

To Beirut...

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Reconciliation Through Reintegration? A Study on Spatial Proximity and Social Relations in Two Post-Civil War Beirut Neighborhoods

By

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ABSTRACT

Although the Lebanese Civil War ended in 1991 and Beirut became a reunified city, much of it remains divided between a Christian East and a Muslim West. Beyond certain parts of the capital, many of its residential neighborhoods remain almost entirely religiously homogeneous. This study takes an in-depth look at two neighborhoods undergoing sectarian integration. Relying on neighborhood observations and face-to-face interviews with over 30 residents, it highlights the reasons that residents have chosen to reside in non-co-religious neighborhoods.

Factors facilitating sectarian residential integration seem to include a past history in the neighborhood, historical ownership of assets in the area, appealing neighborhood attributes, affordability, and location (vis a vis other destinations and activities). Mixing appears to be a function of larger dynamics as well, such as the rising price of real estate that excludes many groups from other desirable areas. This study reveals that rising real estate prices in and around Beirut are driving people to reside in more affordable, yet non-co-religious neighborhoods.

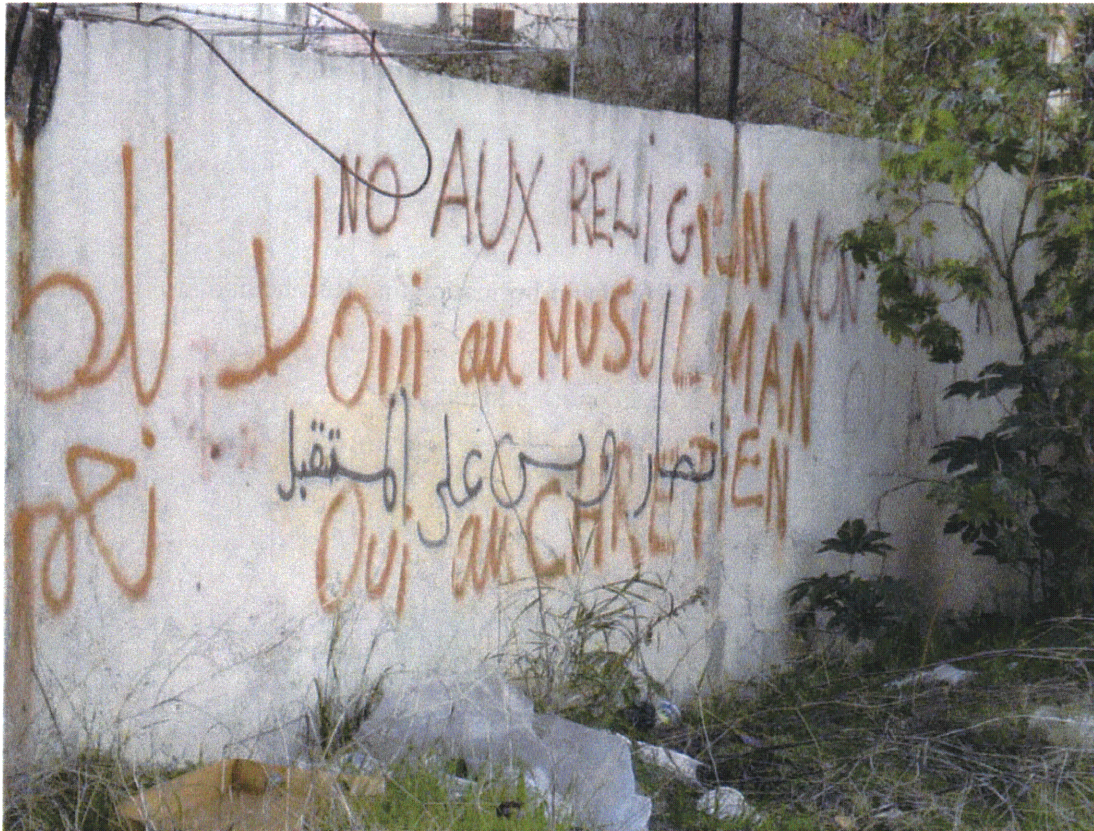
I analyze the extent to which and under what conditions spatial proximity actually leads to social relations between non-co-religionists. Integration alone does not seem to guarantee interaction. Factors limiting cross-sectarian interaction within the same neighborhood appear to include an absence of neighborhood attachment and identification, high levels of personal activity in other locations, involuntary or temporary relocation, and co-religious clustering. Factors facilitating the production of cross-sectarian social relations within a neighborhood include high levels of neighborhood engagement and activity, experience growing up in a mixed neighborhood, attendance at a religiously-mixed school, and weak political party affiliation.

I speculate that a relatively apolitical, secular, and non-polarizing environment facilitates integration. Alternatively, the presence of polarizing political and religious images and symbols can act as barriers, essentially keeping non-co-religionists out. I also speculate that with rising real estate prices, more families may be forced to live in non-co-religious or polarized neighborhoods and this may introduce increasing tension. Public policies should thus focus on improving relations between non-co-religionists living in mixed neighborhoods. Enhancing civic engagement of all the groups in such integrated environments may head-off tensions and instability and strengthen collective community identification.

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“No to religion. Yes to Muslims. Yes to Christians”

French graffiti at one of the entrances to Ras el Nabaa

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I.1 MY PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS IN BEIRUT

While studying abroad at the American University of Beirut (AUB) from 2004 to 2005, my perception of Beirut changed significantly. I experienced a number of incidents that made me question whether the capital really was unified. While Beirut had been reunified at the end of the civil war in 1991, despite being able to cross freely into the formerly Christian East and Muslim West Beirut, and despite the absence of physical barriers, I found that the city was still very much divided. Indeed, there were areas in the capital that many people avoided entirely because they thought of them as territories belonging to members of non-co-religious communities which they either had no business entering or in which they would not be welcomed.

One day in March 2005, I walked into a store across from AUB on Bliss Street in West Beirut. I had a conversation with the owner, Joseph, a Christian. Although he had opened his store in a very religiously-mixed, cosmopolitan part of West Beirut, he admitted to me that he had not once explored the area in which his store was located. He told me he did not know what existed beyond the confines of the immediate surroundings of his shop. He had never been to Hamra, the bustling street merely a few blocks away that attracted professionals, academics, students, businessmen, the rich, and the poor from a number of different sects. When I asked him why, he said that he was raised in the Christian part of Beirut during the war, and since the end of the war, he really had no reason to explore West Beirut. He expressed a deep desire to learn about the rest of his city, but admitted that fear prevented him from venturing into the unknown. In essence, he was a stranger in his own city.

I had a similar experience. I once rode in a taxi in East Beirut and asked the driver to take me to AUB. Much to my surprise, he asked me to show him the way as he did not know the

area very well. I thought to myself, any taxi driver should know how to get to AUB – the most prestigious university in the Arab world. Despite the ease of entering and exiting East or West Beirut, many may not find it necessary to cross the former green line, which divided the city during the civil war; or, they simply may have no desire to do so. Many still have not healed from the civil war and carry within them bitter memories, hostility, antagonism, and negative perceptions of their former enemies. Even in a couple of cases, Muslim taxi drivers in West Beirut refused to take me to the Eastern part of the capital.

On a more personal note, another eye-opening experience made me further aware of the concept of territoriality and of uneasy relations between Lebanese of different religious backgrounds. I come from a Druze family, a minority sect in Lebanon, which is an off-shoot of Islam. In 1999, my grandmother moved into Sodeco in Achrafieh, a neighborhood in East Beirut. When people ask where I stay during my summer visits, I inform them that I stay in Sodeco. It is hard to miss their surprise when they find out that a Druze family lives in that part of the city. One person recently reacted by saying, “Oh, so you live here on our side.” Indeed, non-Christian families are a minority in East Beirut. Evidently, territoriality in Beirut is not defined only by physical barriers but also with reference to ethnic or religious identity.

As a result of such experiences, I began to wonder why such divisions exist even though the civil war ended more than fifteen years ago. Indeed, East Beirut remains overwhelmingly Christian while West Beirut remains generally Muslim. Growing up, I was under the false impression that Beirut had become a unified city in which people mixed, mingled, interacted, and shared common living space. However, I was under this impression because I spent much of my time in parts of Beirut where people from various religious backgrounds did indeed interact, such as Bliss Street, Hamra, and Ain el Mreisseh in Ras Beirut, along with Verdun, Monot, and

Central Beirut District (otherwise known as downtown). In these locations, I observed the young and old interacting, studying, working, and socializing with people from a variety of different religious backgrounds. What I had overlooked, however, was the fact that such areas of the city were predominantly commercial, financial, recreational, or educational magnets. Thus, it was natural that Lebanese from virtually all religious sects would meet there. What I had not noticed, however, was that at the end of the day many of them returned home to their overwhelmingly homogeneous neighborhoods.

While Beirut is ostensibly cohesive, it remains residentially segregated. Purely residential neighborhoods, which have few of the institutional magnets mentioned above, dominate the capital and effectively contribute to its division. As a result, I began to question why many Beirutis still choose to live in separate, religiously homogeneous enclaves, despite the fact that they interact with each other during the day. I wondered whether anything has been done since the war to promote more diverse, religiously-mixed residential neighborhoods, and more importantly, whether such residential integration is desirable. Could policies pursuing residential integration lead to further reconciliation between Christians and Muslims, or would such enforced proximity simply exacerbate tensions between them?

This thesis is devoted to exploring the dynamics of integration in a post-conflict setting. By exploring voluntary integration in two Beirut neighborhoods and the impact spatial proximity has on relations between Christians and Muslims, I hope to be able to assess whether policies focused on integration can help bridge the divide between Lebanese of different religious backgrounds and hence contribute to making Beirut a more cohesive, unified capital – both spatially and socially.

I.2 BEIRUT IN THE PRE-1975 PERIOD

Before 1975, in Beirut's pre-civil war period, the population in the capital was integrated. People from all social and religious classes mingled and shared living space. The opportunities for multiple lifestyles and coexistence were a key element of Beirut city life. As sociologist Samir Khalaf explains, "Altogether, there were very few exclusive spaces beyond the reach of others. The social tissue, like all seemingly localized spaces, was fluid and permeable."¹

Khalaf's description of Ras Beirut in particular describes the extent to which the city was open to diversity and pluralism, as he explains that it was perhaps "the closest the Arab World ever reached to a liberal and open community, where pluralistic groups could coexist in relative harmony and peace."² Importantly, Ras Beirut's openness seems to have facilitated the arrival of various trends, fashions, ideologies, and political platforms, creating a safe haven for people from around the Arab world who wished to express themselves freely. Beirut's inhabitants thrived on difference and diversity. This made life exciting and presented people with numerous opportunities for self-discovery, exploration, experimentation, and innovation. Prestigious institutions located in the Ras Beirut area attracted significant numbers of well-educated professionals. Rather than creating tensions, the diversity engendered "sentiments of trust, mutual respect, and deference to pluralistic lifestyles."³ Despite the fact that Ras Beirut today remains relatively more cosmopolitan and integrated than other parts of the capital, when compared to how it was before the civil war, a certain degree of its plural character and openness has been lost.

¹ Khalaf, 1998. p. 145

² *ibid.*, 1993. p. 14

³ *ibid.*, p. 16

Khalaf depicts Beirut's downtown area as one in which people from all walks of life mingled and shared public spaces. The city's central business district appeared to belong to everyone. He describes the various institutions and services which downtown offered, including "the parliament, municipal headquarters, financial and banking institutions, religious edifices, transportation terminals, traditional souks, shopping malls, and entertainment."⁴

Interestingly, despite the plural nature of Beirut society at that time, strong communal ties also existed.⁵ Indeed, throughout modern Lebanon's history during the early to mid-twentieth century, various sectarian groups had strong family allegiances, which tended to be translated into factional ties. Each group had a za'im, or a feudal lord, who assisted families with particular social and economic resources in exchange for political support. The presence of strong factional, communal, and confessional loyalties⁶ affected relations among groups, even leading to a number of feuds between the sects. Although the origin of the feuds at times originated from non-sectarian issues, they quickly degenerated into sectarian fighting, indicating that the strong communal loyalties largely determined relations between people. Nonetheless, these feuds were limited to particular families and were often suppressed by the intervention of the lords. In many cases families from different confessional groups lived and worked together in mixed towns and villages. The incidents of violence were limited and were characterized only

⁴ Khalaf, 1998. p. 145 This is in stark contrast to downtown today. The massive reconstruction of the heart of the city essentially created a large commercial district with luxurious shops, restaurants, and hotels that attract millions of Lebanese and tourists each year. Quite conspicuously, a large segment of Lebanese society is absent as downtown does not attract much of the lower-income population anymore, thereby making the central business district appeal largely to the well-off (Abed, 2004).

⁵ Barrage, 1986.

⁶ Confessionalism, or communalism, can have a number of meanings that may refer to "the politico-administrative system of government, the social reality of multi-communalism, the institutional organization of a community, a collective or individual attitude tending to involve communal institutions in the global organization and management of society, the rather exclusive, or at least privileged, identification with a religious community, and/or affiliation with an institution or even a way of communal thinking" (Beydoun, 75). I will be using this term as it pertains to the collective identification that members of a particular sectarian community tend to affiliate themselves with.

by limited feuding rather than all-out confessional wars.⁷ Despite the existence of strong communal ties before the war, relations were characterized as relatively healthy and amicable between the diverse Lebanese sectarian communities, particularly those who lived side by side and interacted with each other on a daily basis.

I.3 THE IMPACT OF THE CIVIL WAR ON BEIRUT'S SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY

Unfortunately, the civil war had long-lasting consequences for Beirut's social geography.⁸ The destructive 15-year conflict transformed the religious makeup of much of Beirut, pushing religious communities into more secure and homogeneous neighborhoods.⁹ The

⁷ Johnson, 2001.

⁸ The history of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) is highly complex, as it deals with problems that date back to the formation of the Lebanese state in 1943 under the French mandate. In general however, as of the 1950's, the country was largely split between two ideologies, particularly represented by right-wing pro-Western Christian factions and anti-Western, pan-Arab, pro-Palestinian groups consisting primarily of Sunnis and Druze. This division essentially caused the 1958 civil war, which was quickly suppressed. As of the 1970's, disenchanted Muslim groups wished to equalize the balance of power and pushed for greater political representation vis-à-vis the Christians.

The divisions evident in the 1950's remained and resurfaced in 1975, as a large influx of Palestinian refugees entered Lebanon from Jordan after 1970, many of whom were radicalized and used Lebanon to wage their war against Israel. Right-wing Christian militias feared the dissolution of the Lebanese state, and thus took up arms against the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and other leftist Sunni Lebanese pan-Arab movements. The presence of Palestinian fighters along the border with Israel also exposed Lebanon to Israeli invasion, which in fact occurred in 1978 and 1982. Maronite groups sided with Israel against the Palestinians, further leading to clashes and violence between the Maronites and other Sunni and Druze factions. Syrian intervention in 1976 compounded the crisis, which entered Lebanon to assist the Maronites against the Palestinians, and then allied with the Shiite militia, AMAL. This militia had previously supported the Israeli intervention as they were against the Palestinian presence in the south, yet this support did not last as the Shiites grew wary of the Israeli presence and thus began to fight against the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), and were dependent on the Syrian forces in Lebanon.

Thus, various events from 1975 until 1990 pitted Lebanese factions against each other, even causing former allies to betray each other several times throughout the war, while foreign intervention only exacerbated the conflict. The presence of a number of political factions each affiliated with a particular sect contributed largely to the perpetuation of the war. Each side had connections to a larger international power, thus supplying them with sufficient resources to continue the conflict on Lebanese territory. While the war began as a largely Muslim-Christian confrontation, it degenerated into a multi-sectarian conflict, pitting not only Muslims and Christians against each other, but also Maronites against Maronites, Shiites against Shiites, Sunnis against Shiites, Druze against Druze, with Israeli and Syrian intervention further compounding the crisis as they each sided and fought with different factions over the course of the war.

In 1990, the Taif Accord finally put an end to the Lebanese civil war, whereby a political solution enhanced the position of the Muslims, while curtailing the power of the Maronite president. All militias had to disarm, (except for Hezbollah, as it was resisting the Israeli occupation in the south). While the Syrians were given a temporary stay in Lebanon to help establish law and order - their presence was expected to be settled between the Syrian and Lebanese governments at a later time. (Makdisi and Sadaka, 2005).

⁹ Khalaf and Khoury, 1993.

capital, which used to be known as a city with heterogeneous neighborhoods, became a clearly divided city with a Christian East and a Muslim West; the line separating the two parts of the city became known as the green line. Downtown was deserted and suffered severe destruction. Public spaces ceased to function as social meeting places and became zones of confrontation.

Massive internal population displacements created grave consequences for Beirut's once heterogeneous identity. In 1975, Christians made up about 35% of West Beirut's population. This number dropped to 5% by 1989. Similarly, Muslims made up about 40% of the population in East Beirut in 1975; again, by 1989, they made up no more than 5%.¹⁰

After sixteen years of civil strife, the social geography of Beirut was altered significantly, as the city's population split in half. No longer could Beirut be characterized as a whole city containing a multi-sectarian population; instead, it became known as a city carved up into many different enclaves – with each affiliated with a particular sect or communal group.

The presence of armed factions within these enclaves both aggravated the divisions between neighborhoods and reinforced the trend towards segregation. Each faction took control over its new territory in order to protect its co-religionist residents. Residents living within an enclave who belonged to a different sect were expelled and naturally felt it safer to move to where their co-religionists resided. The presence of the militants threatened outsiders and prevented them from entering the zone.¹¹

As a result of the transformation of Beirut's social geography, Beirut's social relationships were undone; the basic elements that allowed people to trust and confide in each other were replaced by suspicion and fear. Indeed, as Khalaf explains, the war "abetted the

¹⁰ Nasr, 1993. p. 69.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 68

formation of separate, exclusive, and self-sufficient spaces.”¹² Communal and confessional solidarities strengthened as people surrounded themselves with those who shared the same sectarian affiliation.¹³ Inter-communal relations and interaction with those from other sects and religions largely diminished.

Prior to the war, the Lebanese economy was vibrant and the most dynamic in the Middle East. Its “economic stability, characterized by low inflation, high rates of economic growth, large balance of payment surpluses, small budget deficits...and political stability” earned it the status as the region’s financial center. However, the country lost its position as the financial hub during the war; much of its infrastructure was destroyed, along with its industrial facilities. In addition, investment was severely reduced, the flow of goods was disrupted, and massive emigration occurred, resulting in a significant loss of human capital. The war derailed the central government’s authority, disrupted the tax system -- making it weak and inefficient, and compromised the government’s ability to provide for social services.¹⁴

The constrained and limited social assistance compelled the Lebanese to look inwards -- to non-governmental sources -- for support. They sought assistance from family, kin groups, neighbors, and religious communities, resulting in even stronger solidarity networks based on sectarian affiliation.¹⁵ There was thus no need to look outward to the larger city for help. Self-sufficiency was possible within each person’s immediate surroundings.¹⁶

Clearly then, fear dictated the residential location decisions of many Beirut residents not involved in the fighting. Those who had no grievances against Lebanese from other political and sectarian groups and who found themselves caught in the middle of the fighting were ultimately

¹² Khalaf, 1993. p. 32

¹³ Yahya, 1993. p. 129

¹⁴ Harvie and Saleh, 2005.

¹⁵ Yahya, 1993. p. 145

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 135

forced to prioritize their safety over their convictions. Unfortunately, the protracted civil strife hardened the feelings of moderates and seculars who found themselves victimized by the aggression of other groups. As they found themselves having to rely more and more on armed co-religionists to protect themselves and their neighborhoods from outsiders, it is understandable why many eventually developed strong animosities towards non-co-religionists. As Khalaf concludes, the difficulty in reconciliation lies in mending the fractured social relations.¹⁷ This is clearly an enormous challenge, as it involves deep grievances, bitter memories, and horrific encounters with brutality. Even if the Lebanese can put these traumatic experiences behind them, is it possible to think of living together again in shared neighborhoods?

I.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Even though seventeen years have passed since the end of the war, residents in Beirut act as though there is an ongoing cold war between people of diverse sectarian backgrounds. Many are still not comfortable living together as they did before the civil war. While it is understandable that people choose to locate themselves in homogeneous residential neighborhoods for security, support, and a sense of belonging, the fact that a substantial portion of Beirutis from all religious sects now work, study, and socialize together offers an interesting paradox. Moreover, the fact that Beirut was religiously-mixed at one point is perhaps an indication that certain factors now hinder its reintegration.

To further highlight this puzzle, in William Clark's study on segregation and residential preferences,¹⁸ he concludes that integration should not be expected among diverse communities given their different preferences, incomes, racial/religious factors, and prejudices. Yet, in a few

¹⁷ Khalaf, 1993.

¹⁸ Clark, 1991.

primarily residential neighborhoods in Beirut, some degree of integration is occurring between Christians and Muslims. Given Clark's argument, why would such voluntary integration be occurring between people of different religious backgrounds, who experienced years of enmity in a country still deeply entangled in civil unrest and sectarian politics?

In light of these dynamics, I am interested in exploring evidence of integration in two Beirut neighborhoods. Two questions need to be asked regarding these neighborhoods:

- *Why have some Beirut residents moved into neighborhoods with a majority of non-co-religionist residents?*
- *Has spatial proximity produced strong social relations and positive interaction among members of diverse sectarian communities? In other words, does integration mean interaction? Under what circumstances?*

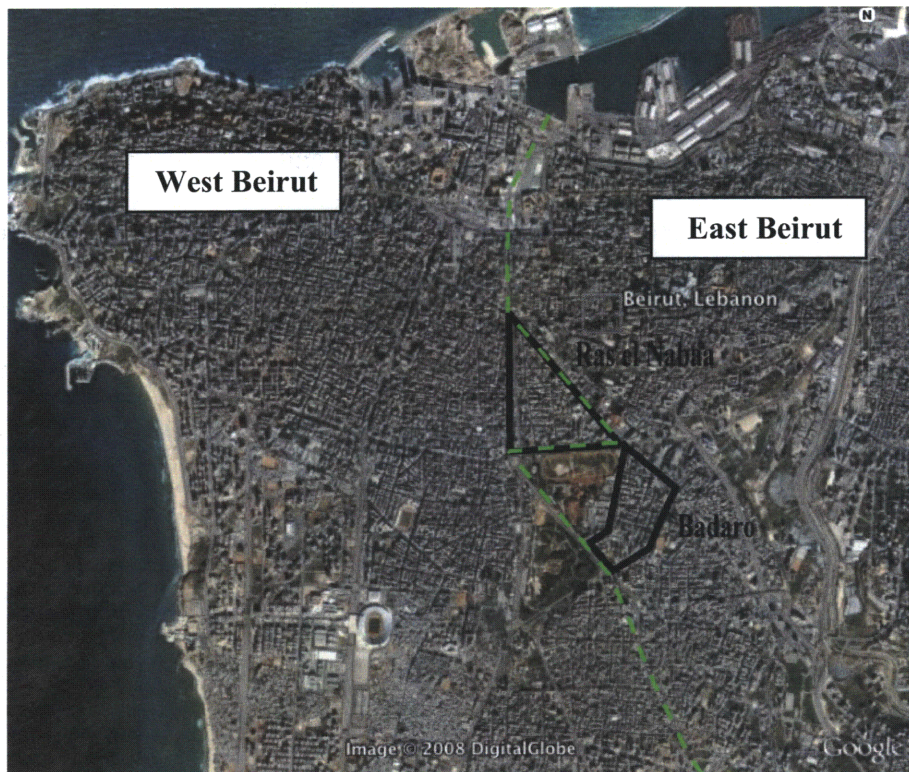


Figure 1.1: Aerial view of Beirut; the green line divides the city between East and West. My two neighborhood case studies are indicated.

Crucially, I would like to focus on the word “reconciliation” as used in my thesis title. According to Webster’s Dictionary, “to reconcile” can be defined as the following: “to cause to be friendly again; to conciliate anew; to restore to friendship; to bring back to harmony; to cause to be no longer at variance; as, to reconcile persons who have quarreled.”¹⁹

Many conflict resolution initiatives in post-conflict settings focus on a number of different mechanisms to bring historical adversaries to reconcile.²⁰ Yet, as Charles Hauss explains, “there is at least one common denominator to all these approaches to reconciliation. They all are designed to lead individual men and women to change the way they think about their historical adversaries.”²¹ Given that this is the ultimate goal of reconciliation, I use this word as my thesis title as I believe that once former enemies engage in social relations and begin to build deeper friendships, they become participants in the reconciliation process.

Since the Lebanese government has essentially adopted a policy of amnesia with respect to the civil war, and has not adequately addressed reconciliation as a means of healing the wounds and bringing Lebanese together again, it is up to the people to come together to break down stereotypes, prejudices, and divisions. As Hauss states, “reconciliation occurs one person at a time...”²² Thus, it has the potential to occur between non-co-religionist neighbors who befriend each other. If indeed residential integration and spatial proximity have the potential to re-introduce Lebanese to each other and to facilitate friendship formation, then the process of reconciliation may well be on its way. This thesis will explore the prospects and effects of such mechanisms.

¹⁹ Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary,

²⁰ Initiatives include problem-solving workshops, dialogue groups, peace camps, youth sports teams, team-building, and community development activities.

²¹ Hauss, 2003.

²² *ibid.*

I.5 APPLICABILITY OF STUDY TO RECENT CIVIL UNREST IN LEBANON

The recent civil unrest that took place in Beirut and across Lebanon in May 2008 between three main sectarian groups shows the importance of this study. Political differences degenerated into armed clashes between Sunnis, Shiites, and Druze living near each other. In my own case study of Ras el Nabaa, for example, while the majority of residents are Sunni, Shiites make up a significant minority in the neighborhood. Importantly, Ras el Nabaa was the location of fierce clashes between Sunni supporters of Saad Hariri and his Future Movement²³ and Shiite supporters of Hezbollah and Amal. The clashes perhaps indicate that spatial proximity has not led to social ties or improved, friendly relations between Sunnis and Shiites in this neighborhood.²⁴ Perhaps it can be said that political affiliation, ideology, and sectarianism trump feelings of neighborliness. This observation must be taken with a grain of salt, however, since it is possible that Shiites in Ras el Nabaa have not lived there long enough for meaningful social connections to develop.

To elaborate with an example: the clashes that took place in the neighborhoods of Mount Lebanon during this period of civil unrest indicate that spatial proximity may indeed lead to social ties and friendly relations between communities from different sects, provided that these groups have lived together for a long period of time. While armed Shiite men from Hezbollah and Amal advanced into the Druze neighborhood of Baysur, residents from the adjacent Shiite neighborhood called Kayfoun condemned the aggression and claimed that they stood by their

²³ Saad Hariri is the son of the late Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri. Rafik Hariri was a five-time Lebanese premier who led the physical and economic reconstruction of Lebanon soon after the war. He was assassinated in February 2005, and succeeded by his son. Saad Hariri now heads the Future Movement, a political party in Lebanon largely supported by Lebanese Sunnis and allied with the March 14 bloc, which consists of several other political parties, including the Lebanese Forces headed by Samir Geagea (Maronite), the Kataeb Party headed by Amin Gemayel (Maronite), and the Progressive Socialist Party headed by Walid Joumblatt (Druze).

²⁴ Interviews with residents of Ras el Nabaa reveal a mixture of views: some say relations between Sunnis and Shiites are friendly and amicable, while others claim that the political situation and armed clashes have severely strained relations between the neighbors.

Druze brothers in Baysur, gathering a group of Kayfoun residents and paying their respects to the families of the fallen victims in Baysur.²⁵ Residents claimed that the two neighborhoods have been on very good terms for generations and expressed dismay at the confrontations. Perhaps the longstanding social relations between the Shiites and the Druze in these two neighborhoods were not severed by the political unrest and in fact played a role in preventing Shiites from Kayfoun from joining the Shiite fighters of Hezbollah and Amal in the clashes against the Druze.

While my study focuses on Muslim and Christian integration in Beirut, the dynamics involved are clearly applicable to a wide range of sectarian communities beyond the confines of Beirut. As a start however, since the civil war overwhelmingly took on the tone of Muslim-Christian rivalry and hostilities, and since the capital was divided into a Muslim part and a Christian part, and since Sunni-Shiite hostilities are a relatively recent development in Lebanese politics, I will be focusing primarily on neighborhoods that appear to be attracting residents from the two main religious communities of Islam and Christianity. However, I will briefly discuss Sunni-Shiite relations during some parts of this study as it has become a very central problem in Lebanon and one that has affected my neighborhood case study of Ras el Nabaa.

I.6 THESIS ROADMAP

In the next chapter, I will present a detailed analysis of what scholars have been saying about residential segregation and integration as well as the theories they have developed. An examination of the advantages and disadvantages of integration should provide a context for understanding its impact in a multi-sectarian society.

²⁵ Abdallah, 2008.

I will devote Chapter 3 to a review of my research design, and present my two case studies. I will summarize the hypothesis that framed my research and elaborate on the method of data analysis that I used.

In Chapter 4, I will focus on my first case study, the Ras el Nabaa neighborhood, giving an account of what it was like before the civil war and the impacts the war had on the neighborhood. I will include my own observations as well as the results of a series of interviews with selected residents. I will do the same in Chapter 5 for my second neighborhood case study, Badaro.

I will conclude with Chapter 6, summarizing my analysis of the role and dynamics of integration in a post-conflict society along with my assessment of the prospects for using planned integration as a means of reconciling conflicts among different ethnic and religious communities. Based on my findings, I will propose recommendations for policy makers, urban planners, and other social scientists regarding how best to handle residential segregation in Beirut – whether through incentives or mandates for integration or other means of reconciliation.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

II.1 INTRODUCTION

There has been much research on residential segregation and integration, but most leading studies have focused on American cities.¹ Given the fact that large cities in the United States are home to a number of different ethnic groups, these studies have examined the reasons for segregation and the implications of the spatial distribution of these groups. The way that blacks,² whites,³ Hispanics,⁴ and Asians⁵ have located themselves has attracted much attention from sociologists, urban planners, and economists.

While there is no real consensus on what determines racial residential segregation, these studies highlight some possible factors, such as prejudice, ethnocentrism, preferences, and social class. Studies examining the negative effect of racial residential segregation show that racially-segregated neighborhoods tend to perpetuate urban poverty and inequality and keep non-whites, particularly lower-income blacks, in an urban ghetto, away from resources and opportunities to improve their status.⁶

Importantly, none of the leading studies on segregation in American cities focuses on any positive elements of racial residential segregation. Rather, they explore the possible reasons for segregation and offer an analysis of its impact on inequality and on social relations between diverse racial communities. For those scholars who believe prejudice or ethno-centrism are leading factors, they argue that increased contact between different racial groups reduces

¹ Massey 1988; Clark 1992; Massey and Denton 1992; Farley and Frey 1992; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Gould 2000; Logan and Stults 2001; Vigdor and Glaeser 2001

² Clark 1991; Sigelman and Welch 1993.

³ *ibid*

⁴ Clark, 1992; Bobo and Zubrinsky, 1996

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ Massey and Denton, 1992; Akerloff, 1997; Topa, 1997

racism and may help increase cases of residential integration.⁷

In contrast, there has been limited scholarly work and theories on residential segregation in post-conflict societies, with a majority of the work focused on Belfast and Johannesburg; studies on integration are even fewer.⁸ While the advantages of mixed neighborhoods in stable societies seem to outweigh the disadvantages,⁹ the advantages of integration in cities that have undergone significant civil strife have not been adequately discussed. In this chapter, I will explore the prevailing arguments in favor of segregation and integration and attempt to relate them to post-conflict societies.

Segregation and integration can be defined as the following: “a particular ethnic group is completely un-segregated when its members are distributed uniformly relative to the remainder of the population. Any deviation from such uniformity represents a situation characterized by segregation, and the greater the deviations the greater the segregation.”¹⁰ One way demographers and population geographers measure residential segregation is by using the index of dissimilarity. This index is “a measure of the evenness with which two groups are distributed across the component geographic areas that make up a larger area.” In other words, it measures to what extent one group is spatially isolated from another.¹¹ Another index, called the isolation

⁷ Sigelman and Welch, 1993

⁸ The following sources are studies on residential segregation in Belfast: Doherty and Poole, 1997; Adair et al 2000; Bollens 2000; F.W. Boal, 2002. There has been a study on Arab-Jewish daily economic interaction in Jerusalem, but it does not include residential integration (Romann, 1991). Another study was conducted in a small Arab-Jewish town which analyzed reasons for residential integration (Graicer, 1991). Studies on residential integration in Johannesburg include: Jurgens, 1993; Cloete and Prinsloo, 2002; Lemanski, 2005.

⁹ The advantages include what Massey, Denton, Akerloff, and Topa found in their studies regarding urban inequality: the more segregation, the more urban poverty; the less segregation, the greater the opportunities for the poor to improve their socio-economic status. Unlike in post-conflict societies, in stable societies, prospects for violence amongst different racial groups living in the same neighborhood is very minimal, and thus creating integrated neighborhoods, rather than homogeneous enclaves, will facilitate the distribution of resources and will strengthen local economies rather than keep certain areas of the city underdeveloped.

¹⁰ Barrage, 1986; Herbert and Johnston, 1978.

¹¹ An extreme case is one in which one racial or ethnic group lives in one area while another group lives in an entirely separate location. If this were to occur, the index value would be 100. If both groups were to be randomly assigned a residence, the index value would fall to 0. (University of Michigan Population Studies Center)

index, measures the degree of isolation each group experiences. Other segregation indices measure exposure or interaction, as they indicate to what extent various groups interact with each other. Although it does not measure how often these groups visit each other, it does say something about the degree of heterogeneity and spatial intermingling in each neighborhood.¹² The factors that influence segregation and integration can differ depending on the history of the city and the neighborhoods involved.

Whatever these factors are, the way segregation plays itself out on the ground differs from one setting to another. Some argue that there are dangers associated with certain kinds of residential segregation while others believe that segregation is the only way to maintain stability, particularly in post-conflict societies. There are a few scholars, like Alexander Downes and Chaim Kaufmann, who argue that pushing for integration in such settings will perpetuate hostilities, while Ceri Peach and Frederick Boal highlight the positive reasons for segregation in post-conflict societies. There are others however, such as Sigelman, Welch, Festinger, Schachter and Back who explain the positive role integration can play amongst diverse, and often segregated and socially distant communities. In this chapter, I will examine these arguments in an effort to further understand the prevailing wisdom about integration and segregation and their potential impacts in post-conflict cities like Beirut.

II.2 POSITIVE FACTORS OF INTEGRATION

a. The Role of Integration on Friendship Formation and Reconciliation

In times of civil conflict, it is not surprising that many people would want to relocate and seek shelter in neighborhoods offering strong social support based on communal ties and social

¹² Population Studies Center, University of Michigan.

solidarity.¹³ Such segregation, however, can have profound negative implications in a post-conflict situation. Without regular interaction with people from “other” groups, hostility, tension, intolerance, enmity, and even the potential for conflict can increase significantly, as it “can lead to the reinforcement of stereotypes by reducing or preventing inter-group contact.”¹⁴

The presence of separate, homogeneous groups relying on themselves for social support reinforces the mentality and notion of fear of “the other” since there is no need to interact and exchange ideas, goods, and services with outsiders. Anyone not belonging to the neighborhood is looked upon with suspicion, and thus rather than a gradual lowering of the walls and removal of the boundaries, the divisions are perpetuated and social relations between the different groups become more difficult to mend.

In fact, this notion is supported by the Contact Hypothesis, whereby increased instances of interracial contact are correlated with a rise in positive racial attitudes amongst people of different backgrounds. In a number of case studies testing the Contact Hypothesis, tension and prejudice between members of two hostile groups lessened after they were placed in close proximity and were forced to interact and cooperate.¹⁵ Indeed, relations between blacks and whites in certain studies improved significantly through specific policies encouraging integrated public housing. Although there are exceptions,¹⁶ the studies found that socialization and interaction between blacks and whites created greater opportunities to build trust, and that in contrast to those who remained segregated, these groups lacked the fear and mistrust that often

¹³ Khalaf, 1993.

¹⁴ Boal, 1996. Boal’s 2002 study on segregation in Belfast argues that community solidarities, reinforced and strengthened through segregation, have contributed to hardened feelings, stereotypes, and continued conflict between the Catholics and Protestants. Other studies supporting this claim include Poole and Boal, 1973; Whyte 1990; Khalaf, 1993; Sigelman and Welch, 1993.

¹⁵ Sigelman and Welch, 1993.

¹⁶ In Singapore, mixed neighborhoods did not necessarily lead to increased interaction between residents of different ethnic communities. I will explain this in more detail later on in the chapter.

characterized the feelings between these two communities. The study shows, for example, that whites in less integrated areas tended to perceive blacks as more hostile.

Indeed, segregated groups often draw their impressions of other communities through second-hand information, which can be biased and filled with prejudice. Positive perceptions and impressions can thus arise when personal contact with other communities occurs, as negative feelings are lessened when individuals interact directly with each other, consequently creating opportunities for the attainment of positive information about members of the other community.¹⁷

Importantly, this hypothesis does not suggest that segregation is the only reason that community members exhibit negative feelings towards other community members. While lack of contact can exacerbate tense relations between two or more groups, there are clearly other sources of prejudice and racial hostility. Nevertheless, since increased contact among communities has improved relations between group members in some cases, it is crucial to consider its importance when looking into ways to reconcile various communities, particularly in post-conflict settings.

While Appold and Hong argue that physical proximity does not necessarily translate into social interaction and integration, as seen in their study on Singapore,¹⁸ in the Sigelman and Welch study, it appears that positive racial attitudes arose simply from neighborhood contact rather than from interracial friendships. Sigelman and Welch conclude that besides the positive role that personal friendships have on relations between different community members, residing in a neighborhood where black and white social interaction is common helps produce positive racial feelings and perceptions. Thus, physical proximity is not the sole mechanism for

¹⁷ Sigelman and Welch, 1993.

¹⁸ Appold and Hong, 2006.

improving social relations; rather, there must be a desire and a willingness on the part of the community members to interact and socialize. The authors do argue, however, that the presence of both interracial friendship and interracial contact creates stronger positive feelings between members of different communities. When taken individually and separately, positive feelings can emerge; however, an even greater and more significant outcome arises when physical contact is joined together with social contact.

While some have argued that placing people from hostile communities together can increase tension and can actually aggravate relations between members, in this particular study between blacks and whites, increased contact did not result in the production of negative racial attitudes. In their final analysis, Sigelman and Welch are able to find support for their argument that interracial contact has the potential to transform relations between communities and can play a significant role in fostering positive feelings between members of different groups. Indeed, while the positive effects may be modest, when aggregated over the millions of diverse community members in the United States, there is a real chance that the tense feelings that characterize relations between different ethnic, racial, religious, and socio-economic groups can in fact be lessened when initiatives encouraging increased contact are promoted.¹⁹

In another similar theory, Festinger, Schachter, and Back developed a theory on the “propinquity effect” in their 1950 MIT Westgate study on friendship formation based on physical location. They learned that residents in a two story apartment building were more likely to form friendships with their neighbors than with those on the other floor. In addition, those living nearest to the staircase and the mailboxes were more likely to have friends from both floors. Thus, the propinquity effect came to be defined as “the tendency for people to form friendships or romantic relationships with those whom they encounter often.” Similarly, the

¹⁹ Sigelman and Welch, 1993.

