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## "Rebuilding Lebanon : Role of Multilateral And Bilateral Organization on Urban Management"

The civil war in Lebanon stopped at the end of 1990. Rebuilding Lebanon is showing how urban management is changing with the reemergence of public institution in relation with civil and private sectors. In reality, approaches on urban management are really different in this country than those proposed by international organization, although Lebanese people has a permanent and traditional hearing on the international scene [1]. Are these main differences the reasons of the weak impact of their orientation on urban management?

### *International and multilateral organization in Lebanon*

We can identify more than 120 international and regional donors and implementing agencies acting on Lebanon in 1998 : 31 UN Agencies, more than 40 International NGOs (including 22 international NGOs, 7 Lebanese Diaspora NGOs, 4 Red Cross and Red Crescent societies several Islamic NGOs), 4 European Union institutions, 27 bilateral and governmental departments, 17 Commercial Funding (including World Bank Group), 5 multilateral.

These organisms have programs (more than 240) among with the main are concerning Development/rehabilitation (more than 130 programs applied) and finance (more than 60 programs applied). Other actions are concerning emergency relief (59, including refugees, demining...). One third of these programs are followed up by UN Agencies (81 programs). Bilateral and governmental department (46), International NGOs (59) and commercial funds (37) have also a lot of actions on the field.

This strong diversity of actors allows a large field of actions. Most of them have direct or indirect impact on urban management at different level (individual, community, local, regional, national) and on different fields (facilities, public services, infrastructures, environment, gender, poverty alleviation, micro-credit...). The coordination of these actions is very difficult and the efficiency of lot of them are subject to discussion in regard to the Lebanese society.

### *Lebanese context on urban management*

Lebanon appears like a modern country concerning urban planning. Construction and Urbanism laws have been implemented since several decades with a lot of operational (remembering, expropriation, land corporate companies, public and private development companies...) and regulation (zoning, natural reserve, public domain, maritime domain...) capabilities. Adjustments have been made on these laws before, during and after the war. Obviously, the war was a period with a lot of land and building irregularities, but it was also the case before[2] and after the war[3].

If this legal structure, close to the French law system, is not really efficient, there are a lot of reasons : weakness of administrative control, corruption, political pressures, contradiction between decrees... But one of the main difficulty is closely linked with the structure of Lebanese economy : the investment on building and land estate is one of the main source of profit in the country[4]. There is a national consensus concerning private property

(almost all the country is buildable, related to the Constitution) and it is impossible to set up *non aedificandi* zoning on private property, except if the State is able to buy the land... Generally, there are no functional constraints in zoning : urban regulations are based on density concepts. The guaranteed income economy based on land speculation[5] concerns small and big owners and is a structural feature of Lebanese economy[6]. So, it has been impossible till now to define a National physical planning strategy.

The application of an European urbanistic model of the fifties in Lebanon create a lot of divergence in regard to the attempted results. For example, industrial areas are frequently not built, or built up with housing units, industrial owners generally prefer to find cheaper land in agricultural zone. We can observe mountain road urbanization and a lot of scattering constructions on natural and agricultural land. More than 220.000 housing units, offices and commercial lots are empty in a context of housing crisis. The contents of the modern laws of Urbanism and Construction and the practices of the society give paradoxical results.

Dominant families and community representatives are using the State as a tool for their own interests. Privatization in a so small country is a creation of monopoly (Garbage collection : Sukleen...). The balance found in Lebanese system allows a sort of distribution for each confessional community. This consensus, basis of the political context, create other guaranteed income situation.

Today, the State has been found difficulties to provide collective services in some region the country. In fact, public services is a stake for local notables and political parties competing with the State and creating dependent relation for inhabitants for basic needs (water supply, electricity non payment, garbage collecting...). This clientelism is a source of permanent negotiations between the State and local actors and political parties for every projects.

A strong institutional change happens last year with the first municipal election (since 35 year) in June 1998. The municipal law give a lot of abilities to municipalities, but with a strong *ante* and *post* control on every decision and action, by the Central power. New local politicians are making pressures to obtain more power (technical and financial) and less control. This new configuration is potentially a strong change for urban management. The key concept will be what kind of articulation will be set up between local, regional and national powers for urban management.

How can international organization have a driving role in that context ? The main programs of development seems to be superimposed on a complex and moving reality. It needs to be closely articulated with this territorial features to have a chance of success.

### *Continuity and change in urban planning before and after the war*

There is a strange continuity on planning orientations, if we compare the projects defined before the war and thus applied today. The Lebanon rebuilding appears like a period in which it is possible to realize projects unfeasible before the war. So, the sea landing track for the airport, the new fourth and fifth harbor basins, new highways, new big facilities, etc., was designed, for most of them, before the war. Obviously, present time is an opportunity to modernize technology : cellular phone network (400.000 lines for 4 millions in Lebanon people today) or optic fiber are innovating; also, the destroyed city center and the irregularity in southern suburbs of Beirut create new opportunities for urban projects. But same urban dynamics are in progress in the town and the rebuilding policy is using the main visible elements of large metropolis to give more chances for Beirut in the regional town competition of the region : big stadium (65.000 seats), World Trade center and business district, International conference center, airport (6 millions passengers to be extent to 10 millions), reclaimed land (300 hectares in northern suburbs)... The land estate economy have the same dynamism than before the war, with short and eccentric cycles (rebuilding boom was only four years (1992-1995)). In fact, the metropolization of towns is a rapid process, linked with those observed before the war.

