

***Monumentality in a Divided City
The Case of the Martyrs' Square
Beirut, Lebanon***

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**MONUMENTALITY IN A DIVIDED CITY:
THE CASE OF THE MARTYRS' SQUARE, BEIRUT LEBANON**

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To my Parents,
To Georges and Makram,
With my love

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I always recall stories of my family's life in Chiyah, Baabda and Beirut. They often remember the pre-war 'glorious' times of the city and the destroying war when they were displaced. I was born almost at the end of the conflict and my memory of it is rather sporadic. The main difference between them and me is their attachment to the space of 'al balad' (the city). For me, it is synonymous with emptiness. This MSc thesis was a great opportunity to understand the space of the Martyrs' Square and the city centre, both as an embedded experience and as an external observer.

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Abstract

Monumental spaces in divided cities are often the source of debates concerning their redevelopment and revival. Using the Martyrs' Square in Beirut as a case study, this research looks at the redevelopment of monumental spaces into their pre-war social, economic and political role. Inspired by Lefebvre's production of space (the lived, the conceived and the perceived), I scrutinize different actors in the square, namely, the users, the developers and the experts in this field, to shed more light on the complex situation of planning post-war spaces, and the different ways of dealing with such situation. Based on literature studies, interviews and observations, I argue that the square fails to create unity in the center. While it does not divide the city physically, the Martyrs' Square plays a major role in a different type of division in social, spatial and political terms. I also propose changes to the approach to the square's reconstruction which could remedy the present situation.

Keywords: monumental space, post-war reconstruction, the Martyrs' Square Beirut, divided city

Table of content:

1. Introduction	2
2. Theoretical framework and literature review	6
2.1 Space, place and society	6
2.2 Divided cities, wars and destructions	10
2.3 Post-war reconstruction	13
3. Conceptual framework and methodology	16
3.1 Main issues	16
3.2 The case study	17
3.3 Research problem and research question	18
3.3.1 Reconstructing the Martyrs' Square	18
3.3.2 The ongoing debates	20
3.3.3 The research question	22
3.4 Conceptual approach	23
3.4.1 Lefebvre production of space	23
3.4.2 Expected outcome of the research	24
3.5 Methodology	24
3.5.1 Research design	24
3.5.2 Type of data collection	25
3.5.3 Data analysis	33
4. The development and evolution of the city centre and the square	34
4.1 The historic dimension	35
4.1.1 Ancient history	35
4.1.2 Process of modernization	41
4.1.3 The changes in the 20th century	48
4.2 The war and destructions	55
4.3 The reconstruction process	59
4.3.1 The different reconstruction plans for the city.	60
4.3.2 Solidere's development for the city and the square	64

5. Discussion	74
5.1 Tangible transformation of the space: the square as a dividing construction	74
5.2 Political role of the square	79
5.2.1 The space of unity: The seraglio and the martyrs.	79
5.2.2 The space of division	82
5.3 The intangible division	87
5.3.1 The memory and symbolic perception of the space	87
5.3.2 Life in Beirut, the perception and use of space.	92
5.3.3 Redefining Territorial identities	98
6. Conclusion and recommendations	104
6.1 Conclusion	104
6.1.1 Redevelopment of research questions	105
6.2 Recommendations	107
6.2.1 Spatial qualities and character of the square.	107
6.2.2 The socio-cultural life in the city.	108
6.2.3 Public participation.	109
References	110
Annex	118

LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 3.1: Map of the public spaces for data collection</i>	28
<i>Figure 4.1: Archeological strata of Beriut</i>	37
<i>Figure 4.2: The Phoenician Tell</i>	37
<i>Figure 4.3: Map of Beirut as it appeared in 1841</i>	39
<i>Figure 4.4: The spatial division of space based on the activities performed</i>	40
<i>Figure 4.5: Map of Beirut in 1876 drawn by Loytved</i>	42
<i>Figure 4.6: Map of Beirut in 1841</i>	44
<i>Figure 4.7: Drawing from an unknown artist</i>	44
<i>Figure 4.8: The Hamadieh Garden in 1890</i>	46
<i>Figure 4.9 Plan of Beirut in 1920 showing the destruction of the city</i>	47
<i>Figure 4.10: The development of Place de l'Etoile</i>	49
<i>Figure 4.11: The redensing of the Martyrs' Square under the French Mandate</i>	51
<i>Figure 4.12: Delahalle proposal for the Martyrs' Square</i>	51
<i>Figure 4.13: Map fo the dividing lin and the zone of conflicts</i>	55
<i>Figure 4.14: the APUR plan for the city</i>	62
<i>Figure 4.15: Henri Edde's Plan for the city</i>	62
<i>Figure 4.16: The axis of the Martyrs' Square</i>	63
<i>Figure 4.17: Solidere's axes plan of Beirut</i>	64
<i>Figure 4.18: Schmit's map of desturction in 1998</i>	68
<i>Figure 4.19: The square in 1960</i>	70
<i>Figure 4.20: The sqaure in 2005</i>	70
<i>Figure 4.21. The Greek winning project</i>	72
<i>Figure 4.22: the projects around the square</i>	73
<i>Figure 5.2: The square in 1960 (fotography taken by Ecochard</i>	75
<i>Figure 5.3: The sqaure in 2005</i>	75
<i>Figure 5.1: Achrafieh highway, a dividing feature</i>	75
<i>Figure 5.4: The statue in comparison with the surroundings</i>	78
<i>Figure 5.6: Proest in 1958</i>	81
<i>Figure 5.5 The front page of the newspapre the day of the martyrs' hanging in 1915</i>	81
<i>Figure 5.7: the Martyrs' Square in 2005</i>	86
<i>Figure 5.8: the view of the tent, and inside the tent</i>	86
<i>Figure 5.9: the installation of Sahnawi in the Martyrs' Square</i>	91
<i>Figure 5.10: 2010 post card of the 1970's Martyrs' Square</i>	91
<i>Figure 5.11: Debbas Garden</i>	95
<i>Figure 5.12: Gebran Garden</i>	95
<i>Figure 5.13: Riad el Solh</i>	95
<i>Figure 5.15: The Martyrs' Square</i>	95
<i>Figure 5.16: Coriniche Ain el Mreisseh</i>	97
<i>Figure 5.17 Sanayeh Garden</i>	97
<i>Figure 5.18 The religious division of Beirut. Each square represent 1000 inhabitants.</i>	100

LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 5.1 Sectarian redistribution of Lebanese communities</i>	100
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“Lebanon can be save because it is mixed, hybrid, composite: its history is the history of hybridity, mixture and tolerance” (Said, 1993)

I. INTRODUCTION

The spatial and social evolutions within cities impact the perception, identity, social interaction and meaning of specific places. Focusing on the interactions between the individual and the surrounding environment and on the multiple events leading to the creation and development of spaces, this research studies the development and the destruction of a monumental space in a divided city.

In the general discourse of divided cities, an assumption of the existence of a present conflict or the memory of a past one is always present. Physical, social and psychological remnants of the conflict are prevailing. On the other hand, a monument or a monumental space “strengthens the sense of communities by offering their members an image of their membership. Monuments create social spaces by evoking feelings of identity and belonging” (Lamber & Ochsner, 2009, p.11). The “inclusive ambiguity” of such memorials allows groups to surpass social boundaries in a particular symbolic space.

This research takes the Martyrs’ Square – a symbol of unity and division – as a case study. The images reflected by such a site evoke “contradictory impulses of remembering and forgetting” (Larkin, 2010), affecting directly its reconstruction.

Located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, Lebanon is a small Levantine country covering 10,452km². Lebanon’s strategic geographical location at the crossroad between the east and the west, developed with social, spatial and political qualities of mixed background that concurrently flourished the country with commerce, exchange and development, and destructed its structure. Beirut, its capital, located on the Mediterranean Sea, was a small harbor city with secondary importance. It later developed, in the 19th century, as the economic, social, and political center of the region. The city’s urban environment and social structure has been affected by the many civilizations that dominated the area. “Each era has left its mark on the city, thus constituting territories inside which various visual messages delimited ideological space” (Buccuanti-Barakat, 2004). Beirut is a melting pot of cultural, religious and ethnic coexistence that concurrently reproduces separation and creates common space. However, the confessional and social pluralism of the city created

fragmentation leading to confrontations. The fifteen-year-long civil war (1975-1990) divided the city into two conflicting sectors, socially polarized and spatially segregated, creating a duality within the urban fabric. The Beirut-Damascus road, starting at the Martyrs' Square, demarcated the "Green Line" boundary, separating the city between Christians in the East and Muslims in the South and West. Beirut today tries to find the balance between the post-war reconstruction of its historic center and the post-modern growth of the city.

The development of the Martyrs' Square was spatially, socially and culturally affected by a multitude of events. The Martyrs' Square, also known as Sahat el Bourj, Sahat el Madfaa and Sahat el Horriyah – the 'Tower Square', the 'Cannon Square' and the 'Liberty Square' – plays an important role in the development of the city. This square has historically been the meeting point of locals and visitors alike; however, during the Lebanese civil war, it was transformed into a part of the "Green Line" dividing the city spatially, socially and politically. The Martyrs' Square thus became a historical monumental space, symbol of a united as well as of a divided city. Sliver (2010) affirms that "the 'Martyrs Memorial' is a polysemic artifact both consensual and diversely symbolic". The diversity of such a square makes its study both challenging and engaging.

Soon after the end of the conflict, Solidere – a real estate joint-stock company – using controversial methods such as expropriation and tabula rasa, was reconstructing Beirut's Central District. However, while the reconstruction of the city center is advancing, the proposed design for the Martyrs' Square is still sketchy. The (re-) development of the square initiated multiple conferences and debates concerning its future design, image, perception and expectations

The Martyrs' Square, as a monumental space with strong historical and cultural significance, has been studied intensively. Numerous studies represent the iconic image of the square as a symbol of revolution, as a cosmopolitan sphere where multi-ethnic groups meet, as symbol of national unity and as a memorial (Khalaf, 1993; Khalaf, 2006; Khalaf and Khoury, 1993; Rowe and Sarkis, 1998; Tueini and Sassine, 2000; Yassin, 2010; Yassin, 2012). On the other hand, while the square gained its significance with the development of its economic, social and cultural functions, when it became a demarcation line, a different perception of the space developed. The square was studied as a symbol of a divided city, a

place of fear and terror (Dados, 2009; Khalaf, 1993, Nasr, 1993). Moreover, many researches deal with post war reconstruction and peace building (Bollens, 2012; Charlesworth, 2006; Sarkis, 2006; Rowe and Sarkis, 1998). However, little research tackles the study of the actual perception of the Martyrs' Square, its use and analysis considering the post-war planning of the city and the role of public spaces in the abolition of social boundaries in divided cities. These are the gaps that I intend to fill by this research.

This study of the Martyrs' Square falls in the ongoing debate focusing on the future use of the square and the post-war reconstruction of the city centre. The research seeks to bring together the different angles of approach in order to develop a complex image of division within the urban space and of the (im) possibility of designing an attractive shared space, and therefore to understand how the redevelopment of an iconic site reflects upon its history, identity, social interaction and perceptions of the past and the present. Thus, the aim of this research is to understand place-making in monumental terms, to shed more light on the role played by architects and planners in post-war reconstruction as well as the power of monument, particularly in divided cities. Thus I based the research on the question: Can the redevelopment of a monumental space participate in the peace building and peace planning for the city?

In the particular case of Beirut, I will look at the redevelopment of the Martyrs' Square to recreate unity in the city. Based on its important pre-war space, I ask: Can the monumental space of the Martyrs' Square become again the social and political center of the city, taking into consideration its spatial character in relation to its tremendous history?

This research is intended to contribute to the debate about post-war reconstruction of divided cities. Its results can be used to prescribe changes to improve and develop the current situation. The Martyrs' Square is a case study that can be related to similar situations in other divided cities around the world, and can therefore provide a solid basis for studying other similar cases.

I am taking an approach to the city and its open space by investigating the role, meaning and politics of space, and the way a square can separate or bring people together. I am emphasizing the pre-war role of the square as the central space of Beirut, place of unity, reunion and communication; the war role of the square as a dividing element, in order to

reflect on the post-war destruction of the space and the planning for the future.

However, some concepts will not be tackled in this research. Such topics include the archaeological importance of sites and their conservations, the reconstruction type – identical reconstruction or a new fabric for the city – the economic situation of the country, the different internal political struggle. These topics are part of a different research approach and should be tackled using different methods, approaches and knowledge.

The rest of this work is organized as follows. In the next chapter, the theoretical background and literature review are presented, pointing out topics of postwar reconstruction, the reflection on space, place and society, and the symbolic image of monuments and monumental space. These considerations lead to the development of the main issues and research question of the case study and the methodology used in this research work. Chapter four introduces the historical background of the case study, focusing on the issue of its relevance for this research. The fifth chapter presents the most important results where I analyze the gathered information. The sixth chapter concludes the work and outlines recommendations for the future of the square.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Grasping the current issues in relation to divided cities, spaces within them, war and post-war reconstruction, is primordial for understanding the (re) development of monumental space and peace building. Indeed, the case of the Martyrs' Square sheds the light on a broad range of issues in relevance to the study of the spaces in the city (space in time, places, experience and development), monuments (their symbolic image and construction), divided cities and wars (the destruction of monuments, the urbicide on the city, the urban division, social, spatial and political segregation), and the post-war reconstruction, including the role of architecture and planner the type of reconstructions. This chapter presents the theoretical framework and literature review studied of this research.

This research takes an interdisciplinary theoretical approach combining concepts from human geography, geopolitics and cultural geography as well as architectural, landscape and urban studies. "Theories from multiple disciplines are utilized because no single perspective is likely to capture fully the complex social and ecological aspects of urban ethnic conflict" (Bollens, 2000, as quotes in Casaglia, 2010). Cultural and political geography focus on spatial and social issues, boundaries and borders, power and meanings. Recent debates in cultural geography raise attention towards the role of politics, and "to the relations between cultural geographies, socio-political context and the politics of the knowledge we produce, disseminate and consume" (Atkinson, Jackson, Sibley & Washbourne, 2010). Space, knowledge and power are the three most important elements to look at for understanding a society. Landscape and urban studies, on the other hand, study the physical aspects of built morphology, its meaning, and sense of place.

2.1 SPACE, PLACE AND SOCIETY

A relation between the nature of cities and the social life experienced within them can be understood. Lynch (1960) argues;

"Like a piece of architecture, the city is a construction in space, but one of vast scale, a thing perceived only in the course of long spans of time. City design is therefore a temporal

art, but it can rarely use the controlled and limited sequences of other temporal arts like music. On different occasions and for different people, the sequences are reversed, interrupted, abandoned, cut across. It is seen in all lights and all weathers. At every instant, there is more than the eye can see, more than the ear can hear, a setting or a view waiting to be explored. Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings, the sequences of events leading up to it, the memory of past experiences” (p.1).

Based on Lynch’s introduction, the study of space is strongly dependent on its meaning, image, identity, history, heritage and memories, as well as people’s interaction with the environment and the space in itself. As such, places become the echo of the history, tradition and social life of the inhabitant of the city (Kostof, 1991). So to better understand the city and its evolution, one needs to look at the political history of the area. Civilizations and empires dominated areas around the world, influencing the social and spatial character of urban areas, reshaping it in accordance the their own style, need, aesthetic ideas, and technology (Gehl, 2010). Furthermore, identity and culture shape and are shaped by space, history and events (whether social, political or natural). “Identity is the foundation to place attachment and sense of belonging. It is a reflection of people’s traditions, culture, aspirations, needs, and their future” (Aly, 2011). Indeed, the sense community and identity affects architectural construction and development of space. Lefebvre (1974/1991) establishes three dimension always present in the development of space and their planning. He argues that material planning, financial and economic issues, and spatial and temporal dimensions allow for the development the space into ideological and strategic visions, thus confirming their political nature. Merrifield (2000) explains Lefebvre ‘Production of Space’ by stating “Lefebvre (...) assumes a much more active understanding of space. For him, space isn’t just a passive surface for reproductive activity. (...) But (...) Lefebvre insists, miss much, would fall into the trap of treating space ‘in itself”” (p. 172). Therefore, Lefebvre proposes to look at space based on three moments namely: the representation of space (also called the conceived), the representational space (the lived) and the spatial practice (the perceived) (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). Merrifield (2000) continues her explanation by a saying “relations between the conceive-perceived-lived aren’t ever stable and exhibit historically defined attributes and

content” (p.175). In other words, the experience of space needs to be embodied, abstract and alive.

Moreover, cities are composed of elements where activities, exchanges and interactions take place. City’s space acquired the role of “meeting place and social forum for city dwellers” (Gehl, 2010, p. 3). Such places acquired many names throughout space and time: square, piazza, forum, agora or maidan evolved as essential elements of the urban structure, serving different purposes and role in different region of the world (Kostof, 1992). Indeed, religion, political power, social tradition and market places influenced the design and planning of public spaces and thus the social life around. For example, Maidans, located at the edge of the city served as a multi-purpose space ranging from military encampment to open air market, Town Squares served as connection nodes, social interaction or military parade (Kostof, 1992; Sitte, 1889/1996). Amin (2006) reviews the understanding of public space in their historical sense, based on the actual changes and evolution in the world. Indeed, changes in social, economic, political and technologies in the world affected contemporary cities (Gehl, 2010).

The spaces in the city vary according to different constituents in and around the space. These elements often change the perception and use of the space. Indeed, narrow streets induce movement, edges define space, human scale square enhance resting (Gehl, 2010). Moreover, the certain aesthetical dimension of urbanism, and the different shapes it produces create successful urban fabrics (Sitte 1889/1996). These elements, shapes and forms are often in direct relation with the image of the city (Lynch, 1960). Spaces affect the urban fabric in three different ways. First socially, urban space attracts more people, create activity and sometimes generate incomes (Gehl, 2010). Second spatially, space physical elements are adapted to the use and need of the citizens and users. And third meaning, representation, image and monumentality affect and change the space (Gehl, 2010; Jacobs, 1961; Kostof, 1991) However it is important to mention that successful urban spaces are neither the result of exceptional architectural work nor the consequence of the random social activities taking place. Good urban spaces are places where different elements come together in a particular or unique way creating a lively square (Gehl, 2010; Jacobs, 1961). “Urban design is of course an art, and like all design it does have to consider, or at least pay

lip service to, human behavior” (Kostof, 1991, p. 9).

Modernism viewed the city as a machine and put little priority to urban space and pedestrian use. Modernist architects and planners focused on the city as individual buildings reducing the “life between buildings” (Gehl, 2010). As life in the city and its public spaces became threatened, many architects, landscape architects and urban planner worked to create better conditions in the city. New visions and designs were imagined for the city’s public spaces. Urban designer critics such as Gehl (2010), Lynch (1960), White (1980), Jacobs (1961), and Shaftoe (2008), consecrated most of their work into developing ideas and recommendation for better use and design of public space. Most of their ideas concerned the pedestrian experience and appreciation of urban space, even though different individuals perform different type of activities in the same space. Gehl (2010) for example describes the good quality life in cities as lively, healthy, safe and sustainable, where as Lynch (1960) proposes five characteristics for a good city namely vitality, sense, fit, access and control.

In parallel to the development of squares as urban public spaces where social activities takes place, some acquired monumentality characteristics. Whether they were planed or evolved randomly, monuments developed or were constructed as a representation of societies, a person, a ruler, a particular event or a period. These cultural and/or political monuments strengthen the sense of communities, enhance social spaces and induce feeling of identity and belonging (Lambert and Ochsner, 2009). Monumental spaces, argues Lefebvre, “offered each member of a society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage... It thus constituted a collective mirror more faithful than any personal one” (1974, cited in Bevan, 2006). Some elements of the urban fabric are monuments or monumental space, developed or constructed as a representation of societies. However, monuments are also ephemeral (Lambert and Ochsner, 2009). Monumental spaces are rigid in their physiognomy; they are difficult to change in term of their meaning and representation. Indeed Hui (2009) present the word ‘monument’ in its Latin and Greek usage and meaning, showing that verbal monuments will outlast physical ones. Events can create, compose transform, conserve monument and unite a society, but at the same time it can destroy, divide, and separate communities. Therefore, the transformation and development of monumental space as a result of social, cultural and political events is an important dimension to consider

(Hui, 2009).

Identity is usually linked with to the question of state survival. “Cities and larger states need an identity, he (Macchiavelli) argues, but certain identities are bound to generate more strategic and adaptive possibilities than others in a given time and place, and identities need to be plural” (van Assche, 2011, p. 7). Events can create, compose transform, conserve monument and unite a society, but at the same time it can destroy, divide, and separate communities. In areas with increased sectarian conflict monumental spaces are often assimilated to one or the other. This particularly leads to attacks and destruction of the other through the destruction of physical representation of their image and identity (Bevan, 2009). Nevertheless, it is important to not disagreement on the relationship between cultural heritage (often symbolically represented by monuments) and identity. “The politics of identity construction uses cultural heritage to improve the social cohesion of their image of a society with a single core” (During, 2011, p. 28).

2.2 DIVIDED CITIES, WARS AND DESTRUCTIONS

Cities’ urban process, was historically, a combination of “rise and fall”, of destruction and reconstruction, of continuous transformation, modification and development (Kostof, 1992). The city and its elements are affected by natural hazards – earthquakes, waves, tsunami – and human-made events – wars, attacks, fires and destruction – that changed their perspective, identity and representation tremendously. The history of the conflict and the division from an architectural, planning and geographical point of view is well documented by scholars offering a wide range of information and analysis on different areas. This understanding of the physical and social situation regarding this type of cities and their space provide a better understanding for the case of Beirut in general and the Martyrs’ Square in particular.

Quarters, ghettos and merchant sections existed in most cities of Hellenistic and Roman Empires, and are translated in contemporary cities as quarters of luxury housing, the gentrified city, the suburban city, the tenement city and the abandoned city. Thus referring to divided cities until the mid 20th century was connected to cities characterized by “the ‘division’ of capitalistic production processes, class, race and gender relation, inscribed into the urban landscape in the shape of residential segregation” (Safier, 2007). In such cases the

division is expressed through economic, industrial and production spaces – the city of big decision, the city of advanced services – the city of direct production – the city of unskilled work and informal economy and the residual city (Marcuse, 1993). Cities internal partition, traditionally, were not perceived as abnormality.

The term divided cities, however, is now being used to refer to a different type of place: “special cases of physically and politically divided cities where a recognizable ‘border’ transected the city” (Safier, 2007). The post-cold war era is marked by a shifting of conflict within a certain community and inside the cities. Graham (2004) argues that “Warfare, like everything else, is being urbanized” (p. 4). In fact, ideological confrontation (Berlin), ethnic and religious identity struggle (Beirut, Belfast and Sarajevo) or national sovereignty clashes (Nicosia and Jerusalem) result in polarized city. As a result, he states: “As global violence telescopes within and through local places, so new physical, social and psychological barriers are being constructed and enacted” (p. 11). Polarized cities are characterized by two or more ethnic groups co-existing in a same urban space with strong “political, spatial and social-psychological contestation” (Bollens, 2012). Thus, divided cities deal with pluralism, ethnic, class and racial clashes as well as conflict over space, territory, nationality and liberty. In cities such as Belfast, Nicosia, Beirut or Jerusalem, demonstrations, conflicts and riot transformed the once unified urban environment into opposing camps spatially partitioned. “Global extension of competitive market and trade relations, and the intensification and ‘polarization’ of economic and social inequalities, but also the blurring of a formerly clear cut separation of international and domestic political conflict, and the worldwide escalation of adversarial ‘identity politics’” enforce the breakdown between communities (Safier, 2007). Indeed, walls and buffer zone in these cities result in the spatial structure limiting the movement and exchange between the inhabitants of the city while at the same time creating intangible social meaning (Alpar, Atun & Doratli, 2009). These divisions reinforced breakdowns of peace and security resulting in terrorism, warfare and urbicide, and thus developed into severe and unresolved multicultural difference (Bollen, 2012; Calame & Charlesworth, 2009). As “lines become walls, and walls govern behavior” (Calame & Charlesworth, 2009 p.8) the social, psychological and cultural identity of the city is at risk. Thus the secular, social and cultural division entrained physical division. In other words, “within them, everyday

urban governance is deeply contested, transforming mundane service delivery and land-use planning into ethno-national or sectarian conflicts over the control of space” (Silver, 2010).

Various groups, debate, papers and conferences deals with urban division and conflict in cities (see for example ‘Urban conflict: ethno-national divisions, states and cities, 2011), the issue of dealing with such cities and the most successful approach of their reconstructions (see section 3.3)

Kostof (1992) argues,

“The Berlin wall was a cause célèbre of our times. It was a symbol of the bitter contest of two ideological camps that sought to divide the globe between themselves after the havoc of World War II, and proof for those in the western camp of the brutal suppression of human freedom that reigned on the other side” (p. 71).

Conflict, destruction and division were not satisfied by the social-psychological impact of the war. The arracks, other than being mainly urban, intended to destroy, erase and sometime eradicate architectural construction it is a “politics of destroying buildings” (Coward, 2009; as quoted in Fregonese, 2010). Damnation memoriae was a common practice in the Roman Empire and after its fall. The attacker intended to demolish, modify or replace existing element of social, cultural, religious or historical importance to the opponent. Today, the term urbicide - from the Latin word urbs, meaning “city”, and occido, meaning “to massacre”- is being used referring to the violence against the city. Originally used in reference to urban restructuring of North American cities, it now indicates attacks against the material fabric of the city (Fregonese, 2010). The destruction of buildings and monuments is a destruction of the material elements reflecting a community. It suggests domination and terrorization and reinforces the division. Often associated with hatred against social or political opposition, domination or disgrace, the architectural destruction become a war tactic, a socio-material attack, it is not ‘collateral damage’ but the objective. The destroyer aims at “erasing any physical reminder of the people and its collective memory” (Bevan, 2006, p. 8). It is attacks on tradition, history, memory and identity. Thus the collapse of physical elements is directly related to social collapse (Fregonese & Brand, 2009). “Destruction of

buildings is thus not incidental to, but underlies, the campaign to homogenize population. Such demolitions destroy buildings that are constitutive of plural communities in order to naturalize the emergent ethnic enclaves. The destruction of buildings is thus representative of communities, and individuals, for whom homogeneity – and hostility to difference – is the norm” (Coward, 2009 p.12). Bevan argues, “much has been written about the deliberate repression of minority cultures – their language, literature, art and customs – but little about the repression of their architecture” (2006, p.9). These actions are also historically exercised. Indeed, “property seizure and destruction (raze or burn) was a normal way medieval Italian communes dealt with disgraced families” (Kostof, 1992, p.256). Also after the fall of the Roman Empire, the main city of Rome became a field of ruins and destruction. But, as weapon became heavier, the destruction worsened and became an inevitable part of the conflict. On 9 November 1938, Kristallnacht deliberately destroyed, burnt or reused synagogues around Germany. On 9 November 1993, Stari Most, a historical bridge over the Neretva linking the two side of the city collapsed. These are few example of war attack on urban elements. Whether against religious shrines or cultural conflicts, the break up of building is directly related to social collapse. “Out of sight can become, literally, out of mind both for those whose patrimony have been destroyed and for the destroyers” (Bevan, 2006 p.16). According to Kostof, there are two ways for dealing with this destruction. On the one hand the attackers would build something over the ruin - this “symbolically shows the defeat of the subject and the ascent of the new power” (1992, p 255). On the other hand, the attackers would convert the monument in another use, reflecting the new power religiously or culturally - “The Córdoba mosque became a Christian cathedral at about the time that Hagia Sophia was being converted into a mosque” (1992, p 256). But the question is whether this monumental destruction eliminate completely a society or whether it acts more as a repression.