“Mere Exposure” theory holds that “the more exposure a stimulus gets, the more likeable it becomes.”²⁰

The theories presented in this section highlight the basic notion that with continuous interaction comes familiarity, making relations between people much easier to establish. Prejudices decrease as people are able to create their own impressions and make their own judgments of “the other” based on their own first-hand experiences, rather than relying on stereotypical claims. Those with limited interaction are forced to rely on these second-hand claims, which only serves to maintain tension between groups, as nothing is being done to rectify or at least challenge these notions about “the other.” These groups remain strangers to each other and thus the barriers remain erected, providing limited opportunities for them to get to know each other on a more personal and humane level.

II.3 NEGATIVE FACTORS OF SEGREGATION

a. The Impact of Segregation on Income Inequality

“More disquieting, [homogeneous enclaves] are inclined to stifle cultural and intellectual experimentation and, instead, generate obfuscating milieus germane to the spiritless and joyless lifestyles symptomatic of all closed and partitioned spaces.”²¹

To elaborate more on the negative impact of segregation on the city, there is a theory that economic inequality can arise out of persistent segregation. Because cities tend to have both developed and less developed neighborhoods, resources may tend to be unequally distributed, reinforcing economic disparities among various communities.²² Barrage argues that this can

²⁰ Festinger, Schachter, and Back, 1950.

²¹ Khalaf, 1993. p. 58

²² Barrage, 1986.

ultimately lead to the creation of certain images and perceptions about the different parts of the city, thereby perpetuating stereotypes towards particular underprivileged groups.

Giorgio Topa adds that increased social interaction between the upper and lower classes can create positive externalities and local spillovers that can aid the lower classes in improving their status by accessing opportunities and employment through the help of those at the upper end of the social ladder.²³ Frederick Boal echoes this as he argues that segregation “can reduce opportunity for those who find themselves unwillingly separated residentially from the general urban population.”²⁴ Indeed, a number of sociological theories propose that neighbors play a significant role in providing residents access to certain privileges.

Interestingly however, physical proximity once again is not the determining factor; the term “neighbor” can also point to members of a particular social network, which may include family, friends, and coworkers. In this sense, the social network plays an important role in presenting members with economic opportunities, information flows, access to resources, and the prospect of establishing additional connections and social contacts.

Importantly, studies have shown that many people in low-income neighborhoods rely on these social networks to find jobs. Relying on these informal networks, rather than the more formal networks that upper-income residents depend on, confirms the importance of social capital in these neighborhoods. As a result, when integration occurs amongst people from different socio-economic backgrounds and when social interaction is the outcome, it presents lower-income people with greater opportunities for social mobility, particularly those individuals searching for low-skilled jobs.²⁵

²³ Topa, 1997. p. 2

²⁴ Boal, 1996. p. 155

²⁵ Topa, 1997. p.3

As Topa explains, there is an assumption that “inbreeding” exists in social networks, whereby members from a particular social-economic class help each other access certain opportunities. Thus, if these social networks remain segregated and if members do not interact with members from other social networks, the result will be a conspicuous difference in wages and labor force participation, as the lower-income individuals will remain confined to their own limited resources and may be cut off from learning about and accessing certain privileges, benefits, and opportunities.²⁶

George Akerlof explains in his theory of social conformity that the closer individuals are spatially to each other, the more likely they are to conform to each others’ habits, behaviors, and goals. In other words, social distance is minimized.²⁷ As a result, those individuals residing in ghettos will find it very difficult to extricate themselves from the poverty that surrounds them, as they are constantly interacting with others from the ghetto and are experiencing “the norms of the ghetto society.” This results then in the prolonging and the perpetuation of poverty, making it more difficult for people to move up the social ladder.²⁸ In Akerlof’s study, one man explains the following:

“Now if you are one of the good and you’re constantly coming in contact with one of the bad and there are a whole lot of bad and very few good, then you don’t have any other choice but to go along with the bad whether you want to or not.”²⁹

²⁶ Alternately, it may appear that the poor are tied down to their homogeneous enclaves and unable to move, yet they may actually be residing there voluntarily because their social networks transcend their own neighborhood and come from external sources such as religious and kinship groups that may not necessarily be located within their own area of residence.

²⁷ This theory may simply indicate that people tend to live in neighborhoods with like-minded residents, who share similar preferences and lifestyles. However, Akerlof’s study focuses on poor people who naturally do not wish to be poor and thus who have no desire to imitate the preferences of those around them. Involuntarily, they are forced to conform to the prevailing habits, customs, and behavior of their neighbors.

²⁸ While education may assist the poor in improving their social status and relocating to another neighborhood, the inadequate public policies, and the dearth of resources and development assistance, partly due to discrimination towards such areas, may compromise the quality of education.

²⁹ Akerlof, 1997. p. 1018.

Echoing the notion that lack of contact with people from the upper classes subjects the poor to the continuous cycle of poverty, Akerlof further explains that the theory on conformity takes on a central role here as individuals have no choice but to conform to the attitudes and norms of those in their own ghetto society, given the fact that it is too difficult for them to access “the other world.” Akerlof acknowledges that there are those who successfully made it out of the cycle of poverty and were able to climb up the social ladder and into the ranks of the middle and upper classes. However, he cautions that if the theory of social conformity has any valuable basis, then this process of “upward class mobility, especially out of the ghetto, must be fraught with difficulties that are only surmounted by the exceptional.”³⁰ Thus, prospects for ordinary citizens living in under-privileged areas to improve their socio-economic status seem to be dim at best. Thus, harms and dangers of segregation can clearly have not only social consequences, but also drastic economic consequences as well.

Interestingly, in Bobo and Zubrinsky’s study on minority perceptions,³¹ it was noted that blacks, Latinos, and Asians all associated greater physical proximity to whites as facilitating their upward class mobility.³² However, for whites, such proximity signaled a threat to their status, indicating whites feared that interaction and integration with minorities would strip them of their dominance and superiority.³³ Thus, while there may be clear advantages for the lower classes to form relations with the upper classes, the latter may resist such prospects as they may not perceive themselves as gaining much from interacting with the lower-income communities.³⁴ Herein lies the challenge in integrating communities from different socio-economic classes.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ Bobo and Zubrinsky, 1996.

³² These various ethnic groups perceived whites as living in higher-quality areas and in more pleasant environments.

³³ For whites, racism and prejudice was involved, in addition to their impression of non-white areas as being associated with lower-quality environments.

While it may be difficult for policy makers, economists, and urban planners to push for integration between communities of diverse income groups, given the difference in affordability, lifestyle, and preferences, would it be slightly less of a challenge to encourage households from different sectarian backgrounds but similar income groups to live together? Do the residents in my two neighborhood case studies come from similar classes, or can they be characterized as socio-economically mixed?

II.4 POSITIVE FACTORS OF SEGREGATION

a. Segregation as a Means for Stability

Despite the fact that social policy is often directed towards increasing interaction and integration among members of diverse communities, there are some who argue that encouraging and forcing people to interact and cohabit may ultimately end up doing more harm than good. Alternatively, they claim that encouraging the formation of homogeneous enclaves can be pivotal in creating secure, stable, and prosperous areas. In discussing the concept of territoriality and the driving forces behind it, Ferdinand Tonnies' theory on *Gemeinschaft*-like relations becomes relevant as it is characterized by strong relations between members of the same community. Within this community, individuals exhibit a collective sense of loyalty towards the members in their society and thus there is a natural production of stability and security.³⁵ Thus, the natural separation of communities occurs because people are drawn to living in areas where they feel they can prosper, where they feel safe, and where they can identify with their neighbors. This theory suggests that such segregation becomes the foundation of the social order

³⁵ Barrage, 1986.

and without it, the urban system may fail to function properly.³⁶ Consequently, homogeneity becomes an important factor for stability. Since homogeneity is produced through territoriality and can result from it, one can thus claim that territoriality is an integral element of stable social systems, as its existence aids in regulating social interaction.³⁷

In another study by Yaneer Bar-Yam et al,³⁸ the authors propose a model for creating stability in ethnically, religiously, and racially diverse areas, particularly in locations where civil conflict occurred. In their model, although they spend a little time explaining how imposed mixing can be a way to promote peace, the bulk of their argument cites the importance of boundary clarification, (and hence, separation of community groups) as an important mechanism to ensure peace. In their model, they assume that homogenization occurs naturally, as individuals choose their places of residence where they feel they can associate more with the members in that particular neighborhood.

In their analysis, they argue that violence is more likely to arise in spatially heterogeneous areas, not because of the mere presence of diverse groups, but rather, because social and economic problems are very much a part of community life; the added presence of diverse communities thus makes it all the more likely for the different groups to conflict. Thus, they predict that the existence of heterogeneous areas is highly indicative of local violence.

Despite this argument however, their hypothesis has a twist. While they show that well-segregated groups do not have the opportunity to engage in violence as they do not interact with each other, they also claim that well-integrated areas with a particular percentage of each group do not engage in violence either. In explaining their reasoning, they state that in highly mixed

³⁶ This is perhaps most relevant for post-conflict cities. On the other hand, although stable cities around the world experience some degree of segregation, many are in fact ethnically and racially integrated and the urban system is not in disorder.

³⁷ Barrage, 1986.

³⁸ Bar-Yam, Lim, and Matzler, 2007.

regions, no particular community constitutes a majority of the population. Moreover, no group is large enough to impose its own values or norms upon other groups. Consequently, it is difficult for any group to develop a strong collective identity, and in fact, the incentive to do so is weakened in such a setting where no other groups exhibit strong ties to their own identity or affiliation; as a result, the threat of “the other” is significantly less or non-existent as in other mixed areas.

On the other hand, they claim that poorly defined boundaries create the potential for conflict and violence. Interestingly, they have determined that in cases where violence has occurred between groups, there is a critical size that one or all of the groups must have reached. Anything smaller than this size is not a source for concern because the group will lack the strong collective identity needed to mobilize its members and impose its control on the others; anything larger automatically makes it necessary for the creation of a homogeneous enclave where such large groups naturally form self-sufficient domains and establish their own sovereignty. As an example, they cite Singapore’s experience in mandating a certain percentage of ethnic mixing in public housing. Although social tensions exist between the different community groups there, no cases of violence have occurred – thereby lending credence to their argument that certain cases of mixing may be successful in fostering some form of tolerance and stability amongst diverse communities (although, again, interaction and social ties may indeed be limited).

However, their main proposal for preventing conflict remains inclined towards the creation of clear boundaries that outline the regions where each community resides or tends to cluster, effectively creating separate, sovereign entities where community members can still interact with other groups across the boundaries, but which have independent policies, norms, and regulations. Their conclusion is that “peaceful coexistence need not require complete

integration.”³⁹

In a similar and quite controversial account, Alexander Downes goes further and proposes the partition of countries undergoing ethnic civil wars, arguing that stability will not prevail unless homogeneous territories are created where members of each community feel safe and are not threatened by the possibility of renewed attacks from other ethnic groups. He cites Chaim Kaufmann’s theory that when previously warring sides are living side by side and are cohabiting a common space, prospects for continuous violence remain high. When separation is established and when people are not constantly running into their former enemies, the incentives to attack diminish, as it becomes more difficult to do so when physical proximity is lessened. In Kaufmann’s opinion, no other solution to ethnic conflict will succeed without partition and separation, as he views ethnic intermingling as the primary instigator of conflict.⁴⁰ One may then wonder, if different community groups are to remain separate within a city, what opportunities will they have to reconcile, build relations, and create a more cohesive society? Would initiatives be recommended at this phase of segregation to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation, before integration is even considered?

b. Additional Reasons for Segregation

Boal lists a number of other positive factors for segregation in post-conflict societies. He explains that segregation:

- “Provides the basis for defense against physical attack
- Provides a means of avoiding what may be difficult or embarrassing contact with strangers

³⁹ Bar-Yam, Lim, and Metzler, 2007. p. 1544.

⁴⁰ Downes, 2006.

- Provides a basis for cultural preservation
- Offers an environment conducive to ethnic entrepreneurship, while forming an electoral base for those members of the ethnic group who aspire to promote their group's interests in the political arena."⁴¹

According to Boal, segregation in conflict environments is not necessarily a negative process and dynamic, as it functions to preserve communities, empower its members, and protect them against attacks. It can be argued however that perhaps segregation may play a positive role in environments that are still engaged in civil conflict, internal strife, and/or war. Alternatively, segregation in post-conflict communities may ultimately only serve to perpetuate intolerance rather than encourage co-existence and reconciliation.

II.5 INTEGRATION AND INTERACTION

*"Urban sociologists often claim that spatially integrated neighborhoods create socially integrated communities that allow economic opportunities and cultural values to diffuse. We find that, however desirable in its own right and however useful as an indicator of social assimilation, residential integration is not an effective policy tool for achieving social integration."*⁴²

In an empirical study carried out by Appold and Hong in Singapore, the authors investigate whether public housing policies mandating inter-ethnic mixing has lead to the formation of friendships and relationships between Singaporeans of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Festinger, Schacter, and Back's study on residential proximity found that it creates the greatest opportunity for contact, interaction, and friendship formation; they claim that such opportunities significantly affected attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of neighbors. Appold and Hong,

⁴¹ Boal, 1996.

⁴² Appold and Hong, 2006. p. 18

however, set out to measure the depth of relationships among Singaporeans of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Through their analysis, they find that residential integration does not automatically translate into social tolerance and does not necessarily lead to strong relationships.

Appold and Hong explain that the Singaporean government's rationale behind mandating racially integrated public housing is based on the concern for the negative economic and cultural consequences of residential segregation – citing “pragmatic and idealistic reasons.”⁴³ With the theory of friendship formation, if there is no opportunity for contact, the chances for establishing relationships across ethnic lines greatly diminishes.

In their findings, they discover that despite the physical proximity of the diverse groups, they remain segregated as they essentially confine themselves to mingling and interacting with their co-ethnics. Despite Singapore's attempt over the past few decades to increase residential integration so as to deepen inter-ethnic ties among its citizens, they claim that social segregation may have in fact increased.

Upon looking into the theory that physical proximity leads to interaction which leads to liking and friendship formation, they explain that there must first exist common demographics, interests, and aspirations. They note that while co-students and co-workers often form relationships and friendships because of the opportunity for continuous contact and interaction, importantly, they also have similarities with which to base their relationships on. In contrast, they claim that neighbors do not have so much in common. To indicate this, they show that three times as many inter-ethnic friendships were created in the workplace than in the neighborhood. They thus conclude that the workplace is the primary source of friendship formation across ethnic lines, and that the neighborhood does not play a large role in establishing such relationships.

⁴³ Appold and Hong, 2006. p. 4

Moreover, upon analyzing the function of the neighborhood, they conclude that it has lost its salience in creating social networks for a few reasons. Their study indicates that the residents do not seem to be spending much time at the commercial or recreational facilities of the neighborhood.⁴⁴ Consequently, the neighborhood has ceased to act as a locale for socializing and instead is purely residential in its purpose and function. In addition, because the local government provides adequate services, there is no need for the residents to band together to form networks to guarantee service provision through collective risk-pooling.

In addition, depending on the culture, some groups may rely extensively on their neighbors or co-ethnics for social support, while others may only rely on family and close relatives. As a result, even if a neighborhood were integrated, its effect on social relations may not be evident. Indeed, in Lebanon, family is a major part of social relations and thus it can be said that in times of need, a household would first turn to its relatives for support before turning to its neighbors.⁴⁵

Crucially, as Gordon Allport distinguishes between mere interaction and positive interaction,⁴⁶ Luis Wirth also states, “the contacts of the city may indeed be face to face, but they are nevertheless impersonal, superficial, transitory, and segmental.”⁴⁷ While it is inevitable that ethnic groups interact with each other in such a multi-ethnic society, Allport explains that strong inter-group relationships form under specific conditions: “equal group status within the situation; common goals; inter-group cooperation; and the support of authorities, law, or

⁴⁴ The study consisted of a working-age males and females between the ages of 25-55. By the age of 25, almost everyone in Singapore has completed their education and can be considered an adult. After the age of 55, many choose to retire and thus their social relations and daily habits may change. About 70% of the adults in the sample had at least one child.

⁴⁵ Although this may apply to many other places, in a society such as Lebanon, citizens tend to rely closely on family for support as they are very much entrenched in their own communal affiliations and often draw social support from kinship networks; it is not common for such networks to span cross-sectarian affiliations, thus making it more unlikely for households to turn to non-co-religionist neighbors for support.

⁴⁶ Pettigrew, 1998.

⁴⁷ Wirth, 1964.

custom.”⁴⁸ Thus, because it is more likely to find these conditions in the workplace than in the neighborhood, Appold and Hong conclude that the mere existence of diverse ethnic groups in a neighborhood does not guarantee the formation of strong inter-ethnic relations.

It is crucial to note that my study focuses on voluntary integration rather than compulsory integration through policies, as seen in Singapore. There, it is clear that housing policies mandating integration between different ethnic groups has not led to social relations and friendship formation – perhaps partly because it is forced. As a result, it may be safe to assume that policies pushing for integration may not be beneficial. Instead, in post-conflict societies such as in Lebanon, it is important to look into the factors driving this voluntary integration, as policies mandating integration between different sectarian groups may indeed end up producing more tension and animosity rather than positive social ties.

Thus, rather than devising policies to push for integration, policies can focus on the root causes of voluntary integration, which may ultimately make integration more successful in terms of reconciliation. Interestingly however, in Singapore, while the integration was mandated by the government, the different community groups are also ethnically diverse with little in common – thereby further weakening the prospects of interaction and friendship formation. In contrast, in Lebanon, the different community groups have more in common as they share the same nationality, ethnicity, culture, and language. Thus, ultimately, perhaps some policies pushing for integration may actually lead to more significant social relations between Lebanese groups than evidenced in Singapore.

II.6 NEITHER SEGREGATION NOR INTEGRATION

“Through inventive urban design, strategies can be advanced to meet the needs for diversity and unity, intimacy and distance, and hence, to allow groups to mix but not combine.”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Pettigrew, 1998.

“Should architects, for example, in heeding the sentiments of their own community, sharpen the resurgent territorial identities, and thereby, run the risk of accentuating differences and distances between communities? Or should they be more predisposed to accentuate, embellish, and dress-up the commonalities and thereby, help in transcending paranoia and divisions?”⁵⁰

While there are some who encourage high mixing and intermingling in neighborhoods, and others advocate for separation, there is an intermediate option that pushes for mixed public spaces rather than mixed neighborhoods. Jad Tabet proposes that spaces should be created that foster and encourage people to build relationships together. In such spaces, “sociation and conviviality” are more likely to occur, as these spaces are away from the sensitive territorial entities where people feel compelled to protect their enclaves.⁵¹ Rather, these public spaces can be perceived as neutral territory and thus people can mingle in a relaxed manner, thereby facilitating the establishment of relationships.

Khalaf postulates that given the current Lebanese situation, whereby the attachment to sectarian identity runs high, perhaps it is not wise to expect the majority of Lebanese to welcome the idea of intermixing and intermingling. He warns that attempts to create public spaces for different groups to interact may end up causing greater tension and harm, given the feelings of hostility that these groups tend to have towards each other.⁵² He explains that since local identity is very much a part of the Lebanese identity, reconciliation between the different communities should probably be established and achieved through other mechanisms which transcend the need to create spaces that attract diverse groups. He hypothesizes that it may be necessary to preserve the separate homogeneous enclaves around the city, and use instead the edges of these territories that lie adjacent to each other, which “would then become the negotiated terrain, the

⁴⁹ Khalaf, 1993. p. 51

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 57

⁵¹ Tabet, 1993. p. 99

⁵² Khalaf, 1998. p. 151

common ground, and the cross-cultural meeting places.”⁵³ He views such spaces as having the potential to play a significant role in slowly and gradually drawing individuals away from their enclaves where they feel secure surrounded by family and community, and out into the open where, upon establishing contact with “the others,” the fear they have towards them may begin to diminish.⁵⁴

Khalaf argues that “weak borders rather than strong walls” can facilitate the permeation of certain neutral areas which will not give the impression that a particular community’s territory is being invaded. Rather than have strong walls which indicate “confinement and exclusion,” these weaker borders can serve the purpose of keeping people separate but allowing them to mix gradually at their own pace, neither forcing them to mingle but also giving them the opportunity to explore, discover, and venture out into the “unknown” when they feel that they are ready to do so.⁵⁵ According to E.T. Hall’s theory of proxemics, a balance can indeed be struck whereby the need for the preservation of personal space is upheld while at the same time the opportunity to mingle and interact is not compromised.⁵⁶ In this theory, the importance of personal space is highlighted and an in-depth analysis of how this plays a role in territorial behavior becomes useful – a concept which I focus on at the end of this chapter.

II.7 THE FORCES BEHIND SEGREGATION

Now that I have reviewed some of the theories on the impact of segregation and integration, it becomes crucial to look into why segregation itself occurs. Although there exist

⁵³ Khalaf, 1998. p. 142

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

There are studies on peace parks that center on the theme of creating a large public space with no boundaries, which, beyond preserving the environment and contributing to eco-tourism, may have the potential to bring together communities from opposing sides, such as in North and South Korea as well as India and Pakistan. This would encourage mingling in a non-hostile, non-polarizing environment which could expose people to each other but not force them to co-habit the same space.

⁵⁵ Khalaf, 1998. p. 142.

⁵⁶ Hall, 1968.

numerous theories on what drives segregation, not much has been discussed regarding the factors influencing integration – perhaps because voluntary integration is not common in plural and multi-ethnic, multi-sectarian societies with a history of civil unrest. On the other hand, segregation is usually driven by personal decisions stemming from certain factors. As a result, an analysis of the forces behind segregation becomes necessary, before delving into a discussion on integration. By discussing various possible factors that drive segregation, it will make it possible to further understand why people might choose to integrate or why they may resist it. Some initial questions are: how compelling is their reason to segregate? Can the factors be overcome, and if these factors diminish – is it more likely that they will integrate with households from other community groups?

In Luis Wirth’s essay called “Urbanism as a Way of Life,” he explains some of the factors driving segregation, claiming that the large presence of individuals from diverse backgrounds accentuates differentiation and variation, meaning that spatial segregation in the city becomes natural, ordinary, and expected based on race, religion, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, among other factors. He explains the process in the following excerpt:

“Diverse population elements inhabiting a compact settlement thus become segregated from one another in the degree in which their requirements and modes of life are incompatible and in the measure in which they are antagonistic. Similarly, persons of homogeneous status and needs unwittingly drift into, consciously select, or are forced by circumstances into the same area. The different parts of the city acquire specialized functions, and the city consequently comes to resemble a mosaic of social worlds in which the transition from one to the other is abrupt.”⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Wirth, 1964. p. 2

Although this was written back in 1964, his theory appears to apply to the way large cities function today, whereby inhabitants are unable to build relations with the many people they interact with on a daily basis, thus creating superficial relations. In addition, the tendency for people to prefer to reside in neighborhoods with others who share a similar lifestyle is still very much prevalent today and can explain certain patterns of segregation.

In a study conducted by Bobo and Zubrinsky, they set out to understand why blacks and whites remain highly segregated in various parts of the United States. They explain that there exist a number of factors that can influence people's desires to locate in a particular neighborhood, which include: "housing cost and affordability, location, the quality of housing stock, proximity to work, stage in the life cycle, quality of schools..."⁵⁸ As a result, several factors may be responsible for the existing patterns of black and white segregation.

Through their analysis, they discuss three prevalent hypotheses that seek to explain the reasoning for what drives residential segregation. The "Perceived Social Class Difference" hypothesis postulates that residents tend to segregate themselves based on social class; those at the upper end of the social ladder cluster together as they share similar income, status, life-styles, and are able to access similar resources. Those who fall in the lower part of the social ladder are thus unable to afford living in such a location and consequently end up forming their own enclaves elsewhere in the city.

Ultimately, the authors explain that the segregation ends up occurring based on racial or ethnic lines, as race and ethnicity can be associated with social class and income levels. As a result, what appears as ethnic or racial segregation in fact stems from socio-economic factors. As Clark explains, "because income is correlated both with race and with residence, it is not surprising to find that even if residential choices were unconstrained by racial residential preferences, ethnic groups would not be distributed randomly in the city"⁵⁹

Another hypothesis, known as the "Mere In-Group" hypothesis, postulates that segregation occurs because of ethnocentrism. In other words, people tend to reside in areas with a majority of their racial/ethnic group members. Individuals with strong desires to live amongst

⁵⁸ Bobo and Zubrinsky, 1996. p. 884

⁵⁹ Clark, 1991.

neighbors with similar backgrounds thus harbor in-group preferences. Importantly, what drives segregation is thus not related to negative feelings towards out-groups, but rather, positive feelings about the in-group. Clark argues that the social class hypothesis may not hold much credence, as it becomes merely an illusion that group members are attempting to preserve their own status rather than the fact that people simply and naturally tend to cluster around others from their own group⁶⁰.

Finally, the “Prejudice Hypothesis” stipulates that out-group hostility plays a significant role in determining where people end up residing. Individuals harboring negative feelings towards members of other groups tend to distance themselves from them, which ultimately creates a pattern of residential segregation based on attitudes of prejudice. Bobo and Zubrinsky argue that it is more likely that this hypothesis plays a more central role in residential segregation patterns than either the social status or in-group hypothesis. They claim that “as the affective difference that whites prefer to maintain between themselves and members of minority groups rises, so does the level of opposition to racial residential integration.”⁶¹ Indeed, in their study, they found that as hostile feelings toward an out-group declined, prospects for residential contact and integration improved as opposition to interaction diminished. They hypothesize that “negative stereotypes are typically significant predictors of social distance preferences.”⁶²

a. Prejudice As a Significant Factor Driving Segregation

Interestingly, when it comes to evaluating the social class hypothesis, it is evident that race still plays a large role in determining residential location patterns. In Clark’s study, white households did not resist the presence of a small number of black households with a similar

⁶⁰ Bobo and Zubrinsky, 1996. p. 886

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 892

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 899

socio-economic status. However, his study revealed that white households would oppose the entry of a large number of blacks into their neighborhood. Moreover, Clark's study shows that large-scale neighborhood transition is occurring in areas where blacks and whites with similar social status reside. Indeed, despite similar education and income levels, there is a prevalence of white flight and abandonment of neighborhoods at a particular tipping point once black households enter the area in large numbers.⁶³

However, this is not to say that social class is not a factor in driving segregation. In White's study, complete housing segregation existed in an area where neither blacks nor whites harbored negative feelings, prejudice, or discrimination towards each other. The segregation resulted simply because white households had higher incomes.⁶⁴

b. The Role of Preferences on Segregation

The role of residential preferences is also seen to be a significant force in determining residential choice location. As Clark explains, this was not given much attention in the past, as other factors such as governmental policies and real estate were assumed to be more decisive in driving segregation and integration. However, in-depth studies have since been carried out on the impact of preferences in the context of residential patterns. Preferences thus encompass economic considerations such as housing affordability, while sociological and psychological considerations including beliefs and value structures can also be instrumental in driving segregation or integration.⁶⁵

The Schelling Segregation Model is an important one to mention at this point. In this model, Schelling suggests that given the variety of individual preferences that stem from

⁶³ Clark, 1991.

⁶⁴ White, 1977.

⁶⁵ Clark, 1992. p. 453

differences in “sex, age, income, language, religion, color, taste, etc” it is expected that in the aggregate these slight deviations will lead to segregation, as people’s residential location choices stem significantly from these preferences.⁶⁶ As a result, beyond the obvious racial or socio-economic divide, households make their choices about where they live based on a number of other factors that indicate their own individual preferences. Ultimately, segregation is likely to arise.

Even when segregation is established however, households are expected to move out of their neighborhood once their tolerance levels are exceeded. This is significant as it indicates that nothing is static and as outsiders begin to “infiltrate” or “invade” a particular neighborhood, which thereby begins to undergo some degree of integration, the priorities and preferences of the households are thus tested. Those unwilling to live with the outsiders will end up moving – resulting in a potentially transformative process of neighborhood change.

Interestingly, Clark claims that governmental interventions to stimulate integration among different communities may be in vain, given the important role that preferences, affordability, and the urban structure have in determining residential location. He cites the fact that policies in the United States have been geared towards facilitating minority access into particular neighborhoods, yet, despite inching closer to fair housing, individual preferences must change as well. He explains that avoidance still seems to dominate the attitudes of diverse groups, whereby group members tend to prefer to cluster around members of their own community, thus creating homogeneous and segregated enclaves.⁶⁷ As long as individuals and groups continue to resist and oppose locating in neighborhoods where they are the minority,

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 1991. p. 4

⁶⁷ Clark, 1992

segregation may continue to characterize American cities for a long time, no matter how many policies are created to encourage mixing and integration.

c. The Role of Territoriality on Segregation

Segregation and integration cannot be properly understood without a discussion on territoriality. In an effort to delve into the theory behind territoriality, it is necessary to briefly return to E.T. Hall's theory on proxemics. Proxemics is the "study of man's appreciation and use of space." As soon as man's space is violated, territoriality immediately surfaces and tension arises with the invader/intruder. Research has shown that communication between individuals can be significantly hampered and compromised should such violation occur. In order to avoid such adverse circumstances, man must maintain control over his personal space as it is one of the primary sources of personal satisfaction.⁶⁸ Drawing on this theory, the presence of territorial boundaries in the context of a city thus determines the course of interaction among people from different neighborhoods.

Clearly then, one striking consequence of the Lebanese civil war is the territorialization of identities. Territoriality is "the practice through which the social and the physical (the built environment) interact in a power relationship."⁶⁹ Out of this context emerges a control mechanism known as territorial behavior. Since the 1920s, scholars have identified a number of definitions that characterize this mechanism. One includes the idea that actors would demarcate areas around their territory to make it clear that outsiders are not welcome to enter. According to D. Stea, "Territorial behavior reflects the desire to possess and occupy positions in space and,

⁶⁸ Hall, 1968.

⁶⁹ Sarkis, 1993.

when necessary, to defend them against intrusion by others.”⁷⁰ For L.A. Pastalan, “territory is a delimited space that a person or group uses and defends as an exclusive preserve. It involves psychological identification with a place, symbolized by attitudes of possessiveness and arrangement of objects in the area.”⁷¹ Clearly then, the various armed factions during the civil war and after exhibited this behavior, whereby enclaves throughout Beirut became associated with a particular identity, and became off-limits to those who did not share that particular affiliation.

Beyond the notion that territorial behavior provides security for those inhabiting a particular space, more importantly, R. Ardrey argues that territories “contribute to a sense of identity such that possessiveness, ownership, and control of a geographical area help define concretely the person or group. This explains why people often compete over territorial locations.”⁷² This function of territorial behavior clarifies the reason for why actors within an enclave exhibit heightened awareness at anything foreign or strange; in drawing their boundaries around their territory, they are essentially attempting to preserve their own identity. In times of civil conflict, since communities often feel threatened by other groups, the notion that they need to protect their identity, and thus their neighborhoods, becomes their number one priority. As a result, their reaction becomes that of antagonism and resistance toward any outsiders.

As Khalaf points out, “the stronger the identification with one’s quarter, the deeper the enmity and rejection of the other.”⁷³ Within this territorial base, the community strives to create its own self-sufficient space where it preserves its own values and lifestyle; hence, any outside interference or influence is seen as an assault on the community’s mere existence. Again, Khalaf

⁷⁰ Stea, 1965.

⁷¹ Pastalan, 1970.

⁷² Ardrey, 1966.

⁷³ Khalaf, 1993. p. 34

explains that “heightened feelings of identity may lead one to a refusal to compromise” and hence, coexist.⁷⁴ As a result, segregation, initially arising out of a need to minimize conflict between diverse communities, may actually end up perpetuating tension and creating greater possibilities for violence.

In analyzing the transformation of societies over time, Khalaf explains that their evolution consisted of a gradual change from a closed system to a more open system whereby affiliation to a particular sect or kinship ceased to determine access to certain benefits.⁷⁵ In Lebanon’s case however, the reinforcement and focus on sectarian identity is hindering such progress. Rather than openly advocating for mixture and diversity, its spatial social landscape is being altered and transformed into enclaves and fragmented entities.

d. Discrepant Theories on Territoriality in High and Low-Income Areas

	High Territoriality	Low Territoriality
Upper Class Areas	Want to maintain their neighborhood social status	More educated, liberal, and open-minded so more accepting of outsiders; no internal cohesion
Lower Class Areas	More conservative and dogmatic so less accepting of outsiders with new ideas and lifestyles; want to maintain their identity, protect themselves, and avoid moving	Want to attract outsiders to gain resources and improve their status

Table 2.1

There are theories on integration that assume that upper-class areas are more susceptible to invasion than lower class areas primarily because of the presence of low density rates, a high availability of resources, and internal stability. The theory states that because high class areas are characterized by inhabitants occupying similar socio-economic status but no other common

⁷⁴ Khalaf, 1993. p.34

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p.35

interests, it is unlikely that strong collective action would arise. As Barrage explains, “because of the individualistic nature of their organizational structure, they are unable to resist invasion.”⁷⁶

In contrast, low class quarters are known to house tight-knit communities with high density and poor living conditions. Such characteristics are unattractive to outsiders and serve to deter invaders from entering the neighborhood. In addition, because the inhabitants of such neighborhoods are unable to relocate easily due to their economic conditions, they tend to become more attached to their neighborhood and are more protective of it, thus making it more difficult for newcomers to move in, and consequently exhibiting higher degrees of internal cohesion and territoriality.⁷⁷

However, La Gory and Pipkin claim that upper-class neighborhoods actually exhibit higher degrees of territoriality because of their desire to maintain and preserve their neighborhood’s status.⁷⁸ Interestingly, lower-class areas with poorer residents may either exhibit high levels of territoriality or low levels, depending on their needs. Beshers, Timms, and Cox explain that these inhabitants would be less territorial if they are looking to change the character of their neighborhood, and thus welcome outsiders in hopes that they would bring with them resources, opportunities, and connections. On the other hand, they would have higher levels of territorial behavior if they are very attached to the neighborhood and fear that newcomers would constitute a threat to their quarter.⁷⁹

II.8 RESEARCH PUZZLE

Thus, to repeat briefly, some theories claim that upper class areas exhibit high levels of

⁷⁶ Barrage, 1986. p. 131

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ La Gory and Pipkin, 1981.

⁷⁹ Beshers, 1962; Timms, 1971; Cox, 1974.

territoriality because residents do not want to lose their status, dominance, and character should outsiders “invade” and occupy their neighborhood. However, in the middle-to-upper class neighborhood of Badaro, it is clear that it is attracting many Muslim households, who are possibly middle-to-upper income residents. Does their presence indicate that there is low Christian territoriality in the neighborhood?

Indeed, there seems to be a gap in the theory, since upper class areas are also where the more educated, and in some cases, the more open-minded residents reside. This indicates a possibility that they are more accepting of others and less fearful of outsiders, and consequently, less territorial. Is this why Badaro is attracting outsiders? At the same time however, there are other upper-class neighborhoods around East Beirut with highly educated professionals, yet which exhibit high levels of territoriality and are quite homogeneous.⁸⁰ So, what is it about Badaro specifically that is drawing in the Muslims?

Regarding the poorer areas, while some theorists claim that upper class areas are more territorial than lower class areas, in fact, the latter also show high levels of territoriality; because they are economically constrained, they are unable to move to another place in the city and thus they become very attached and protective of their neighborhood. However, despite this theory, Ras el Nabaa, regarded as a lower-to-middle class neighborhood, is slowly and gradually attracting Christian households. What is it about this neighborhood that is attracting them to reside there? Are the residents displaying any resistance towards this change?

In addition, poorer areas tend to have less educated inhabitants and consequently, they are more religious and more conservative. This results in a higher level of territoriality because they are less accepting of outsiders as they perceive them to be a threat to their culture, beliefs,

⁸⁰ While upper class areas and more educated neighborhoods are more likely to be heterogeneous than lower class/uneducated areas, we cannot generalize that wealth and education lead to less territoriality.

norms, values, and lifestyle. We can see this by looking at some lower-income Muslim neighborhoods around Beirut and noticing that they are overwhelmingly homogeneous based on sect/religion, such Zoqaq-el-Blat, Basta Tahta and Basta Fawka, which tend to be mixed Sunni-Shiite neighborhoods, while Tarik el Jdideh is a Sunni-dominated area and Chiyah and Haret Hreik are both known to be Shiite neighborhoods. Since Ras el Nabaa can be characterized as a dense, working-class neighborhood, to what extent do they or do they not resist Christian entry and accessibility into the neighborhood?

a. My Contribution and Significance of Study

Despite existing theories that may partially explain what is happening in these neighborhoods, there is clearly a gap in our understanding of exactly what is going on. Which theory actually applies in these two neighborhoods? How can we reconcile the contradictions and the exceptions? Do the neighborhoods offer something special that most other neighborhoods lack? Or, are the factors that are driving integration replicable in other neighborhoods?

There has been much discussion about how people determine residential preferences, why segregation occurs, its impact, and the pros and cons of integration. However, there does not seem to be much research done on what *drives* integration among residents of diverse ethnic, religious, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds, in the absence of mandated policies that push such interaction, particularly in post-conflict societies. Given the natural tendency to create homogeneous enclaves and for ethnic clustering in the city, what explains voluntary decisions to reside in non-co-religionist neighborhoods? Clark claims that however noble in its own right integration may be, it is unlikely that integration will occur on a significant level due to

residential preferences for living amongst people of similar backgrounds.⁸¹ In light of such realities, how can the dynamics in Beirut be explained? Why would people of different backgrounds in post-conflict societies choose to live together? Can such integration lead to reconciliation?

I will be trying to answer these questions and examine my hypotheses by studying two neighborhood case studies in Beirut. In an attempt to understand what is happening in these two areas, I will be exploring two main processes at the micro level. First, I will look into why residents are choosing to reside in areas where they are the minority. I will analyze the reasons for their decisions to locate in a non-co-religionist neighborhood. Next, I will study the relations between the original residents and the newcomers in order to further understand whether spatial proximity leads to the emergence of social relations, friendship, and hence, reconciliation among the different communities in Lebanon.

⁸¹ Clark,1992.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

III.1 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH TOOLS

I utilized two research methods to gather data and information related to my study. First, I gathered information based on personal observation. This involved socio-economic, physical, and political mapping, or observation.¹ Through this, I was able to note a number of characteristics in each neighborhood, and learned about various aspects of the area before speaking to residents. By gathering this information beforehand, I was able to reference particular experiences I had in the neighborhood and ask residents about certain elements that I observed. These observations allowed me to carry forth a more detailed conversation with the inhabitants and gave me a deeper understanding of the dynamics in the neighborhood.²

In addition, I relied on interviews with residents in Ras el Nabaa and Badaro, as well as with the mukhtar,³ real estate agents, developers, school administrators, and personnel from the Ministry of Displaced. By analyzing this interview data, I was able to learn more about the neighborhood's history, as well as its demographic, physical, socio-economic, and political aspects, including how the area has changed in recent years. Moreover, discussions with the residents gave me insight on their personal experiences in the neighborhood and their interactions with other inhabitants.

