Design Pedagogies in Times of Crisis

Six Universities - Six Studios on Post-Blast Beirut Reconstruction

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DOI
10.47982/wgt14d21

Publication date
2023

Document Version
Final published version

Citation (APA)
Hein, C., & Hanna, J. (Eds.) (2023). *Design Pedagogies in Times of Crisis: Six Universities - Six Studios on Post-Blast Beirut Reconstruction*. (CPCL Series). SOAP | Stichting OpenAccess Platforms. https://doi.org/10.47982/wgt14d21

CPCL SERIES

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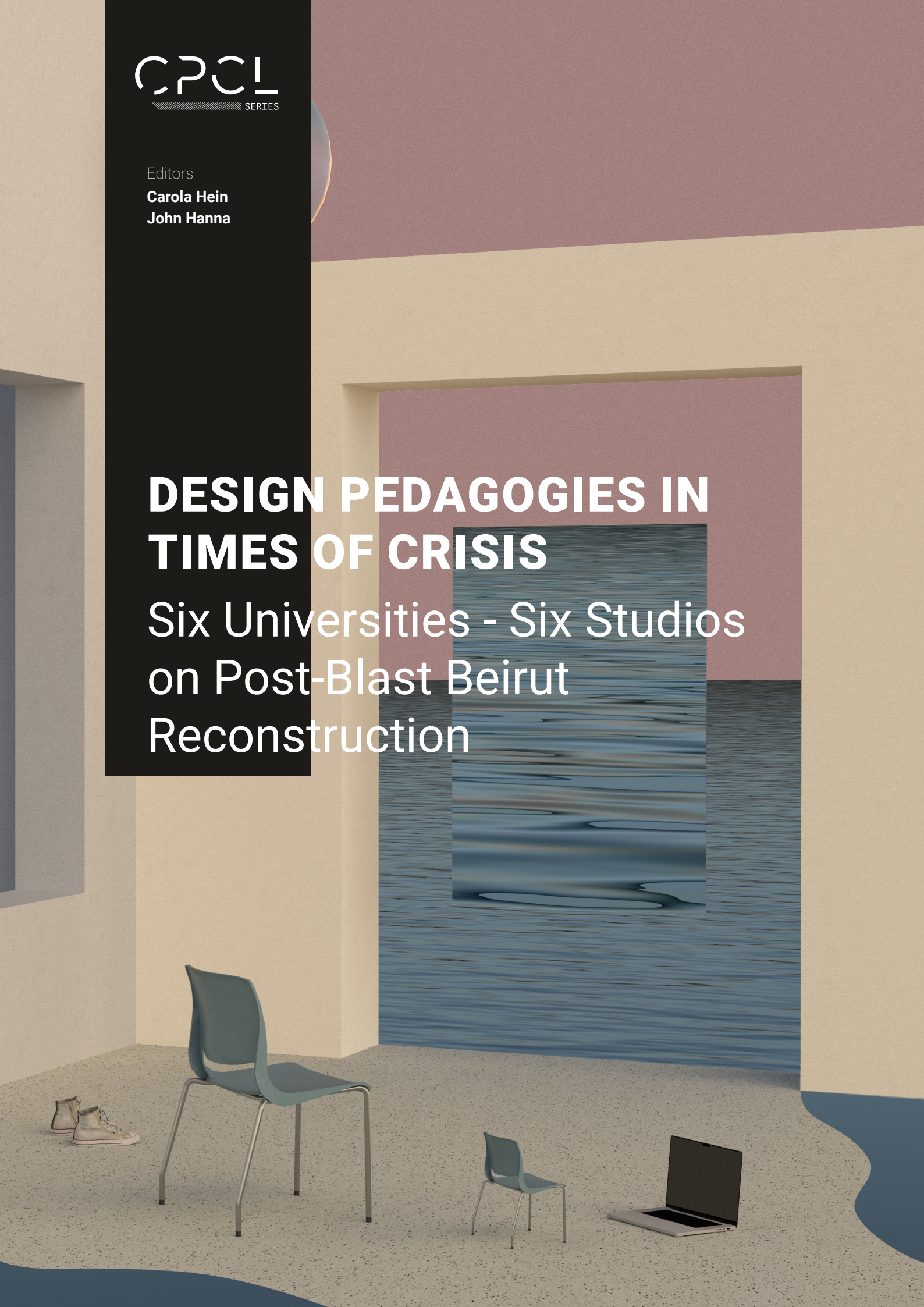

