

CASE STUDY

Local economic development via urbanism lever: the case of Lebanon

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ABSTRACT

The present paper analyses local economic development issues through the prism of urban governance theories and models.

From theoretical corpora to empirical LED case studies, we emphasise, through the anarchy paradigm, the privatisation tendencies of urban planning and development projects in local territories.

We have taken an interest in comparative analysis of principal concepts and theories of current public and urban policies that allow an analytical transposition to Lebanese regional endogenous economic contexts.

Therefore, case studies spread all over peripheral Lebanon, on the outskirts of the major economic poles of the country, reveal alternative dynamics and mechanisms involved in urban development and implemented by territorial stakeholders of LED projects; private, autonomous, and rational actors.

Thus, we were able to identify and isolate three major urban phenomena (zaïmisation, customisation, sacralisation) of the privatisation tendency in “regional Lebanon” respectively led by three local stakeholders’ profiles (headman: zaïm, businessman, religious), sketching out a Lebanese “Realurbanism” model emerging within the socio-political Lebanese “state-of-anarchy” that constitutes a strong founding statement of the Lebanese case.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Lebanese war (1990), it has become common to notice a major legitimate emphasis in urban studies on the greater Beirut region, as it concentrates the main demographic, social and economic weight of the country, despite few attempts to explore the remaining grand peripheral areas, especially the constantly extending northern and southern littoral row. We broadly notice a lack of scholar studies on local economic development

dynamics implemented in the regional territories and tackling urban planning issues.

Local economic development (LED) strategies have their origins in the high-income countries of the North [1], where they were initially processed with a view to contain poverty and unemployment in regions experiencing deindustrialisation or in shrinking rural territories. In the South [2], LED has been gradually emerging as a development strategy against the effective inability of many central states to intervene

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at the local level thus providing a strong impulse towards more locally based initiatives. On a broader scale, LED is used as a complementary (or alternative) lever to centralised macroeconomic measures, in order to promote local dynamics that are directly targeting economic development at the scale of small communities.

Ordinarily discreet and highly depending on international organisations, LED initiatives observed in Lebanon are exponentially increasing lately, mainly boosted by the Syrian refugee's crisis [3], and the consequent direct implication of diverse actors among which UN programs and NGOs, working on strengthening Lebanon via social and economic stabilisation. They are globally tackling social and economic issues through aids and funds medium [4] - thus complementing the highly indebted Lebanese state - and targeting locally-rooted (globally suburban and rural) associative network facing sectarian radicalisation and poverty.

Amongst those LED projects, the Local Development Programme for Deprived Urban Areas in North Lebanon, funded by the European Union (2014-2016) whose general objective is to strengthen stabilisation in the northern region and in particular to prevent violent extremism, while implementing inclusive and participative development plans involving the local authorities and the civil society.

Amongst other LED initiatives, are for example, those led by the Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs) implemented by the United Nations Development Program. Since the 1990s, UNDP has implemented programs of human development at a local level based on a local, integrated and participatory planning approach.

In Lebanon, amongst LEDA's projects which nurtured by diverse local and international NGOs, we can recall:

- Tourism and architectural heritage in Hasroun, as a lever for socio-economic maintain of locals and for empowerment of local authorities, as key players in the local development (North LEDA - EU, May 2017 - February 2018);

- Support plan to the local agro-food products in Hadath-el-Jebbeh (North LEDA - ICD Swiss, December 2016 - January 2018);

- Halba public market (North LEDA - UNDP, May 2016 - September 2016);

- Centre for agro-food and handicraft products

providing quality controls, packaging and marketing services (South Lebanon and Nabatieh provinces LEDA, with the support of UNDP and the participation of women cooperatives, 2011);

- Mobile market for provisioning and crafts (LEDA of the southern suburbs of Beirut, 2010).

This brief review of recent and ongoing LED projects in Lebanon allows for understanding the human development objective of those LED initiatives as an effective and sustainable instrument for enhancing and supporting regional territories. Thus, those Lebanese LED programs are never tackling urbanistic issues, such as urban plans, and politics or policies. However, they contrarily highlight the originality and novelty of this research, since the present paper is strictly tackling urban development issues generated by LED dynamics.

It is important to note in this context, that LED has been used to describe a growing number of initiatives, ranging from industrial policy and regional planning [5] to community development. But talking about LED projects is rather talking about economic and social growth than about urbanism. It is obvious yet that economic and social growth could be carried out by urbanisation issues as well as by social projects tackling unemployment and business issues. Urban projects as local development initiatives are fundamentally LED projects since they refer to those development strategies that are territorially based, locally owned and managed, and aimed at increasing economic growth [6].

As for the Lebanese case, LED, as an urban development vector, is fundamentally alternative to Grand projects such as those in the capital region or in some other major seafront localities, usually monopolised by historical and traditional stakeholders.

Nevertheless, a large part of the Lebanese urbanisation process is alternatively being designed outside these centralised few square kilometres, at the scale of decentralised and disconnected regional territories; an urban development scheme that is intimately connected to local economic development paradigm.

Traditional macro development plans led by the public power (centralised e.g. government, or decentralised e.g. municipalities) have failed to provide a strategic framework for regional urban development. Public power has since experienced a huge failure in managing and assisting socio-economic forces in

implementing urban and economic development in peripheral areas.

In fact, the civil war has caused the apparition of locally rooted forces with matching interests, opposing yet an alternative territorial force/governance that fundamentally generates local economic development through the urbanisation process of Lebanese localities.