2.3 POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

According to Kostof (1992), there are two ways for dealing with this destruction. On the one hand the attackers would build something over the ruin - this “symbolically shows the defeat of the subject and the ascent of the new power” (p. 255). On the other hand, the

attackers would convert the monument in another use, reflecting the new power religiously or culturally - “The Córdoba mosque became a Christian cathedral at about the time that Hagia Sophia was being converted into a mosque” (p. 256). But the question is whether this monumental destruction eliminate completely a society or whether it acts more as a repression. In this paragraph I will develop the different aspect of post-war reconstruction and their controversy.

In the aftermath of natural hazards or wars, a new process takes place for the redevelopment and renewal of the city. Often, transformation takes place and a new urban planning of the city is developed. Although the situation is tragic, it was an opportunity for many cities to change and redevelop in a healthier, more aesthetical and practical city. The London fire in 1666, facilitate the passage “from a medieval half timber warren into a Renaissance city of paved streets and bricks building” (Kostof, 1992, p.245). Similarly, in Lisbon in 1755, fire and waves left very little of the city standing, and thus modify the general structure and architecture of the city. Wars and urbicides, on the other hand, devastate cities in a different way – sometimes attacking particular element or architectural work, sometimes attacking the city as a whole entity. During the Second World War, many European cites were flattened by the opposing force. Thus Hamburg, Berlin, Rotterdam, Stalingrad among others, badly bombed and damaged, emerged as new form and shape of cities (Kostof, 1992). These rebuilding show the different processes cities go through for its revival after such devastating experiences. It presents ‘great’ opportunities for planner and design to image the ‘ideal’ city. Palermo new city planning, Beirut central district development and Rotterdam reconstruction all fall under the same category as open experimental field. Indeed, Kostof (1992) states,

“It is hard to know if Rotterdam center should be judged a success for the Modernists’ program of reordering the post-war cities of Europe. We have little to compare it with. But it does point up the fact that Modernism is only at home on clean slate sites, and is unable to make common cause with the remnants of previous urban orders.” (p. 264).

Moreover, reconstruction of divided cities are strongly influenced by the marker of the division. The reconstruction of the city is directly related to the redevelopment of peace within the citizen. Demarcation lines, walls or “Green Lines” play an important role in the remaking, rethinking and redesigning of the cities even after their reunification. The perception of these areas influences the social, political and geographical image of the city, and the interaction between its different sections. In Berlin, for example, comparing the city before 1989 and after is almost impossible “Today, 20 years later, it is hard to understand what this part of Berlin’s historical center looked like” (Harder, 2009). Moreover, there are ongoing debates about the survival of cultural memory in the context of the 20th century popular culture often identified with mass culture. The future and (re) development of monumental spaces reveal a more difficult task of a process of remembering and forgetting. Thus, “a reconstruction on this scale cannot fail to have social and political consequences” (Kostof, 1992, p.249). Post-war reconstruction is a complex development of peace making, peace planning and reconstruction. Strong effort has been given to this process and has been reported by many authors in their analysis. Charlesworth (2006) studies three divided cities and their attempts to build up peace and reconciliation. While analyzing the different results of each study she developed the role of architects “Architects can assist peace-making efforts in the period immediately after conflict, when partition lines demarcate the boundaries of each warring territory and each party tries to consolidate its shift into its (former) enemy’s space (p.3). This same role is expressed by Brand (2009): “Design cannot solve conflict. Design must not be neglected in reconciliation efforts”. In other words, architects, planners, urban designer and landscape architects develop an important role in the planning for peace in divided cities (Bollens, 2007; Bollens, 2012; Morrissey & Gaffikin, 2006; O’Dowd, 2009). Furthermore, the physical reconstruction should be accompanied by social initiatives for healing the wounds. Often, artistic movements were used in the peace building such as sculpture, postcard and filmography (Koureas, 2010; Hadjitomas & Joreige, 2003; Sehnaoui, 2002, Sehnaoui, 2006).

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 MAIN ISSUES

“Division – whether it is physical or psychological – is an extremely difficult emotion that spawns hatred, grief, denial, depression and forgiveness” (Bollens, 2012, p.5). In the general discourse on divided cities, the existence of a present conflict or the memory of a past one is always assumed. These cities suffer from a physical separation often accompanied by spatial destruction. People experience a feeling of belonging and a construction of otherness in territorial terms. However, at the end of the conflict, different discussions and debates take place concerning the reconstruction and the redevelopment of these cities. Thus spaces in such cities face an important dilemma: what is their future after the unification of the city?

An important example of such situation is the case of Postdamer Platz. Located at the dividing wall in Berlin, the fall of the wall provoked unprecedented discussion on the (re) construction of the area. Architects and planners were fighting in order to get a piece of land to develop, to the extent of privatizing public spaces for investments (Allen, 2006). This example, among many others reveals, the role of Architects as potential peace-builders. Thus an obvious question arises: Is architecture of peace possible? and is the architectural input in peace building successful?

This broad question has been the focus study of several scholars – Brand, 2009; Bollens, 2012; Calame & Charlesworth; 2009, Charlesworth; 2006 to name a few. The aim of their approach is looking at the impact, role and consequences of conflict in divided cities and the role of architecture and urban planning in their post war development. They often criticize, praise and analyze the consequences and impact of these redevelopments. However, they also agree on the role of architecture as process and as part of a larger program for peace building including social and psychological healing. Within this ongoing discussion, it is important to study at the impact of such peace planning on a smaller scale. Looking at monuments and monumental spaces, it is obvious to ask: how does the peacemaking potential of architecture can be exploited in the (re) development of public spaces in the city? In other words, what role should or can architecture play in order to participate efficiently in the

socio-spatial reconstruction of the city. This approach sheds more light on social, spatial and political aspect of the reconstruction as well as the past history and identity these spaces. Thus such a question requires a historical approach to the space, and a present analysis in order to understand and look for future expectations and recommendations.

3.2 THE CASE STUDY

Beirut's history was shaped by the many civilization that dominated it. The recent archeological excavations reveal multiple strata of its initial urban character and political role (Gavin & Maluf, 199; Saliba, 1991; Saliba, 2003; Yassin, 2012). While the archeological interest and findings in Lebanon are not a recent interest (see for example the work of Renan, 1864), on going debates and studies are still struggling to find the original planning of the city (Marriner, Morhange & Saghieh-Beydoun, 2008). Beirut became the center for many civilizations that settled and enrich the social, spatial and political character of the area (Yassin, 2012). Thus, the urban planning of the city is a combination and superposition of different element from these civilizations. Examining the city during the medieval and Ottoman ear shows the continuous alternation of its role and character (Bucciati-Barakat, 2004; Davie, 1996; Moystad, 1998; Nasr & Verdeil, 2008; Yassin, 2012).

Since the late 19th century, the role and image of the city changed drastically. The strategic location of the city impacts its economic, social and political role, leading to a fast growth and urbanization. The city benefited from a multi-confessional population, coexisting in its different neighborhoods (Buccinati-Barakat, 2004; Davie, 1996; Yassin, 2012). However, tension have been built up in Beirut since 1958 (after conflicts between Christian pro-western president and Arab nationalist supported by the prime minister involving US military intervention), reaching its climax in 1975 with direct tension between Muslim-leftist with their Palestinian allies on one side and Christian militias on the other. As violence, on both sides, were directed against civilian, and attacks on urban neighborhoods, many citizens moved to more homogenized neighborhoods namely Christian dominant on the east and Muslim-leftist on the west. Physical barriers were placed as a 'demarcation line' – 9km long fortified path stretching from Martyrs' Square, the foremost public space in the historic center, toward the refugee camps in the periphery (Calame & Charlesworth, 2009; Silver,

2010). Moreover “enclaves were likewise defined and protected by semi-permanent walls” (Calame & Charlesworth, 2009, p.38).

The Martyrs’ Square, as a monumental space with strong historical and cultural significance has been largely studied. Indeed, numerous studies represent the iconic image of the square as a symbol of revolution, as a cosmopolitan sphere where multi-ethnic groups meet, as symbol of national unity and memorial - Khalaf (1993 & 2006); Khalaf and Khoury (1993); Sarkis and Rowe (1998); Tuein and Sassine (2000); Yassin (2010 & 2012). Its history and development became an emblem to the inhabitant of the city and the citizen of the country. It proves that this cultural monument slowly came into being, as such. The Ottomans intentionally developed the square as a central area of the city - the development of the public square in the 1880ies, brought life, prosperity and development to the space, and unintentionally gave it its monumental aspect (Tueini and Sassin, 2000). On the other hand, while the square gained its significance with the development by its economic, social and cultural functions, when it became a demarcation line, a different perception of the space developed. The square was studied as a line of demarcation, a symbol of a divided city, a place of fear and terror – Dados (2009); Khalaf (1993). The location of the square on the demarcation line, put it at the mercy of militias that performed acts of urbicide and voluntary destruction. Dados (2009) points out missing field of research concerning the square namely: “the square as a line of demarcation, as a place of fear and terror, as a site of death” (p.169). The square evolved from marginal space to monumental square to ‘a physical void’. There is an absence of space, enhanced by psychological amnesia. It is the result of a reflective nostalgia. “In part, it would appear that a form of amnesia that culminates in a vital void at the centre of the city is also a product of a reflective nostalgia resulting in the creation of multiple competing histories that bypass a central authority on memory” (Sarkis, 2006, p.22).

3.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTION

3.3.1 Reconstructing the MS. Beirut has, in the last decades, been the symbol of ‘war destroyed city’ as well as the symbol of reconstruction, and booming tourist destination (Nasr & Verdeil, 2008). The reconstructed site of Solidere covers an area of 191 ha of land,

of which 118 ha are the historical city center and the rest have been reclaimed from the sea. It is commonly described as the most important architectural reconstruction project since the reconstruction of European cities after the Second World War in 1945 (Gavin & Maluf, 1996). The city center developed as a commercial and cultural center with shops, restaurants, hotels, cafés, bars and nightclubs, as an economic center with office buildings, and as a political center with governmental offices and the parliament. However this development cannot be generalized in the whole city.

While Beirut city center restoration area was slowly being completed, marks of the war are still visible in the rest of the city. The reconstruction of the city center created an ambiguity in comparison with the rest of the city. Indeed, many areas especially along the Green Line are still bearing visible scars of the 'dark period'. The Martyrs' Square, in particular was victim of important destruction, and its future is blurry. Indeed the proposed design for the square is still sketchy and its development is at the heart of active debates.

The profit-oriented development of Solidere, did not succeed in creating a common shared space for the society (Hoeckel, 2011). The divided cultural identity fails to be regroup and reorganized the space of Lebanon and Beirut (Cook, 2002; Larkin, 2010; Nagel, 2002; Nasr, 2008; Ragab, 2011). Sarkis (2006) in his approach to the Martyrs' Square in Beirut studies the way to revitalize the public square, and regain its 'lost' energy. It was generally agreed that the revitalisation process would go through the development of daily activities avoiding "the hyper-programming approach, the "theming" of activities and scripting of urban life" (Sarkis, 2006, p. 6). Thus the success of the square will depend on the uses of the public space and its open interpretation by the users and the change of the interpretation over time, and that the role of the designer is to orchestrate the component of urban space to allow for these potential to be played out. In his opinion, the designer faces three challenges. First the idea of orchestrating the different components of the site and all potential dimensions of urban life, second the challenge to move from large empty urban spaces into shaping the public space into usable, rich social activities, and third the nature of decision-making about public spaces in today's cities rarely allows for total control over complex intermodal and multifaceted public space.

3.3.2 The ongoing debates. Since the early 20th century, the importance of Martyrs' Square as a multicultural space where social, cultural, economic and political activities was enhanced. The square strategic location, outside the city walls, in the heart of the late ottoman Beirut, and directly on the Green Line, gave the square a particular destiny of sparkling development and absolute destruction. The events it witnessed made it an icon of Lebanese independence and sovereignty. The redevelopment of the Martyrs' Square could be perceived as the main spatial healing for the society. However, Solidere muted action in the space limits the hopes for the development of a space of cohesion.

The (re) development of the Martyrs' Square initiated multiple conferences and debates concerning its future design, image, perception and expectation for the new square. The different participant of such debates can be divided into three main groups.

The first one is of course Solidere. In the original vision for the Martyrs' Square, it is imagined as a major boulevard for the city. The modified plans of Dar el Handassa kept the concept of the 'Grand axis of Martyrs' Square', but did not propose a plan for its implementation. Therefore, Solidere launched an international competition aiming for the development of the new square, in 2004. This competition was organized by Solidere and supervised by the Union of International Architects. The Union has very clear rules on international competition including the selection of the jury. Thus Solidere was excluded from the competition jury and the only intervention they could do was to give criteria on what they would like on the winning scheme. Therefore this organization gives Solidere the liberty of management of the winning project. In other words, Solidere is not bound to execute the project that was won. The winning project of a Greek team of architects is however used as a base map for the development of the space.

The second group in this debate is the municipality. The area of the martyrs' square is a public domain and the municipality have the intention of building a parking space hosting 2 000 parking space. The municipality has this project since almost the end of the civil war and is until now trying to find the proper mechanism to do it. In cooperation with Solidere and Khatib and Alami (a design company), the municipality is looking at the different elements to be taken into consideration (entrances and exits, possibly of greenery, water tanks...). Thus the role of the municipality is primordial in the development and it can easily modify

and change the development.

Finally the third group in this debate is the general public including urban planners, architects and landscape architects, as well as socialists, historians, journalists, writers and citizen in general focusing on both the physical development and the social character of the space. Often this group is divided between those who are looking to the future and imagining a new space and the development and those longing for the past history of the square as a prewar situation of the square. It is important to mention that this group has so far been excluded from the general discussion on the development of the city and the square. The diversity of such a square makes its study both challenging and engaging.

The Martyrs' Square, as a monumental space with strong historical and cultural significance, has been studied intensively. Numerous studies represent the iconic image of the square as a symbol of revolution, as a cosmopolitan sphere where multi-ethnic groups meet, as symbol of national unity and as a memorial (Khalaf, 1993; Khalaf, 2006; Khalaf and Khoury, 1993; Rowe and Sarkis, 1998; Tueini and Sassine, 2000; Yassin, 2010; Yassin, 2012). On the other hand, while the square gained its significance with the development by its economic, social and cultural functions, when it became a demarcation line, a deferent perception of the space developed. The square was studied as a symbol of a divided city, a place of fear and terror (Dados, 2009; Khalaf, 1993). Moreover, many researches deal with post war reconstruction and peace building (Bollens, 2012; Charlesworth, 2006; Sarkis, 2006; Rowe and Sarkis, 1998). However, little research tackles the study of the actual perception of the Martyrs' Square, its use and analysis considering the post war planning of the city and the role of public spaces in the abolition of social boundaries in divided cities. These are the gaps that I intend to fill by this research.

This study of the Martyrs' Square falls in the ongoing debate focusing on the future use of the square and the post-war reconstruction of the city centre. The research seeks to bring together the different angles of approach in order to develop a complex image of division within the urban space and of the (im) possibility of designing an attractive shared space, and therefore to understand how the redevelopment of an iconic site reflects upon its history, identity, social interaction and perceptions of the past and the present. Thus, the aim of this research is to understand place-making in monumental terms, to shed more

light on the role played by architects and planners in post-war reconstruction as well as the power of monument, particularly in divided cities.

3.3.3 The research question. This research studies the potential development for monumental spaces in divided cities for the contribution of peace. Thus in the particular case of Beirut, I am basing the research on is:

Can the redevelopment of the monumental space participate in the peace building and peace planning for the city?

Knowing the important pre-war character of the space, a space of unity and cohesion, it can be assumed that the redevelopment of the space as its pre-war situation can bring positive inputs to its successful future. Therefore, the guiding research question is:

Can the monumental space of the Martyrs' Square become again the social and political center of the city taking into consideration the spatial character of the space in relation to its tremendous history?

Through this research I am tackling different approaches to the city center and its open space by investigated the role, meaning and politics of space, and the way a square can separate or bring people together. I will look at the Martyrs' Square, emphasizing the prewar role of the square as the central square of Beirut, place of unity, reunion and communication, the war role of the square as the dividing element, in order to reflect on the post war destruction of the space and the planning for the future.

However, there are some concepts that I will not emphasize in particular, not because I do not consider them of importance but because I believe that these elements are part of a unique research approach and should be tackled using different methods, approaches and knowledge than my modest input. Such topics are the archeological importance of sites, the conservations, the reconstruction type – identical reconstruction or a new fabric for the city – the economic situation of the country, the different internal political struggle.

3.4 CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

3.4.1 Lefebvre production of space. In the introduction of their book *Thinking space*, Crang and Thirft (2000) point out the importance of looking at space and its theoretical understanding using geographical approach. The conceptualization of space in geography and sociology signifies the inquiring of the materiality of space, a closer approach to experience. Lefebvre approach to space is more extremist. He makes space as a central element. In his book 'The production of space' Lefebvre presents and defends what he calls spatioLOGY, involving "a rapprochement between physical space (nature), mental space (formal abstractions about space), and social space (the space of human action and conflict and 'sensory phenomena')" (Merrifield, 2000, p. 171). Lefebvre insist on the study of space as a combination these three domains. In this research, I will base my research on Lefebvre's analysis of social construction of space namely the perceived, the conceived and the lived.

The lived. Space lived is often associated with its images and symbols. It is the space of the users. Representational space thus reflects on the understanding of the space and its imagination. It looks at the feelings rather than the thoughts.

The conceived. The conceived space represents the space design and developed by professional and technocrats. This representation of space is often accompanied by visions, perceptions, and codifications produced and reproduced by the agents and actors. The representation of space is an integral part of the society 'tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). In other words the planner and designer of the space "identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38).

The perceived. "Spatial practices structure everyday reality and broader social and urban reality, and include routs and networks and patters of interactions that link places set aside for work, play and leisure" (Merrifield, 2000, p. 175). In other words, the perceived space is the understanding of space through a society in general. It is the space of action and interaction.

3.4.2 Expected outcome of the research. This research is intended to contribute to debate about post-war reconstruction of divided cities. Its results can be used to prescribe changes to improve and develop the current situation. The Martyrs' Square is a case study that can be relate to similar situations in other divided cities around the world, and can therefore provide a solid basis for studying other similar cases. This critical approach to the case study, points out inappropriate approach to such a situation and can serve as lessons for other cases. Moreover, the case of the Martyrs' Square shed the light on many issues of relevance for the (re) development of the square.

3.5 METHODOLOGY

3.5.1 Research design. This research is an understanding of monumental public space in post-war divided cities. It deals with the reconstruction of the space, the perception, use and image of the space as well as the expectations and potentials for the revival of the space, as it pre-war character and success. The purpose of this research is to examine and evaluate the present, the probable and the possible future for the square in relation to the historical events around it and the memory of the past. Thus, this descriptive type of research is designed to deal with complex social issues. It aims to move beyond getting facts in order to make sense of the myriad human, political, social, cultural and contextual elements involved.

Because of the nature of information gathered – people's opinion, feelings, ideas, traditions, memory, perception, image, to name a few – a qualitative approach is appropriate. Qualitative data is based on words, which are difficult to quantify, or being translated in numbers. It “adopts an interpretive approach to data, studies ‘things’ within their context and considers the subjective meanings that people bring to their situation” (de Vaus, 2009, p.10).

This research is a case study, as an approach for studying a socio-spatial and political phenomenon through a thorough analysis of an individual case. Thus, the data and information gathered are relevant to the case of Beirut and the Martyrs' Square. However, since the case of a monumental space is typical for divided cities in general, relevant generalizations may be made based on this analysis.

The data collected arise from three focus groups of interest in this research namely,

the users and the none-users of the space of the Martyrs' Square, professionals taking into considerations the real estate company dealing with the redevelopment and designing of the space, and architects and planner working or reflecting on the development of the city, and the governmental, state body. Each category is understood through different actors and agents in the society, each presenting a different point of view, vision and approach to situation.

3.5.2 Type of data collection. The types of data collected were both primary and secondary data. Each type of data collection offers a different approach to the topic and thus, used together allow for a holistic understanding and analysis of the topic from different point of views and approaches. The combination of these two data collection allows for a general understanding and analysis of the topic at different levels and point of view both lived, experienced, expectation and development.

The primary data collection used was observation both participatory and not participatory. Observation is a useful way of collecting information regarding the interaction and behavior of people in space, information that is not easily obtained through questionnaires or interviews. While the secondary data are based on interview conducted in order to retrieve information about earlier research (most of the time unpublished), as well as literature review from different sources such as mass media, newspaper articles, books and personal records, manuscript. This method was useful in order to extract information already collected by other researchers and scholars as well as historical information and publications.

Observation and unstructured interviews. In December 2011, I conducted non-participant observation in the Martyrs' Square. These primary observations were used as a test for the rest of the fieldwork, thus I allowed myself to experiment different approaches, locations and possibilities. During these few visits to the space (5 times in total) I noted peoples' movement and behavior in order to better understand their spontaneous use the space, while myself trying to behave in a way that would not reveal my researcher approach and thus indirectly influencing their behavior. In other words, I was a complete observer, invisible for the user of the space. For example, I sat in the only café in front the statue facing the square, or near the parking space on the other side of the square. Thus

while not being directly in the square, I believe that my influence on the users of the space was minimal. However I was struck by the little spatial interaction with the space. In fact, almost none of the users of the space were actually using it; they were just crossing it. Based on this initial observation of the space, I develop a preliminary assumption that people do not use the Martyrs' Square in for particular reason unknown at this point. Therefore for the fieldwork in April I adopted a slightly different approach. I developed a comparative between the Martyrs' Square and other public spaces in the city, in order to understand people's point of view and behavior. In each of the spaces I was observing the general behavior, and pattern of movements of the users of the space while myself acting like a user, and at time I talked with the people in the space and conduct unstructured interviews.

The public spaces that I selected were based on different criteria. First, I selected space open to the public at any time of the day and of the year. Thus I disregarded the Pine Forest that is not open to the public, Gardens in Achrafieh (Jesuit Garden, Sioufi Garden, Mar Mitr Garden to name a few) that are closed at the sunset (around 5:00 pm in the winter and 7:00pm in the summer). The only exception in this selection was the Sanayeh Garden. The reason for this exception is based on the importance of this garden as a major public space in the city often mentioned in the literature review and through the interviews I conducted. Second, although I tried to look at all the spaces in the Municipality of Beirut, I intentionally took out gardens and neighborhood parks that did not have any connection or influence on the space of the Martyrs' Square whether historically or in today' city. It could be argued that this selection is bias, however most of these parks and gardens are relatively small and act more like a neighborhood garden rather than a space with influence at the metropolitan scale. Third I intentionally looked at most of the public space within the Solidere master plan – such as Gebran garden, Debbas Square, New water front ... - because these space are treated differently at the national level in comparison with the rest of the space in the city both in term of design and maintenance, and the Martyrs' Square is also a space t o be developed by Solidere. Figure 3.1 is a map representing the locations of the public spaces that I was visiting.

I visited the sites regularly during the month of April and at different time of the day. Luckily, the political situation was stable in comparison with the events that took place

in late-May/early-June of the same year. Therefore political instability was limited as an external factor that could affect the use of these spaces. Also, in term of weather, April was a relatively dry period, mostly, with temperature ranging between 15 and 25 degrees Celsius; thus it can be considered as an ideal time to be outside.

In the public spaces I visited, the division between participatory and not participatory observation is blurry. I was interested in recording the behavior of people and their perception of the space they are using. In most of the spaces, I tried to behave as discreetly as possible most of the time hiding recording elements such as camera, voice recorder, often visiting the space with another person, or with a book or even while practicing sport activities such as jogging and running. Thus I acted as a complete participant user of the space. However, some days I was coming with visible recording material – video-recorder, camera, and voice-recorder. It is generally agreed that with such visible elements, the behavior of people might change knowing that they are being observed. However this contrast was very interesting in order to compare the two situations. At this point, it is important to mention that at the Martyrs' Square, and most of the other space in Solidere it was difficult to get entire not-participatory observation because of the lack of people around. Therefore the persons that I would see there I would often try to see their behavior and then try to talk to them.

The observations were recorded using different technique. I was using a camera or a video recorder especially when I was acting as a participatory observer. Also I was using voice recorder, recording directly my personal observations, sounds or particular events that can be useful. Also I was marking most of the observation in a booklet. Although I did take note of some quantitative information (approximate number of people, and their behavior), the notes were not consistent and exact thus I preferred not to analyze them as such.

The interviews I conducted with the users of the space were unstructured, based on two topics: on the one hand I was asking about the use of the space, the frequency, the general activities they were performing there, as well as their place of residence. On the other hand, I was directing the question about the Martyrs' Square, their perception of the place, their image and the reason behind their none-use of it as well as their idea behind its reconstruction. Often the discussions would lead to different direction than my intentions



Figure 3.1: Map of the public spaces for data collection (map courtesy of Solidere)

and sometimes I was questioning small group of people at once. I would like to note that I was mainly talking with people in Arabic, an advantage considering that most of the people would be able to answer me, but also a disadvantage because some of the person I would talk to would try ask where I come from and why I am interested in their opinions. As one person told me “You are not from the government nor from Solidere, so why would I talk to you” (men, interview, personal translation). The majority of these interviews were voice-recorded, with the exception of some interviewees that did not want to have their voices recorded. Also most the interviewees did not accepted that I would take a picture

of them, however they did not mind that I would take picture of them as a small element of the landscape.

The choice of talking with people using public spaces in the city (including Solidere) is a crucial element for understanding their approach to the Martyrs' Square. In other word, their behavior in space, their (not) use of the square and their expectation about public spaces. These interviewees are also interesting to look at in term of spontaneous approach to the site. Indeed, among the people I interviewed, almost no one has though about this topic further away than some social discussions.

Semi-structured interviews. In support of this participatory observation, I conducted in-depth interviews with 15 people that I could divide in two categories. The first category consists of people having a direct impact on the square such as Solidere, members of the municipality, some members of the Jury for the competition, in general influential people in the development of the square. The second category includes scholars and professionals who focus on the issues surrounding the Martyrs' Square and the reconstruction of Beirut's city center and public space at large. The 'professional interviews' where often meetings – either in their offices or in coffee places – that lasted around one hour, three of the communications were done by email due to other constraining factors. The choice of the different person was first based on work they published regarding the topic, and second based on recommendation by other professionals. Thus one interview often led to other contacts. The interviews were of a non-standardized, semi-structured nature. This allowed me to collect relevant qualitative information while allowing respondents the flexibility to pursue topics related to their interest and expertise. The interviews were all recorded, thus facilitating the analysis of the data.