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Six Universities - Six studios on Post-Blast Beirut Reconstruction

PEER REVIEWED

ISBN **978-90-833861-1-9**

This book is published by SOAP | Stichting OpenAccess Platforms, Rotterdam NL, 2023

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This publication has been made through a generous support from Deltas, Infrastructures and Mobility Initiative (DIMI), Delft University of Technology.

Preface

The massive explosion in the port of Beirut in 2020 demonstrates the importance of ports in their urban and regional settings. Exploring strategies for the redevelopment of port and city is a key task for port cities around the world. Design studios can provide insights into different scenarios for future development. Teaching projects shared between Delft University of Technology, Yale University, and Miami University, and between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Tsinghua University, and the German University of Cairo, ultimately led to teachers and students collaborating on six studio courses. Thanks to the support of the Chair History of Architecture and Urban Planning and the Delft Deltas, Infrastructure and Mobility Initiative (DIMI) at Delft University of Technology, we have been able to combine the results of this collaboration into an edited book. We are very grateful for the contributions of all the studio leaders. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the work of Holger Gladys and Robert Saliba, who unfortunately and unexpectedly passed away during our collaboration –a huge and sad loss of two brilliant and critical minds. We are grateful to our colleagues from all the participating institutions for their excellent contributions and engaged collaboration. We would also like to extend our thanks to our student assistants, Douwe de Jager and Zuzanna Sliwinska, who have contributed many hours to the production of this publication. We are grateful to our former colleagues, Nadia Alaily-Mattar and Riwa Abdelkhalek, who have helped us shape the structure of this publication in its earlier phases. Lastly, we would like to thank Netherlands-based Lebanese visual artist, Hala Tawil, for her designs of the cover images.

Index

Introduction

Carola Hein & John Hanna

In the spring of 2021, professors and teachers from around the world taught studio courses and seminars that focused on the destruction and rebuilding of Beirut following the massive explosion that took place in the port on August 4, 2020. Some of these courses were taught collaboratively, others started as an independent project, but students and faculty attended each other's presentations. Each studio was largely taught online due to the coronavirus crisis, which allowed for easier exchange among the groups. But it also prevented the studios from traveling to the field and closely surveying it. Faculty and students relied on presentations and input by colleagues from Beirut, material that could be found online, and documents that were available, mainly in English/French, which to a certain extent limited perspectives. Mutual interest in one another's work led to some intriguing observations, including about pedagogical approaches and conceptual foundations. Each studio focused on specific premises, as the teachers chose diverse analytical viewpoints to address the rebuilding. At Delft University of Technology, teachers emphasized Beirut's status as a port city and on the sea-land continuum as the analytical starting point for the design, and they collaborated with Yale University's Alan Plattus ran a parallel seminar on the history of port cities. At the American University of Beirut (AUB), the instructors focused on the role of visionary planning for post-disaster rebuilding. In the University of Miami, neighborhood-level interventions inspired the teaching in Jean-François Lejeune upper-level spring studio. Similarly, in the German University in Cairo, Holger Gladys's design studio focused on interventions at the neighborhood-level, namely the Karantina neighborhood, and its up-scalability to city and regional scales. At Tsinghua University, the design studio of Jian Liu and Yang Tang explored the multiple possibilities of rebuilding Beirut's port and regenerating the city of Beirut on different scales by way of comprehensive urban design.