Involved territories are thus essentially sub-urban or rur-urban (French. *Rurbain*) and constitute territories that are inclined to the phenomenon of urban sprawl and random expansion of constructions, largely facilitated by the low-constraining Lebanese construction settlements.

This micro-territorial scale clearly involves the direct action of societal forces in development issues. It raises the question of social (societal) and economic dimensions of the urban development process as an immediate response to local opportunities, often private ones.

Thus, we observe that three anchored local stakeholders engineer the micro-territorial scale: headman (local politician: *zaïm*), businessman (local investor) and religious, through the privatisation tendency that is henceforth characterising the local tissue.

Theory and literature review

In the early 1980s, in developed countries badly affected by the crisis of traditional industries, certain regions, and relatively small cities, returned to unexpected growth while valuing their local environment (human, historic, natural), against tendency at the time for great preset public projects and investments.

Appearing as an indirect response to rising unemployment, LED had since emerged as a major instrument of the social cohesion policy. Overshadowed at the end of the last decade (2000s), owing to the competitiveness in tackling globalisation issues, LED has been back to the scene by the recent economic crisis (2008) that is calling for efficient use of decreasing public aids.

If the 1960-70s had been marked by local autonomy and cultural identity advocacies, the following decades (1980-90s) have experienced the advent of a brand new mechanism, supporting the need expressed to new regulations and local governance against the failure of central institutions. Thereafter, local economic

development has been the opportunity to criticise a central conception of public politics management.

Studies on local economic development have been, in fact, intense at the end of the 1980s; in the literature, there are many definitions [7, 8] of LED [9, 10, 11, 12]. Blakely [13] defines LED as the process with which local government or community-based organisations engage to stimulate or maintain business activity and/or employment. According to the International Labour Organization [14], the challenge of LED is to find ways to maximise local resources and local knowledge to benefit all inhabitants within a specific geographical area. Trousdale [15] defines LED as a participating process where local people, from all sectors within a specific area, work together to activate and stimulate local economic activities, with the aim to ensure a resilient and sustainable local economy. According to Bartik [16] LED is defined as the local economy's capacity to create wealth for local residents.

Tremblay and Fontan [17] have for example analysed theoretical models about local development that were observed in Europe and North America allowing them to identify two major schools of thought: the first one called the liberal school, proposes actions that are carried out by local public and private actors; the second one is called the progressive school, which is originally based on actions carried out by local actors who are mobilised by social facilitators.

In major cases, LED is being defined through the prism of humanist and social conception of development rather than a method: it refers to a collective approach, a growing awareness of everybody's capacities in a democratisation dynamic [18]. Accompanying decentralisation of public power as an ongoing main issue in major countries, studies have been since focusing on the civil society and the role it should play in local economy tackling the challenges of globalisation and decentralisation.

Nevertheless, despite this plethora of theoretical corpus, local development shall be first defined as an empirical process involving politics, sociology, economy, and geography.

The LED empirical definition involves concepts including: the setting (employment area - rarely administrative area, valley, neighbourhood, etc.), and the multiple public/associative/private partnerships or participatory methods mobilised around a federative project [19]. It aims therefore to improve the living conditions of local communities and to achieve a

long-term structural and sustainable shift, through its capacity to resolve proximity issues while mobilising local resources (human and economic), and external ones (public or private funding).

The emergence of the LED approach has fundamentally operated a structural change by reorienting economic and social policy away from top-down sectoral instruments towards bottom-up local development strategies. While traditional development strategies are generally top-down, with the central government deciding where intervention is needed having little or no input from local actors, LED advocates the need for promoting economic development through a territorial approach that focuses on development from below.

The participatory process of LED encourages and facilitates partnership between the local stakeholders, enabling the joint design and implementation of strategies, with the final aim of boosting economic activities, mainly by considering the local, public and private actors in charge of the actions for investment and of the control of the processes.

Therein lies the prominent difference between horizontal LED complex dynamics and those classic inherited vertical ones (top-down or even bottom-up - paradoxically almost emphasising the compulsory role of central administrations and local elected representative). Otherwise, anything about local policies is not engagingly related to local development, whether they be municipalities' policies, regional governments' policies or even national policies affecting specific local geographical issues. LED guarantees the initiative of decisions, with local consequences, to be released from the prerogatives of central authorities.

Decreasing public initiative (and funding) and increasing local actors' mobilisation are the cornerstone of the local economic development process, within a constant tendency for larger democratic participation of concerned communities.

One of the major issues for the decision-makers and developers is actually a territorialised development close to local populations' priorities and aggregate preferences that is implementing innovative governance models via society participation in the promotion of an economic model focused on the valorisation of local resources and expertise. "*Local economic development is a process where the local actors shape and share the future of their territory.* [It is] (...)

a participatory process that encourages and facilitates partnership between the local stakeholders, enabling the joint design and implementation of strategies, mainly based on the competitive use of the local resources, with the final aim of creating decent jobs and sustainable economic activities" [20, p.9].

Local economic development theories are inferred from regional economy theories suggesting a reformulation of general economic theories with an emphasis on local issues, since the broader context of regional policy and territorial development strategies are inclusive of local development.

At this juncture, the "development from below" theory [21, 22] occurred as a response to the structural conditions shift of the international economic context of the time (1984).

It proposes, in reaction to the classic "development from above" where the State holds the leading role not only of regulator but also of initiator, an auto-centralised endogen development that consists of a transfer of decisions from above (central authorities) towards bottom (local stakeholders, henceforth more aware and responsible for their own role in their own milieu).