Georges Arbid. Professor of Architecture at the American University of Beirut – commented largely on the modern architecture of Beirut, Solidere approach to the city, the implementation of their plan and their argumentations, and today result of the city. He also gave some insight and impression about the design competition for the square – he himself presented a project.

Elie Haddad. professor of architecture at the Lebanese American University – was directly involved in the reconstruction of Beirut and the development of the Souks, his

approach to the Martyrs' Square was often compared to the development of the New souks. In his words Solidere is a successful company in term of planning and restorations, however the social impact on the city is very critical. Haddad also, gave direct comments on the winning project, regretting he did not analyze the short listed project as he did for the Souks.

Amira Solh. Senior urban planner at Solidere – gave an insider perspective to the project and its developments. She presented the different expected projects for the areas around the square, as well as the critics and problems behind the implementation of the Greek design.

Jala Makhzoumi and Bachar el Amin. Both landscape architects – gave me some inputs concerning the different open spaces in the city in relation to the Martyrs' Square. They also discussed the social space in the city compared to similar spaces in the UK and France – due to their personal experience and life in these two countries.

Rahif Fayad. Architect and planner – was responsible of the master planning of the southern suburb of Beirut after the 2006 Israeli attacks. Thus he compared Solidere project to the one of Jihad el laamar – construction struggle. In his word he states “in Hareit Hreik and the other cities, we reconstructed for the people who were living there before, Solidere reconstructed for foreign investor and rich people. Not at all those who were living in the city before”. Fayad belongs to the generation who lived the pre-war city center, thus his discussion were often marked by personal memories and experience of the space. Also, he retraced the historical planning evolution of the city, pointing out his different argument and vivid discussions with Henri Eddé. His approach was very critical to anything concerning the square.

Hala Abbas. is a landscape designer and agriculture engineer whose office is located close to the Martyrs' Square. Although she did not comment largely on her professional approach to the space, she was relating experience and social behavior in the space by the way she was personally using or the way she was looking at it from her window.

Mazen Haidar. Architect specialized on restoration and cultural heritage – worked on many project concerning the memory of the space. He was presenting his findings about the different tangible and intangible transformation of the square. He approach was focused

on the remembrance and development or loss of the memory for people. Nasser Yassin - researcher and practitioner in urbanism, peace and conflict – studied in particular the perception of public space according to the different religion. In his findings he noticed an increase percentage of people using multicultural approach for working and professional purpose however when it comes to familial and social space they would rather move to monocultural spaces. In his approach, this is a direct impact on the social multicultural space of Beirut, which, in his opinion, does almost not exist.

Finally in communicated with three other person through emails – Samir Khalaf (sociology), Hashim Sarkis (architect) and Bernard Khoury (architect). Due to their busy schedule or not presence in Lebanon they agreed to answer some questions through email. As well as a communication on the phone with the director of the landscape architect department in the municipality of Beirut. This way of communication was more difficult as it limits to possibility of engaging directly with the other. In the three cases they also send me some documents concerning the space, and their writing about it.

Literature analysis. On the difference to the literature analysis conducted for the theoretical framework of this research, this literature analysis consist of a different type of data, often not available online. Indeed I was consulting newspaper archives (An Nahar, L'Orient le Jour, Ad Diyar, Al Joumhouria...), conferences recording (mostly from the American University of Beirut), unpublished books, or researches (most of which I could borrow form interviewees, or I found in the library of the American University of Beirut), as well as videos, recordings, photographs, maps and movies (often found in bookshops, and dvd rental places).

3.5.3 Data analysis. The analysis of the data was done manually without the use any type of software. Although most of the software offers great advantages, it was for my case a time consuming procedure. The non-standardized interviews and the different type of responses gave a very broad range of raw data that was difficult to codify and put into groups, and thus take much more time than what could have been done manually. Therefore for the analysis of the data, I first was listening to the interviews, recordings and videos a couple of times, and then I would summarize it and group the main concepts or ideas. Thus, I was able to form my argumentations based on the fieldwork data.

4. THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVOLUTION OF THE CITY CENTRE AND THE SQUARE.

Located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, Lebanon is a small Levantine country covering 10,452km². The country with its actual borders is only 70 years old, created after the fall of the Ottoman Empire by the French mandate. Regardless of its youth as a state, the history of the area is millenniums old. Indeed, Lebanon's strategic geographical location at the crossroad between the east and the west, developed with social, spatial and political qualities of mixed background that concurrently flourished the country with commerce, exchange and development, and destructed its structure. In geographical terms, most of Lebanon's area is mountainous terrain (73% of the total area) perched on two mountainous ranges called the Lebanon and the anti-Lebanon chains, with a valley in the middle - the Beka'a.

Beirut, located on the Mediterranean Sea, was a small harbor city with secondary importance. However, since 19th century, the city developed as the economic, social, and political center of the region for the Ottoman Empire, and later (in 1920) became the capital of the country. Unfortunately, extreme violence in April 1975 marked the start of a sixteen years civil war, leading to urban destruction, and spatial and social division of the city and its inhabitant (Calame & Charlesworth, 2009). Ethnical violence took place on the Lebanese territory opposing different political and religious party which number reach the maximum of ninety individual armed groups (Charelsworth, 2006). Beirut today tries to find the balance between the post-war reconstruction of its historic center and the post-modern growth of the city.

Located at the heart of the capital, the Martyrs' Square, also known as Sahat el Bourj, Sahat el Madfaa and Sahat el Horriyah – translated from Arabic respectively into the 'Tower Square', the 'Cannon Square' and the 'Liberty Square' – plays an important role in the development of the city. This square has historically been the meeting point of locals and visitors alike; however, during the Lebanese civil war, it was transformed into a part of the "Green Line" dividing the city spatially, socially and politically. This chapter retraces the

historical evolution of the city and its space focusing on the development, destruction and reconstruction of the Martyrs' square in social, spatial and political terms.

4.1 THE HISTORIC DIMENSION

Today's Beirut city center, corresponds to the ancient Canaanite city of Birrayyuna or Birrayat - the name refers to a well or wells, due to its proximity to a River and the availability of underground water reserve (About Beirut Lebanon, History of Beirut, Lebanon, paragraph 4). Beirut became the center for many civilizations that settled and enrich the social, spatial and political character of the area (Yassin, 2012). Thus, the urban planning of the city is a combination and superposition of different element from these civilizations.

4.1.1 Ancient history.

The Phoenician origin. First mentioned in Tell el-Amarna tablet around 15 centuries ago, Beirut was a small harbor city inhabited by the Canaanite civilization. The Canaanites gained a reputation for their commerce and trade around the Mediterranean Sea as well as the production of the purple dye from murex seashells. Called Phoenicians by the Greeks, they mastered the art of navigation and innovated the maritime transport; they also spread the alphabet and numbers around the Mediterranean Sea. The Phoenicians were a pioneering civilization in spreading knowledge and commerce and bringing richness and prosperity to the country and its cities (Haddad, 2002; Origin of Phoenician, s.a.).

Numerous post-war archeological excavations in the city (1993-2000) "unraveled the various stage of Beirut's historic growth since the Bronze and Iron Ages" (Saliba, 2003, p.56). The oldest part of the city is known today as 'el tell' – the hill in Arabic - located just outside the historical wall of the city and north of the actual Martyrs' Square (Tabet, 2001c; Gavin & Maluf, 1996). Figure 4.1 represent the location of the Phoenician city, and the basic urban planning of the city under other dominations. This area forms a small creek protected from the southwest winds: an ideal location for the development of a harbor. The city of Beirut was of lesser importance for the Phoenicians in comparison to Byblos and Sidon – two major Lebanese cities for the Phoenicians located respectively north and south of Beirut – however, it was used as a resting point between the different expeditions (Sader, 1998 cited in Yassin 2011). Little survives in Beirut from that period other than a Phoenician wall and some scattered remnants, as we can see from figure 4.2 representing the Tell's

excavation area.

The Roman domination. Beirut became under Hellenistic influence from 333BC until the Roman general Agrippa conquered it in 64BC, and it remained part of the Roman Empire until 560AD (Davie, 1996; Hanssen, 1998). Beirut gained importance becoming a Roman colony in 15 BC and renamed 'Colonia Julia Augusta Felix Berytus' (Haddad, 2002; Saliba, 1991; Saliba, 2003). During that period, the Phoenician civilization managed to keep their trade business, benefiting from political protection from the Romans. The latter developed major construction works in the city's urban fabric. The most important are: the drawing of the Gridiron plan (Cardomaximus and Decaumus), the building of fortification walls, the construction of religious edifices (Temples, Basilica, Synagogue and Churches), the development of public work – an amphitheater by Agrippa I, a school of Law by Septimus Severus (253AD), and road networks – most of these constructions in the city centre are also visible in figure 4.1. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the areas became part of the Byzantine Empire, and later under Islamic and Crusaders rules.

The medieval period. The medieval period of Lebanon and Beirut is marked by four different rules namely the first Islamic rules (634-1110), the Crusaders rule (1110-1291), the Mamluk rule (1291-1520) and the Ottoman rule (1520-1918). Each civilization influenced the city and its development differently.

In the light of the Muslim caliphs' expansions Lebanon became part of the Damascus territory in 634AD - also known as 'Bilad el Sham'. Later, the area was persistently dominated by different Islamic rules – Ummayyad, Abbasid, Seljuks and many others – during which the role and importance of Beirut varied. Indeed, Beirut became the second most important city after Damascus in the 7th century, however it declined during the 8th century due to its distance from the new capital Bagdad (Saliba, 1991; Yassin, 2012). The Muslim population of Beirut increased while most of the Christian Maronites moved out of the city to areas high in the mountains, relying on agriculture for food and the steep mountains and valleys for protection (Saliba, 1991). The urban fabric of the city changed, strongly influenced by traditional Islamic city and organic pattern of growth: Mosques, bazars, khans and public bath were constructed.

During the 12th and 13th century Crusaders took control of Beirut on their way to the

holy lands. Beirut saw little modification in its urban fabric, the city pattern was kept and was fortified with walls and a seafront castle was built, “a typical measure in medieval cities” (Yassin, 2012). Key religious edifices were destroyed or transformed into churches. The development and use of the natural harbor enhanced port activities in exporting goods to Europe (Saliba, 1991). In 1291 AD, the Mamluks of Egypt conquered the Lebanese territory and drove the crusaders out permanently. The Mamluk rule was marked by an increased trade with Europe, the growth of small suburban settlements, and the development of the city as the main port of Damascus (Saliba, 2003; Yassin, 2012). In 1516 the Ottoman chase away the Mamluks.

Early Ottoman city. -During the early Ottoman rule, Beirut was a small-fortified coastal township with secondary political importance, and a population of around 4,000 inhabitants (Buccuanti-Barakat & Chamusy, 2011; Davie, 1996; Yassin, 2012). However, regardless of its small size, its minor economic and political importance and its very slow growth, Beirut flourished culturally and its urban elements testify of its important urban character.

Shaped as a North-South rectangle, the city possessed main characteristics of a major Arab city namely high density of inhabitants, city walls, fortifications and towers erected to protect the citadel, the residential area and the harbor. The densely populated intra-mural area contrasted with the outside agriculture zone, dominated by three main hills: Achrafieh at the southeast, Ras Beirut at the southwest and the seraglio hill at the west. Around the city walls, public areas were created as caravan stopping points, animal markets, gardens and public spaces, cemeteries and military zones. The Martrys' Sqaure was one of the most important of these areas. Figure 4.3 represent the map of the city and it's surrounding as drawn in mid-19th century, where we can notice the densely populated intra-mural area in comparison to the open fields around the city.

The city urban planning was divided into smaller administrative, economic and commercial framework created through souks (markets) of diverse artisanal work, most of which leading the public places (sahat) and to the seven main gates of the city (Davie, 1996). The numerous religious monuments mark the richness and the dynamic of the multi-confessional population. On the contrary to Jerusalem, Istanbul or Damascus, Beirut did not have any confessional

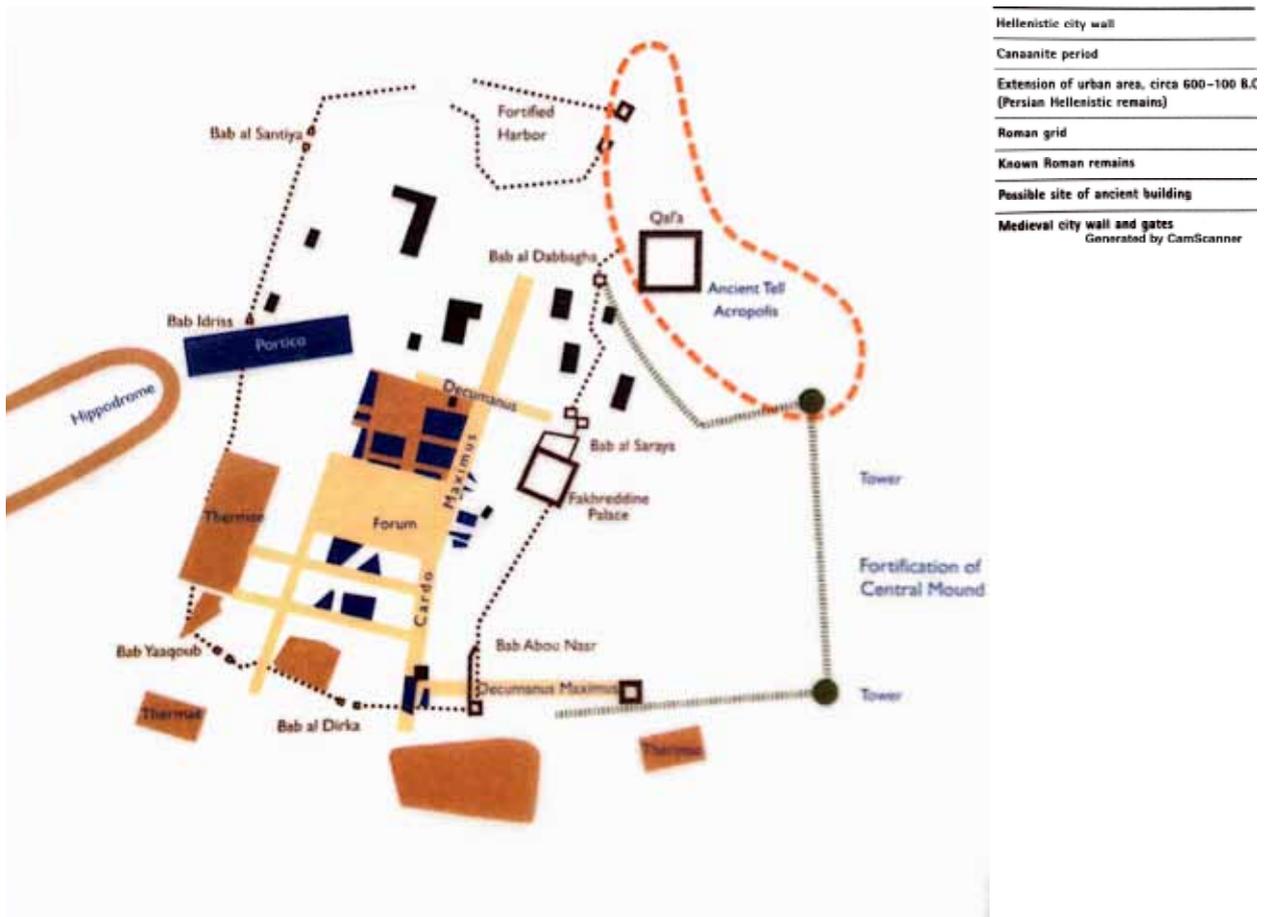


Figure 4.1: Archeological strata of Beruit (Saliba, 2003) CLEAR IMAGES



Figure 4.2: The Phoenician Tell (Courtesy of Solidere)

grouping in neighborhoods, Christians were scattered around the predominantly Muslim city (Buccinati-Barakat, 2004; Davie, 1996; Yassin 2012). The architectural construction of residential and commercial buildings enhanced the interconnection of professional and personal lives, marked by unclear limits between the private and the public sector, as we can notice in figure 4.4 (Davie, 1996).

4.1.2 Process of modernization.

Late Ottoman city. Since the mid-19th century, the city developed into an important maritime and land trade center for the region. Two major connections to the outside were emphasized: first maritime connection through the harbor allowing for the development of commercial relations to other important harbors such as Damiette, Alexandria, Izmir, Istanbul, and Genoa, and second inland connection through a network of road connecting the major cities on the coastline (Saïda, Tyr, Byblos) and inland (Chouf, Keserouan, Zahleh and Damascus toward the Arabic peninsula) (Davie, 1996). While becoming the principal harbor of Syria and an important connection point, Beirut lives an era of commercial, political and cultural soar. It became a new center for the Empire, and is turned into the capital of a wilaya in 1888— an administrative and military center for the Ottoman Empire, also known as a county. Moreover, since 1860, education became widespread, European and American missionaries founded schools and universities (the American University of Beirut – 1866, The Saint Joseph’s University and the Jesuit school – 1875); and new printing presses were put to work to publish many books and newspapers (Buccianti-Barakat, 2004). As a result of this newfound freedom of expression, a literary movement was born in Beirut, known as ‘an nahda’ - Arabic world for ‘awakening’ or ‘renaissance’. Industrials, diplomats, contractors and writers arrived to Beirut bringing technical and cultural support and help to the Lebanese population.

The economic, social and political developments of the city stimulated large and diverse immigration of people from villages searching for work opportunities (Buccianti-Barakat, 2004; Yassin, 2012). Among the new inhabitants were a large number of Christians who moved to the city after the massacres in Damascus and in Mount Lebanon in 1860 (Nasr & Verdeil, 2008). Beirut population grew amazingly fast during the second half to late-19th century: from 5000 people living in the city in the 1820, it reached more than 90 000 in 1888



Figure 4.3: Map of Beirut as it appeared in 1841 (Royal Engineers, 1841; as quoted in Marriner, Morhangea & Saghieh-Beydounb, 2008)

(Yassin, 2012).

This increase number of inhabitant led to an unprecedented fast urbanization of the city that expanded toward new neighborhoods. The city grew outside its walls, new neighborhoods were created, new landmarks were introduced and the walled city referred

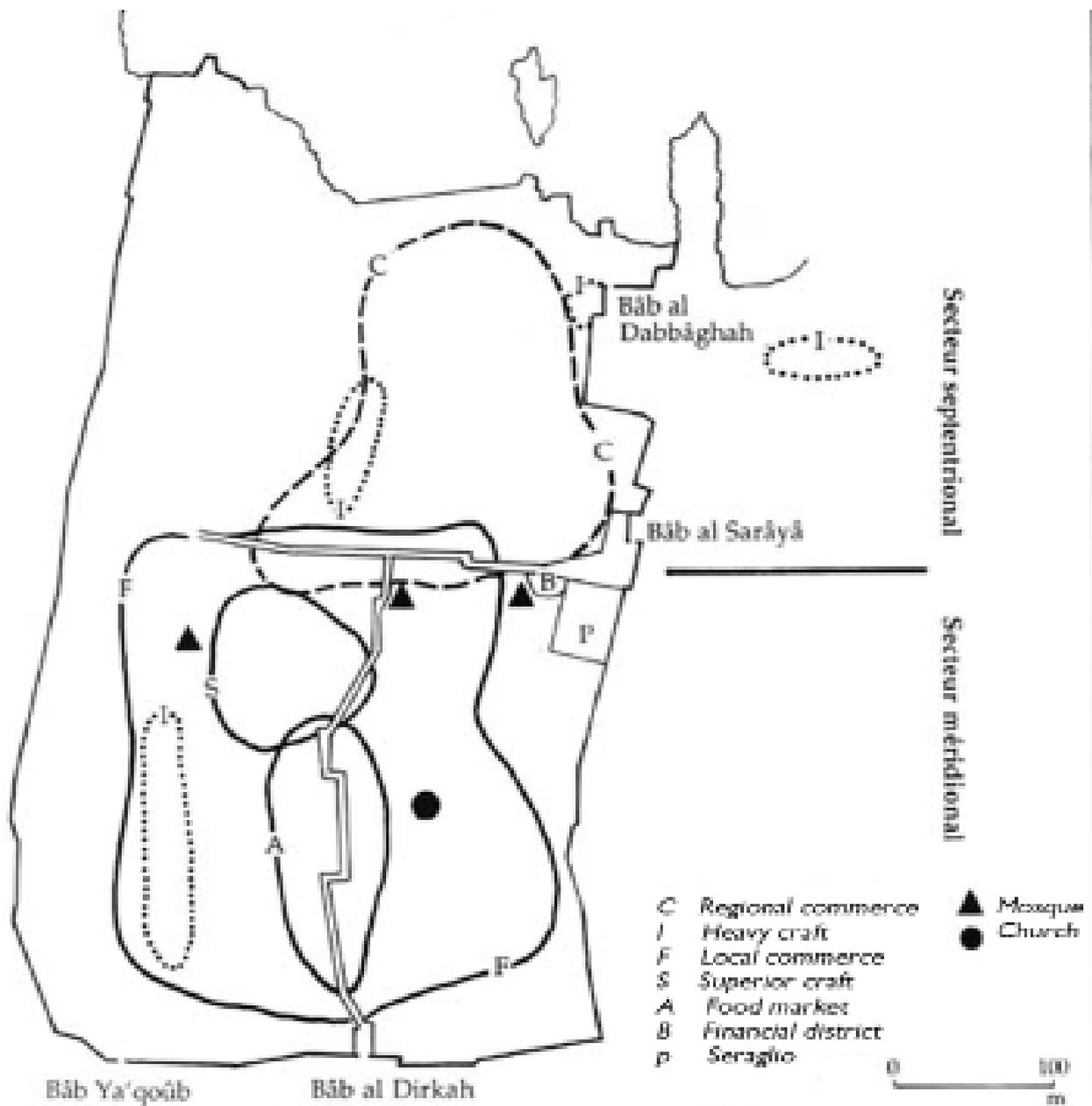


Figure 4.4: The spatial division of space based on the activities performed (Davie, 1996)

only to the city-centre area of Beirut. Figure 4.5 represents a map of Beirut from 1876; where we can notice the growth of the city outside the walls and the development of new urbanized clusters. These developments were concentrated on the major road axis – Gemayzeh and Achrafieh on the old Tripoli road, Ras el Nabeh and Nasra on the Damascus road and Basta, Zokak el Blat and Ras Beirut on Saida's road (Tabet, 2001a; Yassin, 2012). While the center remained multi-confessional, the new areas were to a certain extent more homogeneous: rich and educated Sunni and Christian Orthodox Beirutis settled in the southern periphery, whereas Maronites settled in Achrafyieh (east), and Christian Turkish and Armenian refugees in Bourj Hammoud (north), and on the west an intellectual elite neighborhood developed around the university (Barakat & Chamusy, 2011). These changes forced the Wali to reconsider the urban planning of the city center in order to cope with the modernization of the area. Thus, starting in the late 19th century, the Ottomans developed the first known plans for the city, aiming at transforming Beirut into a cosmopolitan city, highly westernized.

The origin and spatial development of the Martyrs' Square. Despite its strategic location for the Canaanites and the Romans, the “square's emergence as cosmopolitan urban center is of relative recent vintage” (Khalaf, 2006a & Khalaf, 2006b). Indeed, before the 19th century, the space occupied by the Martyr's Square did not exist yet. It was a clearing outside the medieval city wall of Beirut, usually referred to as maïdan - a Persian word meaning a town square – and mainly used as a “caravan-stating place” for travelers coming or leaving the city and for military purposes (military training and demonstrations) (Sarkis, 2006). Located East of the fortification, the actual Martyrs' Square was divided into different zones of different usage. The west, directly adjacent to the wall was a military area where a barrack and stables were located; the south, near the tower (el Bourj, from which the name of the square derived) was a promenade area; the gardens were located at the east (mazaat el Saifi), leading the road of Gemayzeh; and the north was the location of a Muslim cemetery and of pottery and tanning workshops (Tueini & Sassine, 2000). Figure 4.6 represents the map of medieval Beirut showing the division of the space.

The tower or el Bourj's date of construction is unknown, however it was renovated by Emir Fakhr ed Dine - a Lebanese prince from the mountains – in 1632 when he constructed

his palace on that same square – tower was thus known for a while as Fakhr ed-Dine’s tower (de Nerval, 1851/2000). The Martyrs’ Square at that time was at the edge of the city, where undesired activities would take place. It had a marginal role with limited and almost no influence on the rest of the city. Figure 4.7 gives a clear illustration of the square and the tower at the background.