The different interventions proposed by the teachers and the different course assignments shaped the students' analytical viewpoints and designs. Students took different positions and pursued different objectives. Conceptual differences and approaches to research seem to

have mattered as much as the location of the studio, notably the proximity to or distance from Beirut. Teachers were inspired by their local school's philosophy and research approaches. They also were guided by their personal connection to the disaster. The Beirut-based studio focused more on theoretical approaches and abstract implications, possibly an attempt to achieve some distance between the events and the planning. Yet the Beirut-based participants also showed a strong desire to add a memorial component to the design. So, while at first glance it may seem that the Beirut team wanted to keep distance from the disaster, the design response showed extensive knowledge and understanding of the local needs and conditions. Meanwhile the participants in other locations focused on aspects that spoke more strongly to international concerns; however, many of the teams also included teachers and students with advanced knowledge of Lebanon and Beirut, and they brought that expertise to the design.

The organization of the studios, the knowledge of teachers, and the production by students are explored in greater detail in this publication, raising a number of questions for further exploration. What this semester seems to have shown us is that both the form and approach to research and the set-up of teaching design studios have a strong impact on the outcomes, thus, there is a clear relationship between research and design. An explicit understanding of this relationship could help us rethink and refine studio teaching. Educational pedagogies in many fields have been carefully explored and studied; design education is a field that merits further exploration. This book aims to add to the theme of design education by presenting and collaboratively analyzing the six studios that focused on the rebuilding of the port city of Beirut following the 2020 disaster in terms of approach, methodology, teaching format, pedagogy, and more. While exploring the pedagogical aspects of these studios, the publication also considers the unique conditions of Beirut and Lebanon and the international exchange of architectural and planning ideas, including at a time of crisis.

To share the insights gained through our courses, this book is structured in three parts. The first part addresses educational approaches through the lens of teaching about time and concepts. It argues that an understanding of long-term development is relevant for informed future planning. It also argues that we need to understand the conceptual framework that we employ for research and teaching. The second part presents the case of Beirut and explores the syllabi, assignments, and projects developed in all of the participating institutions. The third part engages in a conversation with Beirut-based scholar and educator, Mona Harb, to provide a retrospective reflection on the international collaborations among studios and the lessons which could be learned from it.

PART ONE FRAMING

Temporal Framework

Towards a Broader Conceptualization of Time in Design Education

Carola Hein & John Hanna

Teaching design requires a conscious understanding of time and temporality. The passing of time is central to design as a creative process, which is mainly focused on initiating change and creating a transformation between two states.[1] Whether this transformation is driven by a societal need or an individual need for self-actualization, the creative initiative works in relation to the past (reproducing or challenging traditional knowledge), present (moment of action), and future (the final outcome and its life span).[2] Design also requires awareness of temporalities, that is the difference between natural times (seasons, day-night rhythms), or the times created by modern lifestyles (working hours, traffic jams).[3] In this reading, time in all its tenses shapes and intersects with the process of design. The pedagogical practice of teaching design thus requires a concrete attention to this intersection.

However, as simple and straightforward as this might sound, our concept of time and the way we bring it into play is far from universal. For a few decades now, sociologists have argued that our understanding and perception of time are socially constructed, and they develop at the intersection of multiple sociocultural factors. Time is defined in relation to surrounding environments.[4] Different groups and cultures experience time differently and that has important consequences for the development of ritual and everyday practices.[5] The term 'multiple temporalities', which has been receiving increasing attention since the beginning of the twenty-first century[6] within disciplines such as anthropology and sociology, highlights the ways standardized clock and calendar time fails to convey

1 Burney, 'Intro to Design Thinking'.

2 Rogers, 'Toward a Theory of Creativity'.

3 Henckel and Thomaier, 'Efficiency, Temporal Justice'; Zhu and Hein, 'Temporalities'.

4 Cipriani, 'Social Time'.

5 Levine, Geography of Time.

6 According to the number of occurrences of the word in books as illustrated on Google Ngram Viewr.

the multiplicity of time concepts.[7]

In this chapter, we propose some initial ideas for a stronger inclusion of a temporal framework in design studio culture. We have developed these ideas around three different trajectories: past, present, and future.