Such a project is conditioned by a better definition of the local strategy to be implemented and furthermore by a broader locally organised funding. It implements a development-orientated [French, *Développementaliste*] approach rather than a contextualised one, thus opposing centre to periphery.

In this project, local communities take over regional resources to create employments, territorial added value, and to process a specifically tailored development scheme. Hence, they retrieve from macroeconomic conditions and engage into locally taken decisions aiming at mobilizing the potentialities and resources of the "local", while using them for economic and social returns.

Through these theoretical considerations, LED deals with concepts such as autonomy, independency, valorisation, territorialisation, and privatisation.

Evidently, the concept of local development is defined as a particular form of regional development, one in which endogenous factors occupy a central position.

The endogenous growth theory [23] was developed as a reaction to omissions and deficiencies in the neoclassical (exogenous) growth model (Solow-Swan).

It has come of age as a new theory which explains the long-run growth rate of an economy [24, 25] on the basis of endogenous factors as opposed to exogenous factors of the neoclassical growth theory [26, 27]. The new growth theory does not simply criticise the neoclassical growth theory; rather, it extends the latter by introducing endogenous conditions in growth models: human capital, innovation and knowledge are significant contributors to economic growth. The theory also focuses on positive externalities generally implemented by the public power (e.g. education, infrastructure) which will lead to economic development.

Since the 1980s, and concurrently with the progressive advent of new concepts in public policies (endogenous growth theory, LED, sustainable development, participative democracy, governance models, etc.), States, as a centralised authority (power), are continually disengaging from their historical prerogatives, particularly among ones related to urban planning and local development issues.

In the emerging context of redesigned power relationships, notably between public power and private actors' aggregates, there was a need to develop brand innovative interpretation and analysis models in an attempt to understand the undertaken dynamics between the centre and its periphery.

Thereupon, private stakeholders are urged to play an increasing leading role in the negotiation of local issues. Therefore, the changing implementation conditions of public policies highlights the multi-actors' relationships.

This tendency towards "polycentrism" [28] - within the contemporary "interactionist" currents (American sociology, Chicago School) - radically modifies the traditional development and implementation schemes of public policies. Central power lacks monopoly over policymaking vis-à-vis peripheral actors, which are no longer segregated to exclusively negotiate the policies implementation methods. They are henceforth being increasingly compelled to develop policies themselves, since the emerging governance appeals cooperation and partnership amongst diverse horizontal stakeholders that seek the expression of aggregated preferences.

In order to understand such changing contexts [29] at the scale of (public) urban policies, new urban governance analysis models have emerged in an attempt to renew the public policies issues and

to overstep public-centred approaches of peripheral usual analysis (State/Local governments).

Anglo-Saxon countries have been turned early towards "pluralist" analysis of public policies according to the "networking school", developed in terms of "social networks". It was expressed against neo-corporatist European models of a planer State, as it is historically observed in France. As a result, we have witnessed the appearance of different State-operated models that allow a better inclusion in the political scene of a diverse sociology of stakeholders with dissimilar status and roles [30, 31].

Thus, the analysis of actors' aggregate relating to urban politics and urban projects clearly reveals the coexistence of informal networks ad-hoc to institutional networks.

Policy network analysis (PNA), which is the most common species of network analysis in political science, provides here an intense theoretical corpus for understanding the interdependence that is linking governments sections to multiple societal actors, and broadly for understanding the policy-making process: "Policy networks are sets of formal institutional and informal linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared if endlessly negotiated beliefs and interests in public policy making and implementation." [32, p.426].

As the most widely used paradigm of the 1970s and 1980s, PNA only analysed two specific types of policy networks: policy communities and issue networks, whose rational concepts were deduced from empirical case studies [33].

Yet, there is a degree of misleading clarity about the concept of networks, particularly used in the governance literature [34]. Although a "Babylonian" variety of policy network concepts and applications can be found in the literature - neither is there a common understanding of what a policy networks actually is, nor has it been agreed upon whether policy networks constitute a mere metaphor, a method, an analytical tool or a proper theory [35] -, Rhodes [32] distinguishes between theoretical, prescriptive, and descriptive accounts. In order to structure the existing policy network literature, Börzel [35] makes quantitative versus qualitative network analysis methods distinction along with two schools (dimensions). Both quantitative and qualitative network approaches take networks as an analytical tool: the quantitative approach, however,

considers network analysis as a method of social structure analysis, yet the qualitative approach, on the other hand, is more process-orientated. As for the dimension, Börzel [35] distinguishes two different “schools” of policy networks in the field of public policy: the more prominent “interest intermediation school” interprets policy networks as a generic term for different forms of relationships between interest groups and the State. The “governance school”, on the other hand, conceives policy networks as a specific form of public-private interaction (governance) based on non-hierarchical co-ordination.

Thus, from the stability of “policy communities” (restricted key actors’ groups based on the principle of informal agreement and consensual deals) to the instability of “issues networks” (unstructured clusters directly or indirectly engaged in the debate), the frequent coexistence of both organisational approaches of negotiating clusters reveals the multiplicity of actors tackling the implementation of public policies [28]. These alternative participation mechanisms amongst groups, networks, subsystems or layers operated a shift from classical focus on government, its authority and instruments [36]; they are definitely transforming the governance design.