¹ I adopted this methodology from a thesis written by Juliana Massoud Najem, called "Community Participation as a Tool for Neighborhood Rehabilitation: The Case of Karm el-Zeitoun" at the American University of Beirut, 2001.

² Due to a lack of detailed studies at the neighborhood level, I was unable to gather much information from published sources. Much of my information came from interviews with residents who had lived in the neighborhood for years and who witnessed its transformation after the war. Statistical studies and hard data, particularly for Badaro, are absent. As a result, much of the information in my case studies stems from these two methods of data collection: observation and qualitative interviews with a select group of residents. However, I did rely on a dissertation written by Blandine Delhomme in 1998 on Ras el Nabaa. In addition, I gathered some historical information on Badaro from a Masters thesis written in 1993 by Rania Ghosn and from a report written by Fadi Asmar and Doris Summer in 2007.

³ A mukhtar is a public civil officer whose jurisdiction is limited to particular neighborhoods and sectors throughout the city, but whose function resembles the duties of a mayor. A mukhtar often comes from a very well-respected and prestigious family, and is thus elected based on such primordial characteristics. He thus is an official representative of the state, who consequently holds formal power, as well as a local figure in the neighborhoods who is trusted and empowered by the residents (Barrage, 1986, p. 56).

a. Observation

With the framework of socio-economic mapping in mind, I observed each neighborhood's socio-economic composition by studying the general appearance of the area's inhabitants, which gave me an initial idea about their social class and income level. I observed the interactions between people of diverse income levels, which allowed me to deduce the level of intimacy and strength of the relations between the people and to what extent relations are confined to a particular social class of inhabitants. By observing the façades and types of the businesses in the quarter as well, it further gave me information on the characteristics of the residents. Documenting the types of businesses in the area revealed much about the neighborhood and its potential to attract people from outside the area, and gave me a basis with which to evaluate the local economy. Studying the neighborhood at different times of the day indicated the different degrees of activity that take place there and that vary depending on time, further explaining something about the economic set-up of the neighborhood.⁴

More in-depth physical mapping was also useful in helping me to assess the dominant socio-economic level in each neighborhood. Since the physical appearance of the inhabitants is not always sufficient to indicate someone's social status, I coupled my socio-economic mapping information with the neighborhood's appearance and attractiveness, and studied the types of cars, the size, and the aesthetics of the buildings. This gave me a rough sense of the geographical distribution of different households based on social class. The morphology of the neighborhood,

⁴ Due to the absence of neighborhood-level studies, I was unable to gather statistics on the demographics of the neighborhoods, their socio-economic characteristics, or the local economy. Not even the mukhtar could give me an accurate figure on the population of each neighborhood. There were no public records, land use maps, or property value data that I was able to refer to in order to supplement my observations.

characterized by the layout of the settlement, its density, the plot sizes and configuration, along with the location of the neighborhood were all critical elements to include.⁵

Beyond the morphological structure, I took some time to study the amount of public vs. private space, the land use, and the circulation system. All these factors are important indicators of the level of development and the probable social class of the inhabitants. Much can be deduced simply by documenting the extent of the deterioration of the buildings, the amount of garbage found on the streets, the accessibility of the neighborhood through the street network, the types of cars, and the car density.⁶ For example, I noticed several large, modern, and recently-built buildings in Ras el Nabaa, as well as older, and to a certain extent, shabbier-looking buildings. To me, this indicated that a number of more affluent families are moving into this lower-to-middle income neighborhood.

Political mapping through observation is also quite useful, particularly as it has to do with the concept of territoriality. What I am able to determine based on observation about the neighborhood's political affiliation, others are also able to establish – meaning that the neighborhood makes it somewhat clear and evident where it stands on the political scale. Observing the number and types of flags bearing allegiance to a particular political party, the posters of political leaders, graffiti, and banners displaying slogans related to a certain ideology or group revealed much about the neighborhood's political identity. In addition, the presence of political party offices also indicated whether there is an active constituent base in the

⁵ The layout of the settlement gives an impression about the extent of public and private space, and to what degree it follows a particular pattern. Is it primarily buildings? Are new buildings clustered in one location or dispersed throughout the neighborhood? Where does the main street lie, and do the inner streets all connect to it? High density gives an indication of few open spaces, less privacy, more clustering, more congestion, and less spaciousness. Plot sizes and configuration indicate something about the socio-economic characteristics of the residents, as one can assume that large apartments are more expensive. Finally, the location of the neighborhood also gives an idea about its accessibility, its proximity to other central areas around the city, and its connection to main highways that lead out of the city.

⁶ Najem, 2001.

neighborhood. If there was more than one political party represented in the neighborhood, analyzing the location and clustering of the different flags, banners, posters, graffiti, and offices told me much about how the different supporters are geographically distributed around the neighborhood.⁷

b. Interviews: Sample Design

Given limited time and financial resources, I had to limit the number of interviews to a manageable number, yet still ensure the prospect of gathering a fair sample of views. I knew from the outset that I would not have the resources to do a statistically significant number of interviews. Since I am studying two neighborhoods, I decided to conduct at least a dozen interviews in each neighborhood.

In Ras el Nabaa, I interviewed eight Christian residents and five Sunni residents. My rationale for choosing more Christians than Muslims stemmed from my interest in understanding what attracted Christians to Ras el Nabaa. I wanted to hear about the experiences of several Christian newcomers in diverse social, educational, and economic backgrounds. In this way, I hoped to account for the variety of factors that might explain the process of integration and the formation of social relations. Specifications and details of the Christian sample are outlined below:

- Interviews were conducted with Christian Ras el Nabaa residents who moved into the neighborhood anytime between the end of the civil war (1991) until recently
- Interviews included Christian residents from the following categories:
 - Shop owner in Ras el Nabaa

⁷ Due to the intensified political situation in Lebanon over the past few years, many political groups have become highly mobilized and have expressed their presence in particular neighborhoods by raising flags, posters, and banners affiliated with each party. As a result, I believe observing the political symbols in the neighborhood indicates to what extent residents are politically active and identify with a certain party, ideology, and religion.

- Land owner in Ras el Nabaa
- Building owner in Ras el Nabaa
- Elderly couple
- Employee living in Ras el Nabaa
- University Student
- Christian resident who lived in Ras el Nabaa before the civil war and returned after the end of the war
- Christian resident who never lived in Ras el Nabaa and moved in after the civil war

Breaking down the interviews into such categories provided me with a more holistic understanding of the Christian experience in the neighborhood.

However, I also wished to gain the perspective of Sunnis in Ras el Nabaa and understand their perceptions of neighborhood change and their relations with the newcomers. Five interviews were sufficient to gain some insight on their experience in the neighborhood. The details are the following:

- Interviews were conducted with Sunni Ras el Nabaa residents living in the neighborhood since before the civil war
- Interviews included Sunni residents from the following categories:
 - Shop owner
 - Land owner
 - Building owner
 - Married couple with children
 - Employee

For the same reasons, I decided to interview eight Muslim (Sunni and Shiite) residents and five Christian residents in Badaro. Detailed specifications of the Muslim residents are outlined below:

- Interviews were conducted with Muslim residents living in Badaro who moved into the neighborhood anytime between the end of the civil war (1991) until

recently

- Interviews included Muslim residents from the following categories:
 - Shop owner in Badaro
 - Land owner in Badaro
 - Building owner in Badaro
 - Elderly couple
 - Employee
 - University Student
 - Married couple with children
 - Young couple/newly wed

For the Christians:

- Interviews were conducted with Christian residents who have lived in Badaro since before the civil war
- Interviews included Christian residents from the following categories:
 - Shop owner in Badaro
 - Land owner in Badaro
 - Building owner in Badaro
 - Married couple with children
 - Young couple/newly wed

The team of field researchers hired to interview these residents⁸ first pre-tested the questionnaire with a few residents to see if the questions were appropriate; once they realized that they were not political in nature, they decided that they would be able to carry out the interviews. Most parts of the selection process were random, as it was easy to identify shop owners, students, and employees, and even long-term residents who had lived there before the civil war. In addition, field researchers were directed to areas and buildings known to have Christian and Muslim families. In certain cases however, it was difficult to locate people with

⁸ See “Limitations and Problems Encountered in the Field” in section III.3 for an explanation of why I was unable to conduct some of the interviews.

particular backgrounds, and thus field researchers approached the mukhtar of each neighborhood and old-time shop owners who knew about the neighborhood's residents in order to locate residents with particular profiles. For example, it was difficult for field researchers to locate building and land owners, as many did not live in the neighborhood, and thus relied on respondents who had directed them to particular residents. In this sense then, the selection process was a snowball sample. As a result, biases may have interfered in the selection process, as field researchers were given particular names of people to interview.

All interviews were conducted inside the homes or shops of the respondents. Field researchers introduced themselves as being affiliated with a research team from a respectable research firm, and had name tags with their names, the name of the field manager, his phone number, and contact information. Respondents were informed of the questionnaire and were told that they were welcome to answer and participate in the study if they were interested. They were also informed that their identity would be protected and that they were welcome to see the questionnaire, to refuse to answer some questions, and to stop the interview at any time.

The questionnaire was carried out in a conversation style, rather than asking respondents to answer the questions separately and individually. In order to ensure that all questions were asked, the field researcher resorted to any survey questions not answered during the course of the conversation. The method of recording was done by note-taking. Eight residents refused to participate in the study, claiming that they did not have time to be interviewed; they came from all religious backgrounds. On average, the interviews lasted one hour and were conducted in Arabic. All respondents were asked a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. The field work was carried out in June 2008 and took about 3 weeks.⁹

⁹ See Appendix A for a full version of the questionnaires.

III.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

There are similarities and differences within and between Ras el Nabaa and Badaro, which make them intriguing case studies. These cases shed light on integration patterns and implications in two diverse settings. By reflecting on these cases, we can consider a wide number of factors that may explain the reasons for integration and the effects of spatial proximity on social relations.

I realize that it is important to look at successful cases of integration, not just segregation. Much of Beirut remains divided into homogeneous enclaves for understandable reasons -- the civil war, continued political stagnation, and the fact that proper reconciliation has not taken place. It is for this reason that cases of integration are particularly intriguing. I had initially planned on conducting a comparative analysis between Ras el Nabaa and another Muslim neighborhood not undergoing integration. I had hoped to control for a number of factors (such as social class, education, location, sect) to try to determine what it was about Ras el Nabaa that was attracting Christians. However, it was virtually impossible to control for that many factors. Thus, I decided to study two successful, analogous cases to try to highlight the diverse factors that may contribute to integration and its effects on social relations in the neighborhoods.

a. Selection of Cases

To begin with, both Ras el Nabaa and Badaro neighborhoods are among the few that are experiencing some degree of integration between Christians and Muslims in Beirut. I chose these two because I heard consistent accounts from planners, professors, residents, students, and mukhtars that they are both undergoing integration. Due to the lack of data and official studies at the neighborhood level, however, I had to rely on what these individuals told me. Before I selected these two locations, I considered others. For example, at one point I had considered

studying Mar Elias in West Beirut. It is supposedly a Christian neighborhood in a predominantly Muslim area of the capital. However, some observers doubted that Christians even remained there, while others claimed that indeed Christians, Muslims, and Druze still lived there. Due to my limited time in Beirut in the winter of 2007, I was unable to ascertain the accuracy of such claims. Indeed, the lack of official data on neighborhood populations made it difficult to determine whether Mar Elias was an appropriate site for my research.

Was Mar Elias still predominantly a Christian neighborhood? If so, it would not have been a useful location. I was not looking for a homogeneous neighborhood in a larger Muslim setting. No integration would be evident. Was it a Christian neighborhood attracting Muslims from other parts of Beirut, and thus undergoing integration? If this were the case, all the outsiders and newcomers would be Muslims. That is, if Muslims were attracted to the neighborhood, it would not have been too interesting because Muslims were the majority in the area already since it is located in West Beirut. I found it more interesting to study why Muslims are attracted to a neighborhood in East Beirut and Christians to a neighborhood in West Beirut. Alternatively, if I had chosen to study Mar Elias based on the fact that it was a Christian neighborhood in a predominantly Muslim area, this would not have been a good selection since Mar Elias was a Christian neighborhood in West Beirut long before the civil war, when mixing was prevalent all over Beirut.

I also considered studying Hay Beydoun in Achrafieh, a neighborhood known to host a number of Muslim families in a predominantly Christian area. However, I was informed that the Muslims in Hay Beydoun lived there before, during, and after the civil war. They never fled the neighborhood because they received Christian protection (due to their political affiliation). As a result, I did not find it to be a helpful case.

As I was finalizing my case study selection, I realized that both Ras el Nabaa and Badaro are undergoing integration that began several years ago and that is still occurring today. Studying this integration would allow me to focus on the mechanisms by which neighborhoods undergo significant political, economic, and infrastructural changes.

Both neighborhoods are located along the green line which makes them especially interesting. During the war, a great deal of tension and animosity existed between Christians and Muslims along this dividing line. I would expect that the original, long-term residents of the neighborhoods who represent the majority sectarian community would harbor strong feelings against outsiders, given the history of destruction and fighting that these neighborhoods experienced. How easy is it, then, for outsiders to enter these neighborhoods, given the history? And how are relationships characterized now?

Other reasons for selecting these two neighborhoods are:

- I wanted to study one Christian and one Muslim neighborhood undergoing integration.
- Both are primarily residential neighborhoods that lack large commercial and business institutions like Ras Beirut which largely explains the latter's cosmopolitan, diverse nature. On the contrary, these are relatively quiet neighborhoods.
- I did not want two neighborhoods with the same socio-economic makeup. I wanted to look into integration in a lower-to-middle income neighborhood (Ras el Nabaa) and in a middle-to-upper income neighborhood (Badaro) to assess whether incoming residents matched the social class of the original residents. Was the social class of the newcomers more important than their sectarian identity? Was this what was facilitating their integration? I originally had the impression that integration was more likely to occur in

upper-income areas; however, once I discovered that Ras el Nabaa was undergoing integration I decided it provided an opportunity to test this assumption.

- Ras el Nabaa was religiously mixed before the civil war and Badaro was predominantly Christian with a small percentage of affluent Muslim families, yet both are now undergoing integration. It is interesting to ask whether the Christians who fled Ras el Nabaa are among the ones returning and who the new incoming residents in Badaro are.
- Badaro seems to represent a wide spectrum of political, a-political, religious, and secular beliefs, while Ras el Nabaa seems to be more partisan, with a majority Sunni supporters of Hariri, and a strong Shiite minority supporting Amal and Hezbollah.¹⁰
- Ras el Nabaa witnessed severe destruction during the war, while both Ras el Nabaa and Badaro were significantly depopulated. Ras el Nabaa was one of the first neighborhoods to be rehabilitated and has been experiencing a real estate boom and heavy new development over the past few years. Badaro has not attracted much construction, as it has only recently become a high-demand area.¹¹ Could rising land values have something to do with the prospects for integration?

¹⁰ Hezbollah emerged as a militia in 1982 as a result of the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon, and continued to resist the occupation until the withdrawal in 2000. Since its birth, it has developed a non-military network of social assistance, and runs a number of hospitals, schools, and agricultural services primarily for Shiites across Lebanon. It has strong ties with Iran and Syria, which equip it with financial and military resources. It has a strong backing from most Shiites in Lebanon, which is the largest single sect in the country. With the newly-formed national unity government, it has gained considerable political power and representation in the Lebanese government. A major point of controversy is Hezbollah's weapons, which Hezbollah has claimed are untouchable, as it insists they are needed to defend Lebanon against Israeli aggression; others state that the weapons fail to protect Lebanon and only make it more of an Israeli target. The recent 2006 war with Israel brought the issue of the weapons to the forefront of the Lebanese political scene, and has since then not been resolved.

Amal was established in 1975 by the Imam Moussa al-Sadr, a Shiite cleric who aimed to empower the disenfranchised Shiite population of southern Lebanon. Although it began as a secular movement that had also aimed to unite Lebanon across all confessional lines and to assist the underprivileged from all sectarian affiliations, it became increasingly sectarian itself. Amal has received strong backing from Syria and has been aligned with Hezbollah in the recent political and military confrontation with the pro-Western March 14th bloc. Amal is headed by Nabih Berri, the current Speaker of Parliament.

¹¹ Yammine, 2008.

Clearly then, despite a few similarities, my two case study neighborhoods differ in important ways. When taken together, they offer an opportunity to look into some of the factors that lead to integration and the outcome of such a process on neighborhood relations. It is for these reasons that I decided that studying them in tandem made sense.

III.3 LIMITATIONS AND PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE FIELD

I encountered some obstacles which must be described here. These limitations had an impact on the outcome of my study. To begin with, the volatility and instability in Lebanon during the past two years has had important repercussions. I was unable to conduct most of the interviews myself. I had planned to do the interviews in spring 2008; however, parts of Beirut were too unstable as of March 2008, including Ras el Nabaa, which witnessed some riots and violence. This compelled me to contract with a research team to conduct the interviews on days when political events permitted. The May 2008 violence in Beirut and in other parts of Lebanon further justified my decision to hire the research team.¹²

Although I was unable to conduct most of the interviews myself, I did make it to Lebanon in July and August 2008 and spent much time doing my own field work in the neighborhoods. I interviewed several residents and was able to supplement the data from the research firm, Information International, with my own research. However, my ability to observe each neighborhood was compromised to a certain extent since I was not entirely free to take pictures or walk around all the areas as I normally would be. Given the tense situation in the

¹² The research firm which the team comes from is called Information International. It was founded in 1995 and is “an independent regional research and consultancy firm based in Beirut.” It is a prestigious company that conducts research and feasibility studies in a number of fields, including health, education, infrastructure, socio-economic issues, and demographics. It serves a number of clients, including the UNDP, the World Bank, and USAID. For more information: <http://www.information-international.com/>

country, it was not wise to photograph and take notes extensively while walking around the neighborhood. Much of it had to be done quite cautiously.

As a result, instead of openly taking notes, I decided to memorize what I saw and take short breaks to record this in private. Indeed, this made the research process much more complex and time-consuming. It was necessary, though, to avoid making residents feel uncomfortable or raise suspicions about my presence in the neighborhood. This was particularly important in Ras el Nabaa which has been the site of much recent inter-sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shiites. For Badaro, the army barracks are located there and the army has been the target of unidentified groups the past two years. Thus, tight security is in place whereby photography is not permitted around the barracks and any suspicious person or activity is likely to be reported to authorities.

Since both neighborhoods are primarily residential and do not experience heavy congestion or foot traffic (as in other parts of Beirut), residents would recognize me as a stranger and thus my activities would be thrown into question. One way of overcoming this limitation would have been to be accompanied by a resident of each neighborhood – however, due to time constraints I was unable to befriend and gain the trust of such guides and thus was not able to do this. Nonetheless, I did end up taking many pictures, and spent a significant amount of time observing and exploring the neighborhoods' different segments, and for the most part, did not encounter any problems. I did notice that the fact that I was a young woman in the neighborhood carrying a notebook and a book-bag put residents more at ease as it was evident I was a student gathering data for an assignment. I made it a point to approach certain residents who were observing me from a distance and asked them a few questions about the neighborhood, first, to show them that I was Lebanese and spoke Arabic, and second, to show them that I was not trying

to be secretive in my activity around the neighborhood, but rather, that I was open to sharing with them my objectives and was interested in their guidance and point of view.

The interviews carried out by the research team were conducted only several weeks after violent clashes took place in Beirut and around Lebanon. Consequently, respondents may not have been as comfortable answering some of the questions contained in the interview; it would not be surprising if suspicion, distrust, and fear clouded certain answers. Since many questions deal with sectarian issues and perceptions, residents may not have wished to reveal their honest responses for fear of reprisal.

Furthermore, people's responses now may be different from what they would have said if asked the same question one year ago – relations between people may have even been affected, particularly in Ras el Nabaa where fighting and violence spread between the residents and caused major destruction to cars, shops, and buildings – causing many to flee. It would have been ideal to capture the perceptions, attitudes, behavior, and thoughts of the residents before the clashes – yet this is lost information that I cannot recover.

Although I devised the questionnaire and am certain that the research team faithfully transcribed the interviews – the simple fact that I was not present means that I was unable to steer the conversation to my liking. Each interviewer draws on and grasps different issues and ideas from respondents, and impromptu follow-up questions are certainly different. Something a respondent said might have drawn my attention to a particular issue while another interviewer might not have dwelt on it.

I will now provide an in-depth analysis of these issues as they relate to each neighborhood, first by laying out my hypothesis and later by analyzing and assessing the data.

III.4 HYPOTHESES

a. Case Study I: Ras el Nabaa

Why have some Beirut residents moved into neighborhoods with a majority of non-co-religionist residents?

I hypothesize that the Christian newcomers in Ras el Nabaa are choosing to move into the predominantly Sunni neighborhood because it is slowly regaining its middle class status, as a result of the rehabilitation of the neighborhood since the end of the war in 1991. Because Ras el Nabaa was known as a religiously-mixed neighborhood before the war, and because a significant portion of Ras el Nabaa's population used to be Christian, I hypothesize that the neighborhood is welcoming the Christians because a large majority of Ras el Nabaa residents are old residents who lived with Christians in the past. I would imagine that the Sunnis do not feel threatened by the prospect of a greater Christian presence in the area based on good relations between them before the outbreak of the war. In addition, their return may be an indication that the neighborhood is slowly regaining its previous status as a chic and aristocratic neighborhood, as it was largely renovated and rehabilitated in the 1990s, and has since become an attractive destination for Muslims and Christians alike, thus resembling the religious diversity of the neighborhood before the war.

However, I also hypothesize that Ras el Nabaa residents are highly territorial, particularly in the neighborhood center. As a result, I believe that newcomers are choosing to reside in the periphery of the neighborhood where territoriality is not as pronounced. Given the fact that Université Saint Joseph (USJ) is located right on the edge of Ras el Nabaa, and because there exists high residential mobility in certain parts of the neighborhood due to the presence of foreigners and students, the level of territoriality may be much lower on the outskirts of the neighborhood than in the inner part. Given the notion that a strong feeling of territoriality arises

when residents remain in a particular area for an extended period of time and develop roots there, such dynamics do not seem to be evident on the edges of Ras el Nabaa where mobility and transition seem to occur frequently.

Some may still wonder why Christian residents choose to reside in a predominantly Muslim neighborhood rather than simply cross the street into East Beirut where they could be among their co-religionists. I hypothesize that the Christians choosing to live in Ras el Nabaa are not strongly affiliated with a political, religious, and/or ideological party and thus feel no deep desire to live in an entirely Christian neighborhood. The prime location of Ras el Nabaa may give them a reason to reside in that neighborhood, knowing it is only a few minutes from downtown and other central destinations, seconds away from prestigious academic and cultural institutions, and literally just across the street from what is known as East Beirut. While apartment prices are apparently increasing throughout the neighborhood, perhaps they are still affordable compared to those in East Beirut.¹³

Has spatial proximity produced strong social relations and positive interaction among members of diverse sectarian communities?

I hypothesize that relations and social interaction in Ras el Nabaa are not extensive between the Christian newcomers and the original Muslim residents because of the high level of territoriality in the neighborhood. Having walked through the neighborhood and after observing certain visual images that indicate political and religious affiliation, I imagine that the Christian

¹³Apartment prices have increased rapidly in East Beirut. Below market prices can be as high as \$1,600 per square meter in Sioufi and \$1,800 in Jeitawi. The lower-end of market value prices in Achrafieh cost anywhere between \$2,300 to \$3000 per square meter. Experts claim that newly-affluent expatriates working in the Gulf countries have been investing in real estate in Lebanon while prices were low, given the pro-longed political crisis in the country over the past couple of years. Many have been merely speculating, believing that a resolution to the crisis will drive prices up. Indeed, real estate prices have continued to increase since the political accord was struck in Lebanon in May 2008, and expatriates who invested much earlier in the year are seeing their investments multiply (Sarkis, 2008).

residents may feel that they do not belong there and thus may tend to avoid entering those parts of Ras el Nabaa.

Moreover, if it is true that most of the Christians are choosing to reside on the edges of Ras el Nabaa, they can easily cross over into East Beirut to do their daily business there. Thus, I hypothesize that these Christian newcomers are not well-integrated in Ras el Nabaa and do not feel connected or attached to the neighborhood. I believe that the neighborhood merely serves a residential purpose for them and the majority of their work, school, shopping, and social activities take place outside the neighborhood. It is for this reason that I hypothesize that social relations between the old and newcomers remain superficial and distant.

b. Case Study II: Badaro

Why have some Beirut residents moved into neighborhoods with a majority of non-co-religionist residents?

I hypothesize that the Muslim newcomers in Badaro are choosing to move into the predominantly Christian neighborhood because territoriality is not strong in Badaro, so outsiders do not feel threatened coming into the neighborhood. Walking around the neighborhood, I noticed that the atmosphere does not seem to be politically charged. Rather, it has a more neutral appeal that does not make non-Christian visitors feel unwelcome.¹⁴ In Badaro, one resident informed me that Badaro attracts younger couples from mixed-marriages who want to live in an area where they can raise their children in a non-sectarian environment. This indicates that the Muslim newcomers have no qualms about residing in a predominantly Christian neighborhood.

¹⁴ My impression was quite different walking around Furn el-Chebbak, an overwhelmingly Christian area near Badaro. Territoriality there was highly pronounced, whereby signs and posters of Christian religious and political figures dominated the inner streets and corners of the neighborhood.

In addition, I hypothesize that the presence of Muslims of similar social standing facilitates their acceptance. Since the neighborhood does not seem to exhibit a strong sectarian or political affiliation, I expect that Muslims with similar educational levels and lifestyles are welcome to reside there and feel comfortable doing so. In other words, I believe that Muslims are choosing to live in Badaro as opposed to other nearby Muslim neighborhoods because it is not religiously, politically, or ideologically polarizing; indeed, many Muslim neighborhoods in West Beirut are associated with either Hezbollah or Hariri-dominated areas. Moreover, many are known to be lower-income areas, which might not be attractive to middle-to-upper class Muslims. Thus, Badaro offers an opportunity to live in a middle-to-upper class neighborhood without worrying about the strong influence of sectarianism in their daily lives. And finally, although there are other less partisan, heterogeneous areas like Ras Beirut, Verdun, and downtown where they could reside, Badaro is still more affordable than these other areas.¹⁵

Has spatial proximity produced strong social relations and positive interaction among members of diverse sectarian communities?

I hypothesize that the lack of visual barriers indicating strong territoriality and religious/political polarization in Badaro allows Muslims to integrate socially in the neighborhood. With more integration comes greater opportunities for interaction. To elaborate, with weak territoriality, their freedom of movement may not be as constrained in the neighborhood. This allows Muslims to move around and assimilate more easily, resulting in the creation of relationships with other residents through interaction on the streets and in the various small businesses in the neighborhood. It is this weak territoriality that I believe facilitates interaction between Muslims and Christians in Badaro and contributes to strong social relations.

¹⁵ Yammine, 2008.

I also hypothesize that Christians in Badaro are more likely to be open to socializing with the Muslims. The lack of a strong political or religious appeal in the neighborhood indicates that there may not be one predominant political party or political leader that most Badaro Christian residents follow. I hypothesize that given this presumed political diversity, Badaro residents are accepting of people from different political and religious backgrounds. In the homogeneous Christian neighborhoods where residents are affiliated with a particular sect and political party/leader, it is difficult to imagine Muslims integrating and interacting on a deeper level, as the Christian residents may prefer to keep to their own kind, not welcome outsiders, and not be open to establishing relations with them.

On the other hand, in Badaro, its very nature is more neutral, low-key, and less-polarizing. This ought to facilitate interaction between Christians and Muslims. Since it is not a homogeneous enclave with a majority sect or political affiliation, this probably prevents Christian residents from claiming the neighborhood as one belonging only to the Christians, whereby they feel a need to come together and shun outsiders. In fact, I hypothesize that the presence of secular institutions in and around Badaro helps to produce the sentiment that the ownership of the neighborhood transcends a particular community. I imagine that since such institutions attract outsiders, this naturally limits Badaro residents from exhibiting strong territoriality, consequently leading Christian residents to become accepting of a diverse population and to become more open to the presence of Muslims and of the possibility of establishing social ties and friendships with them.

In a more recent development, on the political level, for the past few years Christian parties in Lebanon have aligned themselves with Sunni or Shiite political parties; as a result, I hypothesize that they have become more open to establishing connections with Muslims, and

that it is easier for them to build friendships with the Muslims newcomers.

In the next chapter, I will discuss my findings on Ras el Nabaa and will revisit my hypotheses in light of the data I gathered through interviews with various residents, the mukhtar, real estate agents, developers, the Ministry of Displaced, and school administrators.

CHAPTER IV: CASE STUDY - RAS EL NABAA



IV.1 BACKGROUND¹

a. Brief Background of Ras el Nabaa Before the Civil War

Ras al Nabaa is a neighborhood located on what used to be called the green line during the civil war, a street that divided Beirut into Christian East and Muslim West. The neighborhood forms the shape of a triangle, whereby to its north lies Independence Avenue which leads directly to Sodeco and Achrafieh in East Beirut and to Hamra and Ras Beirut in West Beirut. To its south lies Abdallah Yafi Avenue, situated right next to the national pine forest and the hippodrome, a large horse racing stadium. To its east is Damascus Road, the infamous street which was known as the former green line, which leads directly to the southern suburbs and mountainous areas outside the capital. And finally, to its west lies the main road of Bechara el Khoury that leads straight to downtown, and which was the old airport road before and during the civil war.



Fig. 4.1: Aerial view of Beirut and Ras el Nabaa; the green line is the line that divided the capital during the civil war.

¹ Information on Ras el Nabaa's history is limited, given the lack of formal studies with accurate data and statistics at the neighborhood level in Beirut. As a result, I have had to rely on interviews with residents and the municipal leader, as well as a dissertation on Ras el Nabaa written in 1998 for information on the neighborhood's history before and during the civil war, as well as a dissertation by Blandine Delhomme.

Before the civil war broke out in 1975, Ras el Nabaa was characterized as a highly prestigious neighborhood with residents coming from both the middle and upper classes. There were a few very well-known and noble families who occupied entire streets, which came to be named after them. While there was a main street called Mohammad el Hout street that ran through the center of the neighborhood from north to south, it also had several smaller, inner streets as well.

One noteworthy characteristic of Ras el Nabaa was that all sectarian communities were represented there, thus making it a very heterogeneous and diverse environment where Muslims, Christians, and Druze lived side-by-side and co-existed peacefully. The families of Ras el Nabaa all knew each other, interacted, and socialized with each other, as the neighborhood itself was very convivial and intimate. There were also a number of households with mixed Sunni-Christian marriages within the neighborhood.²

The neighborhood was mainly residential, but with some commercial, administrative, and educational establishments as well. It was dominated mostly by homes rather than by tall buildings. At most a small building had four to five floors. The density remained very low and many homes had gardens in their front yards. The architecture was markedly Lebanese, giving the neighborhood its own quaint and chic character, further allowing it to stand out as an aristocratic neighborhood housing prestigious and affluent families.

b. Social Relations Between Residents Before the Civil War

My conversation with Rima,³ a veiled Sunni woman who was born and raised in Ras el Nabaa, revealed that relations were very good between the people; she explained the following:

² Delhomme, 1998.

³ The names in this study have been changed to protect the identity of the respondents.

“Politics and religion never interfered with the friendships and social relations between the residents. Our Christian neighbors would join us to break our fast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, while we would also celebrate Christmas with them. We had very strong relations with them. I was practically raised by the Christian lady next door to my family’s home, and I grew up with her children. We are still very good friends until this day. I will take you to meet her now.”

As I walked up the stairs to meet Claire, I observed her reaction as she saw Rima in the doorway; she embraced her warmly and kissed her cheeks several times. Rima looked at me while holding her hands and said:

“See how close we are? She is Christian and I am Muslim. But it doesn’t matter.”

c. Implications of the Civil War on Ras el Nabaa

Unfortunately, Ras el Nabaa’s location on the green line and around the zone of confrontation exposed it to much physical destruction during the war, leading to significant demographic changes. According to the Lebanese Ministry of Displaced, 4,165 residences were damaged in some way, while 596 residential units were completely destroyed. When comparing the impact of the civil war in Ras el Nabaa to other areas around Beirut, it becomes evident that this neighborhood suffered the most in terms of residential destruction.⁴

⁴ Ministry of Displaced, 1998.
See Appendix B for more data on destruction in Ras el Nabaa and around Beirut.

Number of Destroyed/Demolished Residential Units in Beirut⁵

Area	Number of Residential Units	Amounts Paid
Achrafiyeh	37	\$125,197
Ain el Mraise	11	\$4,833
American Embassy	-	\$219,333
Bachoura-Mazraa	270	\$108,147
Karantina	107	\$142,269
Mdaouar	24	\$7,366
Msaitbe	1	\$313
Public Hospital	617	\$246,944
Ras el Nabaa	596	\$250,304
Sportive City Area	-	\$2,596
Sodeco	22	\$8,482
Souk el Khodar	-	\$2,658
Sanayeh	22	\$9,600
Tariq el Jdideh	7	\$3,333
Tariq ech Cham	125	\$50,097
Total	1839	\$1,169,476

Table 4.1

Most families did not remain in Ras el Nabaa. Christian and Muslim residents all fled the neighborhood for safer areas during various parts of the war. Data shows that 68% of the displaced residents of Ras el Nabaa relocated in West Beirut or the southern suburbs, while 18%

⁵ Ministry of Displaced, 1998. p. 65

chose to go to East Beirut or the northern suburbs. Studies also show that many of Ras el Nabaa's Christian residents left between 1982-1990 and tended to relocate to Hamra, Verdun, Ras Beirut, or neighborhoods in East Beirut.⁶

In the meantime, internally displaced refugees from other parts of Beirut and Lebanon arrived to Ras el Nabaa and took up housing there, either by renting or illegally occupying the buildings. The demographic changes were so drastic that residents who did return to Ras el Nabaa during or after the war had found new neighbors or vacant, unoccupied apartments.⁷

According to Delhomme's study on Ras el Nabaa conducted in 1998, most Christian residents who had left Ras el Nabaa had not returned.⁸ However, recent interviews with the mukhtar, Sunni, and Christian residents reveal that in fact, many Christian families either returned after the end of the war to live in Ras el Nabaa, or have recently moved in as newcomers without having any previous ties or roots in the neighborhood. After confirming that a number of Christian families currently live in the neighborhood amongst a Sunni Muslim majority and a strong Shiite minority, it becomes critical to understand what factors have driven them to reside in Ras el Nabaa since the end of the war, despite the fact that its demographics have changed considerably.

Interviews with residents show that as of 1998, many classified the neighborhood as a lower-to-middle class neighborhood that lost its prestige and aristocratic identity that it had before the war. With the demographic changes and the destruction, the neighborhood lost its appeal and began to attract a high percentage of poor residents and refugees. According to my own interviews with residents, soon after the war, some residents who chose to leave Ras el

⁶ Delhomme, 1998. p. 23

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 21-35.

At the end of the war, those illegally settling in the homes were paid to leave by the Ministry of Displaced.

⁸ *ibid.*, 1998. p. 27

Nabaa either sold their assets or rented out their apartments to newcomers. As the years went by during and after the war, residents explained that Ras el Nabaa became a more homogeneous Sunni neighborhood with a Shiite minority. Physically, it became denser, with fewer gardens and public spaces, and less of an aesthetic view as it became dominated by buildings.⁹

Delhomme's study was carried out in 1998, just a few years after the end of the war, whereby 64% of Ras el Nabaa's residents were its original inhabitants, and most were Sunni Muslim.¹⁰ At that time, the neighborhood was not in high demand, and thus newcomers were not as frequent, as it had been largely destroyed during the war and needed significant reconstruction, renovation, and rehabilitation. For the past several years however, Ras el Nabaa has become more central and has been attracting many Lebanese originally from other Beirut neighborhoods or regions of Lebanon. Of the Christian inhabitants, some returned after the civil war, and others are among the families who have chosen to move in recently.

Given the changes which have taken place in Ras el Nabaa, who are the Christians who have chosen to reside in Ras el Nabaa? Why did some Christian residents move in at the end of the war? Why did some who owned assets there not sell them and move to more homogeneous areas? Why did those who had no previous ties or attachment to Ras el Nabaa come live in this largely devastated neighborhood, especially since its sectarian composition made them the minority? Similarly, who are the Christians who have moved in recently? Why did they decide to live in this neighborhood?

⁹ Delhomme, 1998.

¹⁰ Due to lack of data on the number and types of households by confession in Ras el Nabaa before the war, it is not possible to draw a before-after comparison. However, based on the accounts of many residents, the neighborhood was very heterogeneous before the war and became significantly more homogeneous during and after the war.

d. Reconstructing Ras el Nabaa

Devoting some attention to the reconstruction process in Ras el Nabaa is important, as it has played a major role in the neighborhood's revival and may very well be a factor in attracting newcomers. It was mentioned before that the neighborhood was mainly inhabited by middle to upper class residents, most of whom left as the neighborhood was faced with destruction and quickly lost its prestige. It is interesting to know then whether Christians are now choosing to reside in Ras el Nabaa because of this reconstruction and because it is slowly becoming attractive and appealing once again, given its central location in Beirut.

While the focus of the Ministry of Displaced was on Mount Lebanon, where more than 43,000 families were displaced as a result of the war,¹¹ Ras el Nabaa was also one of the few neighborhoods in Beirut to receive so much aid, with a significant amount of money from the Central Fund for the Displaced devoted to restoring the buildings, facades, and public facilities around the neighborhood. Indeed, data indicates that Ras el Nabaa was one of the main beneficiaries of the fund's efforts, as 51% of the funds disbursed in Beirut went to Ras el Nabaa.¹²

During an interview I had with the director of the Ministry of the Displaced, he mentioned that although Ras el Nabaa was not the only neighborhood that faced significant destruction, the government had decided to focus much of its efforts in Beirut on renovating this particular area as it was located at two entrances to Beirut, and thus needed to look appealing and attractive. He explained then that while most of the façades of the buildings in Ras el Nabaa were renovated, they lacked proper plumbing, electrical connections, and construction from the inside.

¹¹ Ministry of Displaced, 1998.

¹² Delhomme, 1998.



Fig. 4.2 – 4.3: Renovated buildings in Ras el Nabaa; most of them still have the distinct Lebanese-style architecture which many modern buildings lack.

In fact, I once ran into a long-term resident of Ras el Nabaa during a taxi ride in Beirut, and during our conversation he had mentioned that while much of the physical destruction from the war has been erased from the outside, the inside of the buildings in the neighborhood lack much rehabilitation and are often dysfunctional. As a result, for those residents who chose to return to live in Ras el Nabaa and who had to fix their apartments, they often had to finance the rehabilitation of their apartments on their own, as the Ministry’s funding was not sufficient and at times took too long to be distributed.