Past

Looking at the present, we are confronted with the questions of how and why we have reached where we are now, geographically and institutionally. This is relevant for **design practice** on a number of levels.[8] First, we have to recognize path dependencies (a concept developed in the political sciences as part of the concept of historic institutionalism)[9] to explore the ways in which decisions made in the past shape decisions today, and, we add, the ways in which the built environment reinforces these path dependencies. For example, the fact that London's decision makers once opted to construct docklands rather than tidal ports continues to impact waterfront renewal decisions today. In the architectural and planning fields, we constantly deal with places that have been designed with values and concepts of the past. Sites have long histories that explain their development over the years (or lack of development) in connection to their surrounding regions. The site, as a historic object, is important for determining the main architectural features and characteristics of the project, including its orientation, views, sensitivity to climate, and connectivity to its surrounding. By studying the history of a site one gains a sense of the socioeconomic forces that have combined to produce this site over time. An attention to temporality would entail looking beyond the mere order of historical events to understand the rhythms and routines of social life at different time scales and the way they have shaped a specific location and still influence our plans for the future. This becomes essential for a comprehensive understanding of the past.[10]

Looking at history through the lens of temporality also has implications for **pedagogical practice**. The selection of a site that has experienced crisis involves a clear acknowledgment of the role of time. Without the disaster, design schools would have paid much less attention to the urban development of Beirut. Disasters have often generated specific attention, notably because of the opportunity for rebuilding and its potential design implications. Teachers of design build on a very long tradition of teaching architecture and planning.[11] This necessitates an explanation of the effect of the passage of time on architectural institutions and actors. They need

7 McKenzie and Davies, 'Documenting Multiple Temporalities'; Schieffelin, 'Marking Time'.

8 Hein and Van Dooren, 'Teaching History'.

9 Sorensen, 'Path Dependence'; Sorensen, 'Planning History'; Hein and Schubert, 'Resilience and Path Dependence'.

10 Harding, 'Rethinking the Great Divide'.

11 Stevens, 'Struggle in the Studio'.

to acknowledge the fact that their choices of topics, places, and themes are also a result of time. The process of creating a design syllabus and leading a studio requires continual reflection on the temporal conditions that contribute to the development of the architectural discipline and teaching culture today. Only then, and through attention to sequences, repetitions, and continuities,[12] can history explain where architecture stands as a discipline and its institutional culture in relation to power.[13]

Teaching design needs to reconsider its modes of writing and presenting history. **Linear timelines** have frequently been used in design classrooms as important tools for representing consistent narratives of time. They focus mainly on single actors and major events to explain historical transitions where one event leads to the next – often in a deterministic fashion. A different approach to timelines rooted in Marxist thought gives less weight to individual action and events and instead focuses on the interaction between social structures and their surrounding environments at different scales and different temporalities in what can be seen in the bigger image as recurrent or consequent historical trends.[14] While the second approach is apt to be more sensitive to the multiplicity of reference points and temporalities, both approaches fail to explain the chaotic and complex nature of life, and by extension, history. They remain driven by an acceptance of a linear connection between causes and effects. Conversely, **non-linear approaches** understand social change as an indeterminate outcome of the intersection between events, different rhythms, scales, and social structures. They accept the possibility of asymmetrical relations between causes and effects. Additionally, they recognize history as a complex system that cannot be explained or analyzed through the reduction of its temporal and spatial components.[15]

We also need to reflect on the **historical sources** that we often use and propose to students to consult, as well as the archives that host them. These sources need to be properly situated in the context in which they became public; we need to understand the (temporal) conditions that shaped the production of these textual sources and the relations between such conditions and today's conditions and teaching culture. Looking critically at the discipline's historical sources and textbooks implies questioning the different power dynamics that have historically shaped their dissemination. In which language were these sources first published? How were they first received? Who preserved them, where, and why? Did this change over time and why? What were the genders of their authors?[16] And in which geographic areas were they promoted and

12 Büthe, 'Taking Temporality Seriously'.

13 Ghirardo, 'Italian Architects'; Lane, 'Architects in Power'.

14 Kagan, 'Is History Chaotic?'

15 McGlade, 'Times of History'.

16 Gürel and Anthony, 'Canon and the Void'.

circulated?[17]

Then comes the need to think about the use of history for design, in other words, its driving force. The current economy of education and research suggests an **operative employment**; one that takes this historical knowledge to produce a better future.[18] In this context, history becomes an instrument for inspiration and positioning. Historically, however, calls have been made by philosophers and architectural historians for **a critical use of history** – to use historical knowledge to expose the underlying ideology of architecture and to question the role of the architect. This responds directly to questions of power dynamics, and is often driven by an interest in preserving small fragments of history from oblivion.[19]

Present

The current time, the contemporary, is intrinsic to the process of design education. The present time is the lens through which we look at history. However, this lens is always moving.

