



**HAL**  
open science

## A Post-War Urban Geography of Beirut

Michael F. Davie

► **To cite this version:**

| Michael F. Davie. A Post-War Urban Geography of Beirut. 1993. hal-01083151

**HAL Id: hal-01083151**

**<https://hal.science/hal-01083151>**

Preprint submitted on 15 Nov 2014

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

## A Post-War Urban Geography of Beirut

Michael F. DAVIE<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

This paper aims at presenting some of the salient changes, induced by the war, that have affected the urban geography of Beirut and its suburbs since 1975. It is also a brief overview of current research on the city undertaken by geographers, urbanists and urban sociologists, both in France and in the Lebanon.

### Résumé

#### BEYROUTH APRÈS LA GUERRE: UNE GÉOGRAPHIE URBAINE.

Cette contribution vise à présenter les changements importants, induits par la guerre, qui ont affecté la ville de Beyrouth et ses banlieues depuis 1975. Elle se veut aussi un panorama de la recherche actuelle sur cette ville effectuée par des géographes, urbanistes et sociologues urbains tant en France qu'au Liban.

\* \* \*

Urban warfare was a characteristic of military operations in Lebanon between 1975 and 1990. The main targets, the centres of military, economic or political power to be occupied were all in cities; the consolidation of this power was attained through ideological and its corollary, confessional homogenization of previously mixed territories. This paper will examine how the war modified all of the geographical aspects of the city of Beirut and of its close outskirts, as well as the current geographical situation on the ground.

The very first observation, at an elementary level, is that new place-names have appeared and have been adopted by the general public, the media and by researchers and which were not in use in pre-war days. The most well-known are undoubtedly "East Beirut" and "West Beirut", two opposing spatial units, conveniently separated by the "Green Line". "Beirut", the place-name, is no longer used without an indication of its position *vis à vis* the Line. Much has been said about the two sectors of the city, much of it belonging to the realm of the personal phantasms of the journalists or militia leaders. "West Beirut" is "Muslim, fundamentalist, overrun by terrorists, under the control of foreign renegade countries, disorganized, dangerous" etc.; "East Beirut" is "Christian, prosperous, organized, pro-Western, tolerant, safe" etc.. By a curious displacement of elementary geography, East Beirut was associated with all the territory occupied by the Lebanese Forces militia; it extended to the North, East and South of West Beirut, while West Beirut could mean all the territory to

---

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer at the Department of Geography, Faculté de Droit, d'Economie et des Sciences Sociales, Université François-Rabelais, 23, rue de la Loire, B.P. 1208, 37012 Tours Cedex, and Researcher at the U.A. 365 URBAMA ("Urbanisation du Monde Arabe"), Université François-Rabelais, B.P. 2221, 37021 Tours Cedex, (France).

the East or to the North of East Beirut. This confusion was increased when the geographical place-name became synonymous with ideological territory: the "East" meant the Christian militia and certain battalions of the Army sympathetic to their political ideals; the rest of the country was the "West". precious little room was left for those who decided to belong to neither camp. Inside each spatial unit, new place-names have emerged: they were often associated with military positions or barracks. The inhabitants have perfectly integrated these names in their mental geography of the city.

Far more important than this geographical confusion was the impact on the population of a very real separation of the city into two sectors caused by numerous military operations. These had an undeniable impact on the city, whether it be external physiognomy or its population, organization, networks, land-use and behaviour. A chronological classification will help in understanding the different changes which affected the city.

### 1975-1978

The executions and expulsions (the word "ethnic cleansing" had not yet been invented) modified whole areas of the city: 1975 and 1976 saw the emptying and flattening of the Tall az-Za'atar, Jisr al-Bacha and Karantina camps and slums; at the same time, the Nab'a area was emptied and its population replaced by refugees from Damour. The first two years of the war also saw the creation of the "Green Line" (a term borrowed from Israeli military mapping vocabulary), the demarcation line between the main opposing militias. This no-man's land slowly widened and spread thanks to military action, became overgrown with vegetation, then extended to the city's suburbs then to the ridges and valleys overlooking Beirut. Beirut city centre was part of the demarcation line and was closed off, its businesses and ministries looted, its buildings transformed into military positions, its civilian population forced out. The commercial, banking and business functions in the heart of the city were stopped almost overnight; the hotels on its periphery were gutted; its port paralysed and its Free Zone looted.