Interestingly, according to Delhomme, Ras el Nabaa was targeted for reconstruction for other reasons as well, not only because it faced significant damage during the war, but also because the neighborhood was primarily residential and thus residents were directly impacted and needed immediate assistance. In addition, there were some middle class Beirut Sunnis who

owned land and buildings in Ras el Nabaa and had been present there for many years; it appears that they had political influence and had the means to influence the reconstruction process.

IV.2 RAS EL NABAA TODAY: MY OBSERVATIONS

I observed Ras el Nabaa several times on the weekdays and weekends to gather information on the physical, socio-economic, and political characteristics of the neighborhood. My visits in the quarter allowed me to observe the morphology and form of the neighborhood, its inhabitants' social interactions, its economic vibrancy, and the political affiliation and identity of many of its residents.

a. Physical Mapping

Ras el Nabaa is a quiet residential neighborhood with significantly less traffic than other neighborhoods in Beirut. However, the main street of Mohammad el Hout, while lacking congestion, is noisier than the smaller, inner streets of the neighborhood. While several parts of the neighborhood do not have much greenery, the streets are relatively clean. However, it is very dense; buildings are built in very close proximity to each other, and are often even constructed without any space between them, making the neighborhood much less airy and spacious. It also lacks a large number of parking lots, as most buildings include private parking spaces for their residents.



Fig. 4.4: An inner street of Ras el Nabaa



Fig. 4.5: The main Mohammed el Hout street; even in the afternoons this main street is generally quiet with few cars but many pedestrians and much activity along the sidewalks.



Fig. 4.6 - 4.7: High building density in Ras el Nabaa; little or no space is often found between the buildings.

Most buildings in Ras el Nabaa look renovated, as bullet-holes and other signs of war-time damage are not visible. These buildings look very pleasant and appealing from the outside; the Lebanese architecture has been preserved, thus giving the neighborhood a distinct look and helping it preserve its reputation as a chic residential area. Only a few buildings remain with some signs of destruction.

I observed a lot of construction and development in the neighborhood, with several new buildings being erected. I spoke with a developer from a construction company called Tayara, and he claimed that around 100 new buildings are being constructed in the entire neighborhood. The density seems to be increasing with each additional building, as Ras el Nabaa's past was characterized by mostly small buildings and homes with front yards and gardens.

As I walked around the inner streets of the neighborhood, I came across a few old homes not more than two or three stories high, gated and with gardens in their front yards. I kept these in mind as I asked the developer about them; he mentioned that almost every new building going up now is being built on the site of an old home that was demolished to make space for high buildings and more apartments. He said he expected that within just a few years, the remaining few homes would be cleared out, and the land would be bought by developers looking to construct buildings in their place.



Fig. 4.8: One of the few remaining homes in Ras el Nabaa, engulfed by tall buildings.

Consequently, this would be the final erasure of Ras el Nabaa's original quaint character, to be replaced by a higher density and ultimately, more people as new residents are quickly making their way into the neighborhood. Unfortunately, since Lebanon has not conducted a census since 1932, it is difficult to determine the population of Ras el Nabaa and how much it has increased in recent years. Nonetheless, despite the mukhtar's inability to give me an accurate number, he estimated that it must be between 250,000-300,000 inhabitants.

b. Socio-Economic Mapping

My observations of the people and the businesses throughout Ras el Nabaa gave me the impression that it is very much a working class neighborhood with some parts that are more upscale than others. While some buildings were new, large, modern, and attractive, a few others were less so, as they seemed to be shabbier and not very well maintained, at least from the outside.

While many of the cars that were parked along the streets were older and not expensive, I did come across some cars in the private parking spots at the bottom of the buildings which are clearly only affordable to the elite, such as a Porsche Carrera, which can cost around \$90,000. I saw this car parked in the private residential parking lot of a new, modern, expensive-looking building located in the inner streets of Ras el Nabaa. Its license plate was from Dubai.

When interviewing the developer from Tayara Construction, he informed me that many wealthy Lebanese expatriates working and making money in the Gulf countries are buying homes in Ras el Nabaa, as Lebanese who live in Lebanon cannot afford to do so, given the stagnant economy and the significant price increase in real estate over the past couple of years. This man explained that although his building is still under construction, most of the apartments

had been sold to Lebanese living abroad. This was confirmed by another developer, whose building which is still under construction consists of 30 apartments, 90% of which were sold to Lebanese living in the Gulf. Similarly, another developer whose building consists of 20 apartments claimed that 17 of them have already been sold to Lebanese living abroad, leaving him with only three vacancies.

When residents were asked about the original inhabitants, they explained that some of the new and younger generation of Ras el Nabaa's original residents are leaving because it is not affordable for them to rent and live there anymore. As a result, they are moving to the suburbs where it is cheaper, while newcomers are buying and moving in. Ras el Nabaa thus seems to be transforming into a mixed-income neighborhood where wealthy expatriates are buying homes amongst the neighborhood's working class inhabitants.



Figure 4.9: One of the new, modern, large, and relatively more expensive buildings in Ras el Nabaa.

The economy in Ras el Nabaa seemed to be vibrant, as many of the stores were open. On the main Mohammed el Hout street, pedestrians are often seen on sidewalks, running errands around the local shops, as most businesses were open and seemed to serve a good percentage of the neighborhood's residents. Interviews with residents and shop owners however revealed that many outsiders from the southern suburbs and East Beirut come to shop in the neighborhood as well. There are significant numbers of small, family-owned shops and businesses along this street. Fruit and vegetable stands can be seen on every corner, while ka'ak, an inexpensive yet satisfying Lebanese bread, juice, and coffee sellers steer their carts between the cars and across the streets throughout the neighborhood. Small kiosks are spread out around the area, selling snacks and basic household necessities.

Traditional Lebanese food stands are also common, whereby the Lebanese mana'eesh (oven-baked sandwiches) are ready within minutes, quickly serving a working-class population on their morning or afternoon rush to work. A number of different businesses cater to the immediate resident population, including the cleaners, laundromats, tailor shops, shoe shops, jewelry stores, clothing shops, barber shops, pastry shops, fabric shops, toy shops, auto-mechanics, electric shops, mobile phone stores, stationary stores, and book shops. As I was observing people on one of the smaller and quieter streets in Ras el Nabaa, I came across two Syrian workers passing by separately through the residences, announcing in a loud, distinct voice certain products that their employer was selling a few blocks away.¹³

No matter what day or time I was in the neighborhood, I consistently saw young boys, young men, and older men out on the sidewalks. The little boys were often playing on their bikes on the sidewalks and around the streets, as the neighborhood does not have a park or a public area for young children. Men in their 20's and elderly men were also seen strolling

¹³ This tends to take place in working-class neighborhoods; it is not common in upper-class areas.

around on the sidewalks, either in front of their shops or in front of their friends' homes and businesses.

Given that it was summer, many of the children and university students were not in school and thus were spending their time outside their homes in their neighborhood. Importantly however, I saw more men than women outside on the streets. At times I saw women buying their groceries from nearby fruit and vegetable stands, taking their children somewhere, or inside taking care of their family-owned business. Other than this however, I did not see young girls playing outside or young university women out and about in the neighborhood.

c. Political Mapping

As I walked around the neighborhood, I noticed many signs indicating that the area is highly politicized. In this neighborhood, I found numerous photos of political and religious figures, in addition to flags symbolizing affiliation to a particular political party and ideology. Photos of Nabih Berri, leader of the Shiite group Amal and also the Speaker of Parliament, can be seen on many walls in certain areas of the neighborhood. In addition, Amal and Hezbollah flags were also hung up around particular street corners, while graffiti bearing the Amal symbol was painted on walls. Photos of other prominent Shiite figures such as the Imam Moussa Sadr¹⁴ were hung up on electricity poles.

¹⁴ Imam Moussa Sadr was a Shiite cleric who founded the political party Amal back in 1975. His aim was to empower the impoverished and disenfranchised Shiite population in Lebanon. He disappeared mysteriously in 1978 while on a visit to Libya.



Fig. 4.10: Photos of Imam Moussa Sadr and flags of the Shiite group Amal can be seen hanging from electrical poles.



Fig. 4.11: Photos of Nabih Berri, Speaker of Parliament, and head of Amal can be seen in several corners of Ras el Nabaa. Below his photo here, there is a pamphlet of the recently-freed Lebanese prisoners held in Israeli jails, further indicating support for Hezbollah, as it is credited in securing their release.

It so happened that on one of the days I was doing field work in the neighborhood, I came across a political rally for Hezbollah, whereby supporters had hung up several Hezbollah flags at the entrance of an inner street perpendicular to the main Mohammed al Hout street. As I walked throughout other streets, I noticed that there were also a few photos of the Syrian president, Bashar al Assad, and the past Lebanese president, Emile Lahoud – widely seen as a pro-Syrian figure.¹⁵ In addition, there were Palestinian flags hanging on one street corner. Importantly, Hariri’s party, Future Movement, does not have a distinct flag as Amal and Hezbollah do, so

¹⁵ Much of the Lebanese population is divided into two political camps – a pro-Western March 14 political bloc against Hezbollah’s armament and Syrian interference, and a pro-Syrian, pro-Iranian March 8th political bloc largely against American interference, supports Hezbollah, and welcomes Syrian and Iranian political and financial assistance.

supporters of Hariri often write his name on walls or post his picture up, as I had observed in Ras el Nabaa. Quite significantly, I had come across an electricity pole that had Amal and Hezbollah flags hung up together with a large portrait of Hariri propped up below them.

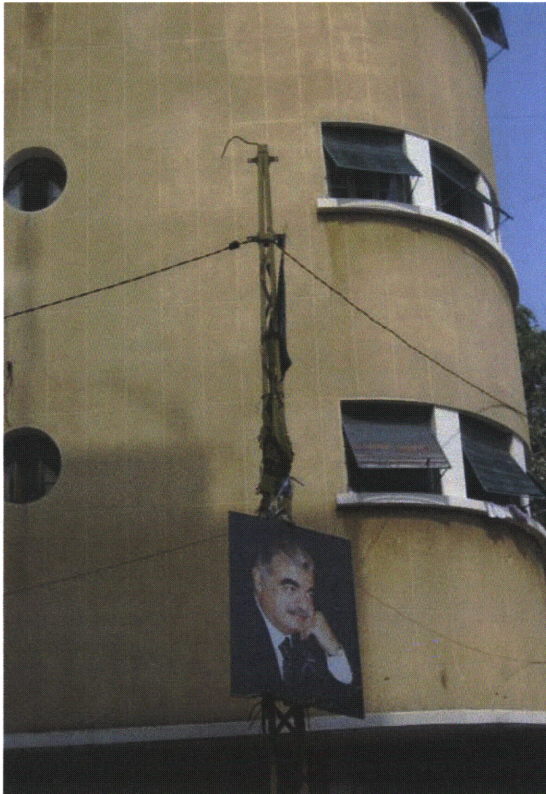


Fig. 4.12: An electricity pole with a large portrait of Rafik el Hariri, along with yellow Hezbollah flags and green Amal flags.



Fig. 4.13: A social organization funded by the Hariri family.

As I interviewed a Sunni Muslim family in Ras el Nabaa, I asked them whether political offices exist in the neighborhood, to which they replied that it is teeming with them. I was told that Amal, Future Movement, the Baath Party, and the Makhzoumi Party all have offices throughout the neighborhood.¹⁶ They confirmed that these offices tend to have their own

¹⁶ Amal is a Shiite political party in Lebanon headed by Speaker of Parliament, Nabih Berri, and is allied with Hezbollah. The Future Movement is Saad Hariri's political party and has the support of most Lebanese Sunnis. The Baath Party is less prominent on the Lebanese political scene, yet its supporters advocate for secularism, socialism,

supporters living around them, where there are certain corners dominated specifically by a particular sectarian community. Thus, they said that anywhere I see many Amal or Hezbollah symbols, this means that many Shiites tend to live on that particular street corner. Similarly, any street heavily represented by Hariri symbols indicates that residents tend to be Sunni and support the Hariri family.

It is thus evident that politics is very much a part of life here in this neighborhood as there is a large Hariri constituency and a strong minority of Hezbollah/Amal constituencies. As Shiites establish themselves politically, economically, and socially in Ras el Nabaa, more are choosing to reside in the neighborhood and feel comfortable doing so, despite the fact that the majority of the population is Sunni.

However, their presence seems to be taken as an infiltration by some Sunni residents in the neighborhood, as they claim that there are so many outsiders coming from the suburbs and thus tension is high between them. Rima explains:

“There are a lot of strangers in the area and no one recognizes anyone anymore, as we used to when I was growing up.”

Territoriality seems to define relations between the residents, as it is clear there are certain parts of the neighborhood that are dominated by a particular sect and that are not welcome to strangers, outsiders, or those from a different religious/political affiliation.

Significantly, despite the fact that many Christian families reside in the neighborhood, I did not come across any flags or symbols of Christian figures or political parties. In addition, I did not see any pictures of the current Lebanese president, Michel Suleiman, himself a Maronite Christian, but widely seen as a neutral leader and accepted by much of the Lebanese population.

and pan-Arabism. The Makhzoumi party is also known as the National Dialogue Party, led by Dr. Fouad Makhzoumi.

Thus, despite the highly-charged political environment and recent politically-related instability and violence there among Sunnis and Shiites, Christians are still opting to reside and remain in this neighborhood. Interviews with several Christian families will reveal why this is the case.

IV.3 INSTITUTIONS IN RAS EL NABAA

Ras el Nabaa is a neighborhood characterized as being mainly residential, but one that offers other services as well. For example, it has at least four primary public schools, one secondary public school, and seven private schools. In addition, Université Saint-Joseph (USJ) is located right across the street from Ras el Nabaa, on the Damascus Road. The French Embassy is located across from USJ on the side of Ras el Nabaa, also on Damascus Road. The Centre Culturel Français, a French educational center, is also near the embassy. The neighborhood has four main religious establishments and sanctuaries: The Najat Church for Maronites, the Catholic Bishopric, the Othman bin Affan Mosque and the Sidani Mosque (both for Sunnis). It also has one hospital, called Ghorayeb Hospital.

Ras el Nabaa's central location and proximity to other major establishments and institutions is also notable. It is within walking distance from the National Museum and the Palace of Justice, while it is merely a few minutes away by car from downtown Beirut, where a number of large institutions are located, including Parliament, the UNDP, the financial district, several mosques and churches, in addition to hundreds of restaurants, shops, and other places of entertainment and leisure. Several other institutions are located around the adjacent Badaro neighborhood and Furn el Chebbak, including the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Housing, and the Ministry of Industry.



Figure 4.14: Several public and private institutions can be found along the edges of Ras el Nabaa.

IV.4 Real Estate in Ras el Nabaa

Real estate prices in Ras el Nabaa have increased significantly over the past few years, as there has been high demand given its centrality and location in the heart of Beirut, the ease of access to main centers in East and West Beirut (including Ashrafieh and Hamra, respectively) and its tranquility since it is a primarily residential area. While interviewing a developer, I learned that prices in his 10-story building increased 40-50% since two years ago. Another developer explained that within 7-8 months, prices increased from \$1,200 to \$1,700 per square

meter. He claimed that it is very difficult now to find anything less than \$1,500 per square meter; he explained that anything less than that indicates a lower quality of construction.

The mere fact that around 100 buildings are being built around the Ras el Nabaa area indicates that it has become a high demand neighborhood. Several buildings are now completed and ready to be inhabited, while others will be finished within the next one to three years. As of February 2008, several buildings had almost no unsold apartments close to one year before completion, which shows that many families are making final decisions ahead of time to move into this neighborhood, knowing that if they waited any longer to buy, the prices will be much higher within just a few months. Relative to other neighborhoods in Beirut however, such as Hamra, Ain el Mraiseeh, Ramlet el Baida, Verdun, Achrafieh, Rmeil, Sioufi, and Gemmayze, Ras el Nabaa remains much more affordable.¹⁷

Importantly however, prices do tend to vary throughout Ras el Nabaa. Those apartments located in the center of the neighborhood tend to be cheaper than those at the edges near the French Embassy, Université Saint Joseph, and the military barracks. Similarly, the southern part of Ras el Nabaa constitutes the most expensive area of the neighborhood. In many cases, apartments located on the fifth floor or higher begin to cost \$3000 per square meter, as the view overlooks the large national Pine Forest, otherwise known as Horsh Beirut.

The chart below shows that the average price of a square meter in an apartment located within the center of Ras el Nabaa tends to be several hundred dollars less than ones found around the edges of the neighborhood. Indeed, based on my observations, the center of the neighborhood is very dense and on particular streets, such as Mohammad el Hout street, it tends to be busier and noisier than other smaller streets around the neighborhood, which may help explain the lower prices found there. The edges are often less dense, offer a better aesthetic view

¹⁷ See Appendix C for apartment price ranges in various neighborhoods in Beirut.

of either East Beirut, West Beirut, or the Pine Forest for those apartments located on upper-level floors, and are more accessible to main streets which directly connect to high destination areas within and outside Beirut.

While I observed Ras el Nabaa's mixed-income communities, whereby upper-class residents are choosing to reside in parts of the neighborhood amongst its working-class population, this breakdown of real estate prices offers a clearer picture of which parts of the neighborhood are more affluent than others.¹⁸

Center of Ras el Nabaa	
Average Price per Square Meter of Apartments	
Mohamed el Hout Street	\$1,200 – 1,300 /m ²
Said Khadige Street	\$1,200 – 1,300 /m ²
Karm al Ghazzaoui Street	\$1,300 /m ²
Abdel Maoula Char Street	\$1,450 /m ²

Table 4.2

Periphery of Ras el Nabaa	
Average Price per Square Meter of Apartments	
Bechara el Khoury Avenue	\$1,400 /m ²
Père Chanteur Street	\$1,700 – 1,800 /m ²
Damascus Street	\$2,000 /m ²
Abdallah Yafi Street	\$2,750 /m ²

Table 4.3

Note: Prices are taken from a February 2008 report.¹⁹ Since then prices have gone up by a few hundred dollars per square meter.

¹⁸ See Appendix D for a detailed look at apartment prices in Ras el Nabaa.

¹⁹ Boudisseau, 2008.

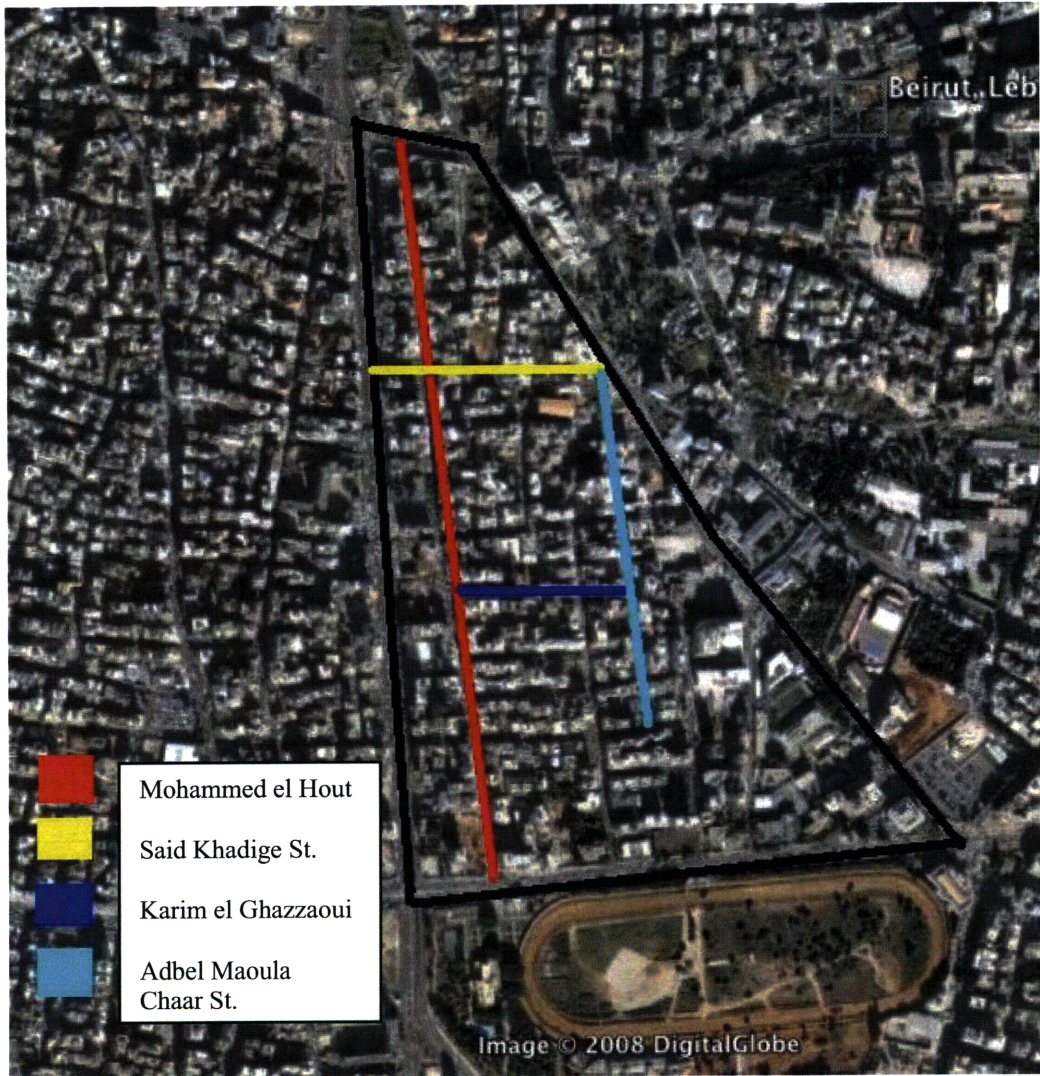


Fig. 4.15: Apartments along the inner streets of Ras el Nabaa tend to be less expensive than the ones along the periphery.

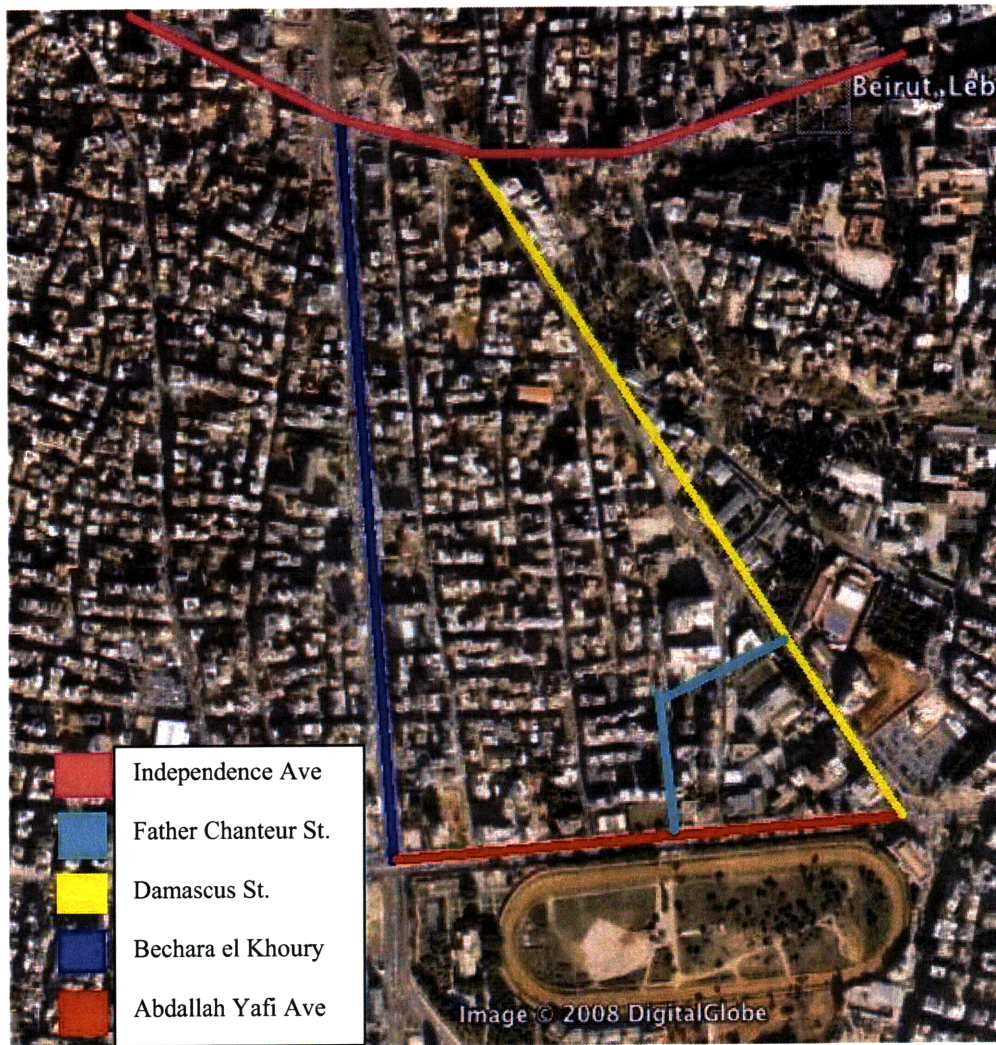


Fig. 4.16: Apartments along the periphery of the neighborhood tend to be more expensive than the ones in the center.

It appears that prices along the edges of the neighborhood are higher than the ones within the neighborhood because the edges are less dense, are located near central and prestigious institutions, are closer to main roads that lead into and out of the city, and are further from the occasional sectarian clashes that occur within the center of the neighborhood. I will discuss in more detail in the section on my hypothesis later on in the chapter.

IV.5 SUNNI-SHIITE RELATIONS IN RAS EL NABAA: ONE FAMILY'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Before describing Muslim-Christian relations in Ras el Nabaa, it is important to look deeper at Sunni-Shiite relations within the neighborhood, as this clearly has an impact on life in the neighborhood, and hence could ultimately be a factor for Christian residents to consider when deciding whether or not to move into Ras el Nabaa. When discussing how relations are between residents of Ras el Nabaa, Tarek, a university student, said:

“Tension is running high between the Sunni and Shiite communities, particularly after the events that occurred in May.²⁰ A few Shiites tried to open up stores near my father’s shop recently, but they were closed down by local Sunni residents who did not want to let them establish themselves in those areas. Just yesterday young Sunni and Shiite men got into a brawl.²¹ Look at the destruction in this building, did you take a look at what they did? Living together with our Shiite neighbors will only increase tension.”²²

When asked whether he considers himself loyal to a particular political party or leader, he said he strongly identifies with Hariri and the Sunni community. As he stepped out for a few minutes, his mother explained to me the following:

“Tarek has never followed any party or leader, and he often even expressed his anger and disappointment towards Hariri, questioning how the leader has helped him or his family and community. If you ask him again in five minutes, he’ll start to curse Hariri too. His experience in the May clashes caused him to express deep anger towards our Shiite neighbors, and this pushed him to adopt an extreme opinion and perception towards them.

My other son and daughter are very different. They follow no leader, have Shiite friends, and are not taif’ya, (or confessionalist) as he described himself. I have many Shiite

²⁰ In May 2008, pro-government Sunnis and pro-Hezbollah Shiites clashed in the streets of Beirut, while Shiites and Druze clashed in villages around Mount Lebanon, resulting in the worst sectarian violence Lebanon has witnessed since the end of the civil war.

²¹ These incidents do not seem to be infrequent, given the very tense relations between Sunnis and Shiites in the area. A recent incident occurred in Ras el Nabaa on August 25, 2008 whereby Sunnis and Shiites clashed and engaged in violence on the main Mohammad al Hout road, an incident widely attributed to the political situation in the country.

²² This young Sunni man was directly involved in the May 2008 events and affected by them. Thus, he has bitter feelings towards his Shiite neighbors. Had he been interviewed before the outbreak of violence, he may have had very different thoughts. Indeed, I interviewed other Sunni residents who were not directly affected by the May clashes and they said relations were still amicable between them and their Shiite neighbors.

friends, including those my cousins are married to, whom I visit often and socialize with, and relations are very healthy between us. Relations will remain amicable and healthy, as long as we do not discuss politics, as it is a sensitive issue that we are bound to disagree and conflict on.”

As Tarek walked back in, I asked him whether he has any Shiite friends, at which point he claimed that he did not. I then asked him whether he has Christian friends, and he mentioned that he does. From our conversation, I gathered that his Christian friends all share the same political perspectives and have similar hopes for Lebanon, while he feels he cannot identify with his Shiite neighbors on that level. After asking him whether he thought living together with them would decrease tension and would produce more benevolent feelings between them, he replied by saying that the Sunnis and Shiites in Ras el Nabaa are living together not because they want to but because they have to, and as such tensions will remain high as will the problems in his neighborhood.

Interestingly, Tarek’s father perceives the sectarian composition of Ras el Nabaa to be 80% Sunni, 10% Shiite, and 10% Christian. He explained that despite the low presence of Shiites in the neighborhood, the reason why there were serious clashes in Ras el Nabaa in May was because many Shiites living in other areas entered the quarter and engaged in the violence. He stated that the Shiites of Ras el Nabaa were not really involved much in the fighting.

Upon bringing up the issue of sectarian relations in Ras el Nabaa with other residents, one man stated:

“We have no problems between Sunnis and Shiites here. The May events did not strain or affect our friendships. I am a Sunni, this man is a Shiite, this other one is a Druze. We get along very well. Most of the people who engaged in the clashes were young men. Their parents were all upset and angry with what happened, as Sunnis and Shiites have been living together in peace for years and never had any problems.”

It is thus clear that there are various takes on relations between Sunnis and Shiites in the neighborhood. Indeed, many were affected by the May events and continue to be impacted by the occasional sectarian clashes in the neighborhood, while others dismiss them and assert that relations will remain positive and amicable between the residents.²³

IV.6 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

A diverse number of Christian residents were interviewed.²⁴ Some were chosen because they owned some assets in the neighborhood, others were chosen because they decided to move into the neighborhood after the war, while others were chosen because they lived in Ras el Nabaa before the civil war and returned at the end of the war. They all vary in their educational, social, religious, and political backgrounds. In addition, their connection to the neighborhood differs based on their daily activities and their attachment to the area they grew up in. Nonetheless, they all made the decision to live in Ras el Nabaa, despite the fact that they constitute a minority there. I will now summarize their backgrounds, their reasons for moving to Ras el Nabaa, and their experiences and interactions with their Muslim neighbors.

²³ Kimbrell, 2008.

²⁴ See Chapter 3, section III.2 for details on how residents were selected.

Characteristics of Christian Respondents

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Rented or Owned House	Owned	Owned	Owned	Rented	Rented	Rented	Rented	Rented
Presence of Family Members	5	None	None	None	None	None	None	4
Number of Years in Ras el Nabaa	4 years	16 years	10-15 years	69 years	2 years	14 years	44 years	14 years
Assets Owned in Ras el Nabaa	Apartment, Land	Apartment, Building	Apartment, Shop	None	None	None	None	None
Education Level	University	High School	High School	Intermediary	University	High School	High School	High School
Social Class	Middle Class	Middle Class	Middle Class	Middle Class	Upper Class	Middle Class	Upper Class	Middle Class
Frequency of Church Visits	Occasionally	Frequently	Frequently	Every Sunday	Occasionally	Occasionally	Frequently	Every Sunday
Political Affiliation	Michel Aoun	None	Samir Geagea	None	None	Michel Suleiman	None	Michel Suleiman

Table 4.4

Additional Characteristics of Christian Respondents

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Live in Periphery or Center	Periphery	Center	Periphery	Center	Periphery	Unknown	Center	Periphery
% Christian in Building	90%	75%	60%	35%	32%	10%	1%	50%
Location	Near Church	Near Church	Near French Embassy	Unknown	Near Church and USJ	Near School	Near Al-Kaissi Garage	Near Church
Comfort Level in Ras el Nabaa	Moderate	High	High	High	Moderate	High	High	High
Degree of Activity in Ras el Nabaa	Low	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High	High
Connection Elsewhere? Would move there?	Ashrafieh Yes	Ashrafieh Yes	Dfoun Yes	No	Jbeil Yes	Mazraa Yes	Sodeco No	Ashrafieh No
Area of Origin	Saifi/ Ashrafieh	Nasra	Dfoun/ Furn el Chebbak	Ras el Nabaa	Jbeil	Mazraa	Ashrafieh/ Sodeco	Ashrafieh
Where Most Relatives Live	Ashrafieh (Christian area)	Nasra/Sode co (Christian area)	Ashrafieh/ Nasra/ Furn el Chebbak (Christian area)	Jal el Deeb (Christian area)	Jbeil (Christian area)	Ain el Rummaneh Hadath/ Furn el Chebbak (Christian areas)	Ashrafieh/ Jounieh (Christian areas)	Ashrafieh/ Sin el Fil/ Zalka (Christian areas)
Same Sect Preference?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Preference to be Near E. Beirut?	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Close Muslim Friends?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 4.5

a. Factors Involved in Residential Location Decisions

These Christians of Ras el Nabaa placed a high priority on securing government services such as water, telephone lines, and electricity.²⁵ In addition, proximity to work, the availability of schools, affordability, social class, and the presence of shops tended to be placed as among the important factors. In addition, proximity to downtown was also considered important by most residents. Population density tended to be consistently less important for most of these residents, and indeed, although it is a neighborhood that witnesses less traffic and congestion, it is still dense, and with more construction occurring, the population will only increase.

Quite significantly, many of these residents placed importance on living in neighborhoods where they had family members and where there was a Christian presence.²⁶ In fact, the presence of family members, Christian presence, and proximity to East Beirut tended to be correlated; that is, residents who viewed one of these factors as important tended to view the other two factors as important as well. Analogously, residents who did not place importance over one of these factors also did not view the others as important either.

²⁵ While I was interviewing one family, the power went off at least a few times during the course of our conversation. It appears that the power goes off in Ras el Nabaa for three hours each day, just like the rest of Beirut. Power outages are common as the Lebanese Electric Company is facing severe shortages of gas and is having trouble meeting the growing consumption. (Daily Star, 2008).

²⁶ The residents' perception of the sectarian composition of the neighborhood varies between 2% Christian to 40% Christian, with Sunnis being viewed as the majority sectarian community in Ras el Nabaa, while Shiites and Druze were other minorities. Some respondents claimed that Christians were between 2-5% of the population, while a few others believed that Christians comprised between 30-40% of the population. Of course, the diversity of responses is expected, as the perception of the neighborhood's composition depends on how long the residents have lived in the area, the degree of activity and attachment they have to the neighborhood, how much time they spend there, how much they interact with the inhabitants, and the particular area they live in Ras el Nabaa.

Residential Preferences of Christian Respondents

	Most Important	Important	Somewhat/Less Important	Not Important
Services	****	**		**
Affordability	***	**	*	
Proximity to Work	***	****		
Attractiveness	*	***	****	
Social Class	***	**	**	*
Proximity to Downtown		*****	*	*
Spaciousness	**	*		*
Shops	***	**	***	
Schools	****	**	*	*
Population Density	*	*	*****	
Parking	*	**	***	**
Presence of Family Members	*	***	*	***
Christian Presence		*****		***
Proximity to East Beirut		***		*****

Table 4.6

b. Residents' Backgrounds: Where They Came From, Why They Moved, and Why They Chose Ras el Nabaa

A married man who has lived in Ras el Nabaa for four years explains that he grew up in East Beirut before the war and lived in both Saifi and Ashrafieh neighborhoods up until he moved to Ras el Nabaa. He states that he was looking for an affordable house to buy in Ashrafieh but was not able to find something reasonable; as a result, he decided to move to Ras

el Nabaa, where he found an affordable home. He chose this neighborhood in particular because of its good living conditions and because he has family members residing there as well. For this man, living in close proximity to East Beirut was considered highly important; the fact that he found an affordable house in a middle class neighborhood close to Ashrafieh, with a Christian population motivated him to move to this area, despite it being majority Sunni Muslim with a strong minority of Shiites.

Another middle class resident moved to Ras el Nabaa with his family in 1992, soon after the end of the civil war. Like the first resident, this man was born and raised in East Beirut, in Nasra, a neighborhood adjacent to Ras el Nabaa. Although all his relatives reside in Nasra, he moved to Ras el Nabaa because he inherited a building there from his father. Because affordability was the number one issue in his residential location decision, he chose to take advantage of this lucrative asset, as he was not required to pay rent and instead was receiving rent from the other tenants. For this man, living in a neighborhood with Christian residents was one of the incentives for him to move there.

A third resident who owns a shop in Ras el Nabaa explains that he grew up in a primarily Christian village called Dfoun, in Mount Lebanon. He moved to Furn el Chebbak, an area south-east of Beirut during the war, despite the fact that his house was too small for him and his family. As soon as he was financially capable, he moved to Ras el Nabaa and bought a bigger, yet still affordable house relative to other options he had around Beirut. For this man, although he claims to prefer neighborhoods with Christian residents and with relatives, the fact that it is located near East Beirut served as an encouragement for him to move there. Although he would have preferred to be around his relatives who live in Ashrafieh, Nasra, and Furn el Chebbak, his primary concern is his ability to sustain his family and live comfortably; the demographics and

religious composition of the neighborhood were thus not as central to his residential location decision.

Another middle class man who grew up in the Mazraa area of West Beirut claims that he lived in religiously mixed areas all his life. He moved to Ras el Nabaa in 1994 after his landlord in Mazraa requested that all tenants move out as the building was going to be demolished. He chose Ras el Nabaa in particular because he found an affordable home, it was close to work, and he knew the landlord personally. He explained that he did not choose to live in Ashrafieh or other neighborhoods in East Beirut because it is more expensive, it is further from work and from his daughter's university. For this man, he placed convenience and affordability above any factors dealing with the presence of relatives, Christians, or proximity to East Beirut. Because he grew up in a heterogeneous area, he explains that the fact that most of the residents in Ras el Nabaa are Muslim does not bother him at all.

An older middle class lady explains that she was born in Ashrafieh and lived in Ras el Nabaa in the 1940's and 1950's. Her family moved to Sodeco briefly, a neighborhood close to Ras el Nabaa in East Beirut, and then returned once again to Ras el Nabaa in 1964. She moved to this neighborhood in particular because it was affordable, spacious, close to downtown, and also close to Sodeco. She further explains that Ras el Nabaa has very friendly residents, it is easily accessible, and has a variety of stores to satisfy its residents. For Christians like this lady who resided in Ras el Nabaa before the war, such factors were more relevant than current factors such as sectarian composition, the presence of family members, and its proximity to Muslim or Christian areas, as there was no East or West Beirut at that time and much of the city was heterogeneous.²⁷

²⁷ Three respondents did not provide too much detail about their histories, so I have decided to leave them out of this section. One was a student who simply came to Ras el Nabaa because she attends USJ and must reside in the

c. Social Relations Between Christians and Muslims²⁸

Although Ras el Nabaa is more integrated between Christians and Muslims relative to other neighborhoods around Beirut, integration does not necessarily mean that they engage in social relations or even interact with each other. Each respondent's story and experience is different, as lifestyles, preferences, and daily activities vary from one person to another. A detailed look at the Christian respondents' social networks will reveal to what extent these residents have befriended their Muslim neighbors, and to what degree spatial proximity has played a central role in facilitating cross-sectarian interaction and friendship formation.