Architectural studio education today is often led by hot topics and catchy headlines. Under the continuous pressure of having to come up with design studio themes that are new, catchy and creative on the one hand, and timely and relevant to their surrounding worlds on the other, many architecture studios address themes such as climate change, protests and public space, camps, refugees, host cities, borders, and regional cohesion. **Event-driven** studio topics highlight a temporality of the real: an authentic awareness of the present time (as defined by Heidegger),[20] which –unlike everyday ideology– encourages an urgent need for actions and interventions to unblock progress to the future. Within this understanding of constant emergency, be it in the form of natural disasters, events of political violence or social struggles, mentors and students of event-based studios understand these events as triggers of social change and become prompted to produce instant solutions to the most-urgent world problems. They often focus on surgical and calculated interventions as well as proposals that aim at creating a fast and tangible impact. Such an approach also includes a time component: Approaches that position design projects in the long-term rather than as a single project, are less prominent. Extensive investment in **prolonged socio-political or economic issues** is also related to an understanding of time where design interventions can follow slower and incremental processes.

Whether focused on events or invested in prolonged issues, the studio's understanding of the present time is important for defining its position.

17 Sibel Bozdogan, 'Architectural History'..

18 Hein and van Dooren, 'Teaching History'.

19 Keyvanian, 'Tafuri's Notion of History'.

20 McGowan, 'Temporality of the Real'; Kealey, '15. No End in Sight'.

What does it mean to run a studio **today** in institutions that are complicit in former colonial activities or other human rights violations with the aim of addressing an issue in a former colonized geography? How do these temporal aspects shape the organization of the studio and influence the production of knowledge?

The engagement with the **present time** also calls for a conscious awareness of **personal learning**. The design of studio syllabi needs to incorporate an understanding of the temporality of the course of the studio itself. This should look into the impact of personal experiences of the studio duration on the learning process. Like many organizational models, teaching design studios involves a particular valorization of time as a finite resource.[21] The students' experiences of studio time are shaped by the prioritization of assignments and deliverables, their sequences, duration and deadlines. Consequently, these experiences of time produce variances in learning curves, paces and final outcomes.

Future

Design studios are oriented toward the future. They produce design strategies and proposals that are to be realized in **a time that is yet to come**. An awareness of future temporalities presupposes thinking about the durability and fleetingness of architecture.[22] It requires recognition of dynamic values and changing perspectives of space. Such thinking should be open to the dynamics and effects of time and the multiplicity of trajectories that an architectural artifact may follow. Above all, it needs to recognize failure (material and operational) as a natural component of the design and building process.[23] We therefore suggest an **adaptive approach to design** that promotes mutable architectural solutions and temporary interventions. Such an approach requires a detailed illustration of how a design proposal can be responsive to the dynamics of time. Adaptiveness entails looking for a certain phasing logic, a relevant awareness of the architectural proposal's lifetime, and looking at the afterlives of its materials and structural elements. Adaptive thinking in design challenges **universal approaches**, which are often driven by an assumption of architecture's longevity. Their products are timeless designs that are one-size-fits-all, whether this 'all' refers to the applicability of the project to various locations and regional context or a self-proclaimed immutability of the project to any future socio-political dynamics at its site.