Transposed from policy networks through his analysis of the Atlanta city governance, Stone [37] introduced the “urban regime” theory in an attempt to model the interactionist local government (actors) governance: *“Urban regime assumes that the effectiveness of local government depends greatly on the cooperation of non-governmental actors on the combination of state capacity with non-governmental resources. (...) To be effective, governments must blend their capacities with those of various non-governmental actors. The distinction between the public sector and the private sector can be made conceptually but can also be a highly misleading guide to empirical reality. That reality is one in which government and business activities are heavily intertwined, similarly to governmental and non-profit activities. (...) The act of governance requires the cooperation of private actors and the mobilisation of private resources”* [37, pp.6-7].

Henceforth, the State would not act independently since outskirt actors have the necessary means to lead local development actions.

Urban regimes examine the construction of a governing capacity, in other words, the conditions and methods that lead to a possible organisation of the

actors’ partnership in complex urban contexts dealing with local economic development issues.

The question of the urban governance is no longer raised in terms of the public power nature as social control, or hegemony production, but in terms of the urban governance as an interactionist approach within the capacity to exercise a political action in a fragmented and unequal society.

“(...) Government authority relies more on inducing action than it does on simply issuing commands” [37, p.24].

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

However, we acknowledge in term of public policy that in almost all of these models of political action related to the most witnessed forms of urban governance, public power (whether central, federal, decentralised, regionalised or otherwise) is still active, with more or less power and monopoly increasingly shared with arising ad-hoc private stakeholders.

This is the main lesson that the above literature review tells.

The aforementioned models share the same idea of a growing role of the “individual” as a principal stakeholder in an interaction situation facing an increasingly decentralised and diffused public power: central power is no longer in a hegemonic situation regarding other actors. It is progressively constrained to cooperate, collaborate and negotiate with peripheral actors, which now (on) own the economic power in terms of investments, but also of intellectual means.

It is clear at this stage that high tendency for increasing multipolar negotiation ends up conditioning actors to anarchy [38] contexts, where no more hierarchical decisions within organisational frameworks are engaged in the implemented governance system.

This postulate perfectly recalls the Stanford University organisational theorists’ studies of the late 1970s upon which was developed the concept of “organised anarchy” [39] through the questioning of the rational decisional-making process (of the educational institution governance mechanisms) and the necessity to introduce the “anarchical” analysis model in the comprehension and study of governance, negotiation and decision systems. It characterises a new era of disorganised actors system: thus, a new architecture of decisions management as well as of

classical hierarchies and fragmented decision-makers in polycentric clusters [39] is being revealed.

The study of the Lebanese case and its socio-political specificity shows a non-perfectly compatible case with those public/private interactionist approaches for two main reasons, closely linked to the social construction (representation) issue of the public power:

1. Public power is central (Lebanese state), and local public power (municipalities) has practically no real prerogatives in terms of spatial planning (settlements and plans);

2. The State is either absent (war period, then cornered by societal groups) or weak and powerless (normal period, then laws and plans are intentionally unmet as they are deemed to be freedom-destroying for individuals and communities).

The Lebanese approach is indeed closer to the “pluralist” model (herein above developed) of public policies design that allows a larger embedding of peripheral stakeholders into the developing process, although as theorised in the Realurbanism model [40], the analysis of the Lebanese case shows existing “juxtaposed” powers that are neither horizontal nor vertical (top down or bottom up).

The Lebanese state is constitutionally (since its foundation in 1920) envisioned as a “confessional consensual democracy” made of multiple communities (societies/groups) aggregated around a “coagulum” of private interests globally carried by communitarian micro-territorially established dynamics.

Urbanism practices as they have been standardly observed in Lebanon have become an “ideology”.

The Lebanese social and political context of absence of what one could call “common higher” (in its Hobbesian definition of absence of a “common power” [41], that is represented by a strong public power and a law-governed state for those multiple societies, is generating a structural “state-of-anarchy” [French, *Etat d'anarchie*]. This state of anarchy clearly recalls the international realism anarchy [42, 40].

Yet “anarchism” is founded on a body of theories and practices that are anti-authoritarian by the denial of any authority or hierarchy in the social (societal) organisation and of any constraints that are inferred from any traditional institutions, amongst which is the State.

Anarchism is thus fundamentally opposed to the idea of that a coercive power within domination relationships, could it be deemed necessary for the

society emancipation. It struggles for a social and economic libertarian (not liberal) organisation.

Then: “Anarchy is order without power” [43].

Still, the study of international anarchism (through the “Realist paradigm” prism) as an existing structural state-of-anarchy of the international concert of sovereign states [44], has allowed, through the Realurbanism model [45], the transposition of international anarchy thesis towards urban governance (anarchy amongst actors). In fact, Realurbanism introduces an innovative model for “realist” analysis of urban policies and practices that is constructed on three fundamental and corollary theses: “The anarchical urban governance”, “The privatisation of urbanism” and “The power relationships and their balance”. The Realurbanism analysis grid allows a better understanding of urban governance in anarchy contexts (state-of-anarchy) where limits between public and private interests are permanently negotiated [46] as it is observed in Lebanon. It is worthwhile to recall here that Realurbanism is stemmed from an empirical approach whose context outskirts are fixed by issues such as: weakness or instability of the public power, demographic-land pressure (particularly in developing countries), privatisation of public services and its funding, and decentralisation of public policies severely competed (even dominated) by private spheres (of which growing communitarian groups), thus revealing a crisis of the decisional processes of policies making and practices.

Setting out from this strong founding statement of the “Lebanese state-of-anarchy” (nurtured by non-compliance with the rules and clientelism), we were interested in studying the involvement of this socio-political construction of the public power in urban policies behind urban projects.

