. Periodic evaluations of all sites in the region should be based on assessments that were made at the same time and carried out according to the same method. They would be published as land-value maps;

4. Persons would be trained for land evaluation and land-register management;

5. Techniques of preparing aid material for evaluation would be introduced, together with basic parameters of value comparison according to different items;

6. Land-use mapping should serve as a basis for land-use planning;

7. Self-declaration by landowners should be the basis of evaluation for both taxation and compensation in the case of expropriation.

Of these recommendations, number one, the establishment of land mapping, exists in Lebanon. But the evaluation procedures are lax. Even the benefits of a land register are not fully utilized. For example, recommendation number six describes one of the main utilizations of a land register.
PUBLIC LAND-DEVELOPMENT POLICY

A public land-development policy would include the following:

1. An alternative form of compensation should be provided, based on the practice of allocating, to the landowners, construction rights on some part of their land, instead of paying them in cash;

2. Large areas of new settlement should be planned in existing urban regions and combine, in the same areas, low-cost housing, site servicing projects and areas for middle- and high-income residential quarters. Employment resources should also be included in such areas. Tax exemption and low land prices would encourage industries and commercial services to move from the central city to the new areas;

3. Cooperative organization among future dwellers should be encouraged, in order to ensure minimum land space per person and family and allow the use of land for housing projects, according to the group requirements of the organized residents;

4. Physical and social infrastructure should be completed before housing projects are implemented, thus ensuring land space and vital services for future housing in case of limited financial resources;

5. Long-term loans from international financial organizations should require that land currently in agricultural use be applied for future human settlement. A long return would be guaranteed on the basis of allocating some percentage of lease cost, starting a few years after the land is used for development.

Most of these policies were thought of at one time or another. It is important for the local public authority to take the initiative and try them out. In order to ensure any long-term loan, policy number five, it is of utmost importance to try the other policies mentioned above as a collateral.
POLICY FOR LAND USE WITHIN THE CITY

The following requirements and features should be included in a guideline for land use within the city:

1. Vacant land within the city must be used within a fixed time period;

2. Unused vacant land would be expropriated and supplied to construction firms to carry out building projects;

3. Compensation for unused land would be determined on a fixed date basis, according to current use;

4. Mixed companies of municipalities, governmental authorities, landowners and tenant representatives should be organized for the purpose of making land-use changes to carry out renewal projects;

5. Landowners' construction rights should be ensured in the redevelopment area, according to the previously evaluated area;

6. Priority rights should be ensured to the previous tenants in the redeveloped area by supplying provisional transitional housing or providing a larger space in another area.

None of these requirements are included in guidelines for land use within Lebanese cities. It is a good opportunity for secondary cities that are still not fully developed to incorporate these requirements with their already existing ones.
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following recommendations might facilitate regional development:

1. Regional development agencies should be established in selected regions. Criteria for selection should be based on the rate of population growth, rate of economic activity and the housing conditions for low-income groups. The role of such agencies should include land acquisition, planning new settlement areas, carrying out infrastructural works and housing projects, and supplying land to industrial enterprises and commercial services;

2. Criteria for releasing publicly owned land should be introduced according to the level of demand. The regional agency should be organized with the participation of private economic factors and prospective residents;

3. Agro-industrial centres should be established in selected rural areas in order to concentrate industrial enterprises for processing agricultural produce. Such centres should at the same time serve as a basis for educational services, preparing qualified persons to act as instructors for the modernization of agricultural activity. The centres should develop educational institutions for the young in rural areas. At the same time, housing projects should be erected, together with cultural centres for professional staff. Professionals should be encouraged to come to the agro-industrial centres by paying them higher wages than they could get in the big cities.

Regional development would reduce the pressure on the city by absorbing the overspill of population. It would also relieve the agricultural land surrounding the city by directing the new development further away into rural areas.
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