Two respondents stated that they have no relations with Muslims. Although one had been in the neighborhood for four years, he lived in the periphery of the neighborhood and most of his neighbors were actually Christian. He admits that while his social activities in Ras el Nabaa are very limited, even with Christians, his closest friends are all Orthodox Christian. He did point out however that he does have one close Sunni friend, who is his sister-in-law's husband.

The other Christian respondent has been in Ras el Nabaa for a much longer period of time, since 1992. In contrast, he lives in the center of the neighborhood, amongst more Muslims. However, like the first respondent, his building is predominantly Christian as well. He also describes his social network and his closest friends as being comprised of mainly Orthodox

dorms. The other respondent was an elderly resident who lived in Ashrafieh throughout his life, where most of his relatives live. In 1994, he moved to Ras el Nabaa because he found a pleasant apartment in a quieter and less crowded part of the neighborhood. The third respondent did not share any information about his background, where he came from, and why he chose Ras el Nabaa.

²⁸ Four respondents revealed that they believe living in mixed areas and sending their children to religiously-mixed schools were important elements for facilitating tolerance between diverse Lebanese communities. Yet, they perceived that building social relations or close friendships with non-Christians were not necessary. Two other respondents argued that neither spatial nor social integration was important, and thus believed that even living in mixed neighborhoods and attending mixed schools were neither pivotal nor important. Finally, only two respondents agreed that forming social relations and having close ties with non-Christians were vital and essential factors for reconciliation.

Christians. He claims that his relations with non-Christians are very limited and even states that he has no non-Christian friends within or outside Ras el Nabaa.

For the others however, spatial proximity in fact helped produce social relations, as one man whose social network is made up of mainly Maronites and other Christians from East Beirut claimed that because of his shop in Ras el Nabaa, he has been able to establish close ties with non-Christians from the neighborhood, with whom he socializes and visits. Importantly however, he has no Muslim or Druze friends from outside the neighborhood.

Another elderly man who grew up in Ras el Nabaa explains that while he has no non-Christian friends outside the neighborhood, he has many Muslim friends whom he met throughout the years of living there. In fact, a close Shiite friend of his helped him find his job before retirement, while his social circle is mainly with the Sunnis of Ras el Nabaa. Similarly, the young Orthodox student from Université Saint Joseph (USJ) comes from a predominantly Orthodox area outside of Beirut, called Mounsef. Now that she has been in the university dorms for the past two years, she has managed to make intimate Muslim friends who have become part of her social network. Quite significantly, she has no Muslim friends outside Ras el Nabaa.

For the middle-aged man who has lived in the neighborhood for the past 14 years, making Muslim friends was not unordinary, as he had grown up and lived in a very religiously-mixed area before the war. As a result, he was open to meeting and interacting with Muslim residents of Ras el Nabaa upon his entry into the neighborhood. He explains that he befriended many Muslims because they were his neighbors, and others he had met through work outside the area. His social network, as he describes it, is comprised of Christians, Muslims, and Druze, from Ras el Nabaa, Mazraa, and Moussaitbeh. In fact, one of his closest friends, a Druze, helped

him find his current job. Quite significantly, this man's relatives are residing in majority Christian areas just around Beirut, such as Ain al Rummaneh, Al-Hadath, and Furn el Chebbak.

A Maronite woman above the age of 60 who has been living in Ras el Nabaa almost all her life also adds that she has Muslim friends in the neighborhood, as she met them during her daily activities, while shopping, and even throughout the war. And finally, a middle-aged Maronite explains that he too has very close Sunni and Shiite friends from Ras el Nabaa, Ras Beirut, and Mazraa.

d. Degree of Attachment to Ras el Nabaa

One man who moved from Ashrafieh four years ago explains that he would prefer to move back there, particularly after the May 2008 events whereby Ras el Nabaa witnessed serious clashes and violence between its Sunni and Shiite residents. He explains that he even has some Christian friends who moved out of Ras el Nabaa recently and into a quieter area that they deem to be safer and which is less religiously diverse. For these families, their attachment to the neighborhood is not very deep, and at least for this man, he only moved to the neighborhood because his wife's family gave him a piece of land and an apartment there. While he does send his children to Ras el Nabaa Mixed High School, much of his shopping is done outside the neighborhood. He explains that what helps increase his feeling of belonging in the area is the presence of family members.

Similarly, the other Orthodox resident who has been living in Ras el Nabaa since 1992 explains that he only moved to Ras el Nabaa because he inherited a building there from his father. His level of attachment to the neighborhood is very low, as he works in Ashrafieh and sends his children to school there as well, while most of his shopping is done outside the neighborhood. Only urgent necessities are bought in Ras el Nabaa, although he does attend

church there. While he says that he feels welcome and comfortable in Ras el Nabaa and does not feel like an outsider, he said he would move to Ashrafieh in an instant if given the chance. Unlike the other man however, he said he does not know of any Christian families who have moved out of the area.

In contrast, the third respondent's attachment and assimilation in the neighborhood is very high, as his major activities are carried out within Ras el Nabaa. His children are enrolled in Al Adlieh School located in the neighborhood, he attends church there, does his grocery shopping, and buys his household necessities all within the boundaries of the area, although he does do some shopping outside as well. He did admit that if he could, he would move back to his hometown of Dfoun for purely sentimental and emotional reasons; otherwise, he would stay in Ras el Nabaa as he is very happy and comfortable there.

The last three respondents have likewise assimilated quite well in Ras el Nabaa; they too do much of their shopping in the neighborhood, attend church there occasionally, feel very comfortable and satisfied there. While one of the residents admitted that if he could he would move back to Mazraa to live in a bigger and cheaper house, they all asserted that they were treated well, had established themselves there, and had formed their social networks there -- thus making them feel welcome.

Quite significantly, the fact that many of these residents do business in the neighborhood indicates that they have no deep loyalties or special ties with others outside the area and thus do not mind benefiting the resident population and the economy of the neighborhood. There are cases where newcomers still prefer to shop and buy their groceries from someone they have grown accustomed to or from someone they trust and have grown loyal to outside the quarter. Except for a couple of these residents, these Christian inhabitants seem to have adopted Ras el

Nabaa as their location of choice, conveying that their ties to a particular person or business are not extensive outside the area.

e. Sunni Experiences in Ras el Nabaa

Selected Sunni Residents in Ras el Nabaa

	1	2	3	4	5
Rented or Owned House	Owned	Rented	Owned	Owned	Rented
Presence of Family Members	Most Relatives	None	12 Relatives	7 Relatives	None
Number of Years in Ras el Nabaa	50 years	60 years	36 years	42 years	2 years
Assets Owned in Ras el Nabaa	Apartment, shop	None	Apartment, Land	Apartment, Building	None
Education	High school	Unknown	Intermediary	High School	University
Social Class	Middle Class	Middle Class	Middle Class	Upper Class	Upper Class
Frequency of Mosque Visits	Occasionally	Never	Never	Every Friday	Occasionally
Political Affiliation	Saad Hariri	Unknown	None	None	Rafik Hariri
Would Ever Leave Ras el Nabaa?	No	No	No	No	Possibly
Deep Connection to Neighborhood	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Moderate
Social Relations With Non-Sunni Neighbors?	Very limited, if not non-existent	Yes, but interaction is limited	Yes	No; his non-Sunni friends are outside Ras el Nabaa	Limited; has Christian friends outside Ras el Nabaa

Table 4.7

A Sunni resident has been living in Ras el Nabaa for 50 years and owns his apartment and a shop in the neighborhood. He comes from a middle class family and is surrounded by relatives living around him in the area. His children are enrolled in the Toufic Salem School in Ras el Nabaa, while most of his activities are carried out in the neighborhood, as he explains that it is rare for him to go outside Ras el Nabaa. His experience living amongst non-Sunnis does not seem to have produced any deep friendships with Shiites, Christians, or Druze. Although he explains that he interacts with non-Sunnis who visit his shop and others at social events around the neighborhood, he describes this contact with them as average and does not regard them as close friends – despite his perception that the neighborhood is comprised of 50% non-Sunnis, with 25% being Christian and 25% being Shiites.

While it seems that owning a shop in a neighborhood increases one's chances of meeting and interacting with people from diverse backgrounds, it does not guarantee that relations will be formed. He did however explain that he has one very close non-Sunni friend whom he met on a business trip in the Gulf. For this man, living in close proximity to non-Sunnis has not been instrumental in expanding his social relations beyond his own sectarian community. While he explains that he thinks it is important to know non-Sunnis, he does not think it is necessary to develop such contact into friendships, which explains why he thinks sending children to mixed schools and living in mixed areas are more important than forming social relations and close friendships with non-Sunnis. He states that he is very attached to Ras el Nabaa and would never consider leaving, and proudly claims that his number one political leader is Saad Hariri. While he is very attached to this Sunni leader, he is not very religious as he only occasionally visits the mosque.

Another man who is over 60 years old was born and raised in Ras el Nabaa. However, this man does not own any assets in the area nor does he have any relatives there. Despite this however, he has a very high attachment to the neighborhood; he conducts 100% of his shopping in Ras el Nabaa and explains that he would never consider leaving the area. His perception of the neighborhood's sectarian composition is 50% Sunni, 25% Christian, 23% Shia, and 2% Druze. He thus explains that while his interactions are limited with non-Sunni residents of Ras el Nabaa, he does engage in social relations with them, although the friendships are not deep. He asserts however that he does have very close Shiite friends outside the neighborhood, and that one of them even helped him find a job.

For this man, he views close friendships as being the most important process by which people from different sectarian communities can reconcile with each other. While it is not clear whether this man has a political affiliation since he refused to discuss politics and did not want to indicate whom he thought was the top Lebanese leader, he did mention that he does not go to the mosque. He can thus be described more as a secular individual who values forming friendships with non-Sunnis and who does not let politics interfere with his relations between them. That being said however, he did not specifically say that he had social ties with Christians.

Another man who has lived in Ras el Nabaa for 36 years has 12 relatives living in the neighborhood, owns his apartment and a piece of land there as well. Most of his activities are carried out in the neighborhood, as he describes that 90% of his shopping is done in Ras el Nabaa and he sends his children to school there as well. His perception of the neighborhood's sectarian composition is 60% Sunni, 25% Shiites, 10% Christian, and 5% Druze. He explains that he has close Shiite and Christian friends from Ras el Nabaa, and that his social network is

mainly comprised of Shiites from the neighborhood. For this man, he views social relations and close friendships as being the key for espousing and generating tolerance between sects.

He adds that Ras el Nabaa has always been religiously diverse, so despite the increase in the number of outsiders coming to reside in the neighborhood, such changes are normal in such an environment and that he would never consider moving out, as he has been there since before the civil war and his work, his children's school, his family, and friends are all in the quarter. Despite his high attachment to the neighborhood, his connection and ties to the area are not territorial, as he welcomes people regardless of sect. Unlike others who wish to protect their neighborhood from strangers and who do not welcome others from different religious or political affiliations, this man is not religious and does not follow a particular political leader in Lebanon.

A 78-year old upper-class Sunni man who has been living in Ras el Nabaa for 42 years owns his apartment and building; he has seven relatives in the area. He grew up in Ras Beirut but moved to Ras el Nabaa in 1966, where he bought land and constructed his building. His activities are all carried out in the neighborhood, and he attends the mosque every Friday in Ras el Nabaa as well. He views Ras el Nabaa as being 60% Sunni, 35% Shiite, 3% Christian, and 2% Druze. He explains that he has some non-Sunni friends inside and outside Ras el Nabaa, but his closest network is made of Sunni friends from Ras Beirut, as this is where he grew up. However, he adds that his social network is comprised of all sects from Ras el Nabaa, Basta, and Ras Beirut. Despite the increase in population density in the neighborhood, he asserts that he will never leave, as he has a special connection to the area. Although he visits the mosque every Friday and can be classified as a religious man, he does not claim to have any affiliation with a political figure in Lebanon.

A middle-aged upper-class Sunni man who has been living in Ras el Nabaa for only two years rents his apartment but has no relatives in the area. He was born and grew up in Dibbiye, a village in Mount Lebanon, but moved to Ras el Nabaa recently because it is close to his work. His attachment to the neighborhood is not very high, considering he has not fully assimilated. He explains that 45% of his purchases are in Ras el Nabaa, while the rest are outside, as he tends to rely on large supermarkets. Although Ras el Nabaa has several fruit and vegetable stands, he claims that much of his grocery shopping is carried out in his hometown of Dibbiye.

Quite significantly, he sends his three children to schools in Christian areas of East Beirut in Gemmayze and in Ashrafieh. The fact that he sends his children to these schools indicates that he does not mind intermingling and interacting with people from diverse sects. In fact, he explains that he thinks forming close ties with people from different religions is one of the most important ways to foster understanding. When asked about his own social network, he described it as being very diverse as he has befriended many non-Sunnis. He does admit that while his relations with his neighbors are very limited because he is a new resident and works for much of the day, he does have some close non-Sunni friends from outside Ras el Nabaa. He explains that one of his closest friends is a Maronite Christian from Ashrafieh whom he turns to for advice and guidance.

This man visits the mosque occasionally in both Ras el Nabaa and Dibbiye. Although this man graduated from university and is considered among the elite, he views the late Rafik al Hariri as the number one leader in Lebanon and that no one can ever replace him. Thus, although he has a strong political affiliation with the Hariri family, and although he attends the mosque every now and then, he is open to interacting with non-Sunnis. However, while it is evident that he interacts with Christians, has ties to Christian areas through his children, travels

frequently to Jounieh (a Christian city) for work, he did not mention he has ties or friendships with Shiites.

IV.7 REVISITING MY HYPOTHESES

Why have some Beirut residents moved into neighborhoods with a majority of non-co-religionist residents?

Hypthesis: Ras el Nabaa is Becoming a More Middle Class Neighborhood

I had hypothesized that some Christian families are choosing to reside in Ras el Nabaa because it is regaining its status as a middle-class neighborhood, rather than remaining one that is inhabited primarily by lower-income residents and refugees, as was the case during and immediately after the war. After interviewing eight Christian families, several respondents indicated that the neighborhood's social class and its attractiveness were among the most important elements they considered. For these families, they placed high priority in living in an aesthetically appealing environment where most inhabitants shared the same lifestyle and social class. For others however, social class and attractiveness were less important, as they placed higher priority on more basic, convenient, and practical considerations, such as affordability, proximity to work and downtown, while others preferred the security of being around family and members of the same religious sect.

Nonetheless, the fact that some of the respondents asserted that social class and attractiveness were important issues indicates that these Christian residents would not have considered another predominantly Muslim neighborhood if it were classified as a predominantly lower-income area. For them, while they indicated that residing amongst people from the same sectarian community or close to East Beirut was not important, they asserted social class was a primary consideration.

In Ras el Nabaa, although some parts of it can be characterized as more working class than others, the fact that certain areas are inhabited more by middle class residents, away from the noise and activity on the main street, shows that the neighborhood has potential to attract Christians from the middle class who are looking to reside in an affordable area that is centrally-placed and that is located in close proximity to important parts of Beirut. While these Christians prioritize social class over sectarian homogeneity, others prefer to live around people with the same sectarian identity, as some residents in my sample had expressed. For these particular residents, they remained unattached to the neighborhood, indicating that those who preferred to reside elsewhere and moved to Ras el Nabaa for reasons out of their control (including reasons of affordability) ended up not forming social ties with their Muslim neighbors.²⁹

Hypothesis: Ras el Nabaa's Sunni Inhabitants Are Open to Other Sectarian Communities

I had also hypothesized that Christians feel comfortable moving into Ras el Nabaa because the neighborhood has a history of being religiously diverse. As a result, I expected that its original inhabitants would welcome these Christians as its diversity is what had given the neighborhood its charm back before the outbreak of the civil war. Since many of the neighborhood's original residents explained that they would never leave Ras el Nabaa despite any demographic changes, it may indicate that they have a high tolerance and high threshold for newcomers, whether they are Christian, Shiites, or Druze.³⁰ Indeed, some Sunni residents explained that Muslims and Christians co-existed peacefully and had great relations before the war, and thus did not mind the Christian and Shiite presence and instead regarded it as something

²⁹ I will elaborate on this towards the end of the chapter.

³⁰ Alternatively, the Sunnis' refusal to leave the neighborhood may simply be because they are unable to move out for various reasons, including perhaps that they cannot afford to relocate, live in an area convenient enough and close to work, or have important responsibilities and assets to take care of in the neighborhood.

positive for the neighborhood and saw it as good change. In addition, the neighborhood seems to attract a number of Shiite and Christian outsiders from the southern suburbs and East Beirut who come to shop and do business there, conveying a certain degree of openness and accessibility to outsiders.³¹

Hypothesis: Christians are Living in the Periphery Where Territoriality is Weaker

Regarding the issue of territoriality, despite hypothesizing that Sunni Muslims welcomed the Christians in the neighborhood, I hypothesized that since territoriality is high in Ras el Nabaa, whereby it is politically-charged and whereby Sunnis and Shiites each have claimed their own turf throughout parts of the neighborhood, I expected to see most Christians choosing to reside on the edges of the neighborhood where territoriality is weaker.



³¹ Despite this however, it does look like there is some degree of high territoriality, if not against the Christian presence, against the increasing Shiite presence. Despite the fact that Shiites and Sunnis coexisted before the war, the political crisis has exacerbated relations between the communities, thus making some Sunnis unhappy with this particular demographic change.



Fig. 4.17 - 4.20: The edges of Ras el Nabaa are less dense, more accessible to the main roads, have more secular and non-political institutions, as well as churches.

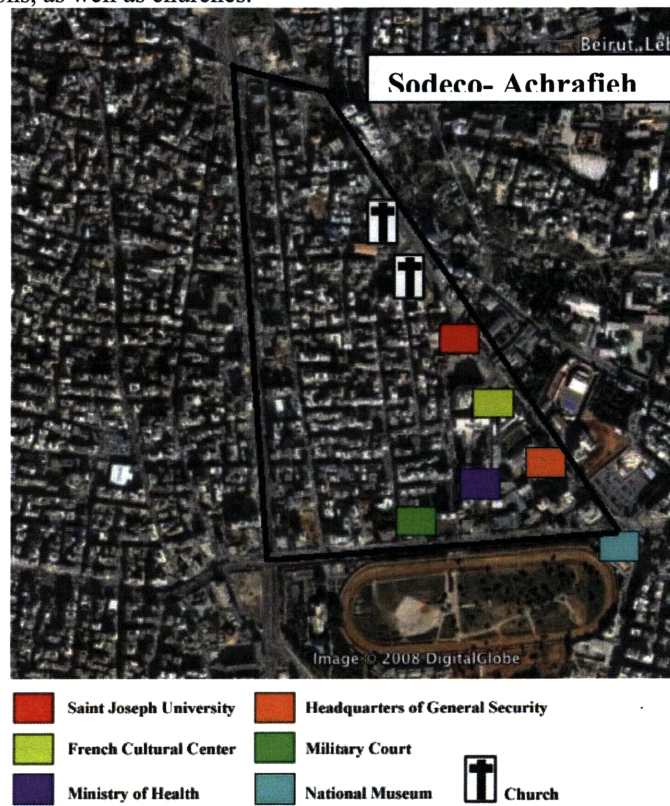


Fig. 4.21: Many Christian residents of Ras el Nabaa are residing along the periphery of the neighborhood, where it is closer to Christian areas and where there are a number of secular, public and private institutions and churches.

Weak territoriality in the periphery and edges of the neighborhood can be documented by the presence of secular institutions such as the Université Saint Joseph campus and the French Embassy, both located on the Damascus road. The former attracts Lebanese students and professors from around the country, pointing to a very mobile population consisting of students, professors, and even foreigners who choose to reside there temporarily and for the short-term. The latter attracts politicians, diplomats, and foreigners as well. The territoriality exhibited within Ras el Nabaa is hardly seen here on the edges of the neighborhood, as it is very heterogeneous and diverse, thereby depriving any sect from claiming themselves as the majority and making it virtually impossible for these people to establish roots in the area.

Moreover, the Université Saint Joseph student dorms are located among the residences but on the edges of Ras el Nabaa. According to a university student living in the dorms, her dorm consists of about 32% Christians, 33% Sunnis, 33% Shiites, and 2% Druze. Whether or not these statistics are entirely accurate or not, they simply convey the notion that this area is highly diverse and attracts students from all religious communities in Lebanon. Given that they are only living there temporarily and are not rooted there, territoriality can be characterized as low with a highly mobile population that changes frequently.

Indeed, several respondents did indicate that they lived in the periphery of the neighborhood, yet most explained that it was because the apartment happened to appeal to them and matched their priorities, without indicating that they felt more comfortable there. However, one respondent did affirm that he chose the periphery of Ras el Nabaa because East Beirut was easily accessible from there, where he would be closest to his family and friends in Ashrafieh, Furn el Chebbak, and al Nasra, in addition to being close to his church in Ras el Nabaa.

On the other hand, other respondents lived in the center of the neighborhood. One man chose to reside there because he inherited a building from his father, indicating that before the war Christians were well-integrated in the neighborhood. For this man, 75% of his building's residents are Christian, indicating that perhaps he prefers to rent or sell apartments to people he knows personally or through his Christian community. Similarly, another man lives in the center of the neighborhood because this is the house he inherited from his parents and the one he grew up in before the civil war. He explains that 65% of the residents in his building are Sunni. An elderly Maronite woman explains that she lives in the center of the neighborhood because this is where she lived and grew up in the 1960's and throughout the civil war. After the war ended, she moved back and has been there ever since. She explains that although about 96% of the residents in her building are Sunni, there is no tension at all between the sects and that they get along just fine.

From this assessment, it looks like it could be the case that Christian newcomers without any previous attachment or connection to Ras el Nabaa may be tending to reside in the periphery of the neighborhood, perhaps because of its low territoriality, its less politically-charged environment, and its proximity to East Beirut, the churches (which are located along the edges on Damascus road), and the French Embassy. On the other hand, it seems that the Christian residents who live in the center of the neighborhood had either grown up or lived there before the civil war or have inherited homes and/or buildings from their parents, who had invested in the neighborhood before the outbreak of the civil war. Thus, perhaps this can explain why some residents described Christians as being more spatially spread out than the Shiite newcomers, who tend to cluster in particular areas of the neighborhood.

Indeed, some residents, including the mukhtar of Ras el Nabaa, claimed that Shiites moving into the neighborhood tend to cluster in areas with a majority of Shiite residents. As I was speaking to the developer of a building in one of the inner streets to learn more about the social and religious identity of the families who had bought apartments from him, he informed me that he knew of a building owner in Ras el Nabaa who had screened potential buyers to find out where they were from and what their religious backgrounds were. It turned out that he had been selling apartments only to Shiites.

In contrast, according to the mukhtar and other residents, Christians on the other hand have not segregated themselves in particular areas of the neighborhood, but instead are living throughout the neighborhood and many do not care to live in an area with majority Christians. Indeed, the developer from Tayara Construction explained that he has had Christian families inquire about vacancies in his building without asking about the identity of the other residents in the building. The lack of Christian symbolization around the neighborhood, whereby I observed no flags or photos of Christian political parties or figures, may further lend evidence that there is no Christian section and that Christians have not created their own enclave within the quarter.

Since there was no concept of religious or political territoriality in Ras el Nabaa before the civil war began, the notion of center versus periphery was irrelevant, which is why we see that many Christians tended to own and live in apartments within the center of the neighborhood. Consequently, the children of these Christian owners inherited assets located within the center of Ras el Nabaa. With the outbreak of civil war, the straining of relations between the religious communities, and the consequent creation of homogeneous enclaves, it is not surprising to see Christian newcomers preferring to live on the edges of the neighborhood, particularly since the inner streets and center of Ras el Nabaa are dense with Sunni/Hariri and Shiite/Amal/Hezbollah

signs and paraphernalia. Indeed, as Khalaf explains, the edges of the neighborhood tend to blur as it is not clear whose turf is there, making it more appealing for those who wish to avoid the polarization of living in an area dominated by a particular constituency with a strong affiliation to a political party and leader.

Upon examining the residential location of the Christian respondents, three of them live near churches, one of them lives near the French Embassy, while the fifth one lives in a building owned by the Maronite Wakf, also located near a church:³²

HOW CHRISTIANS PLACE THEMSELVES IN RAS EL NABAA

	Center or Periphery of Ras el Nabaa	Located Near:	% Christian in Bldg	% Christian in Immediate Surroundings
1	Periphery	Al Saydi Church	90%	40%
2	Center	Greek Orthodox Church	75%	30%
3	Periphery	French Embassy	60%	30%
4	Center	Unknown	35%	5%
5	Periphery	Saydat al Najat Church	32%	Unknown
6	Unknown	Near Elementary School	10%	Unknown
7	Center	Al Kaissi Garage	1%	2%
8	Periphery	Saydat al Najat Church	50%	Unknown

Table 4.8

This analysis of where Christians reside and the percentage of Christians in their immediate surroundings helps give an idea about the spatial distribution of the diverse sectarian communities within the neighborhood. While I was told that Christians tend to live throughout

³² The Maronite wakf is a religious endowment that owns a building or a plot of land for religious or charitable purposes.

the neighborhood rather than cluster together in a particular location, and while it is evident that Christians are well-spread out throughout the area and do not have a specific street or segment that they reside in, based on my sample, it seems that there is a significant number of Christians who live in buildings with a majority of Christians, or at least with a sizeable representation of Christian residents. Thus, for those who do not live along the edges or around secular institutions, but rather live in areas with high Sunni and Shiite territoriality, these Christian residents seem to make up for it by surrounding themselves with other Christian neighbors, hence giving them a sense of security.

High and Low Territoriality in Ras el Nabaa

While I have discussed the ways in which Ras el Nabaa's Sunni and Shiite inhabitants are highly territorial, where each community proclaims its own section of the neighborhood by propping up posters and banners indicating affiliation to a particular party, in another sense, Ras el Nabaa can be described as having low territoriality as well. The fact that the neighborhood has undergone significant demographic changes in recent years, whereby the Shiite population is increasing, conveys the notion that perhaps it is not difficult for outsiders to enter the neighborhood and establish themselves there. In a very highly territorial neighborhood, it is expected that such an entry would be difficult, particularly by a community that has been known to clash with the majority in the neighborhood.

In addition, the fact that several residents claimed that many outsiders from the southern suburbs (mainly Shiites) and East Beirut (mainly Christians) come to shop there further points to low territoriality, whereby these people feel comfortable entering the quarter and doing business there. Whether they are coming to do business with their own co-religionist minorities in the

neighborhood or whether they are coming to a specific shop regardless of who owns it is not certain. Nonetheless, the mere fact that they venture into the neighborhood indicates that they feel secure doing so, despite the fact that they are minorities in an environment that can be described as being relatively politically polarizing.

This brings me to question whether a relatively heterogeneous neighborhood can actually be highly territorial, where there is so much diversity and mixture. Perhaps Ras el Nabaa has taken on a different type of territoriality, whereby despite the fact that Sunnis are the majority, outsiders still enter the quarter as it is home to not only Sunnis but also to Christians, Shiites, and Druze. In contrast, a highly homogeneous and territorial neighborhood may not be as accessible to outsiders. The mere presence of a strong Shiite minority and a rising Christian minority makes it thus more penetrable and permeable to non-residents.

The combination of high territoriality, whereby Sunnis and Shiites each claim their own turf in several parts of the neighborhood, often preventing each other from establishing themselves in areas not their own, and low territoriality, whereby the majority Sunni residents do not seem to have prevented outsiders from residing there, makes the incidence of territoriality somewhat complex in Ras el Nabaa.

Many Sunni residents explained that no matter what demographic changes take place in the neighborhood, they would never consider leaving. For these residents, it is not clear whether they would choose to stay in the neighborhood because they have a high threshold and tolerance for outsiders, whether it is because they cannot afford to move elsewhere, or whether it is because they have a very high attachment to the area and feel rooted there. While on the surface it may indicate that they have high territoriality and thus despite any changes, they would refuse to leave because they are firmly rooted there, the fact that the presence of outsiders and non-

Sunnis is increasing makes it uncertain whether territoriality in the neighborhood is as strong as it seems. Perhaps one can have a strong attachment to their neighborhood, but also exhibit low territoriality. While it can be confirmed that certain parts of Ras el Nabaa are highly territorial whereby outsiders are not welcome, other areas around the neighborhood are not as polarizing; perhaps this is where outsiders are finding it more accessible and easier to enter.

Hypothesis: Christians in Ras el Nabaa Are More Secular and Apolitical

And finally, I had hypothesized that the Christians choosing to reside in the neighborhood are not strongly affiliated with a political, religious, or ideological party and thus feel no real desire to live in a predominantly Christian area. Indeed, walking around the primarily Christian neighborhoods of Palais des Justice and parts of Furn el Chebbak gave me the impression that the Christian residents living there are very strongly affiliated with Samir Geagea/The Lebanese Forces,³³ and Amin Gemayel/The Kataeb Party.³⁴ At almost every block, there were photos of these political leaders, their party's flags, and symbols hanging from electricity poles, on buildings, or along the walls. For many of these Christians, living amongst co-religious neighbors who share a political affiliation is a must, as they feel more secure and are able to identify more with each other. However, for the Christians in Ras el Nabaa, I had expected that they would be less political and would be more tolerant living amongst diverse communities.

³³ Samir Geagea, a Christian Maronite, led the Lebanese Forces during the Lebanese Civil War. He was the only Lebanese warlord to have been imprisoned for his war crimes. He was released 11 years later in 2005 following the Syrian withdrawal. He is currently allied with the March 14 political bloc, advocating for Lebanese sovereignty and against Syrian interference and influence.

³⁴ Amin Gemayel, a Christian Maronite leader, replaced his assassinated brother as the president of Lebanon from 1982-1988. He currently leads the Kataeb Party, a political movement that has mostly Maronite supporters. His son, a prominent figure in the party, was also assassinated in November 2006. Many believe that Syria had a role in both his brother and his son's assassinations. He is allied with the March 14th political bloc, advocating for Lebanese sovereignty and against Syrian interference and influence.

It turns out that out of the eight respondents, one claimed that Samir Geagea is the number one political leader in Lebanon, while another one asserted that it was Michel Aoun³⁵. Two others proclaimed the president of Lebanon, Michel Suleiman, as their number one leader, a very neutral figure, while the four others each insisted that they do not follow any political figure. While this sample can hardly be a generalization of the Christian population in Ras el Nabaa, it does seem possible that less politically-charged and politically-affiliated Christians are residing in this neighborhood.

When interviewing a young Sunni university student, he explained to me that Christians in Ras el Nabaa are very low-key and do not engage or interfere in politics. He seemed to appreciate this as it helped keep relations healthy and amicable between the Christians and the Muslims in the neighborhood. He explained that many are apolitical or at least do not involve themselves in politics. During the latest events in May, he asserted that they did not interfere or get involved in the incidents; instead, they kept to themselves.

Indeed, as I mentioned before, despite the Christian presence around the neighborhood, I did not find any flags, photos, or graffiti indicating affiliation to Christianity or to Christian political figures. The lack of such symbols may indeed indicate that the Christian residents of Ras el Nabaa are more secular and apolitical than their co-religionists in East Beirut. Thus, weak allegiance to a Christian particular party, ideology, or religion also minimizes incentives for them to engage in political clashes with their Sunni or Shiite neighbors.

Yet, it also may indicate that these Christians (a couple of whom do identify with a partisan political figure) wish to keep a low profile and want to protect themselves while living

³⁵ Michel Aoun is a prominent Maronite Christian figure in Lebanese politics. For much of his political career, he has been staunchly opposed to Syrian influence in Lebanon, and pushed for an end to sectarianism. In 1989, he led a bloody and failed battle against the Syrians in Beirut, leaving thousands dead and forcing him into exile in France. He returned in 2005 after the Syrian withdrawal, but within weeks allied himself with pro-Syrian political parties, most notably Hezbollah. He leads the Free Patriotic Movement. (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2005).

amongst a non-co-religious majority. Given that they prioritize having a stable, comfortable, and affordable lifestyle for themselves and their children, it would be illogical, counter-productive, and possibly dangerous for them to aggravate relations with the majority by setting up their own territorial enclaves in certain parts of the neighborhood. By keeping a low profile and not engaging in politics, these Christians are able to minimize conflict with their neighbors and guarantee for themselves a secure living environment.

This can be confirmed by the statements and preferences of the two Christian respondents who indicated political allegiance to Samir Geagea and Michel Aoun. Despite their strong affiliation to these leaders, and despite the fact that they would have preferred to live in more homogeneous areas with a Christian majority, for practical and financial considerations, they had to move to Ras el Nabaa. They both had inherited assets in the neighborhood and had found it more affordable to live there; thus, putting their sectarian preferences aside, they decided to relocate. Because they are aware that their political affiliations and identity may be unwelcome in Ras el Nabaa and may cause tension with the Sunni and Shiite inhabitants, they are forced to keep a low profile if they wish to remain secure and safe in a non-co-religious neighborhood.

Hypothesis: Ras el Nabaa is More Affordable Than Other Beirut Neighborhoods

The fact that Ras el Nabaa has in the past been more affordable than other areas in Beirut also helped facilitate their decision to move into the neighborhood, as according to residents, prices in Ras el Nabaa began to increase only over the past two or three years. Indeed, affordability was cited as among the most important factors for many of these respondents. If particular Christian households are apolitical and do not follow a certain leader, are looking for neighborhoods with residents of a similar social class, and are searching for an affordable home,

it is evident that they would not mind settling in an area such as Ras el Nabaa, especially since it is in a prime location.

In fact, the two Christian respondents who claimed that they preferred to live in predominantly Christian areas ultimately had no other choice but to move to Ras el Nabaa, as it was more affordable than other areas in East Beirut and because they owned assets there. For these respondents, the mere fact that they relocated to Ras el Nabaa, despite the fact that they had strong political affiliations with Samir Geagea and Michel Aoun, indicates that to a certain extent, even non-secular and politically-inclined Christians do not feel entirely uncomfortable living in this neighborhood, perhaps because its affordability was combined with its proximity to East Beirut and the presence of Christian residents within the quarter.

It is hard to imagine that these residents would have chosen another predominantly Muslim neighborhood, further away from East Beirut and with a very small percentage of Christian residents. In such cases, whereby Christians owned assets in overwhelmingly Muslim areas, it was common for them to sell their land or buildings and move to more homogeneous areas. The fact that these two families decided to relocate to Ras el Nabaa instead of sell their assets indicates that indeed, they did feel some degree of security in the neighborhood. For them, perhaps not engaging in politics helped guarantee their security.

Has spatial proximity produced strong social relations and positive interaction among members of diverse sectarian communities?

SELECTED CHRISTIAN RESIDENTS IN RAS EL NABAA

	Spatial Proximity Produced Social Ties?	Degree/Level of Connection to Ras el Nabaa
1	NO	LOW
2	NO	LOW
3	YES	MODERATE ³⁶
4	YES	HIGH
5	YES	LOW
6	YES	MODERATE
7	YES	HIGH
8	YES	HIGH

Table 4.9

Hypothesis: Christian Social Relations With Muslims Are Limited

Although I had hypothesized that relations between the Christians and Muslims of Ras el Nabaa are not extensive, it appears that most of the Christian residents in my sample have actually formed friendships with the Muslims in their neighborhood. It seems that living in the center or the periphery exposes Christians equally to Muslim residents, as there does not seem to be a predominantly Christian area where Christian residents are clustered. Indeed, two Christian residents in my sample had stated that they have no Muslim friends in the neighborhood; one

³⁶ For the respondents who are described as having moderate connection to Ras el Nabaa, this means that they have assimilated quite well in the neighborhood, but would ultimately still move back to their original hometown for sentimental and emotional reasons; otherwise, they claim to be very happy and comfortable in Ras el Nabaa.

lives in the center while the other lives in the periphery. What helps increase chances for the formation of social relations then seems to be the level of attachment and activity in the neighborhood. Those residents who do much of their shopping in the neighborhood, send their children to schools in Ras el Nabaa, work, and/or have businesses there have much higher chances of meeting Muslim residents and befriending them.

Indeed, it thus appears that the two respondents who had no Muslim friends in the neighborhood and who were essentially forced to move to the neighborhood were also very unattached to the area, as most of their activities were done outside Ras el Nabaa. These respondents placed a high preference for living in homogeneous Christian neighborhoods and had deep roots there, but ultimately had no choice but to move to Ras el Nabaa for financial reasons. Based on their accounts, it seems that unattached residents who have loyalties and ties elsewhere, who conduct most of their activities outside the neighborhood, and do business with people they have grown accustomed to elsewhere, do not often end up creating cross-sectarian friendships.

In contrast, the others explained the types of activities that they engaged in throughout the neighborhood, which consequently seems to have increased their chances of interacting and befriending their Muslim neighbors. As a result then, contrary to what I had thought, most of the Christians in my sample actually do have connections and ties to the area, if not roots.

Territoriality then does not seem to have prevented them from engaging with the Sunni and Shiite inhabitants of the area. While territoriality is high in some parts of the neighborhood, these Christians have not chosen Ras el Nabaa to play a merely residential role in their lives, but rather have chosen to shop there, send their children to school there, and engage in social activities with their friends there. While many other Christian families may have different

experiences, at least for these respondents, it seems to be that they have become very well-integrated in their neighborhood, thus allowing interactions between Christians and Muslims to develop into social relations and even into more meaningful friendships.

CHAPTER V: CASE STUDY - BADARO



V.1 BACKGROUND¹

a. Brief History of Badaro Before the Civil War



Fig. 5.1 – 5.2: Aerial views of Beirut and Badaro

Badaro is located within the boundaries but along the edge of municipal Beirut. It is surrounded by three main highways or avenues. To its north lies Abdallah Yafi Avenue which also borders Ras el Nabaa. To its east lies Sami el Solh Boulevard, which connects at a roundabout to Omar Beyhum Avenue. These main streets make outer destinations easily accessible to Badaro residents.

¹ Badaro is a small neighborhood which is administratively part of a larger section of Beirut, called Mazraa. As a result, it is very difficult to find any separate information about the neighborhood, as it is connected to several other areas that form Mazraa. In addition, no studies exist about Badaro before or after the war which could supply me with hard data on social and economic indicators regarding the neighborhood's residents and local economy. Lebanon has not had a census conducted since 1932 because of political sensitivities regarding the changing demographics of the country and the implications this would have on the balance of power and political representation of the various sectarian communities. Even the research firm, Information International, could not locate any studies that could provide background information about the neighborhood, not even any newspaper accounts. As a result, the information gathered in this chapter is largely based on qualitative interviews and observations around the neighborhood, with some information drawn from two recent studies on Badaro in 2007.



Fig. 5.3-5.4: Wide roads and avenues such as Sami el Solh Boulevard (left) and Omar Beyhum Street border Badaro and allow residents easy access to other parts of Beirut and Lebanon.