Understanding spatial planning models that are implemented in Lebanon primarily refers to the territorial scale issues and to the stakeholders’ sociology, within the framework of the operative urban and construction laws. Urbanism questions the urban governance and its territorial inferred stakeholders’ power dynamics and balances within a doubly, complementary and alternative development approach [47] of the micro territories, since macro territorial strategies (if existed) are a matter of State.

As urban planning is traditionally a sovereign thematics (regalian) for public authorities (central or local), urban development issues are directly related

to public policies, although development projects could be funded by private rounds. Yet, we observe in Lebanon that planning issues are generally led by private initiatives and consequently urban development is privately implemented: thus talking here about urban planning or urban development broadly refers to the same private dynamics underlying Lebanese urbanism.

In this research, we have identified two territorial vectors for urban development in Lebanon:

1. The first one is a state-centralised level, a macro-territorial scale, where urban politics and policies are led by the state authorities (ministries, administrations), as historical and traditional stakeholders. The study of this macro level has allowed us a better understanding of the settlements apparatus, its characteristics and specificities, but also its limits, especially those socio-cultural ones. It has furthermore unconditionally revealed a deficient and poor public scale highly competed by private local actors, unveiling still the Lebanese state-of-anarchy. This statement is backed by an endemic lack of public regional strategic plans and schemes that furthermore could be fixed by a regulatory framework that imposes to all.

2. The second level is a decentralised one, a micro-territorial scale, mainly private, where urban politics is promoted and led by actors which are rooted in the local social, economic and political scene.

This double territorial governance, paradoxically alternative and complementary, constitutes the foundation of the Lebanese urban development mechanism [48], yet opposing to an inoperative public power a flourishing local private sector that is gaping the void.

- What are the contents and objectives of alternative urban development policies? How and why have they emerged in Lebanon? What kind of actors and groups are involved in these policies?

- How do Lebanese communities manage to undertake urban development projects despite living in a “state-of-anarchy” in which central state has broken down?

- Who are the locally rooted stakeholders of urban development in regional Lebanon, and how do they interact locally, in terms of social, economic and political dynamics?

- What role does the public power hold in the implementation of spatial planning settlements and

their operational framework towards local territories, outside the major economic and urban poles of the country?

- How does local economic development connect with public/private stakeholders relative to the urbanisation process in peripheral Lebanese territories?

It is clearly about local urban governance [49] as a government mode at the scale of micro-territories, since it refers to the analysis of the decision-making process in local urban project production methods, in the anarchy context of troubled Lebanon.

To this end, we analysed the Lebanese local territorial urban governance where spatial planning and urban development are implemented by actors that are emerging from the local panorama.

We tried to contextualise alternative urban development policies through case studies that are questioning the socio-political and economic conditions triggering the emergence, implementation and stabilisation of these policies. Developing conceptual or theoretical approaches for answering the question why and how alternative urban development policies could be developed and successfully implemented in particular urban settings. For this aim, we studied multiple local economic developments projects chosen across Lebanon that concern different communities settled in different geographical locations.

Furthermore, we proceeded with an empiric-inductive method defined [50] as the intellectual research methodology operation from which one goes from particular occurrences to reach, through observation, statements and hypotheses, concepts or general laws.

Thus, the research was undertaken through three major milestones:

1. The first one tackled identity scopes of the Lebanese context through its geographical, cultural, socio-demographical and historical facets. This constitutes a prerequisite for the understanding of the Lebanese specificity, especially one related to urbanism.

2. The second one analysed the urban design policies and implementation processes through a diagnosis of national urbanism settlements and instruments. To get a better understanding, we analysed the mechanisms of the Lebanese urbanism schemes, through the (policy network) analysis of the

urbanism stakeholders and the power relationships (and their balance) issues which jointly underlie the urban project. Undertaken interviews with the major case studies actors, qualitative surveys targeting LED projects and the analysis of socio-political and urban governance apparatus had revealed actors' mechanisms that are questioning the role of the state in the local development projects options; they are broadly underlying informal yet structural phenomena of the Lebanese urbanism. This phase constitutes therefore an up-to-date pragmatic (realistic) photography of the Lebanese urbanism, strengthened by urban case studies addressed from all over Lebanon in the aim to identify phenomena, logics, practices, methods and forms related to Lebanese context.

This paper aims to submit those urban phenomena findings.

3. The third one allowed to sketch up the "Realurbanism" model inferred from the state-of-anarchy postulate and the powerful existence of alternative private locally rooted actors, a model that is dealing with privatisation and anarchical urban governance issues, as the case studies phenomena revealed.

Thus in this paper, we attempt through LED projects empirical case studies (analysis of development plan and technical supports, info-graphical data, interviews and surveys with major LED case-studies' actors and leaders), randomly spread all over peripheral Lebanon, to conceptualise some local urban development phenomena occurring in outskirts localities, echoing major current urban policies models and theories in modern and current literature.

From a public centralised urbanism which lacks renewing and modernising its apparatus and is, besides, lacking legitimacy and representativeness for social society, we are shifting to a territorialised and private urbanism where strategic options are majorly taken by territorial actors.

Therefore, findings from case studies allowed us to identify and isolate three major urban phenomena of the privatisation tendency in regional Lebanon led by three private stakeholders' profiles, sketching up a Lebanese urbanism model that is occurring within the socio-political Lebanese state-of-anarchy:

1. The "Zaïmisation" phenomenon, led by Headmen (i.e. zaïm);

2. The "Customisation" phenomenon, led by Businessmen;

3. The "Sacralisation" phenomenon, led by the Maronite Church (i.e. religious).

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Territorial stakeholders of LED projects are private, autonomous and rational actors.