However, new replacement locations were found for the businesses: residential areas, considered "safe" in respect to the armaments used, were quickly transformed into commercial or business areas (Mar Elias, Mazra'a, the Raouché souks, Achrafiyyé, Jdaidé-Antelias and of course Kaslik-Jouniyé). Banking branches opened on both sides of the city; shopping malls were built on agricultural land; new offices were built in sleepy villages on the outskirts of the city. The centre of many villages or small towns were remodelled, sometimes pulled down and rebuilt in a functional "modern" architecture, with shops offering goods for a sophisticated urban *clientèle* (parts of Broummana, Mansouriyyé, Bikfaiya). Elsewhere, notably in Beirut itself, residential buildings were converted into offices; ground-floor apartments became shops; individual houses or first-floor apartments became militia headquarters.

### 1978-1983

Between 1978 and 1983 this movement to the periphery of the city centre or to the more distant outskirts was accelerated by the constant fighting in Beirut or in its suburbs. As the fighting increased in violence along the demarcation line, more and more inhabitants sought safe havens for their businesses and everyday life. This mobility was, in the minds of the *Beirutis*, temporary; they became ever more permanent as the war dragged on. Both sides of the coastal road between Jdaidé and Jouniyé, still partially a citrus-growing area before 1975, were almost completely built-up; shops that were once in the city centre now opened permanent replacements wherever possible, and as close as possible to the residential point of its owners. The main roads leading to the mountains to the East of the city became sought-after areas for businesses and residence (Sinn el-Fil, Mansouriyyé, Furn el-Chebbak), while on the roads leading South, small shops and low-quality housing, much of it illegal, sprang up (Ouzâ'i, Hay Mâdi, Hay al-Sellom).

The exodus of the population of South Lebanon moving towards the Western sector of Beirut at regular intervals since 1978 is perhaps the most spectacular example of rapid transformations affecting the physical aspect of the city. Fleeing Israeli military operations and subsequent occupation of South Lebanon, the population settled down in the still-rural periphery of South-Eastern Beirut. The consequences were spectacular: nearly all the rural

activities of the general area between Chiyah and the Airport disappeared in a matter of months, replaced by hastily-built housing on State- and privately-owned land; the pre-existing built-up areas were further densified, and all open spaces disappeared. Other refugees moved into the Western part of the city proper, occupying all available residential space: abandoned or closed apartments, building sites, office space, official buildings. Residential upper- and middle-class areas were squatted, with an immediate change in land-use: shops were converted into garages, restaurants into housing, schools into barracks... Other apartments were requisitioned by the militias; many long-time residents abandoned their houses once it was clear that this population was settling down permanently.

In the Eastern part of the city, the situation was similar, though not as brutal; the consequences were perhaps just as spectacular: the rapid northwards spread of the urban fringe of the city through the intense building of new apartment blocks, changes in the demographic structure of the suburbs, a deep change in its social composition. The inner part of the city, Gemmayzé and Achrafiyyé, saw a large number of its inhabitants leave for safer parts of the country under the control of the local militias; refugees from the North of the country (from where they had been forced to leave after the murder of members of the Frangiyyé clan) squatted or requisitioned housing left abandoned by Muslim tenants or by other residents. Thus during each round of fighting, transfers of population would take place, emptying areas or filling up others. Very little research has been done on these intra-city movements and little is known on the general patterns of population movements during the period.

While these population movements took place, transfers of capital (war and contraband profits, repatriated money from Lebanese expatriates) would also move from one to another, which, together with investment opportunities in speculative building, replacement businesses and political inducements created a building boom observable everywhere in and around the city. Differentiated land-use emerged: the new fortunes created during the war would be invested in new high-quality residential areas (Adma, near Jouniyé; the upper sectors of Naccache-Rabiyé; Khaldé-Aramoun; and, further in central Mount-Lebanon, Faqra); lower-income classes settled in the recent development areas overlooking the coast: Champville, Bellevue, the periphery of villages between the coast and Bikfaiya or Broummana. As for the Western sector of the city, a similar development was blocked because of the particular direction of the demarcation line and the closeness of the new refugee areas in the suburbs.