Badaro is a relatively new neighborhood in Beirut which took form in the 1950's in response to the real estate boom and the rapid urbanization of Beirut. It received its name from a man by the name of Badaro, who operated a factory and owned much land on what is now known as Badaro street, the main street running through the neighborhood.² Soon the neighborhood developed into an attractive site for middle class professionals, offering affordable apartments mainly for rent.³ Interestingly, a significant portion of these residents were of the Syrian Christian middle class and members of the "elite" from Aleppo who decided to move to Beirut to escape onset of the socialist regime in Syria. They played an important role in the formation and development of the neighborhood.

While Badaro's middle class character attracted the Syrian professionals in the 1950's and 1960's, middle and upper class Lebanese initially chose to reside elsewhere, in

² Interview with resident.

³ Asmar and Summer, 2007.

neighborhoods known to be more prestigious, cosmopolitan, and multi-confessional⁴ – such as Ras Beirut, where residents could locate in the chic residential and commercial areas of Hamra, Sanayeh, Clemenceau, and Bristol, as well as Achrafieh.⁵ Although many Syrian professionals resided in Badaro, a number of well-to-do Christian and Muslim Syrians also chose to avoid Badaro -- particularly because they were given the Lebanese nationality and wished to assimilate into Lebanese society, and thus preferred not to live in a predominantly Syrian neighborhood. They also indicated that they were more satisfied living in Ras Beirut neighborhoods rather than in Badaro, particularly because it lacked a diverse environment and at that time was located too far off from key institutions, like educational establishments, and primary commercial and business centers. However, as Badaro continued to develop throughout the 1960's, it began to attract more Lebanese from the middle and upper classes, and hence it became known as a more upscale neighborhood with a majority of residents coming from elite economic backgrounds. According to a man who lived there since 1968, everyone had owned their homes in Badaro at this time; there were very few, if any, renters.

In terms of its religious make-up, Badaro was predominantly Christian; however, several upper-class Sunni and Shiite families resided there as well and owned apartments, land, and buildings. Politically, Badaro was very neutral, as its population was not known to have a strong political affiliation towards any particular political party or leader. Indeed, most of its residents were apolitical and refused to be identified with any particular political ideology. This is what seems to have protected Badaro from the devastation of the civil war. Residents refused to fight

⁴ Confessionalism, or communalism, can have a number of meanings that may refer to “the politico-administrative system of government, the social reality of multi-communalism, the institutional organization of a community, a collective or individual attitude tending to involve communal institutions in the global organization and management of society, the rather exclusive, or at least privileged, identification with a religious community, and/or affiliation with an institution or even a way of communal thinking” (Beydoun, 75). I will be using this term as it pertains to the collective identification that members of a particular sectarian community tend to affiliate themselves with.

⁵ Ghosn, 2003.

in the various militias that sprang up. Militia members had no reason to enter Badaro since there was no one to confront in the neighborhood.⁶

Economically, Badaro used to be a very vibrant neighborhood, where people from all over Beirut would come to shop in the various small businesses lining the streets. This is in stark contrast to the local economy in Badaro today, where few people come to shop from outside and where even its own residents rely on businesses outside their neighborhood.

b. Implications of the Civil War on Badaro

Because Badaro was located on the green line, it was not spared the consequences of the war. Although it did not witness the extent of the devastation that gripped other neighborhoods on the green line like Ras el Nabaa (since much of the fighting occurred outside Badaro and most of the buildings were spared the physical destruction) the effects of the war were still substantial. The neighborhood lost much of its population. Many of its dwellers relocated to another neighborhood in Beirut, escaped to the mountains, or left the country.⁷

As soon as the war ended in 1991, many residents returned to Badaro to claim the assets they had in the neighborhood. Those who chose to remain outside Badaro ended up renting their homes to organizations and companies, as well as to newcomers looking to reside in the neighborhood. In a 2007 study, interviews revealed that many of Badaro's past residents have no intention of returning to the neighborhood. In addition, despite the real estate boom in Beirut during the post-war period in the early to mid-1990's, Badaro was not an area of primary interest to families and households, and as a result, had difficulty attracting residents;⁸ this was confirmed by current residents. For a time, it was known for its high vacancy rates and large

⁶ Interview with Mr. Elias

⁷ This is based on interviews with residents, since no statistics exist on the number of families who left the neighborhood.

⁸ Asmar and Summer, 2007.

percentage of elderly residents.⁹ Recently however, it has become one of the high-demand neighborhoods, pushing real estate values up and bringing in many newcomers.¹⁰

Economically, Badaro suffered as larger businesses opened up outside the neighborhood in other parts of the city, attracting people who used to flock to Badaro to shop; even Badaro residents began to rely on these larger establishments, causing many small shops to lose customers. Over the years, many shops have closed; those that are still operating have very few customers.

V.2 BADARO TODAY: MY OBSERVATIONS

a. Physical Mapping

I chose a Thursday afternoon to roam the streets of Badaro in order to gather more detailed and descriptive information. I realized that Badaro is one of the calmest neighborhoods I have visited in Beirut. It is a spacious, airy, comfortable, and attractive area with wide roads and several large parking lots. I found many trees lining the roads and surrounding the buildings, further contributing to the neighborhood's aesthetic appeal. It is not common to find such greenery in many other Beirut neighborhoods. I also noticed that there were very few run-down buildings. In fact, most of the buildings were in very good shape, and were either well-preserved during the civil war or were renovated in the 1990s. Only a handful were newly built.

⁹ Again, no statistics on vacancy rates or on the demographics of the neighborhood exist.

¹⁰ Yamine, 2008.



Fig. 5.5 - 5.8: Streets in Badaro are typically quiet throughout the day, with few cars, pedestrians, and noise.

Although I noticed a few buildings with bullet-holes, in general, the neighborhood lacked signs of war-time destruction. The streets of Badaro were very clean. The neighborhood lacked the high density and crowdedness typical of other Beirut neighborhoods. On the contrary, rather than the buildings being in very close proximity to each other, enough space was left between them so that air and light could filter through. This gave most households the usual level of privacy. I also noticed only two or three buildings under construction.



Fig. 5.9 – 5.10: Unlike many other neighborhoods in Beirut, space is left between the buildings, leaving room for light, air, and privacy.

On one of the nearby streets perpendicular to the main street, I observed several buildings which looked newer and more modern than many of the other buildings I had seen in other parts of the neighborhood. It appeared that these buildings were built only in the last few years, as their new, modern architectural style was quite different from most of the other buildings where the Lebanese architecture was preserved from the 1950's and 1960's.



Fig. 5.11-5.12: There is a mixture of old and new buildings in Badaro; while the former maintain the Lebanese architecture, the new buildings are characterized by a more modern architectural style.

b. Socio-Economic Mapping

Many buildings were attractive and seemed to cater mostly to the middle and upper classes, as they were large, modern, equipped with security and a guard. It was evident that lower-income families could not afford to live in such large, attractive, and spacious homes, particularly now as real estate prices have soared. There were no obvious socio-economic divisions. There did not seem to be a less affluent section. The cars also served as an indicator that Badaro's residents are relatively more well-off since their cars tended to be among the more pricey ones; although there were several modest-income cars, such as Hondas, Toyotas, and Volvos, I did run across among the more expensive Jaguars, Mercedes, BMWs, and Audis.

I was struck to find the streets in Badaro almost completely deserted at 3pm. I stopped to ask a grocer if Badaro was quiet like that all day, and he said that the neighborhood was always calm, except in the morning when outsiders entered to visit institutions in surrounding areas, such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the National Fund for Social Security, Ogero Telephone Company (to pay their monthly phone bills) and several banks in the neighborhood. After learning this, I decided to visit Badaro again before noon in order to see whether there really was a flurry of activity at that time.



Fig. 5.13: Badaro Street, the main road that passes through the neighborhood, is calm with few cars throughout much of the day, except for the morning rush when outsiders enter to visit the various institutions in the area.

I arrived to Badaro around 10:30am on another weekday, and contrary to what I had seen in the afternoon, I observed a line of cars along Badaro's main street. However, although the main street was significantly busier, the inner, side streets still were generally empty, as were the sidewalks. This indicated that many had come to run their errands at the various offices and institutions on the main street and around the neighborhood. Many of the shops lining Badaro street still lacked customers.

Given this, I found it more difficult to draw any conclusions about the residents of Badaro since not many people were seen outside. Not only were the streets generally empty, but so were the sidewalks. Most of the stores are small, family-owned businesses. I noticed no large franchises or companies, except for several banks and a Mobil gas station. Beyond this, the businesses were primarily independent establishments not found in other parts of Beirut or Lebanon.

While some stores were open, I noticed that many were closed. In a conversation with an old resident, he explained that even the stores that remain open hardly attract the residents of Badaro. He indicated that the several small kiosks tend to attract mostly residents who need immediate household necessities, hardly ever attracting outsiders. Indeed, as I walked into one of the kiosks to buy a drink, the owner recognized me as a stranger to the area.

Although there are four grocery stands in the neighborhood, most residents tend to buy their groceries from the larger supermarkets in other parts of Beirut. Interestingly, a resident explained that outsiders selling fruits and vegetables on their carts come to Badaro to conduct their business. Indeed, I had seen a couple of them around the neighborhood, in addition to a ka'ak¹¹ seller.

¹¹ A traditional Lebanese bread.

Some older men sat on chairs along the sidewalks outside their stores, drinking coffee and carrying on conversations with the shop owners next door. Indeed, most of the people I observed were older men, perhaps because much of the working-age population was at work outside of Badaro. The neighborhood seemed to provide a very intimate and convivial atmosphere for these men; while engaging in a conversation with one man, he stopped to say hello to a number of residents passing by his store. He would point out the strangers to me, saying that they came from outside. Another man claimed that he would be able to identify residents from outsiders, stating that the small size of the neighborhood and its primarily residential character did not attract many outsiders, which made it easy to identify who was not from Badaro. He confirmed that he knew many of the families in the buildings around him, and even counted the number of families and private companies who had rented or bought apartments/office space in these buildings.

Further evidence to support this characteristic of Badaro includes my experience trying to locate a particular family to interview; after searching for a while, I stopped to ask a pharmacist if he knew where they lived, and he pointed me to the right building. While this does not mean that all residents know each other and have social relations, it appears that it is relatively easier to establish ties with them, as it lacks the congestion, traffic, busy-ness, and high activity characteristic of other larger and denser neighborhoods; the opportunity for residents to get to know each other in this calm environment seems to be much more conducive than in other settings.

c. Political Mapping

In contrast to many other neighborhoods in Beirut, I did not find any symbols indicating that much of Baaro's population identifies with a particular political party or follows a certain

political leader. I found no political flags, slogans, banners, graffiti, or photos indicating a strong identification with a political party. I also did not come across political party offices or headquarters. The only such symbols and indication of political party affiliation that I came across were the ripped and defaced photos of Michel Aoun¹² plastered along only a few walls. Yet, no new photos of an alternate leader were placed over Aoun's. In addition, I found one portrait of the late Gebran Tueni, a member of parliament who was part of the March 14th political alliance, and whom many believe was assassinated by Syria in December 2005. Part of it was ripped off as photos of the current president, Michel Suleiman, were placed on top.



Fig. 5.14 – 5.15: Defaced photos of Maronite Christian leader, Michel Aoun



Fig. 5.16: Photos of the Lebanese President, Michel Suleiman, are placed atop a photo of assassinated March 14th politician, Gebran Tueni.

¹² Michel Aoun is a prominent Maronite Christian figure in Lebanese politics. For much of his political career, he has been staunchly opposed to Syrian influence in Lebanon, and pushed for an end to sectarianism. In 1989, he led a bloody and failed battle against the Syrians in Beirut, leaving thousands dead and forcing him into exile in France. He returned in 2005 after the Syrian withdrawal, but within weeks allied himself with pro-Syrian political parties, most notably Hezbollah. He leads the Free Patriotic Movement. (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2005).

Indeed, I came across several photos of the president plastered along the cement walls of the neighborhood. He is a leader widely seen as a neutral and reconciliatory figure in Lebanese politics. This suggests that Badaro is more of an apolitical neighborhood where residents prefer to preserve and maintain a calm environment without polarization or tension among residents. This was confirmed to me by two long-term residents of the neighborhood, who claimed that the neighborhood remains pleasant, calm, and stable as it is not politicized. Of course, this does not mean that all residents in the area have no political affiliation. It is realistic to expect that some percentage of Badaro's inhabitants have allegiance to a particular party or leader. However, there is no evidence of this in the streets of the neighborhood, as it is in other Christian neighborhoods of Beirut.¹³ It is common to find flags of political parties hanging on balconies around Beirut, but I did not see this in Badaro. Perhaps this means that those who have political affiliations prefer to keep their politics off the streets.



Figure 5.17-5.18: In the neighboring area of Furn el Chebbak, photos, images, graffiti, and signs of Christian political and religious figures dominated almost every corner of the neighborhood.

¹³ In contrast, I visited a nearby Christian area in south-east Beirut, called Furn el Chebbek, and noticed political banners, flags, and portraits of Christian political figures on almost every street corner. Photos of Samir Geagea and Amin Gemayel, along with symbols of the Lebanese Forces and the Kata'eb Party were rampant. While there were a few photos of President Michel Suleiman, the loyalty and political affiliation towards certain Christian political factions was quite evident.

V.2 AN INTERVIEW WITH A LONG-TIME RESIDENT

During my third visit to Badaro, I approached one of the owners of a kiosk and, after introducing myself, asked him some questions about the neighborhood's history. After explaining to him the purpose of my research, he advised me to speak with a man who owned a barber shop a few meters away since this man was a long-time resident of the neighborhood and, in his words, knew everyone and everything and could answer whichever questions I had. The kiosk owner introduced me to this man whose name is Mr. Elias.

I sat with Mr. Elias for about 2.5 hours. Towards the end of the conversation, as I was getting ready to leave, I asked him if he could point me to the mukhtar of Badaro.¹⁴

Mr. Elias looked at me and exclaimed:

“I am the mukhtar. There is no official mukhtar in Badaro because it is administratively a part of a much larger area called Mazraa. But even if you visit the mukhtar of Mazraa, he will not be able to give you much information about Badaro because he is not from this neighborhood. Walk out on the street and ask anyone who the mukhtar of Badaro is, and they will point you to me.”

Importantly, although Mr. Elias is originally from the south-east part of Beirut called Furn el Chebbak, he explained that no resident in Badaro is originally from the neighborhood, and that they all come from other neighborhoods in Beirut or other parts of Lebanon. Since Mr. Elias moved to Badaro in 1963, long before the civil war and just as Badaro was developing, he seems to be one of the few people in the neighborhood who knows about its historical, social, political, economic, and religious characteristics.

¹⁴ A mukhtar is a public civil officer whose jurisdiction is limited to particular neighborhoods and sectors throughout the city, but whose function resembles the duties of a mayor. A mukhtar often comes from a very well-respected and prestigious family, and is thus elected based on such primordial characteristics. He thus is an official representative of the state, who consequently holds formal power, as well as a local figure in the neighborhoods who is trusted and empowered by the residents (Barrage, 1986, p. 56).

a. Population Characteristics

Despite the fact that Mr. Elias, a Christian, has been a resident of Badaro for 45 years and thus lived in the neighborhood well before the civil war, he was not able to tell me the population of the neighborhood, and explained that no one had such figures.¹⁵ However, demographically speaking, he confirmed that many of the residents are elderly inhabitants. Even so however, he explains that Badaro has attracted many younger couples, since it also appeals to families with young children looking to raise them in a comfortable environment, away from political and sectarian tension.¹⁶

Because the neighborhood is religiously mixed, I wanted to know whether Muslims, Christians, and Druze are spatially integrated or whether they create their own homogeneous enclaves. Upon asking this question, Mr. Elias asserted that there is no segregation in Badaro, and that Muslims are spatially mixed throughout the area and are highly integrated. He pointed out that several Muslim families currently live in his building, while all around him buildings were owned by Muslims. Several times during my discussion with him, customers walked into his shop; as they were leaving, he made it a point to tell me that they were Muslim. In addition, he occasionally waved at people walking by his shop and again, told me which ones were Muslim.

In Mr. Elias's mind, Badaro is 60% Christian and 40% Muslim. Quite significantly, none of the other residents I interviewed perceived the percentage of Muslims in Badaro to be so large. Unfortunately, given the lack of official data on the composition of the population, it is difficult to verify his claim. However, since he has lived in the neighborhood for so long, is

¹⁵ No census has been conducted in Lebanon since 1932, and no official documents exist at the neighborhood level, so it is impossible for anyone to give me an estimation on Badaro's population.

¹⁶ Both a professor and another old resident agreed that the neighborhood is attracting young families. In an interview with a developer, she claimed that all the households who have bought apartments in her two buildings are young families.

referred to as the “de facto neighborhood mukhtar,” and interacts with much of Badaro’s population, I take his estimates seriously.

In addition, Mr. Elias explained to me his relations with Muslims, explaining that:

“Many Muslims from outside Badaro come here to do business with me. About 75% of my customers are Muslim and most are not residents of Badaro. I cannot make financial ends meet solely as a barber since business is very slow. So, I manage a lottery¹⁷ and many of my Muslim friends come to me because they trust me. I had a Muslim friend years ago who introduced me to his Muslim circle of friends, and ever since then they became part of my social network. I socialize with them regularly, and even more often than with my first Muslim friend! I want to tell you something – I am a very open-minded, secular, and tolerant individual. I do not judge anyone based on religion but rather on personality and how good of a heart that person has.”

Our conversation reinforced for me the importance of having people from different religious backgrounds meet and interact. Such interaction can help to produce positive social ties. This is the case particularly in a society like Lebanon, whereby people have a natural tendency to cluster around their own kind and may not make a conscious effort to meet people of other religions. Placing them in situations like the one Mr. Elias experienced, wherein a friend of his introduced him to non-co-religionists creates an opportunity to produce friendly ties and can even diminish stereotypes and negative perceptions people may have towards each other.

While spatial proximity may lead to increased social interaction between people of diverse backgrounds, people do not have to live near each other to meet and interact, as long as they make a conscious effort to get to know people outside their usual social network. Nonetheless, spatial proximity may prove to be quite important, particularly for those with the propensity to stick to their own kind. For these people, living in integrated environments may be the only way for them to meet others outside their social circle. The full impact of spatial proximity on social relations will be further assessed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

¹⁷ According to Mr. Elias, there are lottery machines in the neighborhoods where his Muslim friends come from, yet they still make the effort to come to Badaro because of their ties with him.

V.4 INSTITUTIONS IN BADARO

Within Badaro, there are several schools, including College Saint Sauveur, Ecole Notre Dame des Anges, Lycée du Musée, and College Louise Wegmann. The Arab Open University and the American University Institute are also located in the neighborhood, across from the Chams Theatre and Soeurs Franciscaines, both cultural institutions. A Lebanese Army base is located in Badaro as well. To the west of Badaro lies a large pine forest, adjacent to another public space area known as the Hippodrome, right next to the National Museum. Across the street to the west lies the Ministry of Social Affairs, while to the south-east another neighborhood called Furn el Chebbak hosts the Lebanese University Campus. The institutions in Ras el Nabaa are merely a short distance away from Badaro.¹⁸

Religious institutions in Badaro include: the Syrian-Catholic Patriarchate, the Evangelical Church, Sacred Heart Maronite Church, and the Saydet al Malaeka Church. Quite significantly, no mosques are present in Badaro. This surprised me. I had expected that there would be at least one mosque in the neighborhood, since Muslims have been residing in Badaro since the 1960's and are not recent newcomers. It appears that they have yet to leave their religious imprint on the neighborhood. To compare, in Ras el Nabaa, there are a few churches and mosques, as the population was very mixed before the civil war.

It is intriguing to assess why this may not be the case in Badaro. Perhaps this says something about the secularism of the upper-class Muslims of Badaro. The absence of a mosque may indicate the extent to which these Muslims, ever since the 1950's and 1960's, have come

¹⁸ Ras el Nabaa has several elementary schools, in addition to Université Saint-Joseph (USJ), the French Embassy, the Centre Culturel Français (a French educational center), in addition to various religious sanctuaries: The Najat Church for Maronites, the Catholic Bishopric, the Osman bin Affan Mosque and the Sidani Mosque for Sunnis.

from non-religious backgrounds. I asked Mr. Elias where the Muslims of Badaro go to pray, and he explained that there is a mosque across from Badaro (near the graveyard of Tayyouneh) where Muslims are able to pray. Interviews with Muslim residents of Badaro later on in this chapter further highlight both the religiosity and the secularism of some of these inhabitants.

The tolerance and openness of both the Christians and Muslims of Badaro was further corroborated when Mr. Elias explained to me the following:

“Badaro is a very open and tolerant neighborhood. Even one of the Christian schools in the neighborhood has about 50% Muslim students.¹⁹ The priest at this particular school gives the Muslim families tuition discounts, since he wants to show Muslims that Christians are open to them and are not religiously dogmatic or intolerant of Muslims.”

Of course, there is a possibility that Muslim families may be sending their children to this Christian school because the tuition is less. However, the fact that they are willing to do so does indicate that they are not highly religious. Religious Muslim families who strictly practice Islam and who visit the mosque regularly would not send their children to a Christian school. As a result, it becomes possible to assume that there is a high rate of Muslim secularism in Badaro.

¹⁹ Religious Muslims who practice Islam do not tend to send their children to Christian schools; there are a number of non-Christian and even Muslim-affiliated public and private schools merely a short distance away from Badaro in Ras el Nabaa and Aamliy  that these Muslim families can send their children to; a few are even Islamic schools. Thus, there is no lack of options for them to be forced to send their children to a Christian school. This indicates a certain degree of secularism exists among several Muslim families in Badaro.

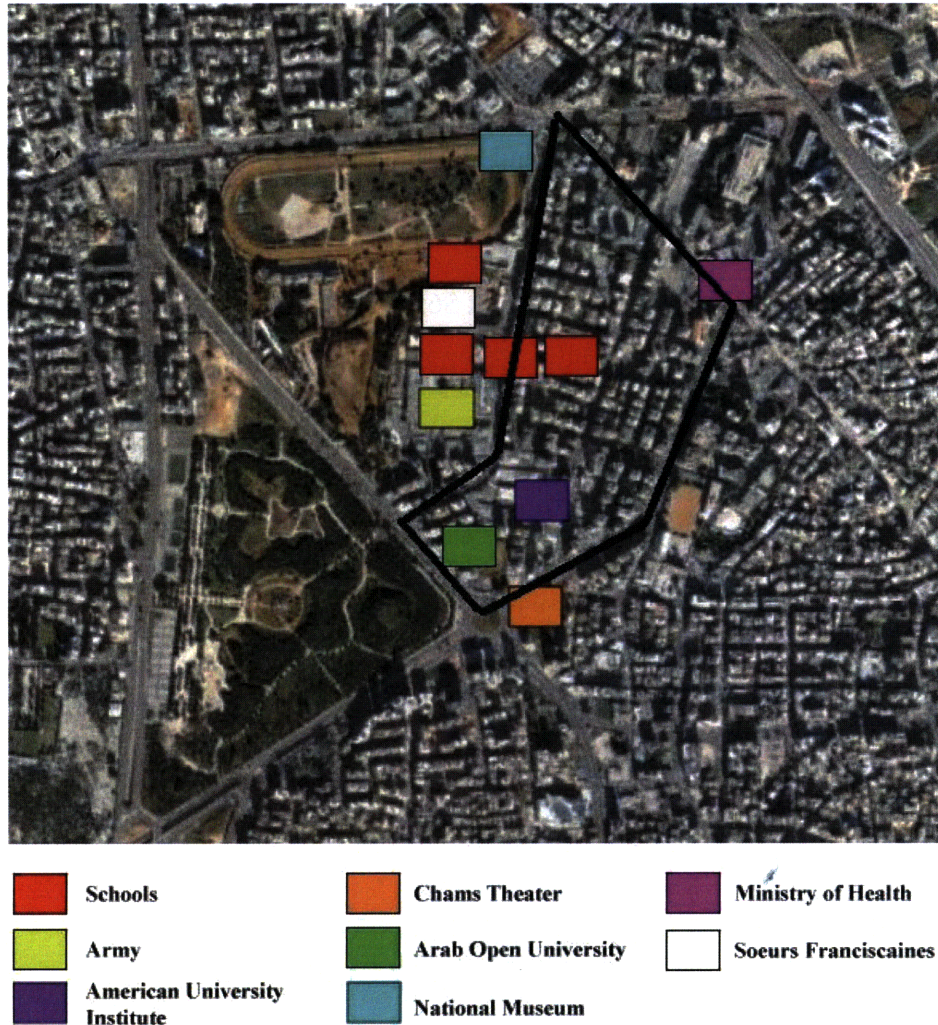


Figure 5.19: Various secular institutions are located within Badaro and in its immediate vicinity.

V.5 REAL ESTATE IN BADARO²⁰

Although Badaro was not a hot spot for real estate investment throughout the 1990's and early 2000's, real estate prices have begun to soar in Badaro. Mr. Elias explained that there is a huge demand coming from couples and families wanting to rent and buy apartments in this particular neighborhood because it is close to a number of governmental, academic, and cultural institutions, close to the center of the city and downtown, located close to the beach and only

²⁰ No studies exist on real estate prices in Badaro; I was unable to compare how land, building, and apartment prices have changed over the last few years; thus, I relied on interviews with residents, NGOs, and developers gather some data.

about 30 minutes from the mountains, and it is known to be a stable, calm, apolitical, and secular neighborhood with a high tolerance for people of diverse sectarian backgrounds.

Because of this high demand, home and land values have risen significantly during the last two to three years. Mr. Elias claimed that land now costs between \$2,000-4,000 per square meter, while apartments which used to cost about \$650 per square meter three years ago now cost between \$1,000-1,400 per square meter. He pointed to the new building behind his store, located on the street that appeared to have mostly newly-built apartments, and explained the apartments were between 320-350 square meters, claiming that it cost \$50,000/year to rent it, as its selling price was over \$1 million. The two men sitting next to him supported his claim.



Fig. 5.20: This is one of the newer buildings in Badaro. The apartments in this building are said to cost at least \$1 million. According to residents, it costs at least \$4,000/month to rent an apartment here.

While this building is clearly among the most expensive in the neighborhood, it indicates that over time Badaro has become a highly attractive and valuable area and is being impacted by

the real estate boom in Beirut, as its price compares to other buildings with similar apartment sizes in high-demand neighborhoods. These other homes around Beirut also cost at least \$1 million; some even go up to \$2-3 million. These apartments are located in high-demand and prestigious areas such as Ain el Mreisseh, Ashrafieh, Beirut Central District, Gemmayze, Ramlet el Baida, Verdun, and Ras Beirut.²¹

Given the high demand for office space in the neighborhood, Badaro is rapidly becoming dominated by companies and is attracting dental, law, and pharmaceutical offices, as well as non-governmental organizations. There are virtually no vacancies left in the neighborhood. Another man confirmed that only two families live in his building, while the rest of the apartments have turned into offices. During my interview with Mr. Elias, I learned that on average apartments rent for approximately \$500 per month in Badaro. Because of this, most owners living outside Badaro have decided to rent their apartments to companies looking for office space, rather than to families, as companies can afford to pay \$1000/month or more.



Fig. 5.21: Badaro is attracting a number of private companies and NGOs interested in renting offices. Many homes have thus turned into office space, thus helping to drive down the vacancy rate.

²¹ Yammine, 2008.

I spoke with the director of an NGO which was renting an office in Badaro, and asked her about her experience searching for apartments in the neighborhood. She explained that her organization had been in Badaro for about six years, and that prices have gone up considerably since then. She mentioned that she was considering adding another office in the neighborhood and she saw on average apartments for \$17,000-22,000 to rent per year. Although they had been renting the apartment for around \$800/month, the prices now can go up to \$1,800/month due to the real estate boom.

Most of the buildings in Badaro were built primarily in the 1960's and 1970's. Only about four or five buildings were constructed in the year 2000, and only two are currently being built. There is no land left to build on. According to the developer of the two buildings being constructed in Badaro, prices range from \$2,000-3,700 per square meter, depending on apartment floor. Half the apartments have already been sold to young Lebanese families who intend to move there rather than to investors looking to speculate and make a profit on their investment. Interestingly, I observed a few large parking lots that could be valuable sites for buildings. A resident indicated that he expects that this vacant land will soon be developed due to the lucrative investments awaiting developers in this high-demand area.



Fig. 5.22-5.23: There is some vacant land left which is currently being used as parking lots. It is expected that in a few years this land will be developed.

Yet, despite the high demand to live in Badaro, the high price of homes and land is making it unaffordable for many couples and families who might otherwise want to reside there. Real estate agencies have recently included it as one of the hot spots in Beirut. Nonetheless, Badaro still remains much more affordable than some other middle-to-upper class neighborhoods in East and West Beirut. Indeed, apartments are still not as expensive as areas in Ashrafieh, Gemmayzeh, Rmeil (in East Beirut) and Ras Beirut, Raouche, and Verdun (in West Beirut). Nabil Sawabini, chairman and CEO of MENA Capital, a real estate development agency, explained that in such areas, buying one square meter can range from \$2,500-6,000, while in Beirut Central District, prices can go up to \$10,000 per square meter.²² As a result, for middle-to-upper income families looking for more affordable residences, Badaro is clearly more appealing and affordable.²³

V.6 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Interviews with eight Muslim families in Badaro revealed some very interesting dynamics. These families vary in a number of ways: they have different educational, social, and political views; they come from different areas of Lebanon and have spent a diverse number of years in Badaro; their level of religiosity differs, as does the amount of assets and number of relatives they have in the neighborhood.²⁴ Yet, despite such differences, it seems that in general, Muslims are getting along very well with their Christian neighbors, are assimilating into the neighborhood, and feel like they belong. While some are newcomers, others have been there for many years. None complain of feeling as if they are outsiders. They all cite different reasons for choosing Badaro, depending on their preferences, priorities, needs, and circumstances. In the

²² Yamine, 2008.

²³ See Appendix C for a breakdown of apartment prices around Beirut's major neighborhoods.

²⁴ See Chapter 3, section III.2 for a detailed explanation of the interviews and how residents were selected.

following section, I will elaborate on the issues that came up in the interviews and analyze their implications and repercussions for social relations.

Characteristics of Muslim Respondents

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Rented or Owned House	Rented	Owned	Rented	Owned	Owned	Rented	Rented	Rented
Presence of Family Members	3 relatives	None	None	None	8 relatives	None	None	None
Number of Years in Badaro	10 years	2 years	2 years	11 years	10 years	43 years	1-2 years	4 years
Assets Owned in Badaro	None	Apartment	None	Building	Land, Apartment	None	None	Shop
Education Level	University	High School	High School	High School	University	University	University	University
Social Class	Middle Class	Middle Class	Middle Class	Middle Class	Upper Class	Upper Class	Upper Class	Upper Class
Frequency of Mosque Visits	Occasionally	Every Friday	Occasionally	Never	Never	Never	Occasionally	Never
Political Affiliation	Saad Hariri	Saad Hariri	Michel Aoun	Walid Jumblatt	None	None	None	None

Table 5.1

Additional Characteristics of Muslim Respondents

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
% Muslim in Building	10%	25%	20%	4%	35%	1%	5%	5%
Comfort Level	High	Moderate	High	High	High	High	High	High
Degree of Activity in Badaro	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	High	Low	High
Connection Elsewhere? Would move there?	Moussaitbe Yes	Bekaa Yes	Chiyah Yes	No	No	No	Tripoli Yes	Corniche el Mazraa No
Area of Origin	Moussaitbe	Bekaa	Taybeh, South Lebanon	Ashrafieh	Raouche	Corniche el Mazraa	Tripoli	Corniche el Mazraa
Where Most Relatives Live	Moussaitbe (Mainly Muslim)	Bekaa (Muslim area)	Chiyah (Shiite Area)	Ras el Nabaa (majority Sunni; mixed)	Raouche (Mainly Muslim)	Mazraa/Moussaitbe (Mainly Muslim)	Tripoli (Sunni-Christian)	Moussaitbe Corniche el Mazraa (Mainly Muslim)
Same Sect Preference?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Close Christian Friends?	Yes	None in Badaro; has Christian friends outside	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 5.2

a. Factors Involved in Residential Location Decisions

While each family weighs various residential attributes differently, all households looking for a new place to live must be concerned about the availability of water, electricity, and telephone service. According to Mr. Elias and the director of the Ministry of the Displaced, Badaro does not suffer from power rationing like the rest of Beirut. Upon explaining to Mr.

Elias that a resident had informed me that the power goes out in Badaro just as it does in other parts of Beirut, he reacted by saying:

“That’s not true. We are never short on water and electricity here. Sometimes I even pray for it to be cut because we get too much of it! You want to know why Badaro is never short on water or electricity? Because we have a number of important institutions in the neighborhood that cannot afford to lose power. We have the Justice Ministry, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Industry, the Office of the General Security, the Internal Security offices, the Army Base, a number of banks, hospitals, and the national telephone company office. Ever since the end of the war, we have not been short on power, as these establishments cannot function without it.”

As a result, residents prioritizing such daily necessities found Badaro to be a prime location.

Indeed, all eight interviews with the Muslim respondents revealed that such considerations were among the most important factors in their residential location decision. In addition, five out of eight respondents explained that affordability and proximity to work were among the most important considerations.

After ensuring that their needs regarding services, affordability, and proximity to work were met, the majority cited that the neighborhood’s population, attractiveness, proximity to the center of the city, and the presence of shops as key considerations. Surprisingly, least important or not important at all was the presence of family members or other Muslims. Six out of eight did not perceive these as issues worth considering in selecting a new neighborhood; in fact, they were not even factored into their decision. This is verified in the table above which indicates that six residents had no relatives living around them in Badaro. Only two residents said that this was an important consideration.

It seems that convenience was the most important factor for the families in my sample. It is evident that they considered it more important to ensure the availability of vital amenities and services and to cut down on housing expenses, transportation costs, and time spent on the road. They did not place much importance on living in a homogeneous area with their co-religionists.

These families, for the most part, did not factor politics or religion into their residential location choices.

Residential Preferences of Muslim Respondents

	Most Important	Important	Somewhat/Less Important	Not Important
Services	•••••••	•		
Affordability	•••••	•		••
Proximity to Work	•••••	•		
Attractiveness	•	•••••	••	
Social Class	•	•••••	•	•
Proximity to Downtown	••	••••		•
Spaciousness of Neighborhood	••••		••	
Shops	•••	•••	•	
Schools	••	••	••	•
Population Density		••••	•	•••
Parking	•••		••	•
Presence of Family Members	•	•		••••
Sunni Presence		••		••••••

Table 5.3

b. Residents' Backgrounds: Where They Came From, Why They Moved, and Why They Chose Badaro

I think it is important to look into the histories of these eight Muslim families and to understand their educational, social, economic, and political backgrounds as well as to find out where they grew up and where they lived before moving to Badaro. The different personal experiences and backgrounds of these Muslim respondents highlighted the many factors impacting their decisions to move into Badaro. While the history of the residents and the reasons compelling them to move out of their old neighborhoods were indeed diverse, almost all cited the same reasons for choosing Badaro: its pleasantness, calmness, low density, low noise, spaciousness, and positive reputation.

One man lived in a neighborhood in Beirut called Moussaitbeh,²⁵ also once known for its religious diversity. He got married ten years ago and needed to buy a new home; he chose Badaro because it is a quiet residential area with a low population level and noise level. Another man moved to Badaro two years ago to be closer to his work in Tayyouneh. This allowed him to avoid high transportation costs. Thus, geographical location was a very important consideration for him. He chose Badaro also because it is quiet and has low density.

A woman living in a nearby neighborhood called Chiyah had to move because her house was damaged in the 2006 war. There was no housing available in the Chiyah area because of the damage incurred during the war. She and her husband chose Badaro because they found an affordable home and the area is known for its calmness and its good reputation.²⁶

²⁵ Before the civil war, Mousseitbeh used to be known as a highly-mixed and integrated neighborhood where Muslims and Christians co-habited and co-existed. Today, while some Christian families still reside there, the percentage of Christians is significantly less than it was in the past.

²⁶ Based on interviews with other residents who described why Badaro had a good reputation, I can infer that "good" means that it has a calm, stable, pleasant environment, away from the noise, traffic, and political tension typical of many other Beirut neighborhoods.

A respondent who lived in Corniche al Mazraa (a neighborhood close to Badaro) until 1965 moved to Badaro because of its pleasantness, attractiveness, low density, and spaciousness. Another resident also from Corniche al Mazraa moved to Badaro a few years ago to be near a shop he opened in the neighborhood. He chose Badaro because it had a promising, viable market and because it was in a calm, pleasant location. He now lives just two minutes from his store.

Another man lived in Ashrafieh before the civil war, and thus grew up in an area with a high percentage of Christians. He relocated to Ras el Nabaa during the civil war but decided to move to Badaro 11 years ago since he owns a building there. Similarly, another woman lived in Raouche, a predominantly Sunni area of Beirut but decided to move to Badaro 10 years ago because she owns a piece of land there and it is also close to work.²⁷ These two individuals are among the many Muslims whose families owned assets in Badaro well before the civil war.

c. Perceptions of Neighborhood Religious Composition

When respondents were asked to indicate, based on their own observations and knowledge, the breakdown of Badaro's population by sect, it seems that their answers reflected their personal experience rather than any independent factual information. Three respondents answered that there were 70% Christians in the neighborhood, while two claimed it was 85% and two others asserted it was 95%.²⁸

Since there are no official statistics on the distribution of sectarian groups in Badaro, these answers point to the residents' subjective perceptions of their neighborhood's demographics. Beyond this, it also reveals, perhaps, that neighborhood homogeneity is not important for many of these residents. To elaborate, for those who said Badaro is 85% or 95%

²⁷ It is not clear how and when these two residents acquired their assets in the neighborhood.

²⁸ The student interviewed did not know as she is a newcomer and merely lives in the dorms in the neighborhood and thus claimed she does not interact with the neighborhood population.

Christian, it indicates that despite their perception that the neighborhood has a significant majority of Christians, this does not bother them nor does it push them to choosing another neighborhood. Clearly, religion is not an issue if they themselves have the impression that they are a significant minority and yet are still comfortable living there.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the religious composition of the building they live in. While again it varied based on each building, one respondent claimed that Christians comprised 60% of the residents in his building, while another respondent indicated that Christians made up 99%. The rest of the respondents' answers fell within these two brackets. Again, these answers show that at least for these Muslim residents, religion does not play a major role in their housing decisions, since they do not seem to mind living in buildings with a majority of Christians.

These figures also indicate that sub-groups in the neighborhood are apparently not segregated into Christian and Muslim sections. No Muslim resident claimed that he/she lived in a building with a majority of Muslims. This shows that for the most part, Muslims are not keeping to themselves and have not established a "Muslim section" in the neighborhood.