Also, the architectural and urban models applied in Lebanon appears like a juxtaposition of models. We find a lot of foreign references in the design of building. The new city center project in an addition of urban models without any coherent planning, using image of old historical neighborhood, new Lebanese pastiche, future financial center with towers, etc., in a small 180 hectares site. This eclecticism was already a feature in architecture since last century (central hall houses) till today (Mandat building, modern architecture, post-modern, high tech...) and is

understood by some Lebanese researchers as the real spirit of authentic Lebanese urban design.

The changing of dominant community (from Christians to Muslims) in the financial and State power distribution doesn't change the main trends of urban management, the urban orientations and the structures of urban development. These main trends shows the limits of internal and external actors on urban management trends.

### *Role of international organization on urban management in Lebanon*

In this context, the role of international and bilateral organization cannot have a strong impact on urban management. This liberal country shows numerous incoherences. The weakness of the State create a lot of disequilibrium in the economy[8] and the liberal model show limits in this context: international organization with liberal conception have paradoxal attitude concerning Lebanon. The main objective of government is to attract investment in land estate and commercial sectors, to support the land bubble[9]. All the effort made to develop modern and productive economy is faced to the guaranteed income economic orientation. An important administrative reform is in discussion since several years, without real implementation, although international organizations (European Union) are closely involved in the process by a strong financial support[10].

So, these international organizations, coming with their own objectives, are confronted with the strong and large dynamic of the economy and the practices of a complex society. They have to adapt their objectives to the context with long term trends and policies defined by the State. Actions have to be articulated with logic defined for long term and financed by several donors. They can facilitate some reforms or actions, but models have to be strongly redefined in relation with the practices and representations of the society.

Moreover, public administration is not able to spend easily the money granted by donors. For example, presently only one third of the World bank loans[11] or the French protocol are used. It gives relativity to the impact of these donors on the development policies. If it is useful for the country to announce these protocols - to inject money in the economy and to finance the commercial deficit - it is also important to give positive image by using these international organization to create better confidence in country development for private investments. But the impact on the main urban policies doesn't appear so strong in the long range.

### *Key concepts for urban management in Lebanon*

In this regard, some elements seem to be interesting to be retained :

- Local urban management has to be though in a metropolization process.
- Land economy and actor system are key analysis to understand urban dynamics.
- Negotiating urbanism appears as the main process observed on each operational project (Central business district (notabilities of Beirut), Southern suburbs (Prime minister, Hezbollah (Islamic party) and Amal (comunautarian party)), northern reclaimed area (private and public actors). Also, negotiations (local/national, notables...) are observed for each new project of zoning.
- Redefining the place of the State is an important issue for general development, including private sector. Partnership (public/private) needs stakeholders able to play their role. The impossibility to implement large BOT project (private highways, International conference center...) in Lebanon is due to the lack of State guarantee. Difficulties of development (slow) is linked with the weakness of the State.
- The articulation of local with regional and national policies is a key element for urban management.
- Historic analysis of urban planning replace the impact of action and the role of actors in the systemic understanding.
- Eclecticism appears as authenticity of local culture in architecture, urbanism and urban management.

### **Notes:**

[1] Lebanon announces its wish to integrate TWO, but after 16 years of adjustments of taxes. Strong public financing system needs to be change (Toll taxes to be change in consumer taxes) because Toll tax represent half of public revenue.

[2] every five years, the State published decrees of regularization since the beginning of the sixties. see el-Achkar, E., *Réglementation et*

*formes urbaines: le cas de Beyrouth*, Cahiers du Cermoc n° 20, CERMOC, Beyrouth, 1998.

[3] i.e. : Christians (maronites) notabilities on demarcation line in close suburbs of Beirut encourage irregularities in their own municipality to send at higher price their property to Muslims (chiïtes).

[4] See Nahas, C., *Economies foncière et immobilière au Liban*, Lettre d'information n°12 de l'ORBR, CERMOC, 1999

[5] The land profit tax is not applied.

[6] One third of mortgage in Lebanon are based on land guarantee.

[7] Saliba, R., *Beirut 1920-1940 : domestic architecture, between tradition and modernity*, Engineers and architect Order of Beirut, Beirut, 1998.

[8] no productive policy in one of the main reason of the large commercial deficit (only 10% is covered by exportation of Lebanese products).

[9] Aveline, N., *Economies foncières et immobilières au Liban*, Document du CERMOC, CERMOC, Beyrouth, 1999, (à paraître).

[10] 34 millions of euros.

[11] on about 600million USD.

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