However, the ideological monopoly enforced by the militias in the eastern sector of the city was central to their endeavours of setting up a territory with few links with the rest of the country. This could only be achieved through a strict spatial control of their territory through the building or modernization of a network of strategic roads (the coast to Faraya, Jbail to the *Jurd*, the coast to Bikfaiya), bridges (Jisr al-Bacha), an airport (Halât, in replacement of Hamât), ports (extensions at Jouniyé, Dbayyé, the 5th Basin at Beirut) and barracks. All of these, in turn, induced changes in the physiognomy of the areas through new accessibility, job and investment opportunities.

While the period 1978-1983 was especially a period of building, it was also one of massive destruction: the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the siege of Beirut brought destruction on a scale unknown until then to the country through aerial bombardment, intense artillery shelling, naval attacks and tank warfare. The Southern outskirts of the city were particularly hit (Khaldé, Aramoun, Bourj al-Barajné), together with all the Palestinian camps. Public infrastructure was particularly targeted, residential buildings hit or destroyed, factories damaged. During their advance on the Western sector of the city, the Pine Forest park was bombed and burnt, buildings wrecked along strategic lines of movement, sites bulldozed to accommodate military hardware or heliports. Mention must be made here of the levelling of parts of the Sabra and Chatila camps by the local militias allied to Israel.

However, all the the destruction was not entirely due to military action: immediately after the invasion, the city centre was demined then levelled overnight, by Presidential decree. The excuse offered was that rebuilding would start soon and that all of the area could not be repaired. Whatever hope there was of revitalizing the centre through private enterprise and a return to its pre-war functions was dashed. Over 100 ha awaited the decisions of politicians and speculators.

## 1983-1990

The last period, from 1983 to 1990, was characterized by infighting between the local militias or by military activity in the mountains overlooking the city. The Chi'ite militia fought the Palestinians then their rivals, the Hizballah for the control of the suburbs; again they fought against the Druze militia for the control of the Western side of the city and its economic nerve-centres: Hamra, Mazra'a-Mar Eliàs, accesses to the airport, to the South. Fighting between the Druze militia and the Lebanese Forces led to the expulsion of the mainly Maronite population from the Chouf and the destruction of villages; this was followed by their eviction from the suburbs of Saida. Fighting along the demarcation line in Beirut or to the North of what was now dubbed the "Christian Enclave" led to the emptying of the front-line areas and villages. Battles raged between the Lebanese Forces together with some brigades of the Lebanese Army and the Syrian Army; later it was infighting between the same militia and battalions of the Lebanese Army.

The consequences of these various rounds of fighting were spectacular: new demarcation lines would suddenly appear, in the city or in areas where no fighting had ever taken place. Intra-quarter communication was disrupted for months on end, jobs lost, school attendance stopped; the mental geography of the inhabitants required integrating new variables such as new perception of vulnerability, different movement circuits, new appreciations of the geopolitical position of their quarter. The regular influx of refugee populations changed the social composition of whole areas; the presence of squatters created tensions with the resident population (which might also have been of refugee origin); job opportunities were controlled by the various militias, creating social tensions. Finally, the influxes of population were directly responsible for the consolidation of the power-base of the local militias, who recruited in the lower-class poorly-integrated refugee populations. In turn, the increase in militia power required new forms of spatial control through new infrastructure and the economic control of key sectors.

Simultaneously, changes affected the ordinary land-use of the areas: with the coming-and-going of different populations, new businesses opened or closed, new or different merchandise offered for sale, customers ever-changing. No stability could be observed in the commercial geography of the city, as the investment opportunities would vary from week to week, according to the local geopolitical situation on the ground. It can thus be said that all of Beirut and its outskirts was in a continual state of modification and adaptation, with areas being created, developed or in decline, according to the military situation or the more general geopolitical situation in the Middle East. New areas developed in a matter of months in surprising sites because of the opening of new military fronts; others would decline rapidly because of a change in the social or economic status of its users. Replacement business centres opened in distant areas of the mountains, relying on cellular telephones, then close once the original areas were "safe". Militias were instrumental in the development of whole villages (Jouniyé, for example) which lost their strategic importance once these militias were eliminated.