However, there may be some exceptions, since it came up in one interview that a Muslim building owner in Badaro had rented or sold all the apartments in his building to Sunnis (although he himself lives in a religiously-mixed building). The reason for this is not clear, but based on the accounts of the other Muslims in Badaro, this does not appear to be common. Thus it can be assumed that the majority of Muslims live in mixed buildings throughout Badaro rather than in one particular section. In fact, Mr. Elias confirmed this in his description of the spatial distribution of religious sub-groups.

d. Social Networks and the Role of Proximity

Selected Muslim Residents in Badaro

	Spatial Proximity Produced Social Ties?	Degree/Level of Connection to Badaro
1	YES	HIGH
2	NO	MODERATE
3	YES	LOW
4	YES	HIGH
5	YES	MODERATE
6	YES	HIGH
7	YES	LOW
8	YES	HIGH

Table 5.4

In assessing the impact of spatial proximity on social relations between Muslims and Christians in Badaro, some very significant results were revealed. It seems that for these residents, spatial proximity has helped produce important social and friendly ties between these two religious communities. Indeed, seven out of eight Muslim respondents claimed that their close friends include Christians from Badaro.

While the eighth respondent stated that his close friends are not from Badaro and that he does not socialize much with residents in the neighborhood, he did assert that he has very close Christian friends outside the neighborhood whom he met through work. Importantly, he also

adds that he does not have any Muslim friends in the neighborhood either, but rather, they are all living in other parts of Beirut and Lebanon.

One resident originally from the religiously-mixed neighborhood of Mousseitbeh moved to Badaro 10 years ago and claims that he has established Christian friends in Badaro and socializes and interacts with them, while they visit each other occasionally. He also adds that he has good Christian friends from work. He explains that although his close personal friends whom he turns to for advice, comfort, or personal assistance are mainly Sunni, he thinks of his social network as including both Sunnis and Christians.

One of the respondents was a young Shiite stay-at-home mother. She explained that despite the fact that she had only been living in Badaro for 2 years, she had managed to create some very personal friendships with her Catholic neighbors. She explained that she and her neighbors visit each other in their homes. She asserts that these are very personal friendships and that she trusts her Christian friends even with personal issues and confides in them. Her social network however expands beyond these neighbors, as it is very diverse and includes people from a number of religions and sects.

Similarly, a Sunni man who once lived in Ashrafieh amongst many Christians explains that he interacts with Christians both inside and outside Badaro and that they visit each other on an occasional basis. He described his social relations as being extensive with Maronites, and indicated that he has a very close Shiite friend in whom he confides.

A divorced Sunni woman who has been living in Badaro for 10 years stated that her social network is made up of mainly Orthodox and Maronite friends living in Badaro and Mathaf, an area directly next to Badaro. In addition, an older Sunni female who moved to Badaro in 1965 stated that she has friendships with Sunnis and non-Sunnis; she also managed to

make Christian friends outside Badaro through her husband and her children. She met her Christian friends in Badaro as many were her neighbors, while others she met in stores throughout Badaro. She says she considers these friends as very close and that they continually interact with each other and visit each other. She says that due to her old age however, they are the ones who visit her more often now. This woman has relations with Sunnis, Shiites, Christians, and Druze all around Lebanon.

The young Sunni student from Tripoli living in the university dorms pointed out that she has close relations with Christian students living with her. She said that although she has Christian friends in Tripoli, the relations were not extensive. In contrast, she said that she considers her Christian friend living with her in the dorms as her very close friend. Her social network consists mainly of Sunnis and Christians in Beirut and Tripoli.

And finally, the Sunni shop owner in Badaro explained that his social network consists of Christians, Muslims, and Druze across Lebanon. He also adds that he had good Christian friends in Badaro and met some of them as they are his customers, and others by interacting with them in the neighborhood. He explains however that his close friends whom he confides most are outside Badaro – a Christian from Al-Naccache and a Shiite from Ras Beirut.

Based on these personal accounts, one can infer that proximity and contact have the potential to play an important role in facilitating interaction and communication. While many of the respondents had Christian friends outside the neighborhood, most confirmed that their Christian neighbors had become part of their social network, if not their close friends. Thus, it may be fair to conclude that spatial proximity can contribute to social ties and even intimate friendships.

However, it is not guaranteed that such ties and relations will be created, as it depends on the lifestyle of each resident. I imagine that relations will develop only if residents feel welcome and at home. Without a certain level of comfort and belonging, it may be difficult to expect newcomers to establish bonds and relations with other residents, particularly those who come from a different religion. As a result, it becomes important to look at the respondents' level of integration, connection, comfort, assimilation, and belonging in the neighborhood, which I will turn to in the next section.

e. Assimilation and Integration in the Neighborhood: Measuring the Level of Belonging

From the eight interviews I did, all the Muslim respondents seemed to feel comfortable in Badaro; however, their levels of integration and assimilation vary. While some Muslim residents are very integrated, others have their roots elsewhere. They do not feel like they belong to the neighborhood, even though they report being treated well. Their reactions do not seem to be associated with political or religious identification, but merely with emotional, sentimental, historic, and family ties that are rooted elsewhere.

For example, the university student from Tripoli claimed that she is well-received and feels at home in Badaro. However, her stay is only temporary. She will be leaving the neighborhood once she graduates to return to Tripoli. She also claimed that she shops mainly in Tripoli and thus only buys urgent necessities and groceries from the market near her dorm; major purchases on the other hand are made when she returns to her hometown in the north, which is about 1 ½ hours away.

The man from Moussaitbeh is also happy in Badaro and feels welcome in the neighborhood. However, he claimed he would move back to Moussaitbeh if he could because

his roots are there. Another respondent echoed the fact that he is well-received in Badaro, yet due to the recent instability in Beirut this year, he is considering moving his wife back to the Bekaa Mountains since she does not feel safe in Beirut. He would remain in Badaro for work. And finally, although the Shiite woman from Chiyah has developed extensive ties to the Christian residents in Badaro, her roots remain in Chiyah. She conducts her shopping and groceries in familiar markets there .

While these four Muslim residents are comfortable in the neighborhood, they are still very much connected to the neighborhoods where they grew up and where they intend to return in the years ahead. Nevertheless, their shallow roots in the neighborhood have not prevented them from establishing ties and friendships with Christian residents. Thus, I think it is fair to conclude that as long as Muslim residents are comfortable, social ties and friendships can be formed, without the precondition of developing roots and establishing a deep level of connectedness in the neighborhood.

The other four Muslims interviewed, on the other hand, are fully assimilated into the neighborhood. The Sunni building owner has enrolled his child in a Christian school in Badaro. The fact that he does not go to the mosque may indicate that he is not a religious person. He explains that about 90% of his shopping is done in Badaro and that he is well-received by the residents.

Similarly, the Sunni land owner claimed that she feels very comfortable in the neighborhood and feels like she belongs there. She does half her shopping in Badaro and half elsewhere. She, too, does not attend the mosque and is not very religious. She claimed that she would never consider leaving Badaro if presented with the option of moving elsewhere.

The old Sunni woman who has lived in Badaro since 1965 explained that she would never consider moving. She has assimilated well for 43 years. And, the Sunni shop owner who has lived in the neighborhood for only four years echoed the same sentiments. He indicated that he is very comfortable in the neighborhood. He has enrolled his children in a school in Badaro and supports the small businesses in the area. He does not go to the mosque and thus can be classified as a secular individual.

Importantly, no Muslim family I interviewed claimed it knew a single Muslim family that has left Badaro. This indicates that over the past several years Muslims have been choosing Badaro as a long-term residential destination and staying. Thus, while I had mentioned above that perhaps the Muslim residents who have stronger roots elsewhere and may want to move back at some point, it is interesting to see that in general, Muslims seem to be very satisfied and with their decision to move to Badaro.

f. Christian Interaction With Badaro Muslims

Selected Christian Residents in Badaro

	Spatial Proximity Produced Social Relations?	Level of Territoriality
1	NO	LOW
2	NO	HIGH
3	YES	HIGH
4	NO	LOW
5	NO	HIGH

Table 5.5

Additional Characteristics of Christian Residents

	1	2	3	4	5
Rented or Owned House	Owned	Owned	Rented	Rented	Owned
Presence of Family Members	15	10	None	None	His married children live in Badaro; number unspecified
Number of Years in Badaro	Since birth	Since birth	40 years	Since birth	39 years
Assets Owned in Badaro	None	Apartment	Shop	None	Apartment, land, building
Education Level	University	University	Intermediate	University	University
Social Class	Middle Class	Middle Class	Middle Class	Middle Class	Upper Class
Frequency of Church Visits	Occasional	Occasional	Occasional	Every Sunday	Every Sunday
Political Affiliation	Unknown	Samir Geagea	Michel Aoun	Amin Gemayel	Michel Suleiman
Would Ever Leave Badaro?	Yes, if demographics change significantly	No	No	Yes; wishes to relocate to Jounieh	No
Deep Connection to Neighborhood?	Moderate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Relations With Non-Christian Neighbors?	No	No	Yes	No	No

Table 5.6

Based on the accounts and experiences of the Muslims in Badaro, it seems that spatial proximity has a positive effect on social relations between them and their Christian neighbors. Quite significantly, however, the Christian residents who were interviewed had very different experiences. In order to understand how Christians interact with the Muslim newcomers, I interviewed five Christian residents – and it appeared to be that for these Christians, their interaction with Muslims is very limited, if non-existent.

One resident, a university student, explained that he has no close Muslim friends, neither in Badaro nor elsewhere. He stated that his close friends are all Christian, mainly Orthodox from Badaro and Ashrafieh. Although he claimed that he noticed an increase in the number of Muslims moving into Badaro, he said that despite these demographic changes in the neighborhood, he would never leave as he regards Badaro as his home.

Although most university students in Beirut attend religiously-mixed universities and are often exposed to students from different religions, this young man stated that he had no interest in forming ties with non-Christians. He personally thinks that integration is important but interaction is not. This is clearly exemplified by his activities. This highlights the importance of upbringing. It is misleading to think that the younger generation and university students are naturally-inclined to meet and interact with a range of other people simply because they grew up after the civil war and after Beirut was reunited. If young university students are brought up in an atmosphere of homogeneity and are taught to follow a particular religious and political ideology – then they are likely to be less open to anything else.

Moreover, this young man indicated that he thinks the number one political leader in Lebanon is Samir Geagea.²⁹ Importantly, many followers of Samir Geagea may very well have

²⁹ Samir Geagea, a Christian Maronite, led the Lebanese Forces during the Lebanese Civil War. He was the only Lebanese warlord to have been imprisoned for his war crimes. He was released 11 years later in 2005 following the

close Muslim friends. The fact that this man does not have any non-Christian friends suggests that he is very comfortable with his current lifestyle and does not find it necessary to establish relations with Lebanese Muslims or Druze. Whether or not his political affiliation influences his social network cannot be determined.

Although the young man claimed that he believes Badaro's religious composition is 60% Christian, 20% Sunni and 20% Shiite, despite there being such a high percentage of non-Christians, integration does not seem to necessitate interaction. Moreover, spatial proximity has not lead to improved social ties between him and his non-co-religionist neighbors – thereby weakening the claim that proximity invariably leads to friendships and relations. It is understandable that such cases do exist and in fact may be quite pervasive as it depends on the upbringing and preferences of each individual. Although spatial proximity in this case did not lead to friendly ties or interaction between this young man and his Muslim neighbors, no tension seems to be evident and the young man does advocate for a certain degree of integration.

Indeed, as long as the newcomers are not contributing to destabilization of the neighborhood or are not taking over the neighborhood in a dominant or aggressive way, there is no reason to assume that tensions will arise between them and the Christians. However, should the Muslim population increase beyond a particular threshold that is acceptable to Badaro's Christians, there might be a point (i.e. a tipping point) at which tensions may arise between them.³⁰ If integration does not lead to interaction in some situations, at least it has not contributed to hostilities, as some scholars have warned.

Syrian withdrawal. He is currently allied with the March 14 political bloc, advocating for Lebanese sovereignty and against Syrian interference and influence.

³⁰ Literature on racial tipping points suggest that in some cases, there is a certain point at which residents of a particular racial background, usually whites, will choose to leave their neighborhood should the proportion of non-whites rise to a certain level. Some scholars argue however that prejudice and racism may not be central factors to this neighborhood demographic change. Goering, 1978; Wolf, 1973.

Another Christian resident who has lived in Badaro almost his entire life, explains that although in his view, Badaro has about 30% non-Christian residents, he has very limited contact with them. When asked whether he has non-Christian friends outside Badaro, he replied that he did not. Indeed, his social network is mainly Christian.

Interestingly, in contrast to the previous resident, he claimed that if “outsiders” come to dominate the area, he will choose to leave the neighborhood. He asserted that he would relocate to an area with the same social and religious identity as his own. For this inhabitant, a minimum level of integration seems to be important, but he does not place a heavy emphasis on it. This in fact is reflected in his lifestyle. It is evident that his beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions towards those of other religious backgrounds tend toward disinterest. Thus, spatial proximity in this case has not lead to the formation of social ties.

While the neighborhood may not be the ideal place in some people’s minds to form social relations, while the workplace might be, even for this man, it has not played out that way. Whether it is because his workplace is also entirely Christian or whether it is because he does not make the effort to interact with non-Christians is not entirely clear.

He would leave Badaro if its character changed markedly, suggesting that he does not have a high attachment to the place and would prefer to leave the neighborhood rather than stay. To this resident, an influx of outsiders, if accompanied by massive neighborhood changes, would be more than he could handle. In contrast, the other four Christian respondents expressed a deep desire and commitment to stay in Badaro regardless of any demographic change, suggesting a high degree of attachment to the area and a high degree of what might be called territoriality.

The young newlywed Maronite in Badaro describes his interaction with non-Christians as non-existent. Asked whether he has Muslim or Druze friends outside Badaro, he replied by

saying that he has some acquaintances but he would not call them friends. His social network is comprised mainly of Christians, and mostly Maronite. This man realizes that demographic changes in Badaro are occurring, but he perceives them as positive. He regards his residence in Badaro as temporary -- until he finds an affordable home in a Christian neighborhood outside of Beirut, called Jounieh, where his work and his friends are located. In his perspective, the number one political leader is Amin Gemayel.³¹

While the fourth inhabitant believes that the establishment of friendships with non-Christians is very important, he does not interact with non-Christians in his neighborhood and even explains that he is unaware of the extent of their presence. Based on his observations, Badaro is 97% Christian. While his social network is mainly Maronite Christian, he does claim that he has formed some friendships with non-Christians through his former job and that he has Sunni friends that he met years ago before the civil war while living in Deir el Amar, in the mountains of Lebanon. He explained that he did notice physical changes occurring in the neighborhood which he sees as indicators of increased development leading to the arrival of more businesses (and more outsiders). He views this all as positive and claims that he will never leave Badaro even if it changes significantly. He owns property in the neighborhood. He views the current president, Michel Suleiman, as the number one leader in Lebanon.

And finally, the last Christian inhabitant to be interviewed is a Catholic who owns a shop in the neighborhood and has lived there for the past 40 years. In contrast to the others, she indicated that she has very good relations with non-Christians living in Badaro and that her social network is made up of mostly Shiite friends inside and outside the neighborhood, mainly

³¹ Amin Gemayel, a Christian Maronite leader, replaced his assassinated brother as the president of Lebanon from 1982-1988. He currently leads the Kataeb Party, a political movement that has mostly Maronite supporters. His son, a prominent figure in the party, was also assassinated in November 2006- many believe that Syria had a role in both his brother and his son's assassinations. He is allied with the March 14th political bloc, advocating for Lebanese sovereignty and against Syrian interference and influence.

originating from work interactions. Importantly, she explains that she receives customers from the southern suburbs whose population is mostly Shiites. It appears that owning a shop in the neighborhood helps create good relations, whereas simply living there does not guarantee interaction. This was evident with both Mr. Elias and at least two of the other Muslim respondents, all three of whom owned shops, interacted with customers, and built relationships based on trust. Quite interestingly, she views Michel Aoun as the number one political leader in Lebanon – a Christian political figure who has since 2005 allied with Hezbollah, a Shiite political party.

V.7 REVISITING MY HYPOTHESES

Why are residents moving into neighborhoods where they constitute the minority sectarian community?

Hypothesis: Territoriality is Low in Badaro

I had hypothesized that I do not believe that “territoriality” is strong in Badaro and thus Muslims can move into the neighborhood without feeling uncomfortable. Beyond my own personal observations regarding the lack of territorial behavior in Badaro, it became evident from my interviews that Muslim respondents are assimilating relatively easily and are not perceived as a threat. The fact that most of them do their shopping in the neighborhood further indicates that they feel comfortable there and are happy to support the local businesses. I observed a few veiled Muslim women around the neighborhood, a sight I normally would not see in a predominantly Christian area, further conveying the low degree of territoriality and the sense of comfort Muslims feel in the neighborhood.

In a neighborhood with a higher degree of territoriality and political and/or religious polarization, minority residents may not feel comfortable interacting with the majority

inhabitants or doing business with them. The fact that at least two of the residents in my sample send their children to school in Badaro shows that they have chosen to establish themselves there for the near future. Because most Christian schools naturally attract Christian students, the mere fact that at least 50% of the students in the Badaro Christian school are Muslim suggests that there is a great deal of openness and tolerance in the neighborhood. In fact, while speaking with several school administrators in Badaro, I learned that many of the religious and secular schools attract students from all religions and from all over Beirut.

The fact that two of the Muslim respondents decided to move to Badaro because they owned assets there offers still further evidence of the high level of comfort they feel in the neighborhood. Had they not felt welcome or at ease in Badaro, they would probably have sold their assets and moved to a more homogeneous area dominated by their co-religionists. It also suggests that they plan on being there for the long-run, since the time to buy relatively affordable assets in other Beirut neighborhoods is running out. Should these families plan to live in Badaro for the short-term only, they are losing out on good deals elsewhere and may end up paying much more for a piece of land or an apartment in the future.

The low level of territoriality and polarization in Badaro is further reflected by the fact that Muslims are investing in the neighborhood. While there is no law that prevents any Lebanese from buying land or investing in property anywhere in the country, it seems logical that Lebanese would avoid investing in areas perceived to be unwelcoming, particularly if they are dominated by non-co-religionists. For example, it is not common to find Muslims buying land in neighborhoods where there is a strong Christian presence and where a majority of residents support the Lebanese Forces or the Kataeb.³² Likewise, it is rare to find Christians

³² There have been reports that Hezbollah has been purchasing land in predominantly Christian and Druze towns and villages around Lebanon. Gradually, Shiite families are moving in as villagers move out. (Levinson, 2007, the

buying land, homes, or opening businesses in areas dominated by Hezbollah or Amal, because of the intimidation and the sense of not being safe that comes with it. The mere fact that Badaro is attracting investment from Muslims suggests that the neighborhood offers a neutral, apolitical, and secular environment where all are welcome.

Hypothesis: Incoming Muslims Share a Similar Social Class as Badaro's Christians

I had also hypothesized that the Muslims moving into Badaro would come from a similar social class as the Christian residents. Indeed, four Muslim respondents were in the middle-class category while four others fell into the upper-class. In ranking preferences, at most two respondents claimed that a Muslim presence was important in the neighborhood, while six out of eight respondents asserted that social class was a key consideration after services, affordability, and proximity to work.

At a minimum, it appears that a common lifestyle is regarded as important for Muslim newcomers. Out of the eight respondents, only one resident claimed that he goes to the mosque every Friday; this is the same resident who attached high priority to having Sunni inhabitants in the same neighborhood and that having neighbors from the same social class was not important. In contrast however, the other seven Muslim respondents either visited the mosque occasionally or not at all.

Hypothesis: Incoming Muslims are Apolitical

Telegraph). In such cases where a large, powerful, and financially well-endowed organization like Hezbollah consolidates its efforts to purchase land from poor villagers, such a penetration from outsiders becomes possible. However, Shiite families acting individually are highly unlikely to move into predominantly non-co-religious areas without others entering with them.

I had hypothesized that the Muslims moving into Badaro would be more apolitical than their Muslim counterparts in other parts of Beirut. I hypothesized that they would not emphasize political party identification. In my view, the less religious and political a person is, the more open they are likely to be to moving into a Christian neighborhood.

Based on my interviews, it turned out that four out of eight respondents claimed that they do not follow any political leader in Lebanon, citing their disillusionment with all the leaders. Two out of eight asserted that Saad Hariri was the number one leader, while the Shiite resident claimed Michel Aoun, a Christian, to be the number one leader, and a Sunni man claimed that Druze leader Walid Jumblatt to be the number one political figure.

While eight interviews is hardly enough to draw a conclusion about the relationship between political affiliation and openness/tolerance, I assume that if eight residents were interviewed in a majority Sunni enclave in Beirut, such as Tarik el Jdide or Aisha Bakkar, it is highly probable that they would claim Hariri to be the number one leader; similarly, in a Shiite enclave, Hassan Nasrallah or Nabih Berri would be deemed as the number one leader. As such, it seems that my hypothesis might hold some weight – Muslim residents choosing to reside in Badaro who come from middle-to-upper class families may not have as strong political affiliations as other Muslims who live in more homogeneous neighborhoods. It would be interesting to conduct a survey in this neighborhood about the religiosity and political affiliations of all the Muslim residents in order to be able to draw an accurate conclusion.

Hypothesis: Badaro is More Affordable Than Other Parts of Beirut

And finally, I hypothesized that Badaro would be more affordable than other parts of Beirut. For middle-to-upper class Muslims looking to reside in more secular, cosmopolitan

neighborhoods, options seem to be limited as prices are clearly on the rise. Many preferable areas around the city are witnessing soaring real estate prices, making it unaffordable even for those who come from relatively well-to-do families. Paying over \$500,000 to live in high demand and prestigious areas such as Ras Beirut, Verdun, Ramlet el Baida, Raouche, and Beirut Central District would be unaffordable and unrealistic for many families. Other areas in West Beirut may not have been attractive because they offer very dense, homogeneous, lower-income neighborhoods. Many of the respondents also explained that they did not consider other neighborhoods in East Beirut because they had no reason to live there. Unlike some of the Muslim families with assets in predominantly Christian areas who returned there after the war or sold their assets, these respondents had no such connection to East Beirut.

Badaro was one of the few viable options left for these families. Combining affordability with other neighborhood features led them to choose this particular area. However, it would be interesting to see how the current real estate boom that Badaro is experiencing will impact the number of Muslim families who move to the neighborhood in the future. While Badaro is still relatively more affordable than other middle-to-upper class neighborhoods in Beirut, this may not be the case for long.

Has spatial proximity produced strong social relations and positive interactions among members of diverse sectarian communities?

Hypothesis: Muslim Activity is High in Badaro

I hypothesized that Muslims in Badaro would be socially integrated throughout the neighborhood because they felt as if the neighborhood were theirs. Freedom of movement

creates opportunities for residents to meet and interact more. The more residents move about the neighborhood, the more likely they are to interact with shop owners, grocers, and customers from the neighborhood, and thus, the more likely they are to form social ties and friendships. It turned out that the Muslims' level of activity and movement in the neighborhood was extensive and indeed helped to produce social ties. One man owned a store and formed relations there with customers, while six out of eight residents indicated that they did most of their shopping in Badaro.

Hypothesis: Badaro's Christians Are Open to Interacting with Muslims

I hypothesized that the Christians in Badaro would be open to interacting with Muslims in the area. However, of the five Christian residents, only one stated that she had extensive ties to Muslims; three others claimed that they had limited or no interaction with non-Christians, and one resident stated that he had some old Muslim friends outside the neighborhood, relations which were formed before the civil war. While none expressed intolerance or hatred towards Muslims, they did express their disinterest in forming social ties with them. I had imagined that most Christians who carry such ideologies live in more homogeneous, territorial, politically-charged neighborhoods such as Furn el Chebbak. Again, while I cannot make a generalization based on what a handful of respondents stated, what I heard does undercut my view that Badaro is a predominantly secular, apolitical neighborhood. However, more interviews will need to be conducted with Christian residents of Badaro to fully understand the political views of the Christians who reside there.

Hypothesis: The Institutions Around Badaro Make it More Accessible and Open to Diversity

I hypothesized that secular institutions attract outsiders, and consequently, residents become exposed to citizens from various backgrounds and affiliations, making them more open to other communities. While most Christian residents stated that Badaro tends to attract only locals since it lacks large-scale businesses, they asserted that many outsiders come into the neighborhood to run their daily errands in the morning, not at the small businesses but rather at the various ministries and companies around the neighborhood. As a result, perhaps the presence of such institutions does lead to some greater activity in the area and a greater threshold for a tolerance of outsiders.

Hypothesis: Muslim-Christian Political Alliances Have Facilitated Muslim-Christian Interaction

Finally, I hypothesized that political alliances at the macro-scale in Lebanon between Muslim and Christian political leaders have made Lebanese open to forming similar ties on the interpersonal level. While most Muslim respondents claimed that they had formed social relations or intimate friendships with their Christian neighbors, this can probably not be attributed to the political dynamics at the national level. Several Muslim residents have been residing in Badaro for at least 10 years, while the Muslim-Christian alliances were formed only recently in 2005 and 2006.

While it is possible that relations were strengthened, it cannot be claimed that nation-wide political alliances created these relations. Although one cannot deny the impact of the political dynamics on relations between people, there are many other factors that may be more

significant in solidifying cross-sectarian friendships. Indeed, while the Christian lady whose social network is mainly Shiites mirrors the political dynamics, perhaps this lady herself has always been open to befriending people from other religions and thus the recent Muslim-Christian alliances cannot be said to be instrumental in encouraging her to form such relations.

Given that apolitical and non-religious Muslims all claimed they had deep and intimate friendships with Christians, and while the more politically-entrenched (but not necessarily very religious) Christians tended to have no Muslim friends, it does offer a very preliminary indication that political views might be affecting relations between people. However, a much larger random sample of Christian and Muslim residents will need to be conducted in order to lend more evidence and support to this claim. For now, all I can say is that politics might affect relations between people and can bring them together. Perhaps in the near future we will see people choosing to live in political rather than religious enclaves.³³

³³ This is in fact occurring in the United States. Studies have shown that political segregation is on the rise, as Americans are tending to reside in cities and neighborhoods with people from the same political affiliation. (The Economist, 2008).

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

Interviews with over 30 residents in both Ras el Nabaa and Badaro highlighted a number of factors leading to cross-sectarian residential integration. Conversations with these residents also revealed under what conditions and to what extent spatial proximity leads to social relations. Despite the limitations I encountered in my study,¹ and despite the fact that my research sample is not representative of each neighborhood's population, I am convinced that there is much to learn from my observations and the interviews. If anything, I have gained much insight about the way people think and behave. I have also understood many reasons and factors accounting for integration. In addition, I have assessed the prospects and opportunities for integration and for improving social relations between neighbors. I will devote this last chapter to offering a conclusion as to what factors facilitate and drive integration and social interaction in post-conflict societies, or at least in societies suffering from divisions where tension exists among the various communities.

VI.1 WHY RESIDE IN NON-CO-RELIGIOUS NEIGHBORHOODS?

Below are the main factors that drove residents to reside in a non-co-religious neighborhood.

- **Past History in the Neighborhood**
 - Some Christian families in Ras el Nabaa are among those who lived in the neighborhood before the outbreak of the civil war and decided to return to the neighborhood because they have roots there. Thus, despite the demographic changes that occurred in Ras el Nabaa as a result of the war, they decided to return there as this is a neighborhood they

¹ See Chapter 3, section III.3 for a detailed explanation of the limitations.

called home. Similarly, there are Muslim residents in Badaro who lived there throughout the 1960's up until the outbreak of the war. For these residents, they developed strong ties to the neighborhood, despite it being majority Christian.

- **Historical Ownership of Assets**

- Many residents who chose to move to these neighborhoods recently or after the war relocated to these particular neighborhoods because they had assets there, whether it was a piece of land, a building, or an apartment which they inherited from their parents and which they chose not to sell.

- **Appealing Neighborhood Attributes**

- Many in Badaro cited the pleasantness and attractiveness of the neighborhood as important reasons for moving there, as it lacks heavy noise and congestion, has low density compared to other neighborhoods in Beirut, and lacks political and sectarian tension. Residents in Ras el Nabaa cited convenience in terms of the availability of stores and schools, thus making them self-sufficient. Many residents in both neighborhoods also viewed social class as being important, and thus found that the neighborhoods offered them a comfortable environment amongst other households that shared a similar lifestyle.

- **Affordability**

- Ras el Nabaa and Badaro have remained relatively more affordable than other neighborhoods in Beirut; so even those who preferred to live amongst relatives and amongst many people from the same sect, had to sacrifice such preferences and settle for a heterogeneous neighborhood where they constituted the minority, as they had little options elsewhere given the real estate boom and the sky-

rocketing prices.²

- **Location**

- For many residents, location was a determining factor, as their proximity to work saved them gas and time on the road and allowed them to avoid the Beirut traffic jams. Both Badaro and Ras el Nabaa are considered prime locations as they are situated near main roads that lead to central destinations, without requiring residents to have to pass through the narrower, inner streets that often face severe traffic jams. In addition, proximity to family and more homogeneous neighborhoods provided some of them with a greater sense of security and comfort.

a. OTHER POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR NON-CO-RELIGIOUS INTEGRATION

A Non-Polarizing Environment

It appears that while residents revealed reasons for living in a non-co-religious setting, other factors may also explain elements that encourage and discourage residential integration. I speculate that a non-polarizing environment with minimal symbols of sectarian and/or political identification may facilitate integration. In such an environment, non-co-religious newcomers purposely place themselves there as the area bears a more neutral, less-polarizing atmosphere, like in Badaro. There, they can establish themselves in a relatively secure area where they feel comfortable and welcome. This contrasts with other homogeneous neighborhoods in Beirut where visual symbols of political or religious figures, flags, and banners are rampant. To many

² There may be serious implications and consequences on the integration process in and around Beirut, given the fact that areas like Ras el Nabaa and Badaro are also witnessing a dramatic increase in real estate prices, leaving people with even fewer residential location options in co-religious and mixed neighborhoods. I will review this in more depth in the next section.

'outsiders,' this may be interpreted as an environment in which they may not be welcome or secure. Such polarizing images may essentially serve to keep non-co-religionists out.

While flags and images of Hezbollah, Amal, and Hariri leaders were visible along many of the inner streets of Ras el Nabaa, Christians are still choosing to reside in the neighborhood. Based on my sample however, it appears that many are situating themselves along the periphery of the neighborhood, as far off from the center as they can be. The periphery thus offers them the opportunity to live in less polarizing areas which often attract diverse crowds – as secular institutions are likely to be located along the main streets where these newcomers reside. Rather than locate in the inner part of the non-co-religious neighborhood where they may feel uneasy and confined, living along the edges offers them the opportunity to cluster with others like them, blend in with the activity just outside the neighborhood, disconnect from the polarizing parts, and even establish connections to other nearby areas which they may identify with more.

Market Forces

Another facilitator of integration may also stem from market forces. Interviews with residents revealed that rising real estate prices may be playing a very important role in creating heterogeneous neighborhoods. Analyzing the implications of a sustained real estate boom may make it clear as to how this may lead to more mixed communities. While so far Christian and Muslim relations in Ras el Nabaa and Badaro are positive and stable, I speculate that increasing real estate prices may ultimately contribute to tension and instability in future newly-formed heterogeneous neighborhoods.

To elaborate, in some cases, residents decided to move to Badaro and Ras el Nabaa because of affordability reasons, as these neighborhoods tended to be more affordable than other

places around Beirut. Fortunately for them, these two neighborhoods were known to have a history of Christian and Muslim residents, were located in prime areas, and fell into a particular social class category which appealed to them and corresponded with their preferences.

Since the past three years however, real estate prices in both Ras el Nabaa and Badaro have been increasing rapidly, and thus, residents looking for affordable homes are finding it difficult to locate anything reasonable in these neighborhoods anymore. As a result, with these rising prices, these families are running out of options. Because much of Beirut is experiencing a real estate boom, many families are opting to reside in the suburbs where it is cheaper. However, sustained interest in the suburbs is also driving prices up, and thus squeezing their options even further.³

Because many prefer to live within the city in order to be closer to work and school, and in order to save on transportation expenses and travel time, many may ultimately settle on finding an affordable apartment in neighborhoods in the capital which they never previously considered. Indeed, some Christian residents indicated that they preferred to live in Ashrafieh but had to reside in Ras el Nabaa because it was the only affordable and appealing place for them to live besides East Beirut. For them, although they preferred living in a homogeneous neighborhood, they were forced to give up this priority and settle for something nearby which they were able to afford.

Given these dynamics, would families who are unable to find affordable homes in neighborhoods of their choice ultimately be forced to settle down in particular neighborhoods which do not correspond to their religious affiliation, social class, aesthetic preferences, or lifestyle? Will the real estate boom inevitably lead to more heterogeneous communities? Would

³ Yammine, 2008.

this mean that people will ultimately have to prioritize affordability over neighborhood homogeneity and security?

In such situations, where people are forced to live in affordable, working-class yet less favorable neighborhoods which they would not have normally considered, because it is entirely non-co-religious, it is possible to expect that greater tension will arise between the newcomers and the original inhabitants who are affiliated with a different sectarian background. This is because it is likely that the receiving community will be more territorial, protective of their turf, and will not be as open to outsiders. Unlike in Badaro, where territoriality is low, and Ras el Nabaa, where there was a history of heterogeneity and where many Christian families own property, these other neighborhoods may ultimately be dominated by a particular sectarian group with high territoriality.

In such environments then, original inhabitants may be resistant to outsiders. With such resistance, newcomers may choose to segregate themselves in the neighborhood, not interact with the inhabitants, and maintain a detachment to the area. Should newcomers begin to enter the neighborhood in large numbers because they have limited options elsewhere, tension may inevitably arise, as the original inhabitants may perceive this entry as an assault on their territory, in which case instability may result. In such situations, the edges of the neighborhood may become the areas of preference for these newcomers, as they tend to be less territorial and polarizing, and more exposed to main streets, outsiders, and other neighborhoods.

VI.2 DOES SPATIAL PROXIMITY LEAD TO SOCIAL RELATIONS?

It appears that spatial proximity alone does not lead to social relations. Simply living within the same boundaries of non-co-religionists does not guarantee that non-co-religionist residents will befriend each other or even interact. There may indeed be integration but at the

same time, there may be segregation. There may be a relatively high degree of heterogeneity within the same boundaries, and thus, integration. However, socially, relations may be distant or non-existent; spatially and physically, there may be clustering; hence, it results in segregation. Thus, merely being exposed to “the other” or living in close proximity does not seem to be sufficient. Based on the experiences of the residents, there seem to be certain conditions under spatial proximity that facilitate the creation of cross-sectarian relations and friendships.

- **High Levels of Neighborhood Activity and Engagement**

- High activity and involvement around the neighborhood increases chances of meeting and interacting with residents. If residents are entrenched in their old roots and continue to nurture their ties elsewhere without forming any connection to their new neighborhood, then interaction with the neighborhood community diminishes, and thus social relations become harder to create. Shopping in the neighborhood, doing business with the shop-owners, becoming a loyal and frequent customer, and taking time to converse with tenants and residents throughout the neighborhood significantly enhances the possibility of creating cross-sectarian ties. As time passes, it is expected that some neighborhood acquaintances will develop into deeper friendships.

- **Ownership of an Asset in the Neighborhood**

- Owning an asset in the neighborhood, particularly a building or a shop, increases the possibility of meeting new people, as it involves interaction with residents not normally within one’s own social circle. The owner of a building usually knows all the

tenants personally and has interacted with them on at least one occasion, thereby creating the opportunity to continue contacts and expand relations. Being a shop-owner also creates the opportunity for one to establish ties with customers; if customers become frequent consumers, then this means they have developed some form of trust with the shop-owner; given that these neighborhoods are primarily residential and attract a large number of residents, it is not difficult for shop-owners to form ties with their customers, as many of them are not strangers. The more frequent the customers become, the more likely it is for some degree of social relations to form.

- **Experience Growing Up in a Mixed Neighborhood**

- Growing up and living in a mixed neighborhood or amongst a majority of people from another religion plays a role in motivating people to move to a heterogeneous neighborhood. Often these people find it enriching and stimulating to live in diverse settings rather than in homogeneous neighborhoods where they regard it as stifling and unexciting. Residents who grew up and/or lived in the very cosmopolitan Ras Beirut area or in neighborhoods with a largely non-co-religious community often develop very open and tolerant views of other groups and tend to befriend people from across the sectarian divide.

- **Attendance at a Religiously-Mixed School**

- Students who move to Beirut specifically to attend university often come from very homogeneous towns and villages and are thus not exposed to many Lebanese from different religious backgrounds. Upon residing in the dorms, they are forced to interact

with other Lebanese from across the country and who come from different backgrounds. Living in a secular environment where students have common academic goals and aspirations helps break down religious, sectarian, and political barriers. The close contact and exposure to “the other” can facilitate the reconciliation process and dispel stereotypes. Indeed, many prejudices are formed when people do not know each other. Many end up forming their opinions based on what they hear and on what others tell them. On the other hand, in the dorms and in the university setting, students are able to see and judge for themselves and therefore rectify any misjudgments about their non-co-religious classmates.⁴

- **Weak Political Party Affiliation**

- Residents who do not support a particular political party or follow a political leader seem to have less prejudices and inhibitions towards befriending their non-co-religious neighbors. While it is possible to find politically-affiliated residents who have friends from various sectarian groups, the interviews revealed that there may be a higher tendency for people to befriend others if they are not affiliated with a political leader that represents a certain sectarian group in Lebanon and advocates on their behalf. Indeed, based on the interviews, several of the apolitical Sunnis tended to have Shiite friends, while all the Sunni Hariri supporters did not. In addition, only one Christian man with no political affiliation had no Muslim friends; the remaining apolitical Christians did.

⁴ A young Christian university student explained to me that at his university, political discussions are not allowed and that students face heavy penalties if they were caught engaging in such conversations, as they have often lead to university clashes and brawls between students. He even claimed that most of his friends are Muslim and that they share different political views than his own.

- *Are people more prone to befriending non-co-religionists based on whether they have similar political perspectives?* It was revealed that in some cases it seemed that political affiliations may have gotten in the way of friendship formation between people from different sects and political affiliations. Two Sunni supporters of Hariri claimed to have Christian and Sunni friends, but no Shiite friends, while a young Christian university student without a strong political affiliation claimed that most of his friends are Muslim and that they share political views very different from his. In addition, the Christian lady who supports Michel Aoun has mainly Shiite friends inside and outside Badaro, mirroring the political alliance between Aoun and Hezbollah/Amal.
- While it is certainly impossible to generalize using such few cases, the impact of the political situation on social relations is not difficult to imagine. Indeed, the divisions between Lebanese may not be entirely religious in nature and may actually be politically-based. It is evident that politics has divided the Lebanese; even those within the same family have found much to disagree on. Politics, unfortunately, has divided relatives and villages, and even soured relations between friends and family.⁵ When politics plays such a large role in the daily life of citizens as it does in Lebanon, it becomes a force that defines relations between people. To a certain extent, it seems that such dynamics are played out in Lebanon on the social level. Although my interview sample can hardly allow me to generalize about the Lebanese population as a whole, it does introduce and highlight some possible dynamics.

- **Minority Community is More Likely to Interact with Majority**

- If residents happen to come from the minority community, it seems to be more

⁵ Ayed, 2006.

likely that they will establish ties, relations, and friendships with the majority rather than the other way around.