In order to cope with the demographic growth in the late 19th century, the Ottoman Empire was first managing the space around the city walls and enhancing the connection between the city and the villages. Thus “the maidan slowly transformed into a large urban square” (Sarkis, 2006), and the open space around the wall became inhabited and used. In his essay, a French military Poujoulat described the square in 1861, comparing it to 23 years ago when he first visited it:

“It (the square) is 300 meters long and 500 large. It is there that the colored red, white

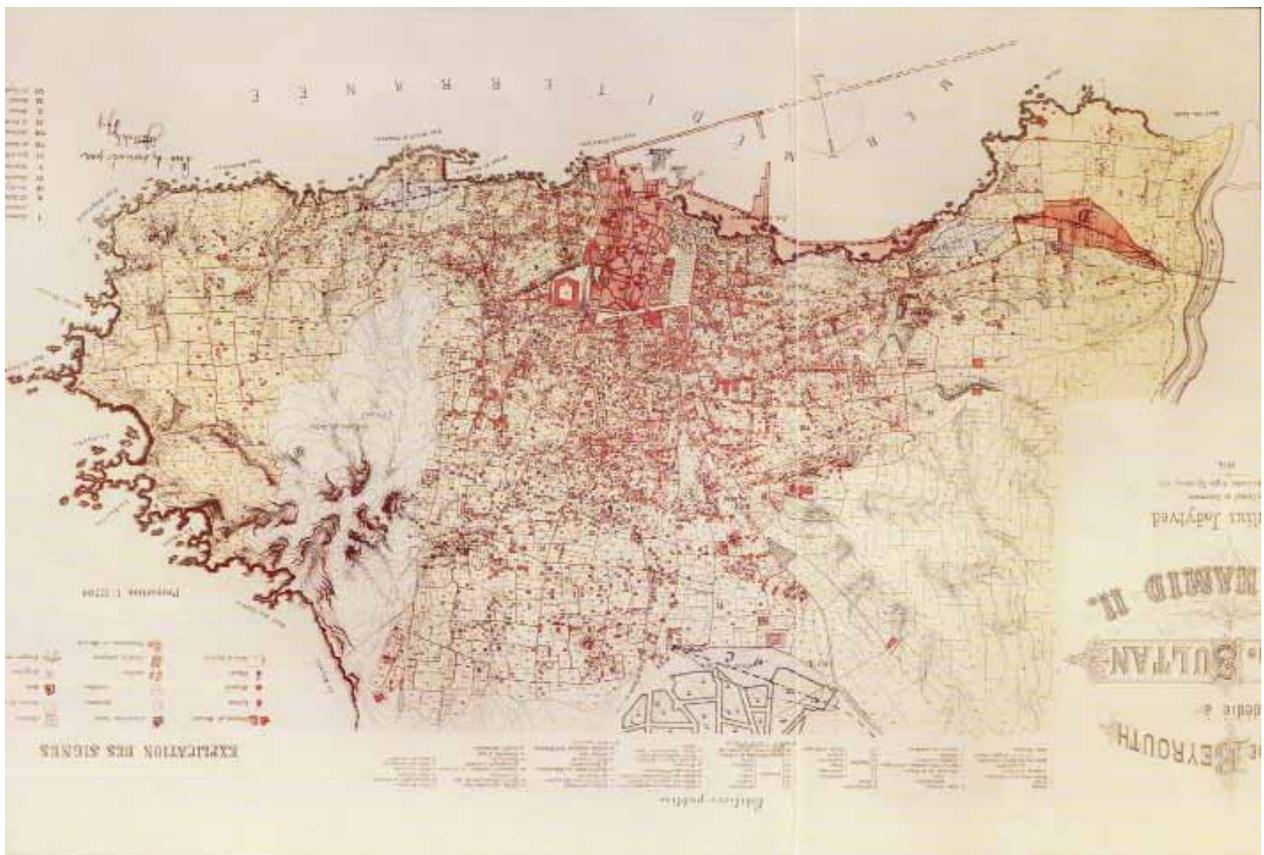


Figure 4.5: Map of Beirut in 1876 drawn by Lojtveld (Gavin & Maluf, 1994).

and yellow carriage stops, taking every quarter of an hour strollers to the Pine forest. However, these carriages did not exist 23 years ago, when I first visited the square. The square was a solitary, abandoned, dirty space with very small streets on the sides. We barely saw walkers, other than Arab traders, Christian or Muslims, passing by to sell their products. Sometimes we could see camels and mules caravans coming from Damascus or leaving from Beirut to Damascus. Everything has change now! We can see everywhere restaurants, cafes, stores and shops owned by French. (...).” (1861/2000, own translation)

Due to this fast development, the municipality of Beirut had the initiative to develop the space into a public garden. The idea was to create an attractive space similar to the gardens found in Europe and Istanbul, and more beautiful than the Azbakieh Park in Cairo (Davie, 2000). Lebanese engineers designed the garden and with the help of local donors, its construction finished in 1884. The garden had an oval shape with fences, fountains and alleys, planted with lush vegetation (see figure 4.8). Adjacent to the park, a new seraglio – headquarters of the Ottoman governor – was built, governmental and important companies offices were also built around the square such as the police station, the municipality building, the Ottoman bank and tobacco, gas and railway companies, as well as social and cultural buildings such as hotels, cafés and restaurants. The southern part of the square was paved and used as the caravan and omnibus stop point, and the starting of the road linking Beirut to Damascus. Also, many social activities took place – ambulant workers were using the space to offer their services such as hairdressers and cookies seller, kiosks and coffee places (Tueini & Sassin, 2000). This was the first time the space was transformed into a garden, thus evolving from an open space to a urban square.

New planning for the city. While a design for the Martyrs’ square was implemented since 1878, the rest of the city had to wait until 1914 to see the first physical changes in its urban fabric. The works done for the extension of the port in 1888 forced the contrast between the city intra-mural and the surroundings of the city wall. As Saliba (2003) argues

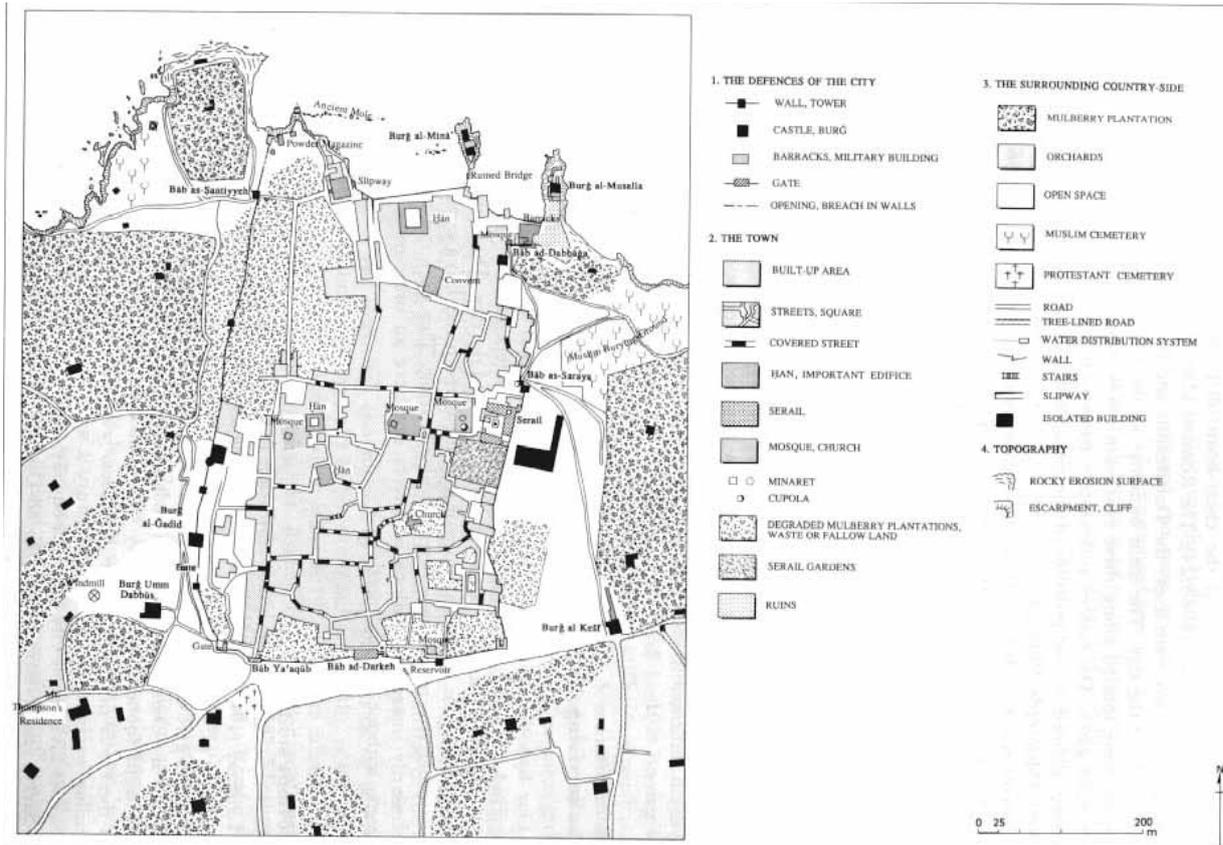


Figure 4.6: Map of Beirut in 1841, noting some detail of the construction of the space (Davie, 1996)



Figure 4.7: Drawing from an unknown artist, showing the square, during the 18th century. We can notice in the back the tower: a high stone building with very little windows. The Square is a large open area, surrounded by few construction, covered with bare soil and few planted trees or pines on the edge (Tueini & Sassin, 2000).

“In contrast with the works undertaken to enlarge and modernize the port, the old town was increasingly perceived as a barrier to the flow of people and goods” (p. 69). The Ottoman Empire decided to start developing plans for the new city center aiming for a modernization of the space and the creation of a better livable space (Tabet, 2001a).

The Ottoman planning created two perpendicular axis cutting through the city – one north-south starting at the port and the second east-west linking the major gates through the souks. However the implementation of this project was delayed due to political and religious problems, linked with the destruction of religious monuments (Saliba, 2003). At the eve of the First World War, the governor Jamal Pasha expropriated lands and buildings in the city center and ordered their demolition. The first to go were the souks shown with dotted lines in figure 4.9 (Tabet, 2001a). Since that period, the planning of Beirut was achieved through expropriation of land and the destruction of the existing urban fabric based on which new planning would take place. This same argument was also used to justify the post-war destruction and reconstruction of the city.

However, the intensification of the First World War and the weakening of the Ottoman Empire halted the process. During that period, socio-political changes in Europe affected the Lebanese people: the Ottoman Empire oppressed the Lebanese, the allies blockade the country from the west and the swarms of locust invading the country resulted in a huge famine where more than one quarter of the Lebanese population starve to death. A revolt against the Turks started and resulted in the hanging of Lebanese and Arab nationalists – 11 on the 21st of August 1915, 14 on the 6th of May 1916 and two on the 5th of July 1916 (Tuein & Sassine, 2000). As the role of the Union Square (previous name of the Martyrs' Square) was also an expression of power, and the location of Ottoman governmental offices, the hanging took place there. The hanging of the anti-ottoman activist gave the square the image



Figure 4.8: The Hamadiyeh Garden in 1890 (Tueini & Sassin, 2000)

of the revolution and protest – a role often reclaimed in 1958, 1968, 2000, 2005 and recently in 2012.

In other words, the growing urbanization of the city place el Bourj at the centre of the evolution. The square became not only an important political, economic, social and cultural node of the city, but also a major crossroads point, a place for military parades, expression of power and official manifestation.

4.1.3 The changes in the 20th century. At the end of the First World War, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and its areas were divided among the victorious states. In 1920, the French government proclaimed the creation of today's Greater Lebanon in Beirut.

The French Mandate period. In 1918, when the French authorities took over Beirut, they found a destroyed city as a result of an incomplete modernization project (Tabet, 2001a). The French mandate became the supreme power over the Lebanese state and contributed in the reconstruction and the improvement of the country in term of infrastructure, economy, education, governmental and juridical system, however they stayed

in control of the Lebanese political, economic and cultural powers. The city remained a regional intellectual capital, but also became a major tourist destination and a banking haven, with many visitors, and refugee coming for temporary or long-term periods. Thus, the population grew very fast; composed of both Lebanese rural families coming to settle in the city searching for job opportunities and security, as well as political refugees –Armenian, Syrian and Turkish, mostly Orthodox Christian, fleeing the Ottoman rules and Turkish regions.

While the growth of the city continues in a vertiginous way, major organization and restructuring took place both internally and at the national level making the capital of primary colonial importance. In 1921 international fair took place in Beirut's main square –Martyrs' Square and Étoile Square – marking a colonial importance of the city (Barakat & Chamusy, 2011; Tabet, 2001a; Tabet, 2001b).

Planning for the city. The first objective of the French was to revive and redevelop the city “through a colonial type urbanism” (Buccianti-Barakat, 2004). The French proceed in the planning of the city with neo-oriental style, dealing with the growth of the harbor, the remodeling of the city centre and the metropolitan area of Beirut.

The French period was marked by two planning strategies. The first one obviously targeted the reconstruction of the destroyed zones in the city center. Based on their vision and conceptual approach of the classism of the Grand Siècle (Grands aménagements et compositions équilibrées), the French

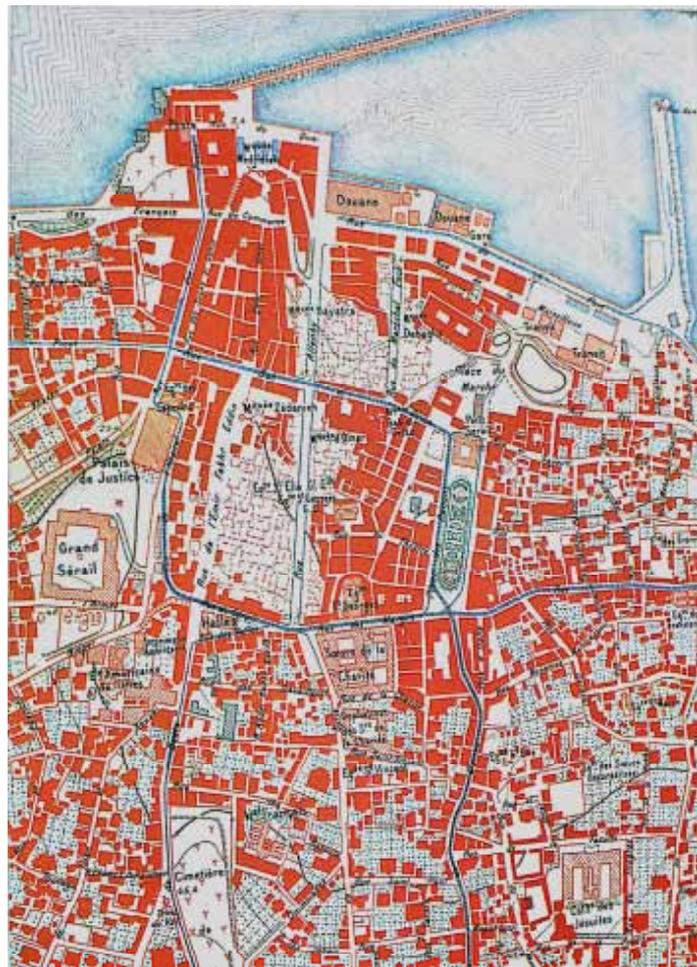


Figure 4.9 Plan of Beirut in 1920 showing the destruction of the city (Tabet et. al., 2001)

authorities developed the main road axis in the center - Foch and Allenby streets - a new radial square, a miniature replica of the Parisian Place de l'Etoile (Saliba, 2003; Tabet, 2001b), and a redesign of the Martyrs' Square (Barakat & Chamusy, 2011; Tabet, 2001a).

The development of the Place de l'Etoile was focused on the new parliament on the one hand and its connection with the Martyrs' Square through one of the radiant. However, this connection could never be achieved for one major reason: in order to execute two of its seven axes, two churches and a mosque would have to be destroyed (Fayyad, personal communication, 26.04.12; Tabet, 2001). The destruction of religious buildings is a very difficult task to achieve in Lebanon, and often results in contrasting construction.

As a result of this amputated Star, the souks were preserved for the moment - though only to be destroyed in 1982 – but this missing development created, according to Tabet (2001b), two separated squares: “From now on, the two squares will turn their back at each other, and ignore each other, separated by a compact uninterrupted construction mass: two spaces rival since their birth, as if they were destined to remain forever opposed” (own translation, p. 49) - see figure 4.10.

The Martyrs' Square. While Place de l'Étoile became the new political center of the city, the Martyrs' square kept its social and administrative role. Gradually, changes occurred in the city and the Square. First, redesigning the garden becomes a must for the hosting of the international fair in 1921, roads are enlarged and the garden space is made smaller (see figure 4.11). Second, the name imposed by the French – Place Pasteur – seems very detached for the history and event that happened in the square. Thus after many discussions between 1919 and 1931, the official name the square became Sahat el Shouhada (the Martyrs' Square). Third, a very controversial commemorative statue was erected in the square in 1930; representing two women (one Christian and one Muslim) mourning over their sons - after the independence of the country, the statue was destroyed overnight by an unknown source (see box 4.1 for the different status in the Martyrs' Square).

The second planning strategy of the French targeted the metropolitan zone of Beirut. The French high commissioner appointed two prestigious design bureaus for the development of a master plan for Beirut. Both attempted to develop suitable directives and planning for

the city, none of which was, however, implemented.

First, the Danger brothers – renowned French urban planners – were assigned the task to develop a new master plan for the city that would be able to host the increase in the seaport activity as well as the growing population (Saliba, 2003, Sarkis, 2006). The architects envisioned the development of centers outside the city wall, connected to each other through a ring. The ring would also connect these neighborhoods with the city center through the Martyrs' Square. The development of the square was assigned to another architect Delahalle, who proposes a great axis opened to the sea, marked by an obelisk in the middle of it (Sarkis, 2006) (see figure 4.12). It is in this project that a grand axis for the city and the opening of the Martyrs' Square to the sea were first mentioned.

A French planner, Michel Ecochard, developed the second project. Twice commissioned to produce a master plan for the city – in 1943 and 1963 – Ecochard considered the city center “a saturated entity in need of being relieved by a ‘healthy’ city in the outskirts” (Saliba, 2003, p. 47). Unlike the Danger brothers, Ecochard worked on the development of networks rather than the direct on shaping the city's space. Thus he emphasized the circulation network, enhancing the fast movement to and out of the city, and creating a bypass north of the Martyrs' Square, which would lose its transportation function (Sarkis, 2006; Tabet, 2001a). The two projects are similar in the fact that they transform the Martyrs' Square into a major urban boulevard, thus destroying the role of the space as an urban public square – a situation almost identical to the present one.

The structure of the city became composed of a residential belt surrounding the business and administration centre. Thus the new space is different than the preexisting



Figure 4.10: The development of Place de l'Etoile. Number 3 and 4 are two Churches (Saliba, 2003)

one: “it is less public or differently public. Reserved to a particular group, it establishes less interferences between the different societal groups of the population” (Davie, 1994, own translation). It goes without saying that modernism affected the development and the planning for the city, but it is not the purpose of this research to look deeper into the different propositions and development. However, it is important to mention that the city failed to develop an urban planning for its metropolitan area. Indeed, further away from the city center, this urbanization is not anymore synonym of development. A haphazard construction took place while the low-income neighborhoods developed lacking any organization, planning, and lacking various basic elements for a healthy living, thus becoming known as the ‘misery belt’ (Bucciante-Barakat, 2004; Fawaz, 2003; Harb, 2001; Martinez-Garrido, 2008; Yassin, 2010b; Yassin, 2012). As a result, No planning for the city was ever completed; leaving the suburbs at the mercy of architects and random development that would work in it as they please.

The Independence period. In 1943 the president Bechara el-Khoury called on a Muslim Sunnite, Riad el-Solh to form a Cabinet of Ministers. Together, these two men created the National Pact that defined Lebanon as an independent country with an ‘Arabic aspect’ and divided the political system of the country between the different confessions in the country. This move, along with other political event forced the French authorities to proclaim the independence of the country, marking the end of the French mandate (Rassemblement Canadien pour le Liban, 2004). Following the independence of Lebanon, the country enjoyed a postcolonial revitalization, a period of prosperity fueled by “Petro-Dollars” sent home by the Lebanese engineers and businessmen of the Arabic Gulf region, the development of tourism, agriculture and education. Thus, between 1943 (year of the independence) and 1975 (year of the start of the civil war), Beirut lived 30 years described as ‘les trentes glorieuse’. The banking secrecy and the vivid city life (casino, events and leisure activities) attracted many tourists from all over the world. Beirut was classified as a ‘modern’ city with economic, political and cultural importance.

In parallel to the development of the country, the urban planning of the city and the metropolitan area faced changes. Major geographic and demographic change occurred in the city. As more and more people were moving to the city - Greater Beirut reached more than one million inhabitants during this period (Yassin, 2010b)- the settlements expanded

around the capital reaching its close villages, and creating a metropolitan area of Beirut. A new center was developed in Hamra and the real-estate boom reflected on the huge urban expansion (Buccianti-Barakat, 2004). However, the rapid growth of construction damaged rapidly the spatial environment, dominated by the 'laissez-faire' policy where the planning were no more than general schemes.

The different developments and planning for the city and the metropolitan area of Beirut were often based on the vision and politics of the different presidents, and were continuously changing. Although some initiatives were developed for finding solution for the area, it soon appeared that the problem are more complicated than expected (Rowe & Sarkis, 1998; Tabet, 1993). Moreover, less prosperous suburbs developed creating a 'misery belt' around the city and enhanced the social injustice. A situation fueled by the political instability in the region, and the presence of Palestinians refugee in Lebanon, as well as of their guerilla. "This situation engendered resentment and allowed the militias to recruit among the frustrated youngsters, offering them an ideology based on fighting for their rights and taking their revenge" (Buccianti-Barakat, 2004)

In other words, the pre-war Beirut was a failure in terms of urban planning schemes. The fast urbanization of the city lacks any type of planning and organization of the space with more than one million people, or around 45 % of the Lebanese population, living in a space representing only 2% of the area of the country (Khalaf, 2006). The failed decentralization processes kept the centre as the major destination for many retails. The Martyrs' Square kept its popularity and it became the location of political demonstration for students, labors and political parties, the location of social activities and exchange. As Haddad (personal communication, April 12, 2012) argues "The Square was not the best designed place but it was a place that was working. It was place where you can find everything and meet".

4.2 THE WAR AND DESTRUCTIONS

The emerging random violence in 1975, first suspended the activity in the city and encourages social segregation within its population. Different combat and assaults affected the socio-spatial division of the city, and physical barriers were installed all over the city, forcing the separation. The Green Line divided the city into two main enclaves – the Christian on the east and the Muslim on the west. The division stretch from the old city

center, on the Martyrs' Square, along the Damascus and Saida roads. This "fortified path of approximately 9 km long and 18-19m wide, protected on either side by solid barricades of various dimensions"(Calame & Charlesworth, 2009). Figure 4.13 shows the division line in Beirut. Snipers shooting at any civilian that would cross it further enforced this division, creating a no-man's land of abandoned houses and growing lush vegetation. The historical center of Beirut has been particularly damaged. The downtown area, which represents the walled city, was plundered and destructed, with very little human activity taking place. The area that historically represented a unified multi-confessional Beirut is now serving the opposite role. Beirut multi-religious diversity and heterogeneous neighborhood doesn't exist anymore (Silver, 2010).

As soon as the hostilities started in 1975, the Martyrs' Square became an open battlefield separating the city in two parts. During the first two years of the war, most of the inhabitants around the square moved out, and militias and refugees occupied the area. The social life in the square was abandoned and its surroundings destructed. It became a ghost area where very few people would dare to pass by. Sixteen years later, most of the buildings around the square looked like a piece of cheese (Khalaf, 1993b), marked by traces of shells. Figure 4.14 represents the state of the square in 1991. The location of the square on the demarcation line put it at the mercy of militias that performed acts of urbicide and voluntary destruction. The Rahbani brothers immortalized the square of war in 1981 in their song:

*At El Bourj, wild trees grew
At El Bourj, grasses grew on the walls
Noises of old times
At El Bourj, time closed the passage
And nothing happens, not even forgetting*

Box 4.1: The different design for the statue of the martyrs

The Martyrs' square and its new statue. After the independence and the destruction of the controversial Martyrs' monument (figure a), the different presidents tried to develop new plan for the square. The failure of many proposed projects leads to an international competition launched in 1952 for a new commemorative statue. The winning project of Sami Abdel Baki (figure b) was never implemented. As we can notice for this project, it in a way represent a desire for a new vision for the city, oriented to a modernity aspect. Finally, the Mazacurati designed the statue and it was placed in the square in 1960 (Figure c).

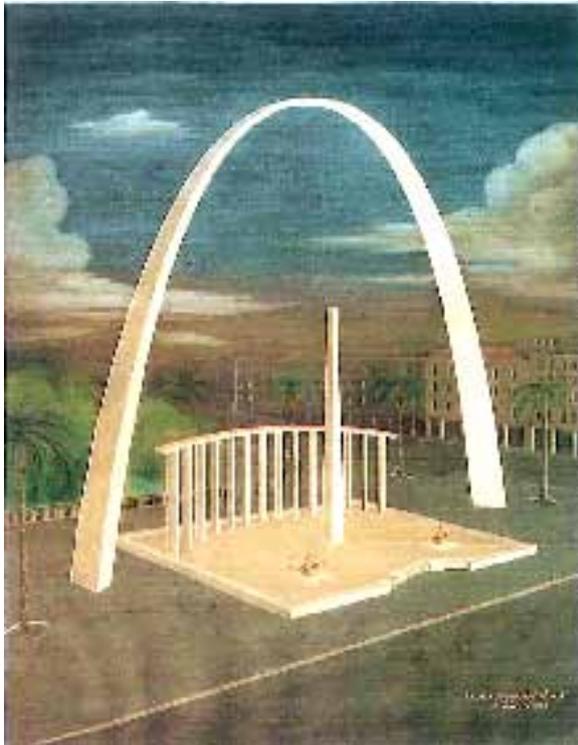


Figure a: The Martyrs' Statue during the French Mandate (Tueini & Sassine, 2000)

Figure b: Sami Abd el Baki proposed design (Tuein & Sassine, 2000)



Figure c: Mazacurati designed statue (post card)

The conflict in numbers. It is not the intention of this thesis to look at the different events that took place during the war, however it is interesting to look at the impact that the war caused to the country physically, socially, and economically. In the aftermath of the Lebanese conflict, it seems relatively difficult to classify and divide its consequences in specific group whether social, spatial or political alone. Indeed, most of the events and changes in the society were almost always a combination of one, two, three or even more elements of this conflict. Therefore, not such element cannot be considered or study as unique, separate entity of the conflict and its consequence.

However, describing the conflict in numbers can be a very useful tool to be able to understand and contextualize the consequences of the conflict , . It is estimated that around 150 000 perished during the war, the double wounded, and almost 1/3 (700 000 person) of the population was displaced – 2/3 of the population was displace at one point during the war – and almost 1/3 of the population is in temporary or permanent exile. In general, Khalaf (1993) note Abandoned houses: 30 000 from which 9000 were destroyed or deliberately dynamited.



Figure 4.13: Map fo the dividing lin and the zone of conflicts (North is the city centre area and South the Pine Forest area) (Habib, Haagenrud, Ludvigsen, Møystad & Saad, 1995-1997)

The major part of the conflict took place in Beirut and its direct suburbs thus the most of the material destruction took place in Metropolitan Beirut. According to Tabet (2001a), the number of destruction outside the city center are as follow: 6% building completely destroyed and 22% wounded buildings in municipal Beirut and 10% of building and houses in Metropolitan Beirut. However, it should be noted that the destruction were not equally scattered around the city. Indeed, along the green line many more buildings were damage than in Achrafieh or Hamra for example. Tabet (2001a) state, “along the 4.5km of demarcation line divided the city in two parts, 23% of the buildings were destroyed, more than 58% of the building that were damaged” (own translation, p. 42).

As a result, the inaccessibility of the city center gave rise to an increased decentralization of the country’s main activities, naturally accompanied by a division of the city into two enclaves. New neighborhood developed as secondary commercial and cultural center (such as Achrafieh in the east, Dora, Jdeideh and Zalka along the highway to the north, Verdun and Mar Elias in the west, and Chiyah and Lailaki, on the highway to the south, Hazmieh) as well as cities close to Beirut (Jounieh and Saida) (Khalaf, 1993; Sarkis, 1993). These new areas have emerged and developed as self-sustainable zones (Tabet et al., 2001). Similarly, the division of the city was also accompanied by the development of many centers of social and cultural activity. As Khalaf (1993b) writes,

“Now the Christians of East Beirut need not frequent West Beirut for its cultural and popular entertainment. Likewise, one can understand the reluctance of Muslims and other residents of West Beirut to visit resorts and similar alluring spots of the Christians suburbs” (p. 99).