Mention must be made here of the complexity of population movements: while influxes or "exchanges" of population were the norm during the war, mass emigration abroad was a factor that also contributed to the changes that affected the city. The continuing violence, job losses, the devaluation of the local currency made emigration the only solution for many tens of thousands of Lebanese. In turn, this entailed closed businesses, abandoned lodging, the loss of know-how and general productivity, less consumers, all of which had an effect on the city and its economy.

Even the analysis of simple villages requires the integration of complex variables, all linked to military and economic factors. The extensions of villages and small towns of Western Mount-Lebanon considered "safe" took place according to a well-defined pattern resulting in clear spatial segregation. The old core of the village would be deeply modified: some of the traditional houses were restored, as they had now become the main residence, while others would be pulled down and replaced by apartment blocks. The traditional commercial functions in the centre of the village, the local souk, would be "modernized" with the opening of video-rental and clothing shops, snack-bars and garages; the grocers would often open on the outskirts, in new "supermarkets". Agriculture, abandoned since the 1940s, would be reintroduced to satisfy local demand for vegetables and fresh produce. In the hills above the village, upper-class apartment or villas dating from the 1970s, all with a

view towards the sea, and would be used all the year-round, and not only in the Summer; new houses would be built on plots sold at speculative prices. On the immediate edge of the village, along the narrow unplanned paths and lanes leading to the main roads, low-quality apartment blocks were built for the lower-income newcomers, who would commute daily to their work in their cars. At the bottom of valleys, the poorer refugees built their individual houses. Elsewhere, new residential complexes were built (notably in the hills above Jouniyé), isolated from the rest of the world by guarded perimeters, and offering all the basic amenities: water, electricity, leisure activities, protection. These isolated ghettos of prosperity are curiously also affected by problems: a lack of community cohesion, physical isolation of unemployed wives, complete dependence on private transport. This situation is similar to the beach complexes built during the war all along the Northern coastline of Beirut to accommodate the well-off refugee population.

Everywhere the military situation influenced the style of building, whether it be in Beirut or in far-away suburbs: all new buildings would have a central generator or place for individual ones; a well would be drilled for an autonomous water supply; underground shelters would be built as such, and not just converted garages. Supplies would be stocked in protected areas, as would be the cars, vital elements when seeking medical help or fleeing. These new buildings were much sought-after as they were the last guarantee for more-or-less normal living conditions.

All of these modifications which affected Beirut and its suburbs were of course the consequence of numerous military or political influences. The new geography of the city consisted not only in changes in its external aspect (destruction or building), but also deep changes in the demography of the city's population, its social structure, its networks (social or economic), its movements. The city, in its municipal limits, globally declined in number on its eastern site, and increased on its western side. The demarcation line was the excuse for homogenising the religious composition of its population, with the mixed areas being the main target: almost all of the Muslim population of Eastern Beirut was evicted, while the Christian element in the Western sector declined notably, being replaced by Chi'ites from South Lebanon or the Beqa'a. The unique mix of religions, nationalities, cultures and influences in Hamra have been replaced by a more uniform confessional and cultural identity; the self-closed-off Eastern sector has developed a similarly uniform identity. Even inside each sector, deep changes have affected the confessional pre-war distribution: Sunni Basta is now Chi'ite or Kurdish, as is the previously Jewish quarter of Wadi Abou-Jmil. Mixed areas such as Qantâri, Moussaitbé, Mar Elias hardly have their original population any more. Greek-Orthodox or Greek-Catholic Achrafiyyé or Gemmayzé have now a larger proportion of Maronites, due to the influx of refugee families; Armenians are no longer the majority community in Karm al-Zeitoun, and their proportion is declining in Burj-Hammoûd. The foreign community is now totally absent from West Beirut.

The East-West divide had also deeply affected the commercial and transport networks: bus lines stopped at the demarcation line; roads were closed and only a few "gates" were kept open. Goods were searched and taxed, citizens hindered in their movements or kidnapped on their way to the airport or to Jouniyé port. Telecommunication and electricity cables were cut between the two sectors; water was distributed to the "other side" according to the whims of the local militia leaders. Two very distinct territories were slowly emerging, each with its own internal organization and ideological affiliation, in short with a particular geographical identity. However, these large territorial units were further fragmented into smaller units because of the ambitions of local militia leaders. The mental geography of the *Beirutis* could thus be extremely complex.