- Spatial proximity has allowed Christians who normally do not interact with Muslims to befriend their Muslim neighbors in the largely Muslim neighborhood of Ras el Nabaa. Similarly, Muslims who rarely go to Christian areas and whose social networks are mostly Muslim have been able to befriend their Christian neighbors in the largely Christian neighborhood of Badaro.
- For the majority Christians interviewed in Badaro, many indicated that they did not have many or even any Muslim friends. Similarly, for the majority Muslims in Ras el Nabaa, many indicated that they did not have many Christian friends in the neighborhood. While they interacted and socialized with them, no deep friendships had been created.
- The members of the minority community have made a conscious decision to move to a non-co-religious neighborhood, and often they are open to interacting with the majority and have no problem doing so, while the majority may not be as open to it, or may ultimately not find it necessary.
- Indeed, perhaps the minority sees a need to interact and establish relations with the majority for security reasons. Because of the civil instability, sectarian tensions, and clashes that have occurred in Beirut neighborhoods during and after the civil war, residents may feel compelled to befriend their neighbors from the majority community in order to feel some protection. Otherwise, if they fail to establish certain ties and relations, their vulnerability to become targeted in a future clash may increase, if not protected from the community.

- Finally, it may be easier for minorities to form relations with the majority, since in most cases the residents representing the minority group is usually surrounded by the majority and constantly exposed to it, and thus it is easier for the minority to encounter members of the majority, rather than the other way around.

a. The Limitations of Spatial Proximity

Several cases with residents indicated that in certain situations, integration does not mean interaction, and that living in heterogeneous environments, amongst other residents with different backgrounds, does not make it more likely that people will befriend each other. It turns out that living in mixed areas does not guarantee interaction unless activities are done in the area and unless residents make an effort to socialize with their neighbors, otherwise it is very easy for them to seclude themselves from their neighbors.

Limited contact and limited interaction between people of different backgrounds will thus not serve any reconciliatory purpose, as in order to build tolerance and understanding, relations must be built between them. Simply living in close proximity will fail to establish this, as residents will not be learning about each other, and thus prejudices will also not be reduced.

As outlined above, certain conditions must exist for people to interact and establish ties, which ultimately center on creating and maintaining a connection to the neighborhood. In the following discussion, particular issues that came up in the interviews will be highlighted, which focus on factors that decrease the likelihood that spatial proximity will lead to social relations. For each factor, a weak connection/attachment to the neighborhood explains why spatial proximity and integration did not produce interaction and friendships:

- **High Attachment Elsewhere**

- If new residents have deep roots elsewhere and focus much of their activities in their hometown without nurturing their new relations with their current neighbors, the possibility of forming deep ties or at least social relations with them decreases. The feeling of detachment to their new environment may persist as long as the new resident does not make the effort to connect to their neighbors and instead only maintains ties with their family and friends in their old neighborhood.

- **Involuntary Relocation**

- When new residents only relocate to their new non-co-religious neighborhood out of pure necessity and not out of choice, then chances that they will form social relations with their new neighbors seem to decrease significantly. People forced to move into mixed areas may not interact well with the original residents.
- Although it was stated above that members of the minority community are more likely to form relations with the majority, in cases where minority residents initially prefer to live amongst co-religious neighbors yet are forced to move to a non-co-religious neighborhood, this theory may no longer apply. Cold relations or tension may inevitably arise between them and their neighbors because their relocation was not voluntary, but rather, it was forced upon them for certain reasons having to do with affordability. For those who found one of the only affordable places in this neighborhood, segregation may inevitably arise as the new residents may not make much of an effort to connect with their new environment and establish some connection with their neighbors.

- This supports the results of the mixed-public housing initiative in Singapore whereby a certain percentage of each community group had to be represented – essentially forcing residents to live together. The result was segregation of different communities within the same neighborhood, and very little cross-ethnic interaction, mingling, and friendships.

- **Co-Religious Clustering**

- There are those who simply prefer to live amongst others from the same background as themselves, not for reasons of prejudice, but rather because this is what they are used to and this is what they are comfortable with. As a result, after years of surrounding themselves with such people, they may not make an effort to incorporate others into their lives because they find no real need to do so, no interest, and no incentive.
- While such people are not intolerant of others, they are simply not exposed enough to those from different backgrounds, and thus, despite living in close proximity to them, they may simply have a high tendency to be drawn to those who share similar affiliations.
- In Lebanese society, the family's central role in one's life perhaps may propound this, as the focus on family leads people to have a social circle based on family and family friends.
- As a result, if new residents do not have neighborhood friends from other sects, it does not indicate that they are intolerant, but rather, that they simply prefer to be around their own kind, as the theory of "the mere-in group hypothesis" states. Those accustomed to a particular lifestyle and social circle are hard to change unless their profession or related activities expose them to others, otherwise, it is very easy for them to remain entrenched in their own non-microcosmic world.

- **High Levels of Personal Activity in Other Locations**

- Should new residents focus much of their activity outside the neighborhood and only regard it as serving a purely residential purpose, then the possibility that they will form ties with other neighbors will also decrease. If these new residents do not find that their neighborhood offers them something beyond a residential purpose, then they will naturally have a tendency to only regard it as such. Even if a neighborhood does consist of a number of shops, businesses, schools, and religious sanctuaries that serve many of its residents, if the new resident has stronger connections elsewhere or if they prefer to carry out their activities in other neighborhoods or regions, then again it becomes difficult to expect them to befriend their neighbors.
- While it may not be necessary for them to carry out much of their activity within the neighborhood in order to befriend their neighbors, (as they can always socialize with their neighbors on their own time), it may prove to be difficult to do this since opportunities to interact will greatly diminish if residents confine themselves to their homes for much of the time that they are in the neighborhood. Interacting and connecting with neighbors outside the home and within the neighborhood may make it easier for them to establish social relations rather than to expect neighbors to connect with each other within their own homes, which are private domains, without having first connected in a more neutral and less imposing setting.

- **Temporary Relocation**

- If residents know ahead of time that they intend to reside in the neighborhood for only a short period of time, then this may decrease the incentive for them to connect with their

neighborhood, thus reinforcing their detachment and dissociation with their new environment. They may continue to perceive themselves as outsiders and strangers within the neighborhood, and this notion may persist rather than fade away over time, as they may not make much of an effort to establish themselves and form social relations, considering it not worth their time to do so.

VI.3 FACTORS NOT PREDICTIVE OF CROSS-SECTARIAN INTERACTION AND FRIENDSHIP FORMATION

Quite significantly, several factors that initially may seem to be crucial for cross-sectarian interaction ended up not being predictive of such social relations. I will highlight these factors below:

- **Social Class and Education**
 - Neither high social class nor high education seem to be essential for integration and interaction⁶
 - Several respondents fell in the middle-class category, while others were considered upper-class. Yet, there were cases where some middle-class and upper-class residents had befriended their non-co-religious neighbors, while others from the same social class had not.
 - Similarly, high education does not seem to correlate with inter-sectarian interaction and friendship, as several respondents reported that they did not have a college education, and yet many of them had close non-co-religious friends.

⁶ Almost all upper class residents had a university education – but this does not indicate that they are more likely to have Christian friends than the middle class residents without a college/university degree. In fact, in all the cases except one, each respondent had claimed that they had managed to form social ties and friendships with their Christian neighbors.

- This then conveys the notion that a particular upbringing and lifestyle is more of a factor in predicting cross-sectarian interaction, it is depends on the environment in which one is raised, and whether there is some degree of exposure to “the other.” This habituation and familiarization with those from different backgrounds thus becomes essential for facilitating ties and social relations.

- **Length of Time in Neighborhood**

- It appears that intimate friendships and ties can be formed within a short period of time, and thus it is not required that residents live in a neighborhood for many years before they befriend their neighbors. Living in a neighborhood for many years does not guarantee that a resident from the minority community will form ties with their neighbors of the majority community, as it depends on the level of activity in the neighborhood and the effort the resident puts into socializing with the other inhabitants. This can easily take a very short-period of time, provided that the resident engages with the others and makes an effort to build trust with them on a consistent basis.

- **Lack of Non-Co-Religious Friends Within the Neighborhood**

- Even if residents do not have relations with people from a different religion in their neighborhood, it does not mean that they prefer to keep to themselves or are intolerant of others. Residents often lead busy lives and do not have time to socialize with or befriend their neighbors. An absence of neighborhood friends from a different sectarian affiliation perhaps is a reflection of this. Residents who fall in this category may very well have friends outside the

neighborhood, whom they grew up with or whom they know from work, as was evident with several respondents.

- **Religiosity**

- Even if residents are very religious and visit the church or mosque frequently, it does not indicate that they are less likely to befriend their non-co-religious neighbors or that they are less tolerant of “the others.” Although secular people are known to be very open to interacting and befriending others from different religions, this does not mean that less secular and more religious people are any less prone to befriending members of different religions. In fact, many Christians and Muslims who claimed to visit the church and mosque frequently indicated they had close non-co-religious friends.
- The religiosity of some respondents was revealed as I noticed some religious symbols, such as the veil on a Muslim woman, or pictures of Jesus and the Virgin Mary – yet in all cases these respondents claimed to have very good relations and even deep friendships with their non-co-religionist neighbors. Thus, the more religious a person is does not mean the more intolerant he/she is towards others with a different religious affiliation.

- **Living in the Center or Periphery**

- Although it seems to be the case that newcomers are tending to reside in the periphery and edges of the neighborhood where there is less territoriality, this does not indicate that those who live in the center of the neighborhood are more prone to interacting with the original inhabitants of the area simply because this is where they are concentrated. Rather, it is very possible for those who live in the

center to maintain a distance with their neighbors if they so desire, while it is possible to see those living in the periphery befriend their non-co-religionist neighbors.

- Indeed, there were residents who lived in the periphery and in the center who claimed that they had no ties with their neighbors, while at the same time, other residents from the same areas claimed to have established solid relations with them. Ultimately, it comes down to whether or not these residents of the minority community make the effort to establish relations with their neighbors; simply living in the same building and being in close proximity to them does not seem to be a central issue.

VI.4 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

a. Spatial Proximity in Stable and Unstable Environments

The Lebanese civil war has been over for 17 years now, and yet East Beirut is still predominantly Christian while West Beirut is still mainly Muslim, save for Ras Beirut, which is a very cosmopolitan area of the capital. It is understandable that after the massive internal population movements forced people to relocate to homogeneous neighborhoods, no one blames citizens for wanting to remain in their secure enclaves as they wanted to ensure security and stability. After spending years in their new neighborhoods, many decided to sell their assets in their old neighborhoods and cut their ties there. For those who were internally displaced and who spent years outside their neighborhoods, many planted new roots elsewhere and found it unnecessary to return.

But, for those new families looking to rent or buy homes within the capital, many are also opting to remain in homogeneous neighborhoods. For the minority that is choosing to integrate

with Lebanese from different religions, it becomes evident that under certain conditions, spatial proximity indeed has the potential to play a large role in breaking down barriers and mending ties between Christians and Muslims. Because the war has been over for years now, (although in a sense, the city can still be characterized as divided) the absence of Christian-Muslim tension and violence may help explain why spatial proximity has led to positive interaction between members of these two communities.

To elaborate, my discussions with the Sunni of Ras el Nabaa highlighted the grave tension and animosity that currently exists between them and their Shiite neighbors. The political situation in Lebanon has only exacerbated ties between both Islamic sects, while it has actually helped mend or at least tame relations between Christians and Muslims. When certain political parties representing different communities are at odds and are conflicting, it seems to be reflected in the relations between people, particularly those who identify strongly with such parties and leaders. In such circumstances, it is difficult to expect citizens to co-habit peacefully because they are so highly-charged and deeply involved in politics.

In particular, there are a number of mixed Sunni-Shiite neighborhoods in Beirut where territoriality is high. Because tension is also high between these two communities, the smallest incident can degenerate into a politically-motivated incident and can lead to violence between the two communities.⁷ In such cases, where politically, the two communities are still at odds and have not reconciled, it may not be wise for people to be spatially-integrated, since relations are simmering and the tension can easily lead to violence. In this case, the theories that advocate for separation seem to hold some weight.

Unlike relations between Sunnis and Shiites, Muslim-Christian relations have been tamed as there have been no severe clashes between the two communities since the end of the civil war.

⁷ Abdullah, 2008.

In order to further facilitate reconciliation, barriers can be broken down between the communities by encouraging them to live together, especially since Christian-Muslim relations have not been tense for years. Given this, because East Beirut is still generally Christian and West Beirut is still generally Muslim, it is important to try to break down these barriers, as there is potential for people to co-habit peacefully, given that political relations between them are not highly-charged, thus facilitating prospects for interaction.

However, it is dangerous to assume that relations will improve between communities which are currently at odds/at war/or deadlocked simply by placing them in close proximity. It is realistic to expect problems and frequent clashes in such situations. It is thus unrealistic to expect that spatial proximity will lead people to form friendly ties between each other if they come from warring sides; spatial proximity does not look like it has the potential to break down such barriers between people and it does not look like it can contribute to reconciliation during such hot and turbulent times.

Different warring sides that live in the same neighborhood are bound to conflict as long as the political situation remains tense. Perhaps once the political situation is resolved or at least tamed can spatial proximity have the potential to lead to inter-sectarian relations. As long as the political situation is hot and constantly affecting the lives of the citizens, it is possible to expect constant clashes or at least intermittent incidents of violence within the neighborhood. In Lebanon, such small-scale incidents can often easily degenerate into inter-sectarian violence that spreads to other parts of the capital and across regions around the country.

b. Spatial Proximity, Neighborhood Engagement, and Community Identification

“A civic identity, which serves to unite people and can express common goals and aspirations of the whole community, can have a powerful effect in shaping attitudes and behavior. Shared values are essential to give people a common sense of belonging regardless of their race, cultural traditions, or faiths.”⁸

Clearly, the implications of inter-sectarian clashes at the neighborhood level have enormous repercussions. This is why efforts need to be focused at the neighborhood level in areas already integrated with Sunni-Shiite inhabitants, so as to minimize possibility for conflict, to increase the prospects for neighborhood stability, and to encourage civility between members of different religious sects and opposing political perspectives.

As a start then, because a number of neighborhoods in Beirut have Sunni-Shiite residents, and because many have experienced violent clashes, in order to tame relations between these two communities despite the absence of a political accord, perhaps a focus on community development becomes essential. Many Sunni and Shiite youths have strong affiliations towards the Future Movement and Hezbollah/Amal, respectively, and thus identify fully with these political parties. In many cases, it is the young men who have engaged in the violent neighborhood clashes around Beirut over the past three years. Thus, a huge divide exists between these two communities, as the youths are so politically-charged to the extent that they are unable to relate or identify with their non-co-religious neighbors.

As a result, efforts may need to be conducted at the neighborhood level whereby youths from both communities are encouraged to come up with common goals and aspirations for their neighborhood, thereby diminishing the notion that they come from opposing sides, and instead,

⁸ Home Office, 2001.

allowing them to work together to improve their neighborhood community as a whole. Only in this way does it become possible to expect them to interact and co-exist. If policy makers and planners ignore the attachment and high connection residents have towards their own community and neighborhood, then integrated and highly-charged areas will only continue to suffer from instability. The perception the youths and residents have of their community must change, and this can be done by enhancing their identification with their surroundings, regardless of sectarian or political background:

“Planning should incorporate social-psychological aspects of community identity into its professional repertoire by losing some of its methodological certainty and by seeking to understand racial diversity and the attachment that some ethnic groups have to land, and its ownership and control.”⁹

Ideas span community development activities that enhance the neighborhood, which include:

• Engaging in community service such as cleaning the public areas, including side-walks and inner streets
• Making room for a public park, a green space, or an open space for the young residents
• Creating neighborhood sports teams
• Arranging for a music performance or a neighborhood festival
• Tutoring young children in the neighborhood
• Visiting the elderly of the neighborhood
• Planting trees and beautifying the neighborhood
• Planning a cook-out for all the residents
• Planning a fundraiser for a neighborhood charity
• Volunteering at the neighborhood hospital
• Planning a talent show

Table 6.1

⁹ Bollens, 2002.

These activities would thus remove the focus on politics and will instead bring residents from both sides together in an effort to mend ties and establish relations with each other, through the common goal of improving their own neighborhood. This becomes relevant for many neighborhoods in Beirut. While it will be unwise for policy makers to mandate integration, since much of Lebanese society may not be ready for this, and since it appears the involuntary integration may still produce segregation, policy makers do have an important role to play in neighborhoods that are already integrated, as well as those that are likely to become integrated in the future.

If indeed rising real estate prices start to drive people to reside in entirely non-co-religious areas due to limited options elsewhere, prospects for tension and instability may only increase, causing more division and strife between citizens. If community and neighborhood development initiatives are adopted however, with a goal to increase civic responsibility and social relations, perhaps it may be possible to expect that integrated neighborhoods with Muslim-Christian and Sunni-Shiite residents may ultimately transcend the political divide and come together as a symbol of coexistence for all Lebanese.

Appendix A

Interview Questionnaire

A.1 Overview

1. Total Number of Questionnaires: 26

2. Number of questions:

8 Christian residents/households in Ras el Nabaa are asked:

12 closed-ended questions

33 open-ended questions

5 Sunni residents/households in Ras el Nabaa are asked:

7 closed-ended questions

21 open-ended questions

8 Muslim (Sunni and Shiite) residents/households in Badaro are asked:

11 closed-ended questions

32 open-ended questions

5 Christian residents/households in Badaro are asked:

8 closed-ended questions

21 open-ended questions

Appendix A

A.2 Ras el Nabaa Questionnaire for Christian Residents

PART I: Basic Background (Closed-Ended)

1. **Sex:**
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

2. **Age:**
 - a. 20 to 39
 - b. 40 to 59
 - c. 60 and above

3. **Sect:**
 - a. Maronite
 - b. Greek Catholic
 - c. Roman Catholic
 - d. Greek Orthodox
 - e. Syrian Orthodox
 - f. Armenian Orthodox
 - g. Assyrian
 - h. Protestant

4. **Marital Status:**
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Separated
 - d. Divorced
 - e. Widow

5. Do you have children? If so, how many?

6. **Educational level achieved:**
 - a. Illiterate
 - b. Primary
 - c. Intermediate
 - d. Secondary
 - e. Technical Education
 - f. College Level
 - g. Graduate

How important do you think it is for people to:

- a. Send their children to religiously mixed schools?
- b. Live in religiously mixed neighborhoods?
- c. Socialize frequently with people from other religions outside of work?
- d. Have close friends from other religions?

To the interviewer:

Do you think the respondent falls in the lower, middle, or upper class category? Why?

Is there any way to identify whether the respondent is politically active and identifies with a certain political party in Lebanon?

PART II: Understanding Why Christian Newcomers Chose Ras el Nabaa (Open-ended)

1. Where were you born?
2. Where did you live before the civil war?
3. Was the neighborhood religiously mixed or religiously homogeneous?
4. What ties do you have to that neighborhood?
5. How long have you been living in Ras el Nabaa?
6. Where were you living before coming to this neighborhood?
7. Why did you leave?
8. Why did you choose to move to Ras el Nabaa?
9. Why did you choose Ras el Nabaa as opposed to a neighborhood in Achrafieh?
10. How would you describe the religious composition of the people in your building? What about in the nearby buildings?
11. If respondent lives in the periphery/edges of the neighborhood: why did you choose to live here and not closer to the center of the neighborhood?
 - o If respondent lives in the center of the neighborhood: why did you choose to live here and not in the periphery of the neighborhood?
12. Are there mainly Christian residents in this part of the neighborhood?
13. What is your occupation?
14. How far is your work from your residence?
15. Where is it located?
16. How do you go to work? (i.e. what kind of transportation do you use?)

17. If you have relatives in Ras el Nabaa, where in the neighborhood do they live?
18. Where do most of your other relatives live? (the ones who live outside Ras el Nabaa...)

Part III: Understanding Social Relations Between Christian Newcomers and Their Muslim Neighbors

1. Do you have close Muslim friends (from outside the neighborhood)? Where did you meet them?
2. Do you have close Muslim friends from Ras el Nabaa?
3. How, where, and when did you meet?
4. How often do you socialize with them (interaction limited, average, or extensive?)
5. How often do you visit them in their homes?
6. How often do you visit your relatives in the neighborhood? (interaction limited, average, or extensive?)
7. Please indicate the religion and location of those who have offered you the following types of social support:
 - a. Those who have helped you find a job
 - b. Those who could be consulted about important matters
 - c. Those who would talk with you when you are feeling down
 - d. Those who socialize with you

PART IV: Christian Newcomers' Attachment to Ras el Nabaa

1. If you have children: Where do you send your children to school?
2. Where do you usually do your grocery shopping?
3. How often do you shop in the small stores/businesses in Ras el Nabaa?
4. Do you rely more on shopping outside Ras el Nabaa or within the neighborhood?
5. Do you go to church? If so, how often and where is the church located?
6. Do you feel you belong to the neighborhood? Are you well-received?
7. If you had the opportunity to move to another neighborhood, would you leave Ras el Nabaa? If yes, where would you go and why?
8. Do you know Christians who lived here in Ras el Nabaa but left recently? If yes, why do you think they left the neighborhood?

Appendix A

A.3 Ras el Nabaa Questionnaire for Sunni Residents

PART I: Basic Background Questions (Closed-ended)

1. **Sex:**
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

2. **Age:**
 - a. 20 to 39
 - b. 40 to 59
 - c. 60 and above

3. **Educational level achieved:**
 - a. Illiterate
 - b. Primary
 - c. Intermediate
 - d. Secondary
 - e. Technical Education
 - f. College Level
 - g. Graduate
 - h. Post-Graduate/Phd

4. Do you have relatives living here in the neighborhood?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If yes, how many? _____

5. Are you:
 - a. An owner of the house you are living in?
 - b. A tenant/renter of the house you are living in?
 - c. Other: _____

6. Are you a:
 - a. Shop owner in Ras el Nabaa?
 - b. Land owner in Ras el Nabaa?
 - c. Building owner in Ras el Nabaa?
 - d. None

7. In your opinion, which of the following are very important and which are least important when it comes to mixing and interacting with people from different religions? Please rank these factors on a scale of 1 to 5 to measure importance (1 being very important and 5 being not important):

How important do you think it is for people to:

- a. Send their children to religiously mixed schools?
- b. Live in religiously mixed neighborhoods?
- c. Socialize frequently with people from other religions outside of work?
- d. Have close friends from other religions?

To the interviewer: Do you think the respondent falls in the lower, middle, or upper class category? Why?

Is there any way to identify whether the respondent is politically active and identifies with a certain political party in Lebanon?

PART II: Background (Open-ended)

1. Where were you born?
2. Where did you live before you came to Ras el Nabaa?
3. Why did you move to Ras el Nabaa?
4. How long have you lived in Ras el Nabaa?
5. Did you stay here throughout the civil war?
6. If no, where did you go? When did you return to Ras el Nabaa?
7. If you have children: Where do you send your children to school?
8. Where do you usually do your grocery shopping?
9. How often do you shop in the small stores/businesses in Ras el Nabaa?
10. Do you rely more on shopping outside Ras el Nabaa or within the neighborhood?
11. Do you go to the mosque? If so, where is it located and how often do you visit?
12. How would you describe the religious composition of the neighborhood? (i.e. percentage/distribution of Sunnis, Shiites, Christians, Druze)
13. How would you describe your interaction with the non-Sunni residents? (limited, average, extensive?)

14. How frequently and where do you interact/socialize with them?
15. Do you have close non-Sunni friends (from outside the neighborhood)? How did you meet them?
16. Do you have close friends in the neighborhood who are not Sunni? How did you meet them?
17. Please indicate the religion and location of those who have offered you the following types of social support:
 - a. Those who have helped you find a job
 - b. Those who could be consulted about important matters
 - c. Those who would talk with you when you are feeling down
 - d. Those who socialize with you
18. Do you think there has been any change in the quarter recently?
 - a. If yes, how?
 - b. Do you think it improved or deteriorated?
19. If the demographics of Ras el Nabaa change with an influx of “outsiders”, what would your reaction be? Would you stay or would you leave the neighborhood?
20. If you had the opportunity to move to another neighborhood, would you leave Ras el Nabaa? Why or why not? If yes, where would you go?
21. Do the shops/businesses attract people from outside the neighborhood? Or are most of the customers residents of the neighborhood?

Appendix A

A.4 Badaro Questionnaire for Muslim Residents

PART I: Basic Background (Closed-ended)

1. **Sex:**
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

2. **Age:**
 - a. 20 to 39
 - b. 40 to 59
 - c. 60 and above

3. **Sect:**
 - a. Sunni
 - b. Shiite

4. **Marital Status:**
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Separated
 - d. Divorced
 - e. Widow

5. Do you have children? If so, how many?

6. **Educational level achieved:**
 - a. Illiterate
 - b. Primary
 - c. Intermediate
 - d. Secondary
 - e. Technical Education
 - f. College Level
 - g. Graduate
 - h. Post-Graduate/Phd

7. **Are you:**
 - a. An owner of the house you are living in?
 - b. A tenant/renter of the house you are living in?

- c. Other: _____
8. Are you a:
- e. Shop owner in Badaro?
 - f. Land owner in Badaro?
 - g. Building owner in Badaro?
 - h. None
9. Do you have relatives living here in the neighborhood? a. Yes
b. No
If yes, how many? _____
10. In your opinion, which of the following factors are most important and which are least important to you when it comes to choosing a new residential location? Please rank these factors on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being very important and 5 being least important):
- a. presence of relatives in the area
 - b. religious/sectarian composition of the neighborhood
 - c. dominant social class of the neighborhood
 - d. attractiveness/unattractiveness of the neighborhood (quality)
 - e. density
 - f. proximity to downtown
 - g. proximity to East Beirut
 - h. proximity to work (travel distance)
 - i. availability of stores
 - j. availability of schools
 - k. house size
 - l. house cost
 - m. parking availability
 - n. state services availability (telephone, electricity, water, etc...)
11. In your opinion, which of the following are very important and which are least important when it comes to mixing and interacting with people from different religions? Please rank these factors on a scale of 1 to 5 to measure importance (1 being very important and 5 being not important):
- How important do you think it is for people to:
- a. Send their children to religiously mixed schools?
 - b. Live in religiously mixed neighborhoods?
 - c. Socialize frequently with people from other religions outside of work?
 - d. Have close friends from other religions?

To the interviewer: Do you think the respondent falls in the lower, middle, or upper class category? Why?

Is there any way to identify whether the respondent is politically active and identifies with a certain political party in Lebanon?

PART II: Understanding Why Muslim Newcomers Chose Badaro (Open-ended)

1. Where were you born?
2. Where did you live before the civil war?
3. Was the neighborhood religiously mixed or religiously homogeneous?
4. What ties do you have to that neighborhood?
5. How long have you been living in Badaro?
6. Where were you living before coming to this neighborhood?
7. Why did you leave?
8. Why did you choose to move to Badaro?
9. Why did you choose Badaro as opposed to a neighborhood in West Beirut?
10. How would you describe the religious composition of the people in your building?
11. How would you describe the religious composition of Badaro's population?
12. What is your occupation?
13. How far is your work from your residence?
14. Where is it located?
15. How do you go to work? (i.e. what kind of transportation do you use?)
16. If you have relatives in Badaro, where in the neighborhood do they live?
17. Where do most of your other relatives live? (the ones who live outside Badaro...)

Part III: Understanding Social Relations Between Muslim Newcomers and Their Christian Neighbors

1. Do you have close Christian friends from outside the neighborhood? If so, how did you meet them?
2. Do you have close Christian friends in the neighborhood?
3. How, where, and when did you meet?
4. How often do you socialize with them (interaction limited, average, or extensive?)

5. How often do you visit them in their homes?
6. If you have relatives here, how often do you visit them in the neighborhood? (interaction limited, average, or extensive?)
7. Please indicate the religion and location of those who have offered you the following types of social support:
 - a. Those who have helped you find a job
 - b. Those who could be consulted about important matters
 - c. Those who would talk with you when you are feeling down
 - d. Those who socialize with you

PART IV: Muslim Newcomers' Attachment to Badaro

1. If you have children: Where do you send your children to school?
2. Where do you usually do your grocery shopping?
3. How often do you shop in the small stores/businesses in Badaro?
4. Do you rely more on shopping outside Badaro or within the neighborhood?
5. Do you go to the mosque? If so, how often and where is it located?
6. Do you feel you belong to the neighborhood? Are you well-received?
7. If you had the opportunity to move to another neighborhood, would you leave Badaro? If yes, where would you go and why?
8. Do you know Muslims who lived here in Badaro but left recently? If yes, why do you think they left the neighborhood?

Appendix A

A.5 Badaro Questionnaire for Christian Residents

PART I: Basic Background (Closed-ended)

1. **Sex:**
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

2. **Age:**
 - a. 20 to 39
 - b. 40 to 59
 - c. 60 and above

3. **Educational level achieved:**
 - a. Illiterate
 - b. Primary
 - c. Intermediate
 - d. Secondary
 - e. Technical Education
 - f. College Level
 - g. Graduate
 - h. Post-Graduate/Phd

4. **Sect:**
 - a. Maronite
 - b. Greek Catholic
 - c. Roman Catholic
 - d. Greek Orthodox
 - e. Syrian Orthodox
 - f. Armenian Orthodox
 - g. Assyrian
 - h. Protestant

5. Do you have relatives living here in the neighborhood?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If yes, how many? _____

6. Are you:
 - a. An owner of the house you are living in?

- b. A tenant/renter of the house you are living in?
- c. Other: _____

7. Are you a:

- e. Shop owner in Badaro?
- f. Land owner in Badaro?
- g. Building owner in Badaro?
- d. None

8. In your opinion, which of the following are very important and which are least important when it comes to mixing and interacting with people from different religions? Please rank these factors on a scale of 1 to 5 to measure importance (1 being very important and 5 being not important):

How important do you think it is for people to:

- i. Send their children to religiously mixed schools?
- j. Live in religiously mixed neighborhoods?
- k. Socialize frequently with people from other religions outside of work?
- l. Have close friends from other religions?

To the interviewer: Do you think the respondent falls in the lower, middle, or upper class category? Why?

Is there any way to identify whether the respondent is politically active and identifies with a certain political party in Lebanon?

PART II: Background (Open-ended)

1. Where were you born?
2. Where did you live before you came to Badaro?
3. Why did you move to Badaro?
4. How long have you lived in Badaro?
5. Did you stay here throughout the civil war?
6. If no, where did you go? When did you return to Badaro?
7. If you have children: Where do you send your children to school?
8. Where do you usually do your grocery shopping?
9. How often do you shop in the small stores/businesses in Badaro?
10. Do you rely more on shopping outside Badaro or within the neighborhood?

11. Do you go to church? If so, how often and where is it located?
12. How would you describe the religious composition of the neighborhood? (i.e. percentage/distribution of Christians, Sunnis, Shiites, Druze, etc...)
13. How would you describe your interaction with the non-Christian residents? (limited, average, extensive?)
14. How frequently and where do you interact/socialize with them?
15. Do you have close non-Christian friends from outside the neighborhood? If so, how did you meet them?
16. Do you have close friends in the neighborhood who are not Christian? How did you meet?
17. Please indicate the religion and location of those who have offered you the following types of social support:
 - a. Those who have helped you find a job
 - b. Those who could be consulted about important matters
 - c. Those who would talk with you when you are feeling down
 - d. Those who socialize with you
18. Do you think there has been any change in the quarter recently?
 - a. If yes, how?
 - b. Do you think it improved or deteriorated?
19. If the demographics of Badaro change with an influx of “outsiders”, what would your reaction be? Would you stay or would you leave the neighborhood?
20. If you had the opportunity to move to another neighborhood, would you leave Badaro? Why or why not? If yes, where would you go?
21. Do the shops/businesses attract people from outside the neighborhood? Or are most of the customers residents of the neighborhood?

Appendix B

Data on Reconstruction and Rehabilitation in Ras el Nabaa and Beirut

B.1 Evacuations Carried out in Administrative Beirut

Area	Number
Achrafieh	1225
Ain el Mraisseh	564
Bachoura	180
Gemmayzeh	27
Mazraa	680
Mdaouar	170
Marfaa Beirut	46
Minaa el Hosn	174
Msaitbe	571
Ras el Nabaa	207
Ras Beirut	1153
Rmeil	89
Saifi	73
Zoqaq el Blat	209
Miscellaneous Evacuations	391

Source: Ministry of Displaced, 1998. p. 31

Appendix B

B.2 Compensation to Restore 9,310 Residential Units in Beirut as of 1997

Area		Number of Beneficiaries	Amounts Paid
Achrafieh	Damaged	362	\$1,587,933
	Restored	40	\$202,200
Borj abou Haidar	Damaged	171	\$595,600
	Restored	86	\$286,666
Basta	Damaged	195	\$691,800
	Restored	157	\$483,333
Mdaouar	Damaged	437	\$1,742,266
Mazraa	Damaged	130	\$507,600
	Restored	118	\$415,266
Msaitbe	Damaged	128	\$468,733
	Restored	91	\$303,333
Maktab Sinno	Damaged	814	\$29,022,866
Qasqas	Damaged	63	\$251,533
	Restored	90	\$300,000
Ras Beirut	Damaged	31	\$113,200
	Restored	31	\$10,000
Ras el Nabaa	Damaged	4,165	\$12,042,980
	Restored	628	\$1,695,466
Tariq ej Jdideh	Damaged	959	\$3,423,466

	Restored	431	\$1,438,000
Verdun	Damaged	17	\$71,333
	Restored	29	\$96,666
Zoqaq el Blat	Damaged	2	\$9,333
	Restored	1	\$3,333
Zarif	Damaged	64	\$231,333
	Restored	70	\$236,933
Mohafazat of Beirut Total		9310	\$30,244,513

Source: Ministry of Displaced, 1998. p. 74

Appendix B

B.3 Restoration of Various Buildings and Facilities Around Beirut

Buildings and Facilities	Amounts Paid
Restoration of a dispensary in Ras el Nabaa	\$15,974
Miscellaneous restorations in Bchara al Khoury and Quntary	\$1,850
Miscellaneous Restorations in Ain el Mraisseh	\$19,712
Restoration of the facades of Ras el Nabaa	\$436,024
Restoration of a Building in Sodeco	\$3,047
Restoration of Bcahra el Khoury Palace	\$1,152
Restoration of the Buildings of Abou Khater-Ghanem-Daou	\$1,149
Real estate of Souq el Dana	\$5,301
Karantina Sewages	\$13,999
Miscellaneous Restorations in Ras el Nabaa	\$13,333
Restoration of the Phalanges Building in Karantina	\$526
Paving Streets in el Mdaouar	\$30,981
Mohafazat of Beirut Total	\$559,711

Source: Ministry of Displaced, 1998. p. 92

Appendix B

B.4 Restoration of Religious Sanctuaries in Beirut

Area	Building	Sect	Contribution of the Central Fund
Achrafiyeh	Alam-el-Sharq Mosque	Sunni	\$20,666
Basta	Basta Tahta Mosque	Sunni	\$18,000
Beirut Commercial	Center Khodor Mosque	Sunni	\$20,000
Hamra	Sayedet el Najat Church	Orthodox	\$8,000
Ras el Nabaa	Catholic Bishopric	Catholic	\$174,500
Ras el Nabaa	Sayedat el Najat Church	Maronite	\$13,283
Ras al Nabaa	Osman bin Affan Mosque	Sunni	\$20,666
Ras el Nabaa	Sidani Mosque	Sunni	\$8,745
Ras Beirut	Shatila Mosque	Sunni	\$16,666
Tariq ej Jdideh	Ali bi Abi Taleb Mosque	Sunni	\$106,000
Beirut Total			\$406,528

Source: Ministry of Displaced, 1998. p. 111

Appendix C

Real Estate Prices and Construction Around Beirut

The numbers in this section indicate the number of buildings being constructed in each neighborhood according to each price range.

C.1 WEST BEIRUT

Neighborhood	Under \$150,000	\$150-300,000	\$300-500,000	Above \$500,000
Mazraa	1	10	3	3
Zoqaq el Blat		2	1	3
Zarif			2	
Ras el Nabaa		2	5	
Mousseitbeh		4	4	22
Ras Beirut				12
Ain el Mreisseh				3

Appendix C

C.2 Downtown

Neighborhood	Under \$150,000	\$150-300,000	\$300-500,000	Above \$500,000
Beirut Central District				11

C.3 East Beirut

Neighborhood	Under \$150,000	\$150-300,000	\$300-500,000	Above \$500,000
Ashrafieh		3	6	15
Sodeco		1	2	
Gemmayze				3
Saifi				3

Appendix D

Real Estate in Ras el Nabaa

D.1 Details on Buildings Being Constructed in Ras el Nabaa

Location	Number of Units	Size of Apartment	Price per Square Meter	Total Asking Price	% Already Sold	Completion Date
Karm el Ghazzaoui Road	18 apartments	162 square meters		\$205,000	50% sold	
Mohammad El Hout Street	30 apartments	200 m2 (10 units) 165 m2 (20 units)	200 m2 selling for \$1,250 165 m2 selling for \$1,030	200 m2 selling for \$250,000; 165 m2 selling for \$170,000	100% 6 months ago only one floor remained for sale; it has since then been sold at \$275,000	September 2008
Bechara al Khoury	30 apartments	205 m2 and 220 m2	\$1,400 m2		Sales begin Summer 2008	Early 2010
Karm el Ghazzaoui	20 apartments; 10 levels	210 m2		\$273,000	45% sold; owner considering renting out the rest	Early Summer 2008
Abdel Maoula Char Street; near Greak Orthodox Church	72 apartments	175m2	\$1,450 m2	\$253,000	100% sold	Summer 2008
Near Ogero Telephone Company	27 apartments	110 m2, 150 m2, 165 m2	\$1,000 per m2		85% sold	
Said Khadige Road	53 apartments	122 m2, 155 m2, 179 m2	\$1,200 per m2		92% sold	
Near A.R. School	10 apartments	171 m2		\$197,000		2009

Said Khadige and Damascus Road	14 apartments; 15 offices; 15 boutiques	300 m2			Owner wants to wait until the end of 2008 to begin selling	
Near Sodeco Residence	14 apartments	110 m2; 155m2	\$1,300 per m2		100% Sold	December 2008
Said Khadige Road	36 apartments	100 m2, 130 m2, 160 m2	\$1,300 per m2			2011
Facing USJ and Adjacent to Greek Catholic Church		150-600 m2	\$2,000 per m2			
Pere Chanteur Road, near Hotel de Ville and Hippodrome	12 apartments	250 m2	\$1,800 per m2	Remaining units for sale at \$450,000	50% sold	December 2008
Pere Chanteur and Abdel Hafiz Char Road	18 apartments	215 m2	\$1,700 per m2			December 2009
Abdallah Yafi Street, near Hippodrome and French Embassy	27 apartments	415 m2; two others are 630 m2 (duplex); one is 1,250 m2 (triplex)		\$1,140,000		Summer 2010

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