Torn between complementary and alternative approaches, private actors determine a major part of the urban development in Lebanon, without claiming to be exclusive of the planning scene: the Lebanese government has for example demonstrated its willingness to tackle the impact of urban poverty on stability and social cohesion by launching, in 2002 the "Cultural Heritage and Urban Development" program (CHUD) following an initiative by the World Bank (and the EU). The program aims at revitalising the old cities of Tripoli, Byblos, Batroun, Tyre, Saïda and Baalbek.

Public power as mentioned before, is powerless and decreasingly conditioning the whole development process. The state itself does not constitute a homogeneous entity: it is rather considered as a meeting place for alliances, conflicts and negotiations, or even a place for deployment of diverse social groups' strategies, than an actor [51]. This is how the weakness of public authorities incites local actors to take charge (until possible strong resurgence of public authorities) of the local alternative power level regarding local economic and social priorities.

The absence of "common higher" infers territorialisation dynamics of urban policies and thus the privatisation of urban development by local actors.

Local actors are private, since, in the territorial governance scheme, they constitute a para-public network, despite a few affinities that might occur with the public sphere.

Local actors are autonomous, since, in the settlements weakness context, they demonstrate effective capabilities to bend the complete regulatory system. They even manage to adjust the few existing rules to their business interests.

Finally, they are rational (i.e. reasonable and utilitarian definition) in the seeking of their personal interest, yet, cumulatively, generating an undeniable general interest benefiting to all communities.

The traditional Lebanese consensus politics is rather a compromise model run between all Lebanese communities (societies) attempting to continually implement the "holy" equation of: the addition of the

communities' interests should equal the collective interest.

Amongst local actors dealing with planning and development issues at local level, we can observe "Headman" (*Zaïm* in Lebanese Arabic), a hereditary region-rooted leader, recycled through election process as the identification anchor for a complete territory.

A *zaïm* traditionally rallies around values and interests on a "clientelist" basis that is securing his status and stature. Actually, the ongoing central weight of primary affiliation bonds [52] within the Lebanese social representation [53] model still produces a democratic "*coagulum*" (antithesis of *continuum*) of headmen and elders (*zaïms*) targeting the complacency of a maximum of electors.

Within a holistic sociological diagnosis of private stakeholders at the alternative local scene, one can identify political parties (e.g. the Hizbollah Party leading or supporting development projects in southern Lebanon and in Beirut's southern suburbs [54, 55], and associative milieu (some associations close to political parties are leading improvement projects, majorly in the Beirut suburbs) as an autonomous profile, since they are leading development projects in localities. But broader analysis shows they should be in fact compared to (regarded as) the "*zaïm* profile", for globally matching representations and methods.

Through initiating diverse local projects [56], that are in the short run providing a personal return on investment (economic value), and in the medium run guarantying somehow the local economic development of the territory, a directly observable win-win situation is generated, although in the long

run, negative outcome could be expected, as case studies show.

Projects are ranging from active seeking for national extraordinary subsidies (as positive externalities in LED models) to public facilities (hospitals, schools, amenities), to transport infrastructure development (funding or public joint venture).

In the LED series, Bnachey Lake (Figure 1) in northern Lebanon undertaken by the region-run *zaïm*: from a very private initiative largely composing with private election issues to a regional tourism leisure-pole generating wealth (employments and benefits), the project implements the major schemes and principles previously developed.

The Bnachey lake project is a leisure mid-mountain village designed around an artificial lake completed by resorts and services complex (restaurants, crafts, etc.) and combined with large investments into infrastructure developments and improvements.

Within the privatisation tendency of Lebanese regional urbanism, the Bnachey Lake project crystallises what we call the "*zaïmisation*" phenomenon, one among three major phenomena of the Lebanese LED puzzle.

Since public power is failing to develop planning schemes towards territories, such local "spot projects" are inevitably becoming structuring pillars of the local economy, and at long run, layers for land planning. Nevertheless, they remain fundamentally fragmented, incoherent and discriminating, resulting in "fits and starts" developments, with direct and indirect negative impacts on land uses, mobility and housing schemes, economy and sustainability of local environments.

Composing hence micro-territorial centralities,



Fig. 1: The Bnachey leisure village.

any upcoming national (or regional) strategical plans for local economic development should intelligently redesign the economic scheme with the aim of fairly rebalancing and sharing inferred quantifiable and non-quantifiable profits.

Those urban LED projects are concentrating distorted development by monopolising social and economic dynamics that are quite attractive for a regional workforce at the expense of the rest; hence, they are directly involved in land and real estate pressure that paradoxically ends up in disastrous urbanisation regardless of rational preventive public spatial planning settlements.

Here the case of the Saints Route (Figure 2) shows how the religious tourism project, through the idea of connecting four major monasteries in a pilgrimage circuit itinerary, has been consequently accompanied by an unrestrained urbanisation of the natural forested and agricultural areas, thus forcing the development of a dense offer of hotel accommodations, trading and catering services.

The territorial enhancement carried out by massive transport infrastructure allowed the development of an important land offer in the real estate market, an opportunity that promoters rapidly took over, resulting in the development sprawl on natural environment, irreversible damage of local ecosystems and an important social and economic transformation of local tissues.