### **Post-1990**

The official end of the war in Lebanon (excluding the on-going military action in South-Lebanon) has led to the opening of all the country to all of its citizens, the pulling-down of barricades, the decision to accept the return of the refugees to their place of origin and the dismantling of militia territories. However, all these decisions have yet to have a lasting impact on the ground. While the dismantling of barricades has opened up Beirut, the Demarcation Line is still deeply anchored in the minds of the *Beirutis*, and the previous commercial or transportation networks and circuits are still in place. It is still difficult to cross from one sector to another; the habit of using a particular port, or dealing with

particular banks or businesses have continued, even though the Beirut port is operational and the businesses have gone back to the city. The fact that refugees can now return to their villages has not meant a massive return: many refugees have no intention of returning, as lives and jobs are now firmly linked to their new place of residence; a whole generation was born and raised in the Beirut area and have no knowledge of, nor no wish to return to an isolated agricultural village with no amenities. Therefore, no reverse population exchanges have taken place, with no Muslims returning to Nab'a, no Palestinians to Tall el-Za'atar, no Christians to Mrayjât or Damoûr.

The various large infrastructures built since the war still have a deep influence on job opportunities and mobility patterns: the new strategic roads have opened up new residential areas in the mountains; the ports and "safe areas" have offered job opportunities; new commercial and business centres have declined but are still active. Militia-financed private businesses are still operational and offer jobs to the local work-force. Finally, the recent extensions of the suburbs are still there, and constitute the most visible trace of the geographical upheavals caused by the war.

But perhaps the most significant aspect of the post-war period is the decision to rebuild the city centre of Beirut. The latest plans call for the building of a very large (140 ha) international business and financial centre linked to offices, hotels and white-collar activities. Where the souks once stood, high-rise modern glass-and steel towers would be built; a luxury marina would occupy part of the port; the narrow streets of the town centre would be replaced by motorways linking the area to the rest of the city; new modern buildings would line the seafront with upper-class shopping malls; an opera theatre would replace derelict buildings near Parliament square, surviving churches and mosques would be surrounded by greenery.

This architect's vision of an utopian Beirut has already unleashed protest from many circles: in order to rebuild the centre, only private investment, concentrated in one company, was allowed. This, in turn, put into question the legality of turning over private and public land to a private company which would enjoy a complete monopoly of decision as to the future rôle and physical aspect of the centre of the capital. Full use of private land was denied to their owners who would be compensated with bonds in the development company. Whatever the legal quibbles around this problem, the fact remains that Beirut's centre would not be rebuilt to pre-war characteristics, nor would it have the same functions. Before the war, the centre was a commercial and business centre axed on local and regional trade; with the new centre, it would be transformed into an international financial centre, a rival to London, Frankfurt, Tokyo or New York. This very naïve prediction also ignores the fact that the rest of the city would not be rebuilt, nor would the basic services be offered to all: the centre would be a very favoured, almost extra-territorial piece of property for a very privileged few. It would thus place, in the very heart of a now unstable and socially fragmented third-world city, an inaccessible ghetto of prosperity, with unpredictable political and social reactions. The reconstruction process could thus be the spark for another round of violence, this time closer to the model seen in the larger cities in the developed and underdeveloped world. The fact that very little public transport was planned (all transport to and from the centre would be done with private cars) is indicative of the rôle the city centre was to operate: white-collar cadres commuting during working hours, with the area closed off at night: no shops, no entertainment, limited housing. The centre of Beirut would thus no longer be able to play a part in the integration of the population, nor act as a transport hub, nor offer multiple services and activities to all. On the social level, its rôle as a central public space is also called into question, as only few of the Lebanese would have free access to the area. The questions of power, urban geopolitics and democracy immediately spring to mind.

From this chronology several large themes can be extracted, and tentative models proposed.

#### **Urban Land-Use:**

The war has first of all eliminated the centre of Beirut as a commercial, financial and business centre for the economy of Lebanon and for large sectors of the Arab Middle East. It has not been entirely replaced by the numerous replacement centres located in and around the capital. However, each one of them has played an important part in allowing a relative

degree of autonomy for the area or quarter in which they were placed. Each sector and sub-sector of the city and its outskirts is now more or less independent and free from the centralization of functions that characterized pre-war days. These replacement centres do not have stable functions: they change and evolve according to the political and military situation on the ground. Hamra, for example, after being a regional and national business and financial centre catering for an upper-class international community, has now declined to a local centre which caters only for a lower-class refugee population; elsewhere, village centres have taken up a regional rôle (Jouniyé, Jdaydé, Khaldé-Ouzâ'i, Mansouriyé).