On the other hand, “The civil war generated a new form of urban morphology” (Yassin, 2010). Along with the socio-spatial division of the city, the political power was also fragmented into small local powers. Thereby, Beirut lost its role as a capital. It became a ground fragmented into small ideological, military-militias and politically opposed spaces. Moreover, the increase number of displaced squatted area at the southern outskirts of the city. This reinforced the “misery belt” around the city. Thus, while decentralization of the city was in the planning development of Ecochard and Danger, the urban war made way for its implementation.

4.3 THE RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS

During the civil war period, the country's infrastructure was destroyed and communities were physically and socially divided. In 1992, Beirut was a destroyed battlefield and major problems had to be solved: reuniting the capital, reconstructing the city center symbol of the multicultural coexistence (and the need for a larger center), and a restructuring of the infrastructure network (aiming to solve the traffic problems). Rethinking, (re) designing, and (re) organization of space took place.

The first reconstruction projects date from 1976. Indeed, a year after atrocious combat, the peace seems to have settle only to restart a couple of months later. However, this brief truce allowed the creation of Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and the appointment of APUR – Atelier Parisien d'Urbanism – as a consultant for the development of a master plan for the city center. However the renewed fighting suspended any work, while companies and consulting firm were still developing plans for the reconstruction.

In 1992, after the 'Taïf agreement' was signed and the installation of new political reforms and the disarming militias in Lebanon, the reconstruction of the city start taking places, based on a master plan for the city and its metropolitan area approved in 1986 by the government. However, even though the civil violence ended and reconstruction could begin, Israel still occupied part of south Lebanon until 2000, and the Syrian Army occupation limited the democratic liberty of the country. In 2005, after the assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic el Hariri, strikes and political events known as 'The Cedar Revolution' led to a new independence of Lebanon. Nevertheless, peace seems short lived in Lebanon. After a phase of reconstruction and renewal of the Lebanese state, the 2006 Israeli attacks mired the country in economic and political instability.

With a removal of the physical barriers and a return to normality, the reconstruction of the war-torn city became the most important issue for the government. However, as developers were seeking for larger parcels, traffic engineer for wider roads and archeologists for deeper pits (Sarkis, 2006), a bankrupt government with many social and political issues to be dealt with, it was clear that the reconstruction of the whole city would be impossible and the project of the reconstruction was too large and costly for the bankrupted government

Box 2.2: The city at the end of the conflict and after the reconstruction



Maarad Street: Before (left) and After (Right) (Trawi, 1998)



Weygant Street: Before (left) and After (right) (Trawi, 1998)



*The Martyrs' Square before the destruction (left)
The Martyrs' Square today (right)*

to deal with (Aly, 2011). Therefore, the government created a private joint-stock company Solidere (Société Libanaise pour le Development et la reconstruction) in 1994 to deal with the development and reconstruction of the city centre. Half the shares of the company were given to previous owners of property in the city center (none of which could own more than 10%) and the rest sold to investors (Yahya, 2004). Rafic Hariri himself owned the majority of the stocks of the company. Rafic Hariri, who became prime minister in 1992, was one of the major protagonists of this project (Haddad, 2002). Thus, since the mid-1990ies, the reconstruction of the country started and new planning was designed for the capital. The international airport was reconstructed, the harbor enlarged, the city center rebuilt along with many development and reconstruction projects. Before proceeding to the development of Solidere master plan and development for the city, it is important to look at the different reconstruction plans and vision for the city that lead to the actual plan for the city.

4.3.1 The different reconstruction plans for the city. The history of urban planning in Beirut is part of a long-changing vision of the city since the Ottoman Empire. However, Beirut today looks anything but similar to the representations the different planners worked out for the city (Tabet, 2001). “Each time, a deaf resistance, almost systematic, was opposing the different attempts of arrangement” (Tabet, 2001b, own translation, p.12). It is, however, very interesting to look at the different projects for the city and the square, comparing and analyzing their impact on the current developments. As it has been in history, the reconstruction of the city of Beirut revealed to be a complicated issue of planning and development, showing a certain repetitive pattern in the progress and expansion and the city.

The fast evolution of the conflict and different interludes in the combat gave hopes for the reconstruction of the city. Plans were developed based on various conceptual approaches. But before proceeding to the presentation of these plans, it is important to note the beneficial aspect of the war in respect to its urban planning potentials.

As Khalaf (1993) argued “By literally bulldozing vast areas of urban space, urbanists now have access to priceless real estate resources which could not have been freed by the normal, costly and cumbersome processes of expropriation” (p. 21). In other words, it is logical and natural that war and destruction induce great potential for producing daring,

visionary designs, thus creating a better space, a revolutionary – or even an experimental one. Many European cities after the Second World War as well as cities destroyed by natural disasters can serve as examples of this. In the case of Beirut, as we will see hereafter, the different plans constitute the milestones for the understanding of the current project of Solidere. The most important projects are the master plans developed by APUR (l'Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme) in 1977, IAURIF (Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région d'Île de France) in 1986, and the initial post war plan of 1990.

The APUR Plan. During the first truce in 1977, the first plan for the reconstruction of the city was assigned to APUR. The office followed the same vision as Ecochard in terms of traffic flow and infrastructure; but the Martyrs' Square, on the contrary, would preserve its previous configuration while gaining an underground parking (Saliba, 2003). Indeed, as Fayad (personal communication, 26.04.12) argues, the motto behind this development was preservation: the plan avoids any type of demolition while reorganizing the space aesthetically. It preserves the scale of the city center and allows for its development in the future (see figure 4.14). However, the resumption of hostilities put a stop to any type of development and planning.

The IAURIF Plan. In the ten years that followed APUR's planning, much destruction and many other changes took place in the city, so the master plan had to be revisited and modified. The new plan, developed by IAURIF, aimed at "consolidating the position of Beirut as the nation's capital and as a regional and international center" (Saliba, 2003, p. 47). Again the connection with the direct suburbs was enhanced, and the Martyrs' Square was preserved in its historical limits (Fayad, personal communication, 26.04.12; Saliba. 2003). However, the plan was never implemented and the resumed and intensification of the conflict halted the development.

Initial postwar plan. The third plan, was developed in the last phase of the war and constitute the baseline for the actual master plan of Solidere. Henri Eddé developed the first post-war plan for Dar el Handassa, an international design company based in Lebanon. The plan was based on three main visions. First, the Haussmannian grand design applied to the city according to "Trois Grand Axe" - the first one passing through the Martyrs' Square, the second is the 'place de l'Etoile-Allembly' axis, and the third one is a rather visual axis

from the Seraglio to the beach. Second, a strong emphasis was given to the urban networks facilitating the connection between the city, the Airport and the nearby neighborhoods (Fayad, personal communication, 26.04.12; Saliba, 2003). Thus the construction of the ring and other highway/fast lanes linking the different neighborhood to the city center, airport and harbor. Third, the city was to be preserved by keeping and enhancing “the romantic neo-regionalist image of a Mediterranean Levantine city with red tile roofing” (Saliba, 2003, p. 49). Figure 4.15 represents the initial master plan for the city.

In this plan, the Martyrs’ Square was extended to the sea via a long planned opening that was supposed to enhance the relation between the space and the sea (Fayad, personal communication, 26.04.12) (see figure 4.16). The concept was of course grandiose, expensive, and destructive both physically (110 buildings only in the centre should be preserved) and socially. Indeed Fayad (personal communication, 26.04.12) claimed “the project uproots 130 000 person from their space to somewhere else and doesn’t bring anybody instead”.

4.3.2 Solidere’s development for the city and the square

Solidere’s vision and perception. Solidere’s master plan was based on Dar el Handassa’s development, proposing a new city for the future and massive destructions (Tabet et al., 2001). Although this provoked a hot debate, the government accepted the plan in 1992 with only minor modifications that increased the number of preserved buildings, but did not change the overall vision (see figure 4.17).

The architectural and spatial character of the center, which mixes the western and the oriental culture, created exceptional combination of space, place and society. This imagination of the city is reflected in Solidere’s expected development of the city: “The character of the prewar city center and the special nature of the place – its history, association with sea and mountains, economic role in the region and links with East and West – are real assets. These will be brought to life once again, and the new challenges and opportunities of the age addressed, through reconstruction of the central district” (Gavin & Maluf, 1996, p.13).

Solidere argues that the success of the new plan of the city center is based on the positive character of the new master plan (Gavin & Maluf, 1996). They state “the plan is itself integrated within an ambitious program of national recovery that addresses regional transport, and communications infrastructure and all aspects of the nation’s economy” (p.



Figure 4.14: the APUR plan for the city (Tabet et al. 2001)

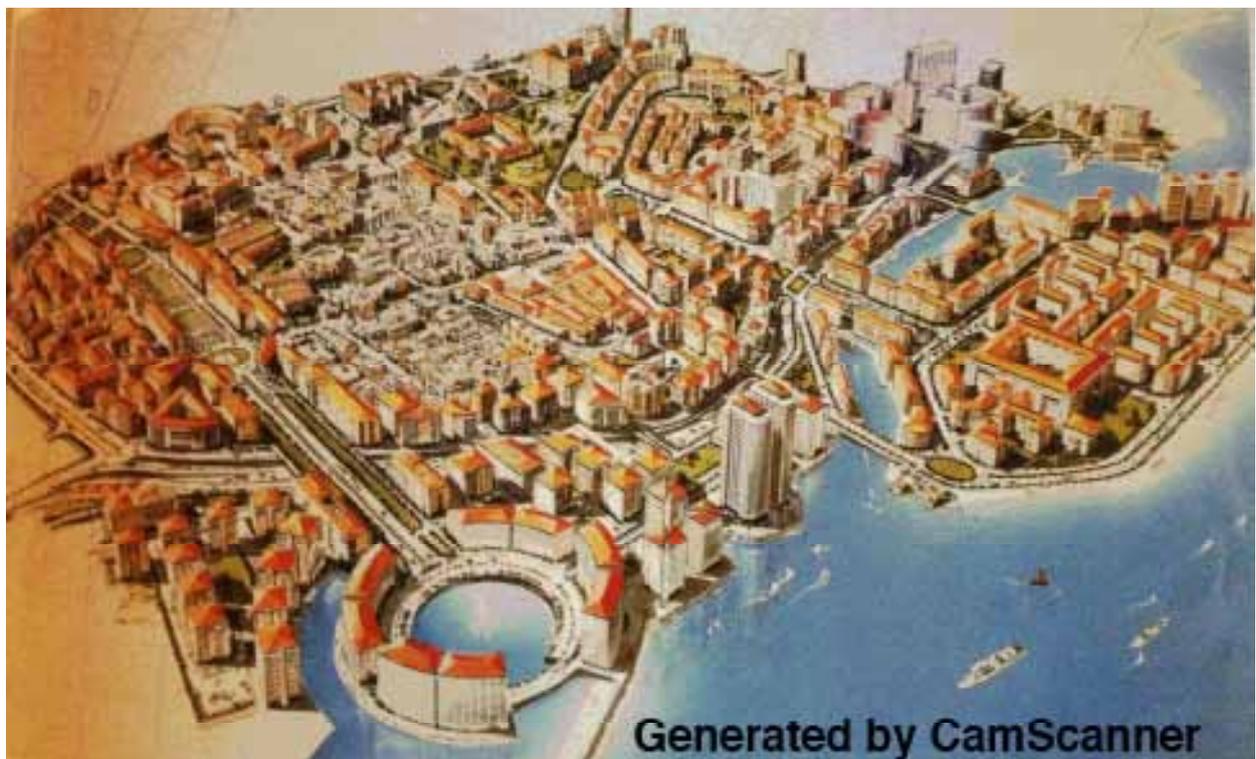


Figure 4.15: Henri Edde's Plan for the city (Tabet et al.,2001)

13). In other words, the new planning for the city focuses mainly on the attraction of capital, building a city for the future. In this respect, the new planning of the city is borrowing many aspects of development from cities in the Arab Gulf countries (Badescu, 2011). As Arbid explains it, the new development of the city is a bold statement asserting that Beirut is now back in the race, it can take back what Dubai and other Arab cities took from it during the civil war.

The growing scale of the development result in a new city scale different from its historical one, and gigantic infrastructure and construction works (Verdeil, 2002). A phenomenon described as Dubaification of the city and the development of a global city – a city that can attract capital and investment, a city where major development and investments takes place.

“The reconstruction plan was hugely influenced by the neoliberal peace model that

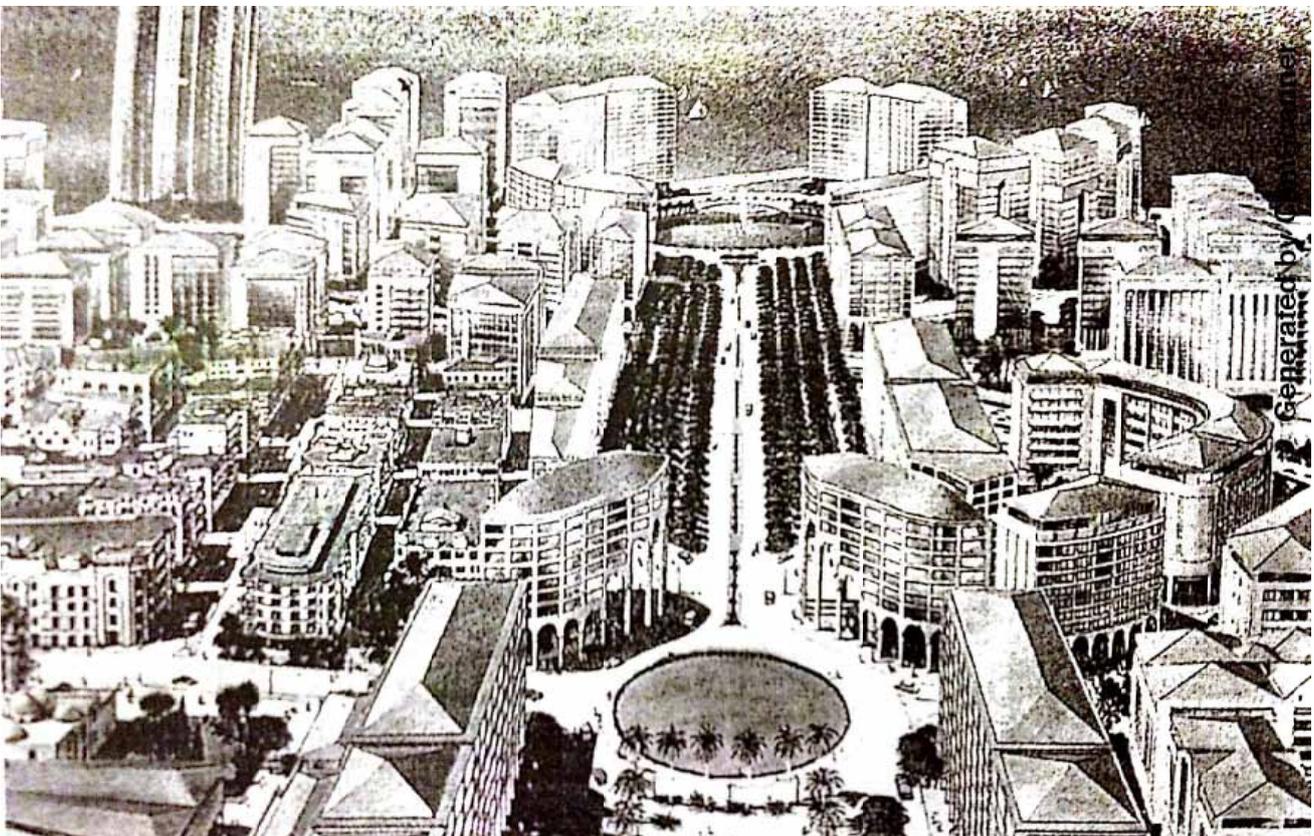


Figure 4.16: The axis of the Martyrs' Square (Sarkis, 1993)

assumed economic growth and recreating linkages to the liberal world system would sustain peace and bring prosperity. (...) While Solidere offered a solution to the issue of multiple ownerships, it was set-up as a real estate company depending heavily on a ‘massive external injection of capital’ from profit-seeking investors, led by Hariri himself (Beyhum, 1992)” (Yassin, 2012).

The vehicle for implementation. In order to implement their project, Solidere first had to deal with the owners of the spaces as well as to prepare the site for the development. Thus two measures were taken into consideration: the expropriation of land and the tabula rasa. The company used different arguments in order to defend their actions. One of the major problems faced by the city were the multiple ownerships. As Solidere puts it,

“[t]he extreme fragmentation of property rights, a product of local ownership and rental laws, made land assembly and redevelopment through existing ownership an

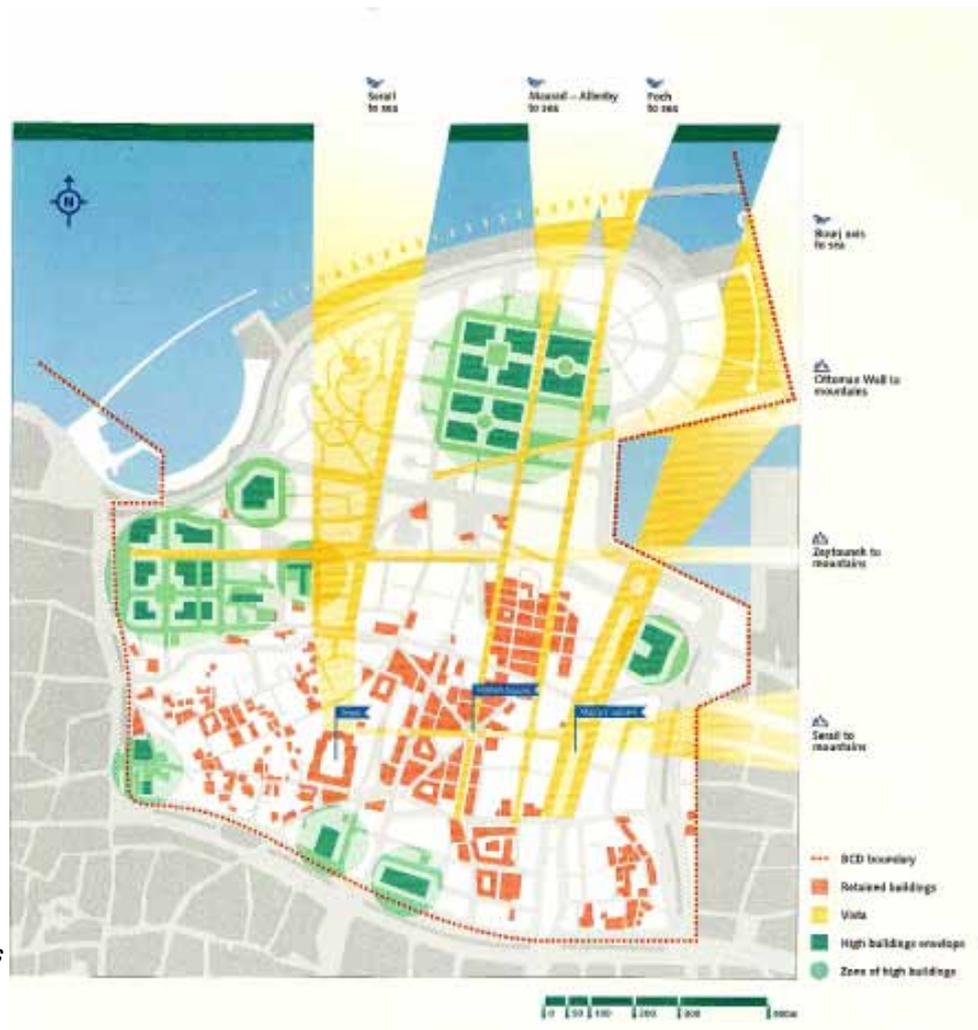


Figure 4.17: Solidere's axes plan of Beirut (Gavin & Maluf, 1994)

impractical proposition. With over 40,000 active owners involved, some individual buildings were revealed to have several thousand titleholders. More than half the existing land parcels in the central district were less than 250 square meters, and therefore below the minimum size feasible for modern development. Complex landlord-tenant relationships, including the continuing validity of previous tenancies under local laws, created further disincentives to redevelopment” (Gavin & Maluf, 1996, p.15-16).

In order to deal with this issue, the company obtained a governmental decree allowing it to expropriate land in a move that Haddad (2002) calls “an ex-cathedra judgment on the incapacity of the petite bourgeoisie, now out of line with late- capitalist realities, to manage its own rehabilitation.” Alluding to a gentrification of the city, Fayad (personal communication, April 26, 2012) claims “what they did is taking your property away, giving you some shares in the company as compensation and then playing on the speculation of land. Thus what they gave you for example 400 dollars for, is now worth millions”.

Many expropriations took place, some voluntary, but some forced. As one interviewee (women, personal communication, April 18, 2012) said: “My dad was renting a small shop in the actual Virgin building. He had it for almost 30 years, and the rent was for unlimited time. Of course, during the war, many things changed, and we stopped paying the rent. So Solidere told us: either you pay us now the rent for 17 years, taking into consideration the land value change, or you take some shares and you are not allowed to have the shop back after its reconstruction.”

Therefore, based on this conceptual approach and vision, Solidere and Dar el Handassa could explain and perform a destruction of the city, in order to achieve their vision for ‘a new modern city’. In other words, the war-induced destruction was also accompanied by the intentional destruction of Souks and Khans – in general basic elements from the Ottoman constructions (Haddad, 2004b) – as part of downtown reconstruction efforts (Khalaf, 1993b; Sarkis, 1993). This resulted in a tabula rasa of the existing area and the development of a new space according to the demand and preferences of the investors. The huge reconstruction process planned to recreate the center of the city not an identical reconstruction of the space, but rather in the creation of a modern city center that will serve the new role and

function of the city, regardless of the many criticism aiming for a city similar to the pre-war Beirut (Gavin & Maluf, 1996). The motto of Solidere 'Beirut: an ancient city for the future' was widely used. Thus, the new city center shares little similarities to the center of the prewar period; it is a process of reinvention rather than a process of reconstruction. I will develop in a later chapter the issues concerning the implementation of the plans.

Indeed, since 1982, wide ranges of space were being intentionally destroyed in the city – Urbicide. Solidere's motto was achieved by the tabula rasa. The map by Heiko Schmit (figure 4.18) represents the space in the city center and the destruction of buildings at different times. It goes without saying that some of these buildings were too damaged to be reconstructed or renovated, but it is relatively far fetch to say that 80% (Arbid; Sarkis, 1993; Tabet et al., 2001) of the buildings were damaged beyond repair. As a result, the massive destruction of the space, "a Tabula Rasa, opened the way for new opportunities and design according to Solidere's argumentation" (Arbid, personal communication, April 11, 2012). Arbid continues that this idea is a big mistake, and it insinuates that what was here is meaningless, and now we should try to do what we can with what is left. Sarkis (2006) argues that more that 85% of the buildings destroyed during the reconstruction phase were torn down unnecessarily. The strategies of rebuilding and the expensive reconstruction costs resulted in a process of "refilling the physical void of downtown Beirut", and generating unexpected patterns of developments. The area is a larger example of the speculative and erratic developmental pattern in Beirut's redevelopment (Sarkis, 2006) – actions based on pure real estate practices (Fayad, personal communication, April 26, 2012).

It is not the topic of this research to analyze whether a tabula rasa, an identical reconstruction or a continuity were the proper manner to redevelop the city. However, as I will describe in more detail in the next section and in the recommendation section, the consequences of this reconstruction today are not necessarily their architectural and planning concepts but rather the lack of public participation and activities available.

On Solidere's expected development for the Martyrs' Square. Today, twenty years after the end of the civil war and the 'official' demilitarization of most of the militias in Lebanon, the dividing line in the city is not visible anymore. The reconstruction

of the city center is almost completed; new road networks have been developed and the restoration work have covered most of the city center area (around 5% of the area of the city of Beirut). As activity slowly came back to the center, its role in relation to the rest of the city remained unclear, in particular concerning business district, transportation and public life. Indeed, many parts of the rest of the city still bare marks of the war, in particular along the green line. The rest of the city seems 'de-linked' from the increased development of the city center. Neighborhoods such as Zkak el Blat and Ain el Mreisseh didn't benefit from the high reconstruction budget allocated to Solidere. Indeed, only the city center was reconstructed, while other parts of Beirut are still destroyed and uninhabited, underlining the division of the city (Badescu, 2011). Thus, despite all the efforts of the reconstruction (only in the city center) in order to enhance reunification, the city still seems divided across 'war-induced sectarian lines' (Yassin, 2012).

The Martyrs Square in particular represents a large open empty space where no development is taking place. Regardless of the reconstruction process directly adjacent to the square, the proposed design remains sketchy lacking any anchored clear development. Henri Eddé's plan for this area was based on the development of a great axis – "an avenue larger than the Champs-Élysées" (Tabet, 2001a). According the Sarkis (1993), this new street plan was established based on the Parisian inspiration, which already inspired the development of the Place de l'Etoile. The statue of the Martyrs; however, was assigned to a different space in the city (Fayad, personal communication, April 26, 2012), and it was intended to regain its detail and exuberance (Sarkis, 2006). However, the modification of Henri Eddé's plan kept the size to the historic square, while modifying the setback regulation and traffic road enlargement at the expense of the square (Haddad, personal communication, April 12, 2012). Thus, what happen in the square since 1992 can be summarized as follow (see figure 4.19 and 4.20 in parallel to the text):

- The opening of the view toward the sea with the destruction of the Cinema Rivoli
- The destruction of most of the surrounding buildings –except for two buildings - and the enlargement of the streets around the square into boulevards for smoothing the traffic flow (which in fact is rather creating a traffic jam north of the square)

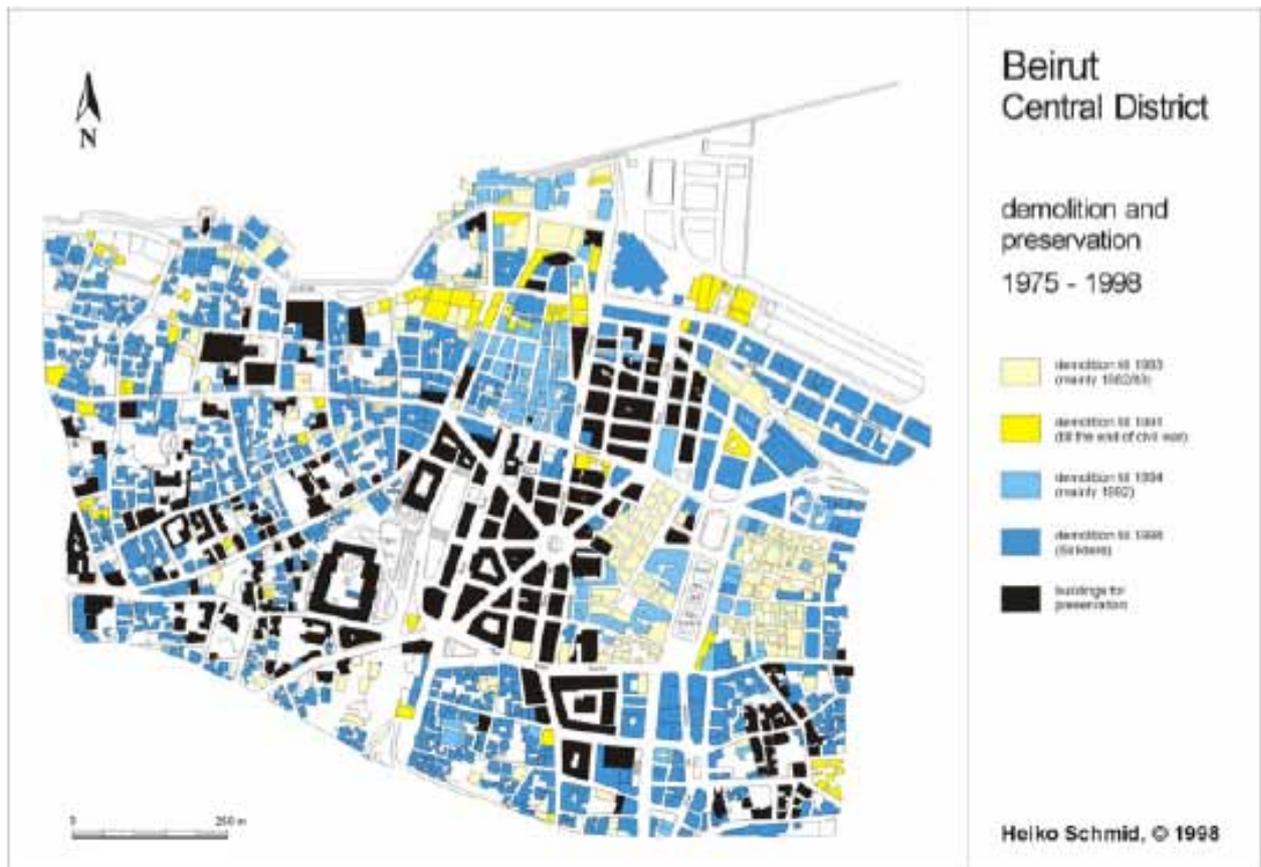


Figure 4.18: Schmit's map of destruction in 1998 (Schmit, 1998, courtesy of Georges Arbid)

- The renovation of the statue and the building of sloping concrete forms with vegetation on them around the statue.