Therefore, it is through this mechanism that “religious urbanism” - which is referring to the “religious” nature of concerned urbanism stakeholders - participates in the definition of local development options in terms of economic, social and spatial

planning, thus emphasising the religious actor’s role, despite the public funding of the project. In fact, the project was initiated and carried out by the Church (Maronite Church owns about 27% [57] of the whole Lebanese land property), mainly attesting about the “Sacralisation phenomenon” of the local Lebanese urbanism.

Another key actor of local development and planning is the “Businessman”, generally a local investor involved in economic development and real estate issues, where private and public (social) interests intimately cohabit.

These local stakeholders are to be considered as legitimate, although informal local planners, since they are intervening in socio-economic balances and dealing with related development issues that are indirectly generating common benefits.

Major private investments concern projects such as hospitals, hospitality and leisure, educational and social amenities, globally projects with general interest scopes (although as a business deal it guarantees direct profit to their developer); these projects are usually accompanied by infrastructures developments similar to those engaged in the *zaïmisation* phenomenon.

LED projects carried out by micro-economic actors constitute a loophole for territories suffering from lack of public plans and initiatives.

Nevertheless, those projects are almost rushing the spontaneous and radical transformations of local behaviours and of the chaotic land consumption, thus underlining the limits of the informal LED dynamics. Indeed, those implemented dynamics are characterising the privatisation tendency of Lebanese regional urbanism.

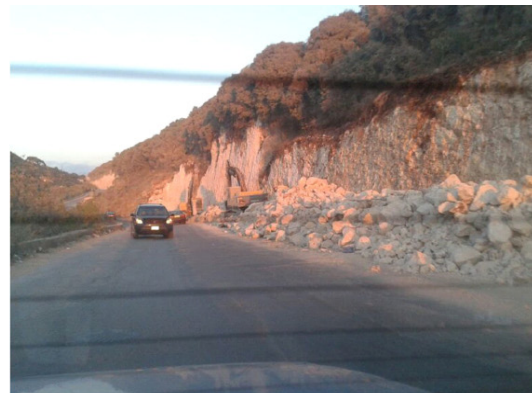


Fig. 2: Frenzied urbanisation of natural sites, on Saint-Charbel Monastery section of the Saints Route. Transport infrastructure, hostelry and restauration spots.

Here, the Bejdarfel village (1 500p) case (Figure 3) in the northern region is highly symbolic of the leading role played by a local billionaire in the LED process. A businessman renovated the scholar and institutional amenities, built malls, medical and socio-medical care centres.

Random and chaotic LED projects implemented in localities, although benefiting in the short run local communities since involving economic spinoffs, are, in the long run, responsible for the disruption of local balances as observed in this case, thus imposing emerging centralities (economic pole) against the impoverishment of neighbouring localities and the inescapable development of urban sprawl.

However, this case study underlines two major issues:

1. The first issue globally concerns the governance mode of these random and fragmented projects;
2. The second issue concerns the poor networking dynamics of regional territories, i.e. connecting the peripheral localities to the central urban poles within strategic public-led development schemes, upstream and downstream of the emerging polarisation process.

Although these emerging spots are raised as socio-economic development models, they are still weak and ephemeral, since private actors are customising the territory according to their ongoing private interests. But, business priorities are changing, and planned on a short-term basis.

Another example of the “Customisation” phenomenon of the urban privatisation tendency occurring in Lebanese regional urbanism is one related to some local businessmen (endorsed by local zaïms and mayors who were often simultaneously

co-funding or investing in affairs and facilitating procedures) behind the successive introduction of the clubbing industry to the antic coastal city of Batroun (30 000p), in northern Lebanon (Phoenician and Roman patrimonial site).

It shows the radical shift (Fig. 4, 5) of the historical functions of the local economic tissue into a leisure and a clubbing service-based economy (nightclubs, bars, restaurants, gambling bars, shops, etc.) which have become the unique and only lever of the local development of the city.

The economic metamorphosis has resulted in the resettlement of housing towards emerging city suburbs (nearby hills: New Batroun, Batroun Hills, etc.) consequently to the overvaluation of the real estate market in the city centre.

Urban diagnosis clearly reveals here the constitution of a business city-centre (dedicated to leisure and business) balanced by the constitution of residential suburbs, where accelerated urban sprawl (Fig. 5) has led to the destruction of natural lands (pinewood and orange groves) and to the fatal rise in land prices.

Since “waggling” concerned a niche market in the tourism industry that moreover was not broadly empowered by public power (except few businessman mayors), one decade later, decreasing clubbing phenomenon has left the city deprived of structuring developing schemes that could have been driven for example by nautical industry or cultural tourism or eco-tourism.

The Batroun city-centre example attests once more to the crucial businessman initiatives for the options of local development and spatial planning.

Yet, privatisation stakeholders are not restrictively



Fig. 3: Commercial and leisure centres at Bejdarfel village.



Fig. 4: Batroun city-centre.
Clubbing industry around the main road (highlight).



Fig. 5: New residential suburb sprawls, Batroun.

involved in chaotic urbanisation of local territories. Sometimes, urban LED projects are, on the contrary, attempting to preserve lands, as for example in the case of the Holy-Valley (in northern Lebanon): here the Church has struggled for the classification of the valley (Figure 6) as a UNESCO World Heritage Site [58], thus preserving it from a real estate project for the creation of a leisure complex within the deep valley.

This ensured counter-role in the sacralisation phenomenon allows one to underline the religious actor role into the planning choices for land use and into the protection of built and natural heritage, facing demographical and urbanisation challenges.