Simultaneously, the physical aspect of the city has changed: the destruction of the city centre and areas leading down to the sea-front, with a ribbon of destruction following the rue de Damas demarcation line has created a very visible scar cutting through the urban tissue. On the outskirts, the interface between suburbs has also been physically modified: Chiyah-Ain al-Remmané; between Palestinian and Chi'ite Burj al-Barajné; along the line separating militia and Army forces. Areas not destroyed have been modified by the general state of disrepair or by the changes in the social and demographic composition of the population of refugees and squatters, of militia families.

However, the aspect of the city has also changes through building, especially on the outskirts: whole new areas have been built to accommodate the different influxes from the city itself, but especially from the rest of Lebanon. Agriculture has been replaced by slums, illegal housing, high-density apartment blocks or by deluxe apartments and villas. As such, the 19th-century Beirut has now disappeared, while the areas developed during the early years of the Mandate have been damaged; the areas built during the 1950s to the 1970s have been squatted in Western sector of the city, while most of the outskirts are now new, replacing the original villages that gave these areas their place-names.

### **Economic Geography:**

These changes are of course the consequences of changes concerning the economy of the city: whereas pre-war Beirut was a product of benefits derived from the transit of goods and the purveying of services to other lesser-developed countries in the Middle East, post-war Beirut has lost this rôle. It must now survive exclusively through local markets and services, offering them to a lesser number of consumers and customers. With the demarcation line and the other internal divisions, the economy was further fragmented and weakened. As such, Beirut is no longer a regional or international relay-point; it is hardly a national relay and one can even question its usefulness in the long term.

### **Population Geography:**

The whole question of economic geography is of course linked to the various internal migrations caused by the war: areas have been emptied, others filled with new populations which have changed the original demographic structures in and around the city. Low-density sectors of the outskirts are now the most density populated of the country; elsewhere (Tall al-Za'atar, for example), the situation is reversed. The inner areas of the city have either emptied (through emigration or changes in place of residence), or filled up (the city centre is now a residential area for squatters and refugees). A new geography of the city according to revenue is also visible: pre-war upper-class areas are now among the poorest, while some city blocks have been completely reconverted to upper-class areas. The usual parametres of demographic analysis has of course also changed: differential higher or lower birth-rates, infant mortality, etc.

### **Political Geography:**

Post-war Beirut does very obviously not present the same political map as before. The East-West divide is the most visible sign of political differences, with opposing militias striving to impose their respective ideologies on the other side. However, at a smaller scale, each side could be subdivided into ideological sub-regions according to the ethnic or geographic origin, the length of time spent in the city, family links with local leaders etc. of the militias. Even with the war effectively over, these sub-regions are still present and have their importance in moments of political tension.

### **Mental Geography:**



Post-war mental geography still integrates the division of the city, even though the official distinction does not exist. A very clear association is still made between East Beirut, Achrafiyyé and the "Christian enclave"; West Beirut is still felt as having a Muslim, Arab and strong ideological identity. Inhabitants from one side still feel apprehensive at crossing to the other side. Replacement business centres do not make it necessary to do so; there are few movements linked to jobs or leisure from one sector to the other, and hardly any residential movements, mainly due to this mental geography barrier.

### **Transport Geography:**

The post-war situation is still very similar to the one observed during the war: few shared-taxis ("services" cross from one side to the other: they only serve very local circuits. A limited number of State-run public-transport buses cross the demarcation line. As for individual movements, they are limited to shuttles between place of residence (the outskirts) and place of work (also in the outskirts). Only limited traffic is observed between the outskirts and the centre of the city, or towards the replacement centres. This is the exact opposite of the pre-war situation, where traffic converged, from the outskirts, to the centre; now, Beirut residence work in the replacement centres or in the outskirts (Jdaydé, Jouniyé, ...) Once again, questions can be asked as whether a rebuilt centre will be able to regain its pre-war importance: it will be a long and difficult endeavour to change the transport habits of the work-force, especially if the rebuilt centre is destined for white-collars only.