In other words, the Martyrs Square today is somewhat similar to its shape in 1992, except for some buildings that have been completely knocked down and replaced by parking areas. The archeological findings north of the square also retarded any type of development (Tabet, 2001a). Unfortunately, it seems difficult to imagine a public space in the square today. "Collective space seems no longer possible" (Sarkis, 2006).

This harsh transformation in the space leads to different kind of behavior and understanding of it. The loss of landmarks is also reflected in the loss of spatiality (Haidar, personal communication, April 11, 2012) and thus a public amnesia (Khalaf, 1991). The area, as Sarkis puts it, is a larger example of the speculative and erratic developmental pattern in Beirut's redevelopment (Sarkis, 2006). The square seems to have gained again its marginal role, a clearing in the middle of the city; it is slowly becoming a maidan again.

Competition for the square. Nevertheless, the stock joint company tried to encourage and show their interest for the development of the square. Therefore, in 2004 Solidere organized an international competition supervised by the Union of International Architects for the space. The title of the competition was “Urban Design for Martyrs’ Square and the Grand Axis of Beirut” – a bold statement and an allusion to Henri Eddé’s plan. Solidere was not part of the jury and was limited to simply proposing a list of things they were looking for in the project. In such a case, they are not tied to implement the project as it is.

According to Solh (personal communication, April 17, 2012), the competition was successful. Many international and national architects, planners and landscape architects as well as students participated. The proposed designs were very broad and appealing. There were in fact 270 projects from 45 countries (UIA, 2005). The jury, under the presidency of Donald L. Bates, assigned the winning project (figure 4.21) to a Greek design company composed of Vasiliki Agorastidou, Antonis Noukakis, Lito Ioannidou and Bouki Babaou-Noukaki, explaining that:

“This project was the most successful of all the finalists in giving a comprehensive design to the whole dimension of the competition. It creates an imaginative and feasible project that will offer a profound new urban order to this important sector of Beirut, one which can accommodate and support the aspirations and demands of a proud community.” (UIA, 2005).

Solh (personal communication, April 17, 2012) puts forward three arguments for the success of the project. First, the architects broke down the axis into three parts, each of which was treated differently. In fact the Grand Axis cannot work in the case of Beirut; it is too large for the size of the city. “The problem with the competition was the title,” she argues, “The creation of this grand axis doesn’t work for the Martyrs’ Square”. Treating the space, as one linear space was too rigid, the Greek scheme divided the space in three parts creating a dynamic space. Second, the project enhances the connection with the sea. The water is brought to the square, in the shape of fountains and water features, but also in a close connection at the seashore. Third, the Greeks developed a good “understanding

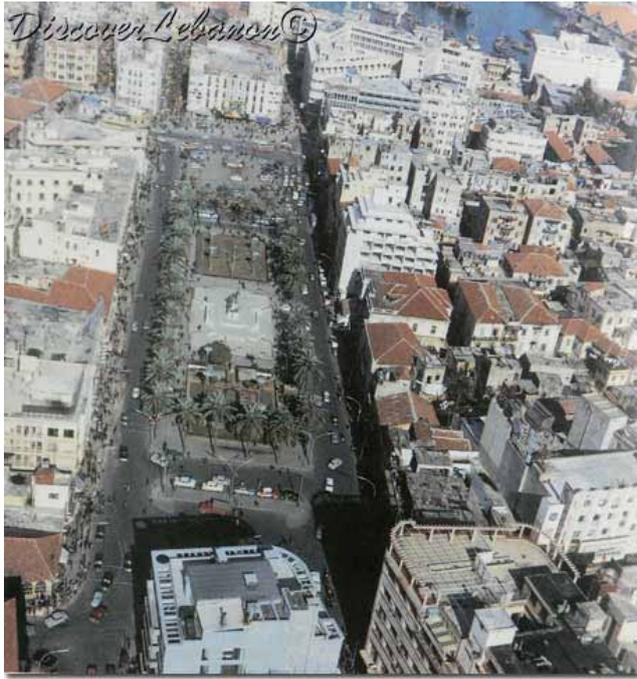


Figure 4.19: The square in 1960 (fotography taken by Ecochard (Discoverlebanon.com))

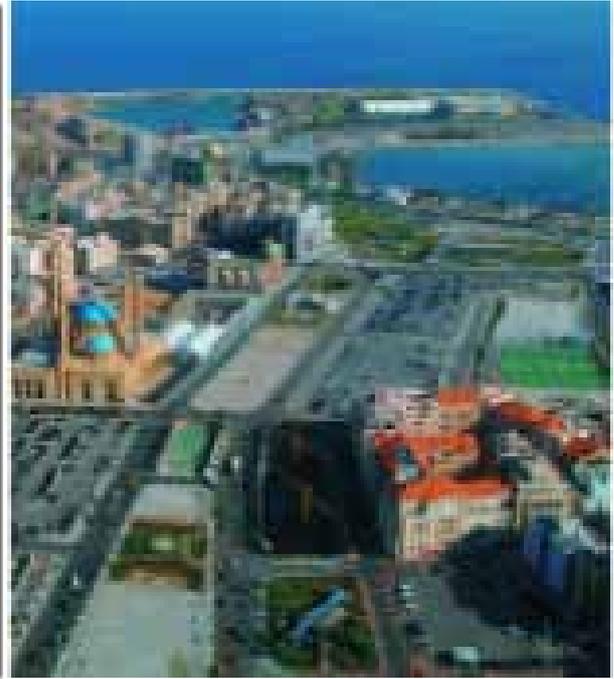


Figure 4.20: The square in 2005

the city, translating it into a contemporary design that would work for the city the way it is today”. Unfortunately, although “we (Solidere) want to implement this project as it is, it is not possible”. The space of the Martyrs’ Square is very controversial. The municipality, on the one hand, wants to build an underground parking for 2000 cars. This plan dates from the end of the civil war, and is a result of a lack of vision by the government in terms of public transportation and mobility. The municipality, CDR, Solidere and Khatib and Alami (a Lebanese designing company), are now studying the mechanism for the implementation of this parking. “Its development is very critical and constraining, so unless treated properly, it will directly affect and impact the public space, its design and the life in it”. Another problem of the Greek proposal is that while they paid lots of attention to the design of the square, no guidelines were developed for the buildings around it (including the Phoenician village to the north-east of the square, the Archeological museum to the north of the square, the new Saifi district to the east of the square, and at the southern edge the Beirut Gate Project – see figure 4.22). These different projects under development today can give an idea about the expected future of the square. Eight years after the development of the project and the changes in the city and the country, the implementation of the project as it was seems

almost impossible.

While the new development seems, in a certain way, imbedded in the futuristic vision of the city in general, it does attract a considerable amount of criticism. Haddad (Haddad, personal communication, April 12, 2012) for example, argues, “the winning project is a very nice scheme in Baltimore or Dubai. It has no attachment to the space in itself, no connection to the fabric of the city, and does not fit Beirut and its history. It is an ordinary development that can be found anywhere”.

To sum up, the different planning and developments for the city and the Martyrs’ Square take into consideration a sequence of historical events and changes in the general scheme of the city. The design inspiration and vision for the city and the square varied tremendously in the Lebanese and Beirut history, resulting in multiple planning and debate concerning the redevelopment of the Martyrs’ Square. In the following section, I will discuss the current issues in relation to the image and future of the square.

5. DISCUSSION

Although the division line is not present anymore in the physical geography of Beirut, a different type of division is visible in the Martyrs’ Square. The square today plays a major role in three-fold division: a spatial division of space, based on planning strategies especially in the post-war reconstruction phase; an intangible transformation of the square classified in terms of perception, image, identity, and symbolic of the space and the use of public space in Beirut; and a political image of the space, in terms of unification character for the city and a controversial revival.

5.1 TANGIBLE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SPACE: THE SQUARE AS A DIVIDING CONSTRUCTION

The post-war planning of the city enhances the division between east and west Beirut. Indeed, the fast-lane known as the ring (see figure 5.1), is the major element limiting the connection between the two sides of the city. As Haidar (personal communication, April 11, 2012) explains “the enlargement of the Damascus road and the Ring both enforce the two-side city. The fact that the connection between the two is based on vehicular traffic, it is



*Figure 4.21. The Greek winning project,
Left: the plan,
Right top: a perspective looking south
Right middle: a perspective looking north
Right bottom: a view to the statue
(Antonios Noukakis, 2006)*

difficult that it will create a spatially united city”. This spatial development of the city places the square at the center of division, leading to the understanding of the spatial character of the Martyrs’ Square as a dividing construction. This division is visible in four different characters developed hereafter. Figure 5.2 and 5.3 represent the square in 1960 and in 2000 respectively. These two figures will serve as a comparative for the spatial description of the space as dividing element.

First, the square lost its spatial character as a square. A square is probable to emerge in bounded areas. Sitte (1889/1996) maintains that “an empty space surrounded by four streets and destined not to be built (...) is not an urban space” (own translation, p. 35). Indeed, more elements and spatial characters need to be met in order for it to become a square; the most important is its closeness. “The most simple case is a space cut by housing masses facing a monumental structure, which can immediately allow for a creation of a continuous fencing through buildings” (own translation, p. 36). In such situations, Sitte insists on the



Figure 4.22: the projects around the square (Skycrapecity, 2007)

creation of a coherent space where “the eye cannot escape the space” (own translation, p. 36). This character is missing in the square today. Indeed, the opening of the space to the sea on the northern side, as a result of the destruction of buildings, and the discovery of archeological remnants below, limits the possible construction on that edge. Solh (personal communication, April 17, 2012) mentioned the planning on a small section of the northern edge of an archeological museum. Although today there is no clear design or concept for its, she states that it will be of a relatively small size due to the shape of the space and to the presence of the remnants. Thus this expected design cannot frame the square the way the Old Serail and Cinema Rivoli did. In other words, this edge is amputated, thus forbidding the redevelopment of a closed character. Fayad goes as far as refusing to call it a square anymore. In his words, “the space lost any character of warmth, protection, unification, and social rapprochement”. On top of that, given the geography of Beirut, the connection with the sea is possible in almost any area of the city. Thus Haddad (personal communication, April 12, 2012) argues “this extreme need to open up a square in order to enhance the connection with the water is absurd in Beirut. It could make more sense in other areas but not here.” Adding up to this contradictory opening to the sea, the reclaimed land limits the view to the horizon, which was the original idea behind opening the square. In other words, eager to enhance the connection between the city and the water, the reclaimed land is at odds, not serving this purpose. Fayad (personal communication, April 26, 2012) thus wonders, “If they really wanted to connect the city with the sea, then why was all this area dumped?”

Second, squares are likely to develop as a result of traffic crossroads (Kostof, 1992; Sitte, 1889/1996). Squares give the impulse to stop and rest as opposed to streets, which are directly related to movement (Gehl, 2010). Thus historically, the most common place to develop a public feature and space – whether a fountain or a statue – was one where different streets converge. In the case of the Martyrs’ Square in the prewar era, we could notice a number of converging streets, most of which were coming from outside the city, meeting in this square and then moving inside the city. As Fayad (personal communication, April 26, 2012) argues, “the endpoint of the tramways and the transportation center south of the square naturally enhanced the meeting point of the square and the pedestrian movement



Figure 5.1: Achrafieh highway, a dividing feature (<http://lebanon-thelegend.blogspot.nl/>)



Figure 5.2: The square in 1960 (photography taken by Ecochard (DiscoverLebanon.com))

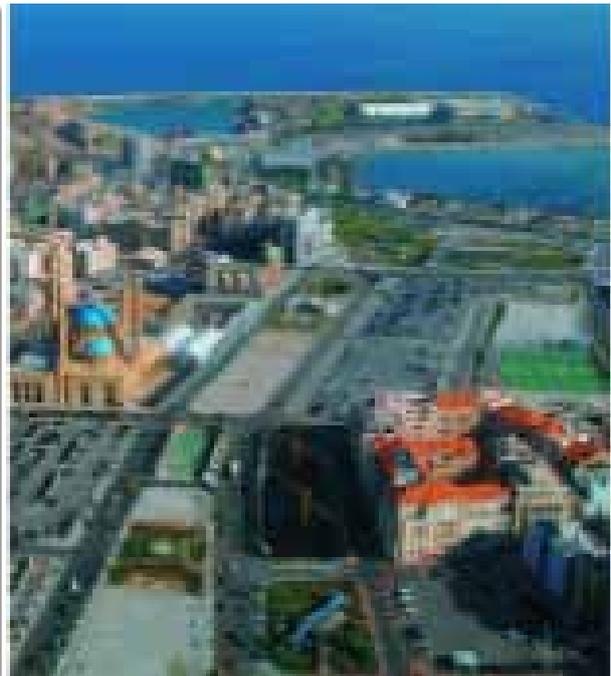


Figure 5.3: The square in 2005

in it". It was a natural place of converging and arrival. Today however, the space is not a link between different parts of the city and the outside; it is at the edge. It is natural that people would prefer to meet in different places. Based on the questioned people in the square, I noticed that their meeting points are in different areas of the city. The closest to the square was Virgin Megastores – west of the square, and the Samir Kassir space north west of the square. A majority of the interviewees insisted on the lack of a landmark on the square, the large scale of the square, and the impracticality of staying under the statue – knowing that the vegetation around the statue is designed on slated blocks of cement and standing under the statue, we do not have a clear overview on the square. Maha (interviewee in the space) said "in the summer it is too sunny and warm, and in the winter very windy and cold, so I would rather not way there. Plus there is not even a bench I could sit on or a tree to sit under". Most of the people who prefer to meet elsewhere were giving me exact locations such as "at the watch facing the Parliament" or "in front of X shop". Thus the square lost its role as a connection and meeting point for the city.

Moreover, we can notice the lack of connection of the square with the rest of the city. The spaces of pre-1975 developed a sequence of connections and hierarchy between each other. Indeed in the original planning of the city, there was a system of different squares linked to each other by roads. Thus going from Debbas Graden to Riad el Solh to l'Etoile to Aintabli fountain to the Bourj was in fact an enjoyable way where shops and other retail could be found. The different spaces were lively and safe, inviting people to walk (Gehl, 2010). Nowadays, large avenues, limiting the desire to move through them, separate each space. On top of that the lack of functions on the ground floor makes the walk boring and passive (Gehl, 2010). Thus the six-lane traffic on the east and west sides of the square and the same north and south of the square turn it into an island in the middle. On top of that, the government does not have any vision regarding the transportation issue in the center, and the Marytrs' Square is now one of the major junctions of the city. While the Greek design of the Martyrs' Square proposed to close one of the two vehicular axes, both the municipality and the government refused categorically, and insist on the development of the parking space under the square. This parking might absorb some of the traffic but is definitely not going to enhance the connection with the rest of the city (Solh, personal

communication, April 17, 2012).

Third, the proportion of the square with respect to the rest of the city is lost. Kostof (1992) states, "if the square is central to the design of a new town, it will be scaled in relation to the town plan as a whole" (p. 136). Indeed, in the Ottoman and French development of the space, the square is propositional to the rest of the city in terms of length, width and height of construction. Amin (personal communication, April 21, 2012) and Fayad (personal communication, April 26, 2012) argue that today, the square's large size is disproportional to the rest of the city. This disproportion is visible in terms of the scale of the space itself and in terms of its relation to the new constructions around. Indeed, the New Mosque and the planning for the Phoenician village are covering the Square.

Fourth, the scale is also an important feature to take into consideration the monumental aspect of the space. Sitte states that "in general, a too small space does not allow for monumental constructions to reflect all their effect; however, it is clear that a too large space is even worse, to the extent that even the largest edifices will look very small" (own translation, p. 48). In other words, as we could notice from the spatial study of the square, the statue loses any image and remarkable character. Figure 5.4 represents the miniscule size of the statue in comparison with the space around.

In other words, space today shows an important spatial division and lack connection with the rest of the city. It also reduced its monumental aspect, and its near-future most probable developments increase this spatial division. The spatial revival of the square as its pre-war condition seems difficult to achieve today. The development so far is in itself a dividing construction.

5.2 POLITICAL ROLE OF THE SQUARE

Looking back at the historical evolution of the square in political terms since its creation, we notice three major events that modified its perception, use and name. First the presence of the seraglio and the political image and events it echoes as a major political and social demonstration area; second the division line, the physical marker of the divided society and sectarian war(s); and third the political revival of 2005 following the assassination of the former prime minister and the Cedar Revolution. While the first one became the emblem of the Lebanese society as a whole without any differentiation in terms of religions, political

views, social class or age, divisions mark the other two, by either political or spatial markers.

5.2.1 The space of unity: The seraglio and the martyrs. The political history of the square started in the 16th century when Emire Fakhr ed Dine recognized Beirut as the capital of Lebanon – the first independence movement – and ordered the modernization of the space (Tuieni, 2000). On the Martyrs' Square, he arranged the space, restored the tower and constructed his palace – also sometimes referred to as Serail – south-west of the square (Boustany, 2001). However the general layout of the castle implies that it was not built by Fakhr ed Dine only, but (re) built over some existing pattern, most probably a remnant of a crusader palace (Boustany, 2001; Davie, 1994). However, it was all destroyed – except of the tower – when Fakhr el Dine was expelled (Tueini, 2000).

In 1888, when Beirut became the capital of an Ottoman county or Wilaya, the Wali transformed the seraglio – completed in 1884 as a replacement for older one intra-muros (Davie, 2000) – into his personal and political headquarters (Tueini, 2000). Indeed, a seraglio refers to the “harem” or the personal headquarters of the wives and concubines; however, in the context of Beirut, and other Ottoman provinces it usually refers to the residential and political palace of the governor (seraglio, s.a). The history of the square was initially associated with the major political construction of the seraglio during Ottoman rule, which was later reused by the French as well (Tuieni, 2000). “The location of the Serail vis-à-vis the square, its classical architectural construction typical of Ottoman civil building of the 19th century and its similarity to medieval fortress gave the space its political image” (Davie,



Figure 5.4: The statue in comparison with the surroundings

2000, p. 13). The seraglio became the seat of the government and the municipality, while other public buildings were constructed around the space – a railway company, an Ottoman Bank, gas and tobacco companies (Davie, 2000; Tueini, 2000). In other words, it seems that the Ottoman Wali used and reflected his political power in the construction of the square; a firm way to state his authority and power.

However, the hanging of the Martyrs between 1915 and 1916 transformed the image of the space, from one of fear to an image of liberation and independence. In total, 27 Arab and Lebanese nationalists were hanged in the square. On the eve of the first execution, 11 nationalists were judged in Aley (a city in Mount-Lebanon district, located 17km uphill from Beirut) and moved to the police office (previously the Ottoman Bank) east of the Martyrs' Square to be hanged there next morning (Gehchan, 2000). The public buildings around the space and its political image are obviously the main reason for the location of the execution – the hangings had to be visible to all and associated with the strong political power present. Figure 5.5 is the front page of a newspaper, describing the square as “the square of suppression and execution in the Arabic countries” (Tueini & Sarkis, 2000, p. 30). The hangings lead to indignation and anger, resulting in a popular uprising against the Ottoman power. The space thus became a synonym of liberty and struggle for independence.

With the weakening of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, the allies were received in Beirut as liberators and occupied the *sérail* (Tueini, 2000). In the first years of the French rule over Lebanon, the mandate government was based in the “Petit Sérail,” later moving to the “Grand Serail,” which was previously a military casern and an Ottoman hospital. In fact, as the Ottoman rule relied heavily on military power, the role of the “Petit Sérail” was often overshadowed by the power of the “Grand Sérail” (Tueini, 2000). Also the development of the “Place de l’Etoile” and the construction of the parliament at one of its axes moved the political role of the Martyrs' Square to different areas in the city (except for the police office that was kept in its place). Thus the Martyr's Square lost its role as an official political center to the Place de l’Etoile, retaining only its social and economic one (Tabet, 2001b). However, regardless of the spatial location of the political power, the first wave of demonstrations took place in the Martyrs' Square in 1920. Gradually, the square and the “Petit Sérail” became associated with numerous political events and resistance,

demonstrations and declarations (see figure 5.6).

Until the start of the civil war in 1975, the square developed as a symbol of resistance and liberation as well as recreation and social meeting point. Haddad (2002) argues:

“Martyrs’ Square was transformed, after the demolition of the city walls at the end of the nineteenth century, into a public space with a central garden facing the old *sérail*, and metamorphosed later into a vibrant public space, the central square of the city, surrounded by public functions from the police headquarters to popular coffee shops, movie theaters, and retail shops of various types. Martyrs’ Square was not only a space of public entertainment, but also a political space par excellence, where political manifestations started or ended.”

5.2.2 The space of division.

Multiculturalism and the war. In 1975, the war started as neighborhood fights and skirmishes, often directed from well-defined homogeneous neighborhoods to different areas (Calame & Charlesworth, 2009). These events encouraged the redefinition of territorial identities. However, when the conflict reached the city center in October 1975, it became known that the magnitude of events is larger than those of 1958 (Beyhum, 2000). Some interviewees from the older generations were relating the start of the war as a disruption to their life. They assert that the neighborhood conflicts of 1958 were affecting the people living in these neighborhoods, but when the assaults reached the city center, it suspended the life in the city and the country as a whole. As one interviewee recalls (personal communication, April 20, 2012) “even though the political situation in 1958 was not stable and we were often listening to the news to know which road to take, in 1975 it felt different and much more dangerous”, his friends adds “In 1958, I was a teenager but I still remember my father going to work every day, however, 1975 everything was on hold: offices, planes, banks, boats...” Another interviewee adds, “When the fighting reached the city centre, we thought that was it! We now knew it was escalating. It was the point of no return” (personal communication, April 20, 2012).