DISCUSSION

The theoretical recall positions the findings of this article in the scientific literature and allows for a better understanding of the paradigmatic roots of the studied Lebanese cases.

The research design emphasises globally-observed pluralist interactionist models of urban policies: “the State” and “the Others”, act as in a transversal equation of the principal implemented theories of public and urban policies models. Yet, with “less or more of State”

and “less or more of Others”. Thus, public and urban policies are continually dithering between alternative and complementary balances [59].

Many urban scholars have argued that the last three decades have been characterised by dynamics of homogenisation and standardisation of urban policies [60, 61]. These processes have been accompanied by the dissemination of “good practices” [62], both in the Global North and in the Global South, such as “cultural-LED regeneration projects”, the construction of business districts, the creation of shopping centers, recreational facilities or new transport infrastructures, the policies of urban sustainability, the hosting of major sport events or the strategies to enhance image through urban marketing, etc. This trend is the product of the interaction of several dynamics such as the weakening of the link between local governments and urban societies [63], or the rise of the financial sector in the production of urban spaces [64, 65]. However, this generalisation of mainstream strategies should not obscure the existence of alternative urban development policies: alternative as the set of initiatives, projects or strategies supported by the local authorities seek to redirect urban development away from top-down



Fig. 6: The holy-Valley of Kadisha.

perspectives or by policy circles dominated by senior politicians, experts or stockholders; alternatively, urban policies are elaborated in a bottom-up perspective in which society in its diverse components is the driving force.

The relative decline of the state in the regulation of the economy and society and the current economic crisis could open a space for the development of alternative urban strategies in many countries.

The Lebanese case is strongly illustrative about these ongoing dynamics.

The general hypothesis that infers the Lebanese urbanism paradigm is the “state-of-anarchy” (transposition of Realist paradigm to urban governance). It extensively involves the entire Lebanese socio-political system.

The complex dialectic that nurtures Lebanese communities (societies) vis-à-vis: public power (and consequently public space), general interest paradigm, and broadly vis-à-vis rules and their respect involves the public versus private and the private versus private relationships dynamics, keystone of the Lebanese urbanism “ideology”.

State-of-anarchy is essentially perpetuated by the coexistence of private, autonomous and rational actors at the micro-territorial level against a weakened and powerless public power (coercive authorities).

Privatisation tendencies (zaïmisation, customisation and sacralisation), fragmented and un-networked urbanisation phenomena provide many revealing examples of the alternative power that peripheral private stakeholders (zaïms, businessmen, religious) hold in terms of urban planning and economic development.

These phenomena constitute the triptych of a profoundly privatised territorial urban governance implemented in an urban anarchy model (Realurbanism) where strategic planning and socio-economic development orientations are undertaken and designed by private local actors: actually increasingly empowered rooted stakeholders who play the major role in the development of local (disconnected) territories outside the Capital influence area and other few regional centralities.

They allow therefore to emphasise the growing role of private and engaged stakeholders in local urban and economic development facing a dismantled public power that is still lacking legitimacy within its different social components (communities/societies) -

particularly during crisis periods, and almost beyond these periods, in the founder context of the Lebanese state-of-anarchy.

Thus, by pursuing their communitarian and/or personal interests, private stakeholders thrive through almost non-formal schemes, although rational, to implement urban policies and practices in regional Lebanon that are undeniably beneficial to locals.

LED urban projects are a key lever for the development in anarchy contexts and broadly in developing countries.

However, as for every policy, these benefits may not lastingly occur if they are badly designed or implemented. If a small group of actors manages to monopolise the policy-making process, LED strategies may be geared towards the private interests of the few, rather than the collective or social interests of the locality as a whole [6], and consequently would generate close ties that generate particular interests and corruption. The zaïmisation and customisation phenomena are here relevant examples, especially when LED “bosses” are running local elective mandates.

The customisation phenomenon shows another major effect of the shift to territorial policies: development policies are emphasising the efficiency rather than the equity of development. Historically traditional top-down policies were conceived with an implicit balance between economic efficiency and territorial equity while LED approach focuses more on efficiency [6]. These locally-defined goals may lead to increases in territorial inequity, as shown in the Bejdarfel example.

In this local context, as horizontal cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders is essential, the need for a coordinator is rising and is particularly important to the success of the LED approach. Local governments still need to assume responsibility for coordinating policies and ensuring a degree of spatial equity support that prevent the economic, social, and political problems that territorial disparities can cause [6]. Furthermore, they need to implement a regional, yet formal, strategy since LED informal strategies lack long term efficacy.

Here the potential success of the LED process is also highly dependent on the horizontal cooperation between local government and other local stakeholders. The ability of local governments to stimulate the participation of a variety of stakeholders

in the formulation and implementation of public policies, as well as the pre-existence of formal and informal organisations of key local stakeholders with which local governments can liaise, are therefore likely to have an impact on the success of LED strategies.

Municipalities have then to position themselves as local, horizontal, egalitarian and non-hierarchical LED actors, in the Lebanese Realurbanism anarchy context.

Empowering Lebanese municipalities within local economic development strategies is an urge in the current Lebanese spatial planning context where local governments have practically insignificant power.

Municipalities, as an autonomous (urban) LED actor, and globally, decentralisation towards peripheral regions, are major upcoming priorities: issues that are undeniably embed in recent global tendency for decentralisation and local empowerment dynamics [66] - some of which were recently carried out by independentist and sovereigntist movements tackling European regions and territories.

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