### **Conclusion**

This very brief overview of the complexity of the post-war urban of Beirut points to several themes that require attention in the future. Firstly, an analysis of the pre-war suburbs is essential in the understanding of the rôle they had during the war. It was in these areas that most of the incoming population settled down, and where the various militias consolidated their power-base before controlling the city centre. It was in the suburbs that new forms of land speculation were devised as reactions to the demand by refugee influxes. New land-use situations were created in these suburbs, with a very rapid transformation from rural activities to neo-urban ones. These suburbs are also not uniform, and their urban typology varies according to the geographical origin, social background and date of settlement of the population. Detailed analysis of the physiognomy has started to be obtained through satellite and aerial photograph analysis; social and detailed land-use surveys are still insufficient.

Secondly, in Beirut itself or in the already built-up areas, squatting and other illegal forms of occupation of housing created completely new situations and land-uses. Very little attention has been given to the deep changes induced by these new rural or neo-urban populations, their demographical, social and political composition, that have affected all areas of the city, whether in the Eastern or the Western sectors.

Thirdly, the new business and commercial centres which have sprung up since the war have not been convincingly analysed. Little has been said about land-ownership, the origin of the necessary capital, the commuting patterns of the work-force, the reasons given for their geographical location. No land-use mapping has yet been produced, nor analysis of their future rôle. Limited research has been done on the decline of Hamra, but nothing on other areas.

Fourthly, little attention has been given to the future place of Beirut in the national and regional (if not international) fields. No answer has yet been offered to the simple question of "Is there still a use for Beirut?". Hardly any research has been done on the historical origins of the urbanization of the city, nor historical land-use mapping. Research on migratory patterns in the city itself, which could help in this matter has not advanced because of a chronic lack of census and demographical-survey documents. Without convincing explanations for the past, little can be done to plan the future of the city.

Finally, precious little has been produced around the general theme of the centrality of Beirut in respect to its rôle in integrating the various populations through their use of public space. These open areas (sea-front walks, gardens, the Place des Canons) are central in the

creation of the notion of belonging to a territory, to a city. A reappraisal of the terms "citizenship" or "urbanity", words that convey a meaning of identification to a city are sorely needed for Beirut.

For geographers, Beirut is still *terra incognita*.

### Selected bibliography

AWADA, F., 1988: "La gestion des services urbains à Beyrouth pendant la guerre, 1975-1988". *Pratiques Urbaines* (Paris) 5, 145 p.

BEYHUM, N., 1991: *Espaces éclatés, espaces dominés: étude de la recomposition des espaces publics centraux de Beyrouth de 1975 à 1990*. Thesis, Université Lyon 2 Lumière, 795 p.

BOUDISSEAU, G., 1993: *L'évolution des fonctions de la rue Hamra (Beyrouth, Liban) de 1975 à 1992*. Mémoire de Maîtrise, University of Tours, 162 p.

DAVIE, M.F., 1992: *Guerres, idéologies et territoires: L'urbanisation récente de la côte libanaise entre Jbayl et Sayda*. AFEMAM Meeting, Toulouse, July 1992.

DAVIE, M.F., 1992: Quelles Limites Géographiques pour Beyrouth? Colloquium, "Reconstructon de Beyrouth", Beirut, May 1992.

DAVIE, M.F., 1993: "Beyrouth-Est" et "Beyrouth-Ouest": toponymes à usage idéologique. in: "Beyrouth", URBAMA (Tours), in preparation.

DAVIE, M.F., 1993: *La reconstruction de Beyrouth: quelles voies pour le futur?* Colloquium, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, February 1993.

DAVIE, M.F., 1993: *Les marqueurs de territoires idéologiques à Beyrouth (1975-1990)*. in: "Dans la ville, l'affiche", EIDOS/University of Tours, pp 38-58.

HUSSEINI, S., 1992: *Redistribution de la population du Liban pendant la guerre civile (1975-1988)*. Thesis, EHESS, Paris.

KHLAT, M., COURBAGE, Y. & DEEB, M., 1993: *Beyrouth 1984: un profil socio-démographique à l'échelle des quartiers*. in: "Beyrouth", URBAMA (Tours), in preparation.