The first attacks in the city center took the form of raids, destroying and plundering a souk because it was supposed to be held by an opposing group (Beyhum, 2000). “I remember I went there with my comrades, we were young and immature, I even wrote on the wall

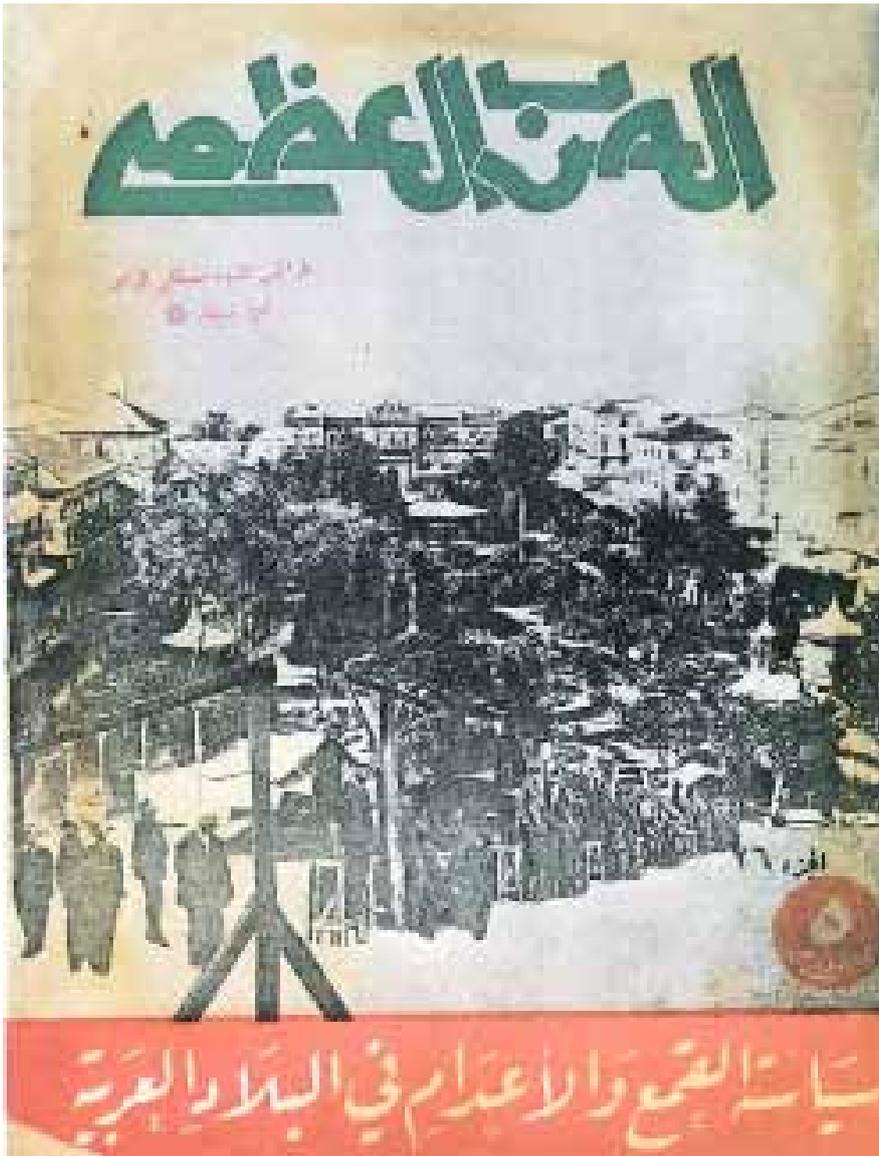


Figure 5.5 The front page of the newspaper the day of the martyrs' hanging in 1915 (Tueini & Sassine, 2000)

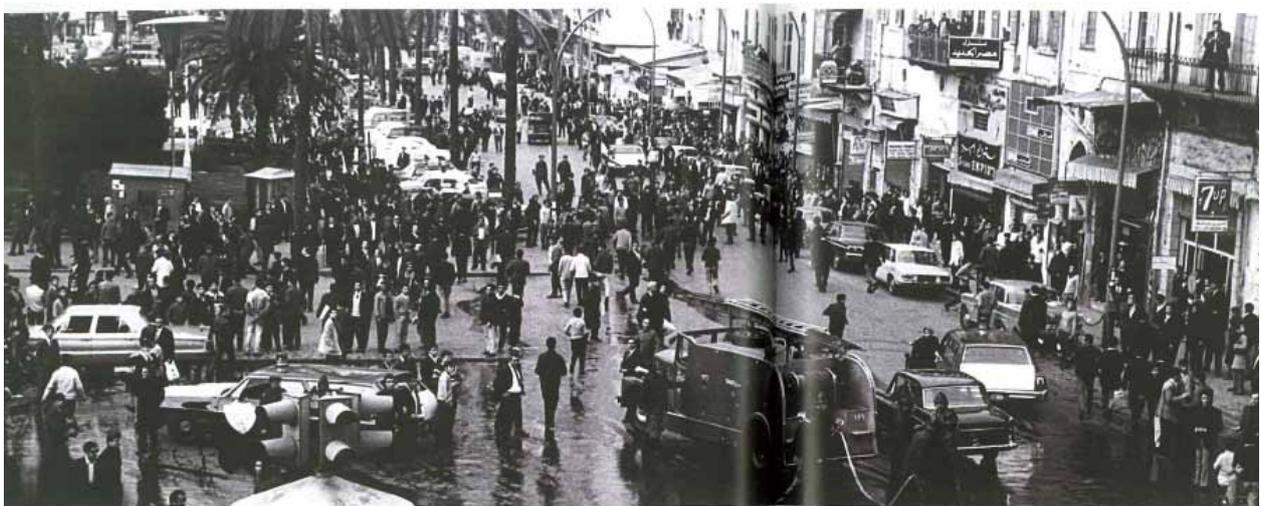


Figure 5.6: Proest in 1958 (Tueini & Sarkis, 2000)

‘X was here’” relates one of the interviewees on the street (personal communication, April 10, 2012). The destruction and pillage in the city center were associated with direct aggression towards places of coexistence and multi-culturalism (Beyhum, 2000). The fighting transformed the city center and the Martyrs’ Square into a battleground in the first years of the war. Although no major battles took place, the space was deserted, and became occupied and controlled by militias. Beyhum (2000) argues, “The Cannon Square was an urban space where a strategic transformation took place. There, the new image of the city was written, the relation between its parties and its relation with the rest of the world” (own translation, p. 94). In other words, the city center and the Martyrs’ Square were synonymous to a borderland, a frontier, a division between two groups, a place of fear and terror, a site of death (Beyhum, 2000; Dados, 2009). As one interviewees recount, “the problem in the city center was the militias, they were positioned in different buildings, and would shoot to any passers by, even if you were not from the other, opposing party... What happen then, is that nobody dared to go there, even the blue mosquito” recalls another interviewee (personal communication, April 8, 2012). The city center became a no man’s land, and the Martyrs’ Square the end point of the dividing Green Line (Beyhum, 2000; Bollens, 2010; Tabet, 2001b).

Beyhum (2000) argues “the city center was the most affected: it became the space of fear, instead of the place of coexistence between communities and classes” (own translation, p. 94). The reasons behind the development of the city center as the heart of the conflict are numerous, although often neglected in the study of the war. The three most important ones, were summarized by Beyhum (2000) as: first economical (with the robberies and pillages of the city center), second socio-political (a mean of decentralization) and third symbolic image of the city as coexistence and tolerance. As I argued earlier, the attacks in the center induced the decentralization of the political, social and economic forces, the development of ‘self-sustained’ neighborhoods and a sectarian redefinition of territories. In other words, the rich multiculturalism of the city center became its major handicap.

Post-war reconstruction. Solidere needed to develop a fast and efficient way of implementing the reconstruction of the city. The most important problem was the multiple owners of lands. According the Solidere the best and easy way to achieve this was the

expropriations of the land. In other words, Solidere forced the squatters to leave the areas and bought the land, or to be more exact, “put pressure on the owners” (Fayad, personal communication, April 26, 2012) to sell their property to Solidere in return of shares in the company. Thus it forced the previous owners to move out, erasing part of the history, and replacing it by a new layer (Fayad, personal communication, April 26, 2012). In political terms, the reconstruction of the city center, regardless of any spatial and social vision, is meant as development of a new history, a history not associated with any political party from the war era. In the words of Saree Makdisi (1997), “there has been a concerted effort to wipe the surface of central Beirut clean, to purify it of all historical associations in the form of its buildings, to render it pure space, pure commodity, pure real estate.” (as quoted by Nasr, 2008).

Moreover, the multi-culturism that the country has was also represented in the composition of Solidere’s board of director, as divided according to the confessional pattern of the Lebanese government (Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2005). As a result, the company used the argument stating: “we (Solidere) have people from every religion, so the development is fair” (Arbid, personal communication, April 11, 2012). On top of that, Solidere— at least during the first part of the reconstruction – was regarded as a neutral party that did not take part in the war. Rafic Hariri himself was an expatriate throughout most of the conflict. It goes without saying that this first approach to the reconstruction seems an appropriate way for the general public to gain back trust in some kind of a power. However, as Rafic Hariri became Prime Minister in 1992, his political neutrality was lost. Nevertheless, the government gave Solidere little constrains for the development of the area, its reconstruction and demolition.

2005 – a partial revival. The Martyrs’ Square has since the early 20th century been the central space for political and social demonstrations; however, the twenty years of war left the public expression in the space lessened. In 1997, the visit of Pope John Paul II marked the first vast movement to the Martyrs’ Square where a service was held. It goes without saying that this crowd of people was from one particular group in the country. However, the great revival of the square as a political symbol of unity, liberty and independence took place shortly after the assassination of prime minister Rafic Hariri. On the 14th of February 2005,

a blasting attack near the Saint Georges hotel cost the life of 18 people including the prime minister. Following the assassination, the city center was transformed into a “resounding collective protest that transcended all the fractional loyalties and divisions within society” (Khalaf, 2006, p.15). For the first time since the end of the civil war, the space of the Martyrs’ Square was again one of national unity and cohesion (figure 5.7). These events were also known as the Cedar Revolution and the new independence, and the Martyrs’ Square renamed the ‘Liberation Square’ (Khalaf, 2006; Nasr, 2008). Although this name did not survive for a long time, according to Haidar (personal communication, April 11, 2012), the revival of the political image of the city and the square has “made a real return to the public imagination” (Dados, 2009, p.). For a couple of months, the Martyrs’ Square became a space of activity, unity, martyrdom and independence, but also one of pilgrimage and protest.

Nevertheless, on the 8th of March, a pro-Syrian public demonstration by Hezbollah supporters and their allies took place in Riad el Solh Square and the adjacent parking lot and spaces. A crowd of more than 800 000 people gathered and was characterized as “sober, stern, homogeneous and almost monolithic in its composition and message” (Khalaf, 2006, p.16). On the other hand, the 14th of March demonstrations in the Martyrs’ Square were “more joyous, ebullient and spirited spectacle” (Khalaf, 2006, p.16). In other words, regardless of the political vision of each group, the use of the city center as a political space was also dividing. The army was in fact creating a strong dividing line between the two spaces to forbid any movement and interaction, and of course direct attacks (Makhzoumi, personal communication, April 20, 2012). Thus the space is directly associated with one or the other group until today, and these coalitions in general are still present in the political system of Beirut. The political revival of the square represents the political unity of one part of the society.

After the assassination of Hariri, Solidere modified the plans for the space around the Martyrs’ Square. In fact, the middle section was meant to become a Memorial site of the late prime minister. Located in front of the Garden of Forgiveness, “the gravesite of Mr. Hariri and his companions will take the form of a memorial garden, and no building will be erected at this site” (Solidere annual report, 2006). Figure 5.8, shows the actual situation of the space: a highly militarized tent, inside which Hariri’s grave is exposed and next to the

pictures of the new martyrs. According to Solh (personal communication, April 17, 2012), an idea for the space was to create a War Memorial. Unfortunately, this project has not been followed up and most probably will not take place. As a result, the space became a particular image of Hariri and his political allies.

5.3 THE INTANGIBLE DIVISION

The third type of division present in the case of the Martyrs' Square can also be generalized in the case of the reconstructed city centre of Beirut, and takes into consideration different mental approaches to the city – namely, the memory, the perception, the identity, the representation, and the image of the space. The Martyrs' Square, as a result of its harsh physical transformation is often being forgotten, ignored or lived in its past. In this section, I will develop major ideas that underline the intangible divided character of the square.

5.3.1 The memory and symbolic perception of the space. The social and political changes in the country and the city center directly affected the Martyrs' Square. As we could see from the spatial transformations, the square's evolution can be divided roughly in four periods. Before 1878, the space was outside the city – an edge, a borderland. Between 1878 and 1975, different socio-political events and design proposals continuously changed and urbanized the space. This period is in general described as a period of development and transformations. During the civil war (1975-1990), the Martyrs' Square was assimilated with the frontier within the city. Finally, the period after 1990 was marked by massive destruction. In social terms, these periods are also visible and mark the intangible transformation of the square. Major symbols, images and perceptions of the space mark each of the above periods. Saliba (1991) studied the imageability and cityscape analysis of the city center in 1990 – directly after the end of the civil war. The project consisted of questionnaires and the drawing of a mental map (see annex I). This project presents an interesting comparative approach in terms of memory and expectations for the city center, and will be therefore used here as a comparative and support to the fieldwork.

The maidan. While the period before 1878 requires a different approach and study of historical documents, for the purpose of this study, it is important to understand this period in its perception as a maidan, an edge, referred to as 'El bourj'. The location of the

space outside the city wall and the activities taking place there are part of the making of the space.

Before the civil war. The second periodical division of transformation can be



Figure 5.7: the Martyrs' Square in 2005 (Annahar, 2005)

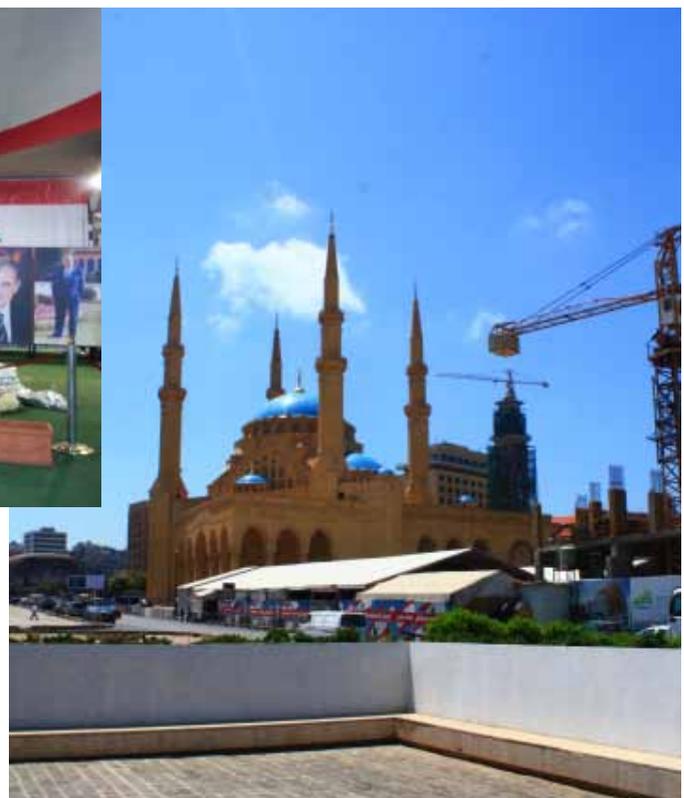


Figure 5.8: the view of the tent
And inside the tent

associated with the period during which the square gained its recognition as an integral part of the city. In other words, when it became a square rather than an open space. This period can be subdivided into two parts: one as an Ottoman Garden, and second as a monumental image of the 'first independence', which is the result of the martyrs' hangings. As Haidar (personal communication, April 12, 2012) argues, "if the country was not liberated from the Ottomans two years later, the space would have not marked the society so much. In fact, many other hangings and massacres took place in Lebanon during the Ottoman period, but they are not remembered as a national image of struggle and independence". As such, the image of the square is a combination of the Martyrs' and the liberation.

Based on Saliba's (1991) work on the memory of the space, this periodical division consist of two categories of people the age group above 45 (i.e. born before 1946) and the age group between 25 and 45 (i.e. born between 1946 and 1966), In general these people are classified as those who lived the space, they have a strong memory of the space, of its elements and landmarks. In their experience, it is a collective space, an economic center and a place with a symbolic role. In Haidar's (personal communication, April 12, 2012) point of view, "these people, because they lived the space, and they were isolated during the war, the memory was very active, it did not die in their mind". He goes on and explains: "these people were not aware of the changes happening in the city. Hamra and Corniche did change in their design and development but because they could see these changes, the memory of it is not as active as that of the Bourj".

Moment during the civil war. Again based on Saliba's classification, this section concerns the group younger than 25 years old – born between 1970 and mid-1980. These people did not live the space so they cannot have a memory of it; what they know is recalled stories and pictures. "They know the space, its history and symbolism, but they did not experience it directly" (Haidar, personal communication, April 12, 2012). An interviewee on the street said: "we didn't know the city center other than through the radio and parents stories" (Women, personal communication, April 20, 2012). Saliba (1991) noticed that as the people grow in age, they representation and drawing of the space becomes more detailed. Indeed, according to his study, the youngest generation presented the lowest level of detail in their mental maps, basically only associated with landmarks. On top of that, these maps

lack a certain coherence in the drawing – wrong relation between the spaces, misplaced elements (Saliba, 1991). In parallel, mentions of the Martyrs' Square in their mental image of Beirut were also growing (frequency per age group: 14 times for 25-35, 22 times for 35-45, and 28 times for older than 45). Similarly, the older generations of people I was talking to were giving more details regarding their perception and remembrance of it. The details were often concerning the location of shops, and retail stores, the events taking place, sometimes the movies they went to see, other people in the square, the name of a bartender. Furthermore, I noticed two relatively equal types of behavior from the people of the older generation with regards to the square. Some were very enthusiastic about the redevelopment of the square, while others developed an attitude of a lack of care. Some even asked me why should the square be reconstructed. I also noticed that the more enthusiastic people were for the majority interviewed in the spaces of Solidere while I found those who did not care in different spaces of the city. Nevertheless, it is possible that this difference of behavior also results from differences in the financial situation of the respondents. People with better financial capacities can afford going to the Solidere and thus would like to see the Martyrs' Square developed, in comparison to the people in other more popular places in the city. However, more data should be gathered in order to confirm this hypothesis.

Moment directly after the civil war (period of deconstruction). The destruction of the space around the Martyrs' Square was a strong moment for the loss of the landmarks. This period cannot be studied as a separate entity of the transformation. Haidar compares the Martyrs' Square to the Place de l'Etoile, stating that “because that square was kept as it is, nobody tries to link it to its past. They might remember some elements like a shop or a tailor, but they would also live it in its present. The harsh transformation in the Martyrs' Square in a way forces people to remember its past history”. Through the discussion with some of the interviewees, the moment of the destruction was dominant. Some of them were questioning me about the reasons, others were telling me how they experienced it, others yet were feeling sad about some buildings, and some were also asking me about the square's future. The most interesting was the story of Arbid (personal communication, April 11, 2012) about the destruction of Rivoli Cinema: “they had to dynamite the building for it to finally collapse as if the building was making the point that it wants to stay”.

Indeed, Haidar argues that “the lack of details does not only relate to the loss of memory, but also to the disappearance of a physical marker in the space”. What follows was described as ‘public amnesia’ (Khalaf, 1993; Khalaf, 2006, Sarkis, 1998). The citizens are forced to forget. As a result of “the selective amnesia of the rebuilt city center, several alternative versions of Beirut’s past and present have emerged to generate dialogue about the civil war” (Nagel, 2002). Thus important artistic movements are taking place as to commodify the space, notably through movies and pictures. For example, in the installation of Nada Sahnawi called ‘Fraction of memory’ in Martyrs’ Square’ in 2003, stacks of newspaper represent the memory and image of the space before 1975. It shows what was forgotten (represented in white paper) and memories written by participants (see figure 5.9). The postcards created by Hadjithomas and Joreig represent the burnt square. A common reprint of a pre-war picture of the Martyrs’ Square in other postcards and films such as *West Beirut* and *the Pink House* retracing the period of the war are other well-known examples (Dados, 2009) (figure 5.10).

There is a desire for the development of the remembrance of what the past was. Haddad (personal interview, April 12, 2012) supports this idea in the development of the Antabli fountain in the Souks. The previous space had was a simple fountain as an important landmark. Today, he argues, the rebuilding of the fountain in its original location is controversial. “There is analogy between the city they are projecting and the city that was there. We don’t need to have again a fountain so that the life in the square will be developed again.” This redevelopment of memory is achieved through the over-consumption of the city. It is a space of consumption of what heritage is about, not a space where heritage is lived.

With almost all the interviewees, regardless of their age and location, talking about the destruction of the spaces around the square was accentuated with some sadness, and comments such as “What a pity!” “It is sad!” “What can we do? This is the country we live in!” to quote of few. Nevertheless, the younger generations were less pessimistic with regards to its future development. Most of them doubted that it would stay as it is today. In other words, although the spatial destruction is a very small moment in time, it affects many generations socially. In its representation and image, it is allowing the new generation to expect something in the future, while keeping the older generation longing for it’s lost past.

After Hariri’s assassination. Finally, the last moment of transformation is after

the assassination of Rafic Hariri and the political events that followed. The square was revived in political terms. Often, the younger generations were mentioning their image of the space based on these periods. It became once again a symbol of unity and liberation, this time from the Syrian occupation. The space at that time also changed name. It was often referred to as the “Liberation Square”.

To sum up, the Martyrs’ Square today is either lived in its past and in the experiences of 2005 or not lived at all. Today’s different narratives of the space are a void, a parking, a demonstration place or a memory its past. Regarding the memory, with time, it is getting less and less expanded and developed; we forget the details and sometimes lose the meaning of the memory and the space, and as Haidar (personal communication, April 11, 2012) says, “the lack of details does not only relate to the loss of memory, but also the disappearance of a physical marker in the space”.

5.3.2 Life in Beirut, the perception and use of space. Public spaces in Beirut and their study deal with recent fragment of the history of the place. Indeed, the lack of knowledge about the spatial character of the city before the mid-19th century limits the palpable history of the space (Davie, 1994; Davie, 1996; Tueni & Sassin, 2000; Yassin, 2010; Yassin, 2012). The historical and monumental evolution of the Martyrs’ Square sheds the light on the rich historical episodes, both national and international, affecting life in Beirut (Tueini & Sassine, 2000; Salibi, 1993). Most importantly, the destroying and terrorizing war period affected the life in the city and its public spaces. The redefinition of territorial identities and the homogenization of the space in Beirut lead to a re-understanding and re-examination of the role of public spaces in the city (Dwyer, 2006; Gallo, 2012; Harb, 2009; Kabbani, 1998; Khalaf, 1993b; Khalaf, 2006; Larkin, 2010; Nagel, 2002; Seidman, s.a.; Yassin, 2010; Yassin, 2010b). Moreover, the increase private vehicular transportation system in Beirut is preferred to the pedestrian use and thus affecting the urban life and public spaces in the city (Dwyer, 2006; Monroe, 2011).

Particularly interesting for the case study of Beirut and the Martyrs’ Square, the understanding of the public spaces in Lebanon and Arab areas is different than these spaces in different part of the world. Davie (1996) points out unclear division between the public and private space in the Souks of Beirut, the general understanding of public spaces as



Figure 5.9: the installation of Sahnawi in the Martyrs' Square (nadasahnawi.com)



Figure 5.10: 2010 post card of the 1970's Martyrs' Square (tommy post, 2010)

limited and framed is not present in the city. Beyhum (1992) insists on the development of public space as a network, it is not a physical space. Arbid (2002) shows that public space in Beirut is particularly practiced in villages because 80% of Beirut's people are originally from other place. Thus publics are not successful in transcending the identity in Beirut.

In order to understand the public life in Beirut, it is important to retrace its recent and post war situations that have an impact on its public life. The situation of public space, as we will see in what follows, creates a paradox between the spaces within the Solidere field of action, and the rest of the city. Moreover, other factors than the planning and design affect the use and development these public spaces, as we will see from the haphazard development of the city and its vehicular dependency. On top of that, the architectural construction

of residential and commercial buildings enhanced the interconnection of professional and personal lives (Davie, 1996). These multi religious areas, along with other character of the city were lost in the post war city.

The use of public space in Beirut. Going around the other open public spaces in the city center, I notice that the public spaces of Solidere in general are weakly used. In other words, while Corniche Ain el Mreisseh and the Sanayeh Garden were agitated with people from different ages, sex, religions and background the space of solidere were rather described as voids and empty.

Public space in Solidere. Compared to Beirut in the early 20th century, most green areas have almost disappeared. Solidere often puts forward the increased number of green public spaces in the city in comparison with the pre-war situation. Even though Solidere succeeded in the rehabilitation and implementation of open public spaces (except for the development of the Martyrs' Square) in Beirut's Central District, it seems to have failed in enhancing the social life within. The spaces in Solidere present low activity: Debbas Garden (figure 5.11), Gebran Garden (figure 5.12) and Riad el Solh (figure 5.13) were almost not used. The Wadi abou Jamil Garden was even forbidden access – even for the people living around. The Serail gardens were sometimes used. The only two exceptions in the spaces selected in Solidere were Samir Kassir square and the Etoile. Both of them depended in a certain way on the restaurants around it – an argument often given by the people questioned, they are here because they are waiting for something else. Dwyer (2006) points out “public spaces in the master plan are typically keyed as ‘green open space’ with the standard ‘parking below’ designation – and no other distinctions as to form or program.” There is no wonder that since most of the gardens already designed – namely the Khalil Gebran Garden, the Riad el Solh Square and the Debbas Square – are relatively small and thus not very suitable for an efficient establishment of parking spaces underneath, all the hope for creating a large underground parking was directed towards the Martyrs' Square.

Moreover, the location of most of these gardens in the city center is the victim of political context that reduces and inhibits their access and use. The Gibran Garden is located in front the United Nations building, almost always guarded and closed to the public. The roman bath garden located directly under the governmental offices and the seraglio is rarely

closed but strongly guarded. The only structure accessible at any time is the stairs linking Bank Street and Bad Idris. They are, however, also seldom used because their large and wide structure induces movement and because of the lack of any activities taking place on or next to the stairs. In the Debbas Garden, I did not encounter any users of the space. The only discussion was with the security officer who was surprised by my presence. Riad el Solh is facing a radical change. Before the war, the site was a small middle Island in a low traffic zone (Fayad, personal communication, April 26, 2012). Today, the space has been added to the adjacent building now under construction. This building is a 110-meter high tower, designed by Jean Nouvel, which overshadows all the spaces around (see figure 5.14). Finally, the Etoile Square can be described as having slightly more social life going on. However as I could note from the observations and interviews, it is mostly dependent on office hours – somewhat active during lunchtime and after work hours. Thus, the actual spaces in Solidere give “little hope of ever adding to the public life in the city” (Dwyer, 2006).

The Martyrs' Square (figure 5.15). The none-participatory observation on the martyrs' square, gave me insight on the use of space from a distance point of view. Almost no one was actually stopping at the square. The users seem to be using the space as a passage point. Moreover, the main axis or way used was not even near the statue but rather north of the square, where a sort of passage point was created near the ruins (see line A on figure). More people were using the sidewalk on the west of the square rather than on the east. I could notice a time pattern in the general use of the space: a larger number of persons were crossing the square in the morning (roughly between 9:00 and 10:00) in comparison to the midday time (roughly between 1:00 and 3:00). However this passage was again increased later in the afternoon (starting 17:00). Nevertheless, almost no one was actually sitting on the square. When talking to the people, I notice a majority of people think of the Martyrs' Square as a passage point regardless of the time of the day: they would cross from the parking spot east of the square to reach their destination –whether their work office, a café, store... In term of their expected use of the space if developed and their perception of the future, the answers were divided in two major categories of almost same size groups. First there was the group would like to see the square developed but were not sure they would use it, and second there was the group who were interested in it future. However, most of

the interviewees, thought their public inputs are useless, except for a couple of them who were actually working for Solidere.

The Corniche. In comparison to the shady, green and nicely designed areas of the city center, the seafront corniche of Ain el Mreisseh and Raouche (figure 5.16) present a very different setting. The space resembles an extra-large sidewalk reaching up to 10 meters at some point, going parallel to the Mediterranean Sea on one side and the Avenue des Francais on the other. It goes without saying that its location at the edge of the sea is definitely a privileged one. People on that space could not explain the reason behind their enjoyable and pleasant experience. They often answer: "I don't know why".

The space was agitated almost all day long, however with some modification in the type of activities performed. This agitation varied according to the days of the week. The most striking was Friday at the midday prayer time, part of the square was used for parking and many people were coming to the Mosque across the street. This same phenomenon was visible in the Martyrs' Square at that time. Unfortunately in both spaces I was not able to know if the people were staying long in the space. The users of the space were from different ages – young kids playing, youth riding the bicycle, or the skate board, teenager talking, university student waiting for their class or enjoying the sun, and middle age as well as old people fishing or having coffee and sportive people of different age were the most common. In the space there clear religious mix was present – women wearing a veil next to other showing a cross. The activities were often different according to different times – fishing was more common in the early morning and late afternoon; Jogging was also common all day long, but can be divided between 'sporty' people, young and teenagers were often present in late afternoon and evening. Another common feature I notice were the street vendor – for coffee, corn and thermos. Most of the questioned people were using a transportation mean to come to the space, although most of them lived in the municipality of Beirut but not close enough to walk; few were living in Ain el Mreisseh. Moreover, most of these people, feel attached to the space although most of them could not say why. While the majority of the people questioned were indifferent concerning the development of the Martyrs' square, only a very few number were going there. However, almost all the older generation people felt said about the space in the center, and the younger rather indifferent.



Figure 5.11: Debbas Garden (Left)

Figure 5.12: Gebran Garden (Second line right)

Figure 5.13: Riad el Solh (Second line left)

Figure 5.15: The Martyrs' Square (Third line)



Borrowing Dwyer's (2006) conclusion: "The Corniche model is key to returning public life to the people of Beirut".

Sanayeh Garden (figure 5.17). This space was quite similar to the Corniche – agitated almost all day long, with different activities taking place. The main difference with the Corniche was the large number of person that were having picnics, and a bigger group that was reading – in fact a newspaper stand was there in the mornings. Thus the space was relatively crowded on Sundays. Another difference is the place of habitat that was for the majority close to the garden – most of them were walking to it. Unexpectedly, the majority of the people had the same reaction to the martyrs square as the people questioned in the Corniche.

To sum up, it seems that Solidere wanted to avoid public space in the way we would imagine it, where exchange is happening. Solidere is proposing more open spaces and gardens in the city than were present before the war, but they are in fact highly securitized and privatized spaces. It seems that neither Solidere wants people there; nor people want to go there. The perception of the spaces in the city is and will be voids (Sarkis, 2006). The image of Solidere in the space is thus an important factor in the development of the Martyrs' Square.

5.3.3 Redefining Territorial identities. The impact of identity and cultural revival in Beirut was often shaped by the ways the past is narrated. Sawalha (2010) argues that while the Phoenician past, the Ottoman and French rules are significantly studied, few narratives about the Arab and Crusaders past are found about the city. On this topic Kaufman (2001) notice the revitalization of the Phoenician identity of the country in 1920 stating

"The Phoenician idea was first expressed by Beirutis, who, of all the inhabitants of Syria, were the most exposed to Western thought. 'Phoenicianism', in its first step, was definitely 'an ideology of the city' to use the term coined by Albert Hourani. It was the spirit of Beirut that furnished the idea with its character in its commencement"

The recent archeological pits in Beirut, as Nasr (1996) argues, have been used "as a tool to pacify the critics and fear" regarding the post-war destruction of the city. Naturally, Solidere's action regarding these destructions will be unfortunate but justified as a mean



*Figure 5.16: Coriniche
Ain el Mreisseh*



Figure 5.17: Sanayeh Garden



to unfold of exceptional historical information about the city (Geurin, 2002). While Beirut struggle to combine their Phoenician past with their Arab history, the civil war resulted to redefinition of cultural identity based on different grounds.

On the other hand, as a result of the conflict, new social geography divided the area of Beirut along religious lines . During the sixteen years of war, Beirut saw large numbers of people moving from one place to another within the city, mostly from multi-cultural neighborhoods to ones with a dominant majority. Nasr (1993) studied the sectarian redistribution of Lebanese communities between 1975 and 1989 (table 5.1). According to him, not more that 5% of the population live in the 'others' neighborhood' compared to 35% in 1975. Thus, there is a growing homogeneity of spaces (Nasr, 1993), naturally accompanied by the disappearance of mixed and heterogeneous communities (Khalaf, 1993a; Khalaf, 1993b) (see figure 5.18). Moreover, the sectarian division of the space was followed by a gradual destruction of the common place (Nasr, 1993). The war has destroyed common spaces and "reinforced proclivities for the formation of exclusive and seclusive enclaves" (Khalaf 1993b, p.19).

In a recent study, Yassin (2010b) notices an increased wish for living in mono-cultural neighborhoods. His study was done on students and employees from the American University of Beirut. He noted that while most of them were indifferent regarding their working and social environment, when it came to buying a house or choosing a place to live they, would often refer to some neighborhoods where a certain dominant religious group was present. He states: "Restaurants, bars and offices are often occupied by a multicultural mix of people spending time together, or even dating. However, when it comes to wedding or living somewhere, most of the questioned people wanted to live in mono-cultural places". In his opinion this is the main consequence of the war still visible today in the society. On this topic, Khalaf (1993) argues:

"As land turns over, so do our perceptions and commitments to it. Such changes are not only visible in the way the Lebanese are confirming their spatial mooring and the language they employ in asserting their retribalized identities. Their images of the "other", those who

intrude on their spaces and beyond, have also been profoundly transformed” (p.16-17).

The increased sectarianism and the disappearing multi-communal space of the city center impact the Martyrs' Square in its lack of attachment to any community. The historic socio-cultural meeting place is victim of a fragmented socio-political culture.

Destruction of Beirut and the loss of common place. The spatial destruction of the space during the civil war affected the life of the Lebanese in many ways. Besides individual material losses (houses, offices...), Beirut's society also lost its common spaces. In the interviews, people were often discussing shops, restaurants and cafes where they would meet regardless of their religion or political views. They feel that today, these spaces are almost non-existent. Khalaf (1993b) argues that “the first to go was Beirut's central business district which had served historically as the undisputed focal meeting place” (p.97). Beirut's downtown area presented itself as the historical center of the city politically (with the parliament at the Place de l'Etoile, the seraglio, and the municipal building), financially (especially at the Banking Street where most of the banks and financial institutions were located), as a transportation hub (at a connection line between the North-South axis and the East-West axis), as center of social, commercial and night life (with the souks, restaurants, cafés, hotel, bars and the red-light district), as well as religiously. “There, people of every walk of life and social standing came together” (Khalaf, 1993b, p. 97). Therefore, the destruction of shared common space, accompanied the destruction of the city center. The urbicide on Beirut's central district represent the destruction of the multi-cultural meeting space for the city and the country.

As explained in the previous section, the reconstruction of the city center was intended to remove the previous owners and sell the space to investors. The result is, of course, a gentrified city. It was the second time that gentrification of the space took place in Beirut, the first one being the Ottoman and French gentrification in the early 20th century (Yassin, 2012). The city center thus developed as a suburb for the rich. Big companies were renting and buying offices, and international brands (Dior, Gucci, Lauboutin...) were opening their shops. Arbid points out: “Solidere promised us to have small and poor dwellers in the city; however, 15 years after the development, the rental prices are exuberant and of course individuals can never pay back the rent”. Amine argues that “the development of Solidere for

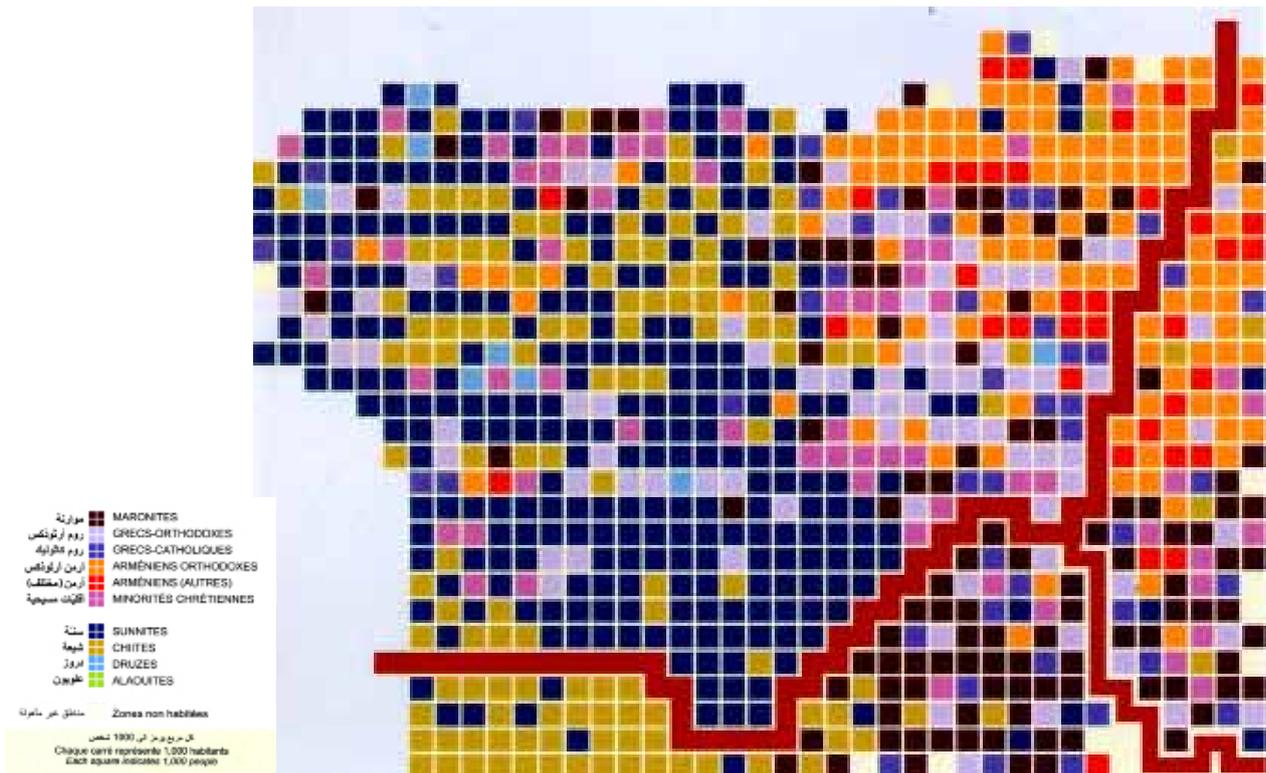


Figure 5.18 The religious division of Beirut. Each square represent 1000 inhabitants.

Table 5.1 Sectarian redistribution of Lebanese communities (Nasr, 1993)

	<u>1975</u>	<u>1989</u>
Christians		
Southern Mt. Lebanon (Shouf, Aley, Upper Metn)	55%	5%
West Beirut and Suburbs	35%	5%
Beqaa	40%	15%
South Lebanon	26%	10%
Muslims		
Eastern Suburbs (Beirut)	40%	5%
South Lebanon (Security Belt)	50%	10%
Koura, Batroun	10%	2%
East Beirut	8%	1%

the city center is similar to an island in the city". In other words, this space is not available for everyone. In evidence of this, the majority of the people I talked to in Sanayeh (most of whom live in the surroundings of the garden) said that they do not like to go to the city center. These groups explained their lack of interest based on very simple comments such as "I don't feel comfortable," "the space is not for me," "what would I do if I go there? It is very expensive," "they [Solidere] are looking at what I do". In comparison, people questioned in the gardens of Solidere did not have the same reaction. Some did mention that they prefer other places in Beirut (Gemayzeh and Hamra were the most common names given) but they still felt comfortable in the space.

This shows that the gentrification is extremely socially dividing and destructive. The center became geared to a certain category of people; it became the rich suburb of the city in the city, a gated community, which will eventually be reflected in the development for the Martyrs' Square. Indeed, looking at the potential buildings and development around the square, we can realize what type of space it will become: West of the square, a 5-star hotel Le Grey was inaugurated in 2009; between the virgin and the Mosque, a building complex called 'Beirut Gardens' is under construction. A simple visit to their website can give an idea about the clientele they are targeting (Beirut Gardens, s.a.). The two expected plans for the west and north-west of the square, as Solh (personal communication, April 17, 2012) informed me, are also geared for a certain clientele.

Increase of car dependence at the expense of open spaces. One of the biggest problems of Lebanon in general and Beirut in particular is a very strong dependence of vehicular transportation. While many plans exist for the development of trains and metros, and enhancing a bus system, since the end of the war only some infrastructural works have been or are being done, most of which are not a big success. Most people still use cars to move around, and commercial movement depends mainly on vans and trucks. Statistics show that the high level of motorization in Lebanon can reach up to 350 cars for 1000 inhabitants, with an even higher ratio in metropolitan Beirut (Barakat & Chamusy 2011). In Beirut, only 8% of the movement is done using buses compared to 77% with private car or trucks and 15% in taxis and taxis-service (Barakat & Chamusy 2011). This high level of vehicular dependency creates a situation that is directly related to the use, availability and

role of public spaces in the city. Firstly, this reflected on a strong dependence on vehicular transportation that creates very congested traffic, and thus intolerable urban and suburban traffic jam, consequently increasing the pollution of the city, and deteriorating its urban quality (Dwyer, 2006 & Barakat & Chamusy, 2011). Secondly, this reflected on the loss of spaces for cars in the city. The government does not have any short- or long-term vision for reducing the traffic in the country, so as the number of cars is increasing in the city (Solh, 2012), many spaces in the city are given away from the public to cars (sidewalks, empty lots used for parking). As a result, “open space becomes parking space, discouraging the social interaction and encouraging an even greater retreat from the center” (Dwyer, 2006).

The increasing number of cars in the city is not only affecting the public spaces but also the infrastructure works and movement. Instead of investing into public transport projects (such as buses, trains, trams and metros), the government is putting a large sum of money for the development or amelioration of highways. I will not go in detail into the governmental infrastructure program, but it is important to note that it includes the convergence of motorways in the Martyrs' Square area. Solh affirms: “We know for a fact that about 70% of the traffic that comes through downtown is through traffic, not even destination traffic. And that traffic comes through Martyrs' Square”. This cuts off the center of the square from its edges, and makes the experience of the space unpleasant to the loud, almost deafening sound of traffic.

To sum up, the post-war social transformations in the city and in particular in the space of Solidere create a space of division rather than a space of mix. While “rebuilding the divided city entails selective memory and forgetting, nostalgia for the past and aspirations for the future” (Sliver, 2010), the reconstruction of Beirut is developed based on several dividing factors. Indeed, reducing the religious-political presence in the city, the privatization of the space and the perception of Solidere are major dividing factors. The previous multicultural spaces of the center, as the space of all religion and political parties confined, have been replaced by a one-side group, enhancing a still prevailing division line.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSION

The Martyrs' Square has historically been a monumental space and the meeting point of locals and visitors alike; however, during the Lebanese civil war, the square was transformed into a dividing structure. The Martyrs' Square became symbol of a united as well as of a divided city. Today, the lack of development in the space generates controversial feelings of post-war destruction and reconstruction, division, nostalgia and amnesia. In parallel, the reconstruction of Beirut City Centre, carried out by a private company, was designed to reclaim Beirut's pre-war role as the financial capital of the Middle East, and to redevelop the site of national harmony and multi-confessional exchange.

This research focused on the redevelopment of the monumental space as a way to participate in the peace building and peace planning for a post-war divided city. It questioned the spatial, social and political revival of the monumental space of the Martyrs' Square with its pre-war role at the center of Beirut. The space, previously an integral part of the center of the city, is now labeled as empty and marginal. This research shows that while the division is not present today as a physical line, the actual situation of the square plays a major part in a different type of division. The space is a dividing element for the city in spatial, social and political terms. The re-designing of the city center does not seem to have been able to solve conflicts and developed a united shared place.

Although the space did not lose its symbolic and monumental image, the perception and use of the square is more dividing. So far, the success of the Martyrs' Square as a space of unity does not look promising. The redevelopment of the Martyrs' Square as a unification space seems like a utopian approach. The dominance of architectural constructions which eclipse the space of role of the Martyrs' Square on the one hand, and the development targeting the 'upper class' public on the other, seem to create a space serving the people living around, a lost public space with a statue in the middle.

The space of the Martyrs' Square is often associated with the image of Solidere and its development of the center. The image of a gated community or exclusivity and the physical character of the square are dividing Beirut's society. Moreover, the political image

of the space, although revived as a space of independence and liberty, is often related to a certain political party. The provisional and fragile system in the country leaves the long-term prediction for the space and its image in turmoil. The redevelopment of the space is also closely dependent on various changeable factors such as the type of development of the space around it, the survival of Solidere, the perspective of the people, and the social and political changes in the country in general.

Although architecture of peace has proved to be efficient in various cases of divided cities, in the particular case of the Martyrs' Square in Beirut, it did not bare fruitful results. It is clear, however, that this monumental space cannot be studied alone; it is an integral part of the rest of the city. While in architectural and planning terms, the development of Solidere is not a complete fiasco (the city center has an organized master plan and regulation as compared to the rest of the city where haphazard construction and the lack of planning is being dominated by individuals); the Solidere development has been a complete catastrophe in social terms. In other words, the problem with the development of public spaces in Solidere does not lie in its architectural and aesthetic values, but rather in its social image and in the perception of the center as a global city. This problem can be generalized to other public spaces in the reconstructed city: the spaces are either disappearing to be replaced by various types of construction (building, parking lots...) or developed for the elite of the society. The Martyrs' Square, regardless of its monumental character for the city, is thus a case study for the rest of the public spaces in Beirut, in particular to the reconstruction part of Solidere.

6.1.1 Redevelopment of research questions. Looking at these results for the development of this square, we can ask ourselves different types of questions:

First, are we perhaps overemphasizing the role of the Martyrs' Square as a monumental space and a social center of the city? Was its pre-war success a result of its monumentality or the result of the different socio-economic development around the space? It was relatively clear from the different interviews conducted that the memory of the space was not always attached to its monumental aspect, but to the different activities taking place around. Indeed, some interviewees were retracing moments of the square as far as giving me the name of

the bartender, the newspaper they would buy in the early morning after a party, or even the number of the tramway line or bus they would use to come to the square. It goes without saying that the reconstruction and the redevelopment of the Martyrs' Square is a common statement found in many narratives. However, this symbolic space will not in itself necessarily create unity, exchange and a better-mixed life. Thus we should not overemphasize the role of the Martyrs' Square as a monumental space only, but rather create a connection between the image of space and the social and economic role it played.

Second, should a monument be developed as a public square? Although Sitte (1889/1996) would argue that the center of squares should be assigned for monuments, today, monumental spaces do not necessarily develop into a lively public space around. Imposing a spatial character can of course impact the spatial organization of the city; however, there is a strong political association with its meaning and representation, and often people do not know what to do with it. The idea of developing a grandiose, nicely designed space around the Martyrs' Square is quite difficult, weak, and to a certain extent useless. Smaller changes or different approaches should most probably be taken into consideration, and can have a stronger impact on monuments and spaces in the city.

Third, can the center stay as it is today? This question relates to an often-posed question: for whom was the center reconstructed? The development of the city today is excluding a large group of the society from it. The political, social, cultural and economic influence of Solidere is privately oriented while there should be a balance between private and public interest in order to have a healthy city. As Arbid (personal communication, April 11, 2012) argues, "many economic crises will force Solidere and the users of the space to lower the expectations and standards, and normal life will come back to the center". Moreover, there is a need for many more artifacts for the development of a better city social life. The problem of the city center is the result of the post-modern economy: it is a market driven development of the city. The city needs a different vision for a continuous, affordable life in it. Sarkis (2006) argues that the Martyrs' Square "continues to play an important role in maintaining the image of the city as a coherent entity (...), the center became like the forbidden city in Beijing, holding the city together symbolically by the power of its ubiquitous image and its inaccessibility" (p.11).

Fourth, why did urbanism not heal the scars of conflict? Sarkis (2006) describes the reconstruction of Beirut as a void: not a void of the war, but a void of the reconstruction that is wiping out everything that has existed there before 1975. The loss of architectural constructions and landmarks is enhancing a collective amnesia. This urbanism did not heal the scars of the war but simply stitched the wounds. The society is not healed, the memory is still present, and the nostalgia is strong. Moreover, excluding the public from the process of the reconstruction limits the intentions for multi-cultural exchange and rebuilding.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of this research, it is legitimate to ask: Can something be done for the space of the Martyrs' Square to become again the social and political center of the city? It is clear that some measures could be taken for changing the perception and spatial quality of the space. In this section, I propose three recommendations for the development of the Martyrs' Square. These recommendations tackle the most important problems of the square presented in this research, namely: the spatial qualities and character of the square, the socio-cultural life in the city and the public participation in the designing of the space.

6.2.1 Spatial qualities and character of the square. Gehl (2010) categorizes outdoor human activities in public places in cities into necessary activities, optional activities, and social activities. All three categories involve different qualities of the physical environment. He categorizes necessary activities as those that will take place anywhere, under any circumstances; they are not dependent on the physical environment. People perform these activities because they do not have any other choice. Optional activities will, in contrast, take place when the conditions are favorable for their occurrence. They have a higher probability to happen in a convivial space with high spatial qualities. Social activities are more likely to happen when necessary and optional activities are given better conditions in public spaces. Thus in the ideal case of the Martyrs' Square, we should hope for the development of a space where social activities can take place, where people can interact under any circumstances. The development of material space compatible with the desirable social space should be developed. Thus a question arises: how does the physical environment encourage social interactions?

First, on a larger scale, the space should be designed as an integral part of the city center. On the one hand, the space should be proportional to the rest of the city. A potential action could be to decrease the size of the space in general, constructing narrower streets and smaller buildings. On the other hand, the development of pedestrian connections with the rest of the space in the city center is necessary. Close attention should therefore be paid to the rest of the spaces in the city as well. Second, the development of a closed square enhances the feeling of security and confinement. Indeed, the development of the space around the square and the careful attention and study of the design of buildings favors the bordering of the square. Third, the design of the square itself, including the attention to the parking entrances and pedestrian movements, can improve the quality of the space. And fourth, aesthetic elements and attention to details and decorations create a more enjoyable and appreciated walk and resting places. These elements should fit the way the space matches with the activities in the space. Indeed, the more a site is attractive and diverse, the more optional activities will take place, and thus life will come back to it, and it would not look like a 1:1 model of the space.

6.2.2 The socio-cultural life in the city. The presence of cultural activities in the city center can bring more people to the square. The reconstruction of the Grand Theatre, the presence of libraries, museums and cultural centers allows for social exchange to take place. It is true that Solidere is trying to create events and activities in the center, but they are often unnatural and lack any spontaneity (Haddad, personal communication, April 12, 2012). Moreover, the social and cultural life in the city should target all the classes of the society. Thus the presence of 'cheaper' and smaller dwellers in the city will attract more people to the city and its space. Also, the presence of certain objects in a space allows for particular activities to take place. For example, the presence of benches suggests a meeting or a sitting area, an open plaza allows for performances to take place, and so on. These are objects in space, which divide the space and relate it to different functions. Objective material spaces are perceived by the people through multi-sensory mechanisms, and therefore used for certain activities. The human dimension in public space relates to the size of the built surroundings as well as its attractiveness to pedestrians (Gehl, 2010). Martyrs' Square should not become a garden where people would come and have picnic. It

was never the case of the space. It should be a square that works.

Finally, changes at the higher hierarchy need to be done first in order to bring some positive impact to the city and the country in general. We can think of writing the history of the war, allowing for the scars to heal and then think of creating a space of forgiveness. The city and the citizen should be allowed the possibility to heal their scars. Thus the functionality of buildings and open space should relate to the degree to which people will be able to identify to the space square. This characteristic can be understood in terms of identity of place and events as well as in terms of a sense of place, the meaning, the structure, the transparency, the legibility, and symbolism.

6.2.3 Public participation. Numerous cases of successful post-war development show that the participation of citizens enhances the feeling of belonging and the potential of peace building. The cultural and social meaning of spaces is revived, and their interests kept. In the case of Beirut, the lack of public participation resulted in citizens feeling excluded from the decision making and their role ignored. It is, therefore, important to know what the people want from the square and what are their expectations and desires for its redevelopment. Public participation in the physical reconstruction is a logical extension of this.

In a nutshell, the interplay between space and well-being should be dealt with in order to rearrange common and public spaces and to create conditions conducive to peaceful and creative coexistence among groups embittered by years of unresolved hostilities. Architecture should be used in peace building process, however, the process of its implementation is as important. The lessons learnt from this case study can be applied in other situations. I rephrase the most important ones: increasing public participation, developing apolitical design, creating social cohesion side-by-side to the redevelopment and careful spatial and architectural attention to the pre-existing urban fabric and urban life.

“Until you know what you want, you cannot get there at all” (Lynch, 1960)

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MENTAL IMAGE OF BEIRUT CBD 1990					
IMAGE ELEMENT	FREQUENCY PER AGE GROUP				TOTAL
	<25	25-35	35-45	>45	
MARTYR'S SQUARE	7	14	22	28	71
PARLIAMENT		8	11	19	38
PLACE RIAD EL SOLH		3	9	23	35
BAB IDRIS		2	6	25	33
PLACE DE L'ETOILE	1	6	10	15	32
RIVOLI (cinema)		7	9	16	32
SUD EL TAWILEH		6	7	18	31
MAARAD ST.		3	8	19	30
EL AZARIEH BLDG.		6	6	16	29
CAPITOL (cinema)			10	12	22
POLICE HEADQUARTERS		2	7	12	21
ST. ELMASAREF	3	7	1	10	21
FOCH ST.			4	16	20
ST. GEORGE CHURCH			8	11	19
PLACE DEBBAS		3	6	10	19
SAIFI ST.		2	5	12	19
DMARI MOSQUE		4	4	11	18
GRAND THEATRE		3	4	11	18
ALLENBY ST.			3	15	18
MUNICIPALITY		1	5	11	17
SUN AYASS		1	2	10	14
BYBLOS BLDG.		4	5	4	14
SUD EL HOGDAR		3	4	6	13
ROXY (cinema)		2	4	7	13
AUTOMATIC (restaurant)		3	2	5	10
DARAJ KHAN EL BEID	1	1	1	6	9
SUD EL SAGHA			4	5	9
EL AJAMI (restaurant)		1	4	4	9
WEYGAND ST.			2	7	9
BICHARA EL THOURY ST.			2	7	9
GRAND SERAIL			1	8	9
EMPIRE (cinema)		1	1	6	8
P.T.T. (mail)		2	4	2	8
SUD EL NOURIEH		1	1	6	8
RED LIGHT DISTRICT		4	3	4	8
EL ANIADLI	1	3	3		7
SUD EL SAMAK		1	1	5	7
FATTAL BLDG.		2	3	2	7
DUNIA (cinema)			2	5	7
SUD EL DMOUMI			3	4	7
A.B.C. (department store)			1	5	6
CAPUCINS CHURCH			1	5	6
EL MUTRAN ST.			1	4	5
EL ZAITOUNEH (district)			1	4	5
DAMASCUS ROAD			1	4	5
ABUN NASR MOSQUE			4	1	5
SUD EL BAZIRKAN				5	5
SUD EL HADADIN				4	4
ARMENIAN CHURCH			2	2	4
EL KEZAZ (coffee shop)			1	3	4
GEORGE PICOT ST.			2	1	3
SUD EL-EFRANGE			1	2	3
ARAB BANK		1	2		3
PORT (district)			1	2	3
DAR EL KITAB			1	2	3
METROPOLE (cinema)		3			3
EL SAMADI (patisserie)		1		2	3
SUD EL JAMIL			1	2	3
SUD EL JOUKH			1	2	3
LA RONDA (shop)			3		3
DROSDY BEIK			1	1	2
EL AMIN MOSQUE		2			2
FALAFEL FREIHA		2			2
EL MAKASSED BLDG.				2	2
EL AHDAB GARAGE			1	1	2
MINISTRY OF FINANCE				2	2
GAUMONT PALACE (cinema)			1	1	2
BANCO DI ROMA				2	2
SUD EL NAJJARIN				2	2
MASRAH FAROUQ (theater)			2		2

Mental image of Beirut: Frequency per age group of reference to elements