An awareness of future temporality requires looking at the **use of design tools**. Architectural drawings, models, collages, and montages are all visual forms that are used within the framework of design studios

21 Ballard and Seibold, 'Communicating and Organizing'.

22 Królikowski, 'Durability of Architecture'.

23 Maher, '900 Miles to Paradise'.

to facilitate an imagination of future possibilities in the present time. Students of design use these tools not only to show the final image but to develop a persuasive logic and order of several sets of future action in particular rhythms and spans. The reliance on these visual tools and products to convey a proposed experience of future time imply a constant mediation between future and present temporalities.[24]

During this collaboration, it became clear that different design studios have different understanding of temporalities. This has also been reflected in the position they give to the discussion of time within the studios. While this is very often related to specific institutional practices and local cultures, we recommend that design studios, specifically those who take problematic and conflictual contexts as their main focus, should create an adequate space for addressing the multiple dimensions of time and temporality for design.

24 Comi and Whyte, 'Future Making'.

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Conceptual Framework

Beirut: A Laboratory for Design Education in Times of Crisis

Robert Saliba

This section is an attempt at defining the intersection of 'post-traumatic urbanism' and 'urban design' as a research and practice track within the emerging field of reconstruction studies, an umbrella term engaging 'migration studies, refugee studies, postwar studies, social movements, political mobilization, physical planning and urban design'.[1] The focus is on cities in the Global South, using Beirut as case study, from which to explore, evaluate, and generalize. The city witnessed a remarkable development in urban design during the past three decades, becoming a recurring destination for international students interested in exploring post-disaster reconstruction due to the successive traumatic events endured by the city. Beirut has been qualified in the 1990s, along with Berlin, as 'arguably one of the largest building sites since the rebuilding of European capitals after World War II'[2]; and the 'the largest laboratory of the world in reconstruction'.[3] With the 2006 Israeli bombing of the national territory, reconstruction projects expanded from central district restoration and development,[4] to encompass suburban neighborhood rebuilding,[5] refugee camp reconstruction,[6] and rural landscape recovery. [7]

On August 4th, 2020, Beirut made international headlines after thousands of tons of ammonium nitrate, loads of fireworks and kerosene, and a system of mismanagement and corruption led to a blast that ripped through the Lebanese capital, leveling countless buildings and taking more than 200 lives. Moreover, the blast came at a very critical time for a country battling an unprecedented economic crisis exacerbated by extreme political instability. This is amid a global pandemic that has

1 AlSayyad, 'Forward' to Lessons in Post-War Reconstruction.

2 Khalaf and Khoury, Recovering Beirut.

3 Charlesworth, Architects without Frontiers.

4 Sarkis and Rowe, 'Physical Reconstruction', in Projecting Beirut; Saliba, 'Foch-Allenby and Etoile.

5 Ghandour and Fawaz, 'Spatial Erasure'.

6 Hassan and Hanafi, '(In) Security and Reconstruction'

7 Al-Harithy, 'Politics of Post-War Reconstruction'; Shibli, 'Beit Bil-Jnoub'.

GENERIC ISSUES					SPATIAL FRAMING MORPHOLOGIES OF DESTRUCTION					IDEOLOGICAL FRAMING DIALECTICS OF RECONSTRUCTION							
					Landscapes/Agents of Crisis	Geographies of Crisis				Design Ideology					Design Position		
Identity	Infrastructure	Ecology	Public Space	Private Development	Street fighting Surgical bombing Land blast Poltical upheavals Pandemics Urban renewal	Urban	Suburban	Peri-urban	Rural	Culture-based	Market-based	Social-based	Ecological-based	Conceptual-based	Pathologist	Facilitator	instigator

Fig. 1 Post-Traumatic Urbanism: Conceptual Framework (source: Robert Saliba)

put into question the standard notions of time, city, public space, and community, making Beirut, once again, an unintentional laboratory of urban recovery.

Since the 1990s, I have witnessed the successive waves of destruction and reconstruction through teaching design studios and coordinating international conferences and academic publications on the subject.

To navigate through the diversity of material produced by local and international participants, a conceptual framework (fig. 1) was articulated to analyze, situate, and compare the different approaches and output of design teaching during times of crisis. It revolves around five generic urban design issues that are spatially and ideologically framed, i.e., *identity, infrastructure, ecology, public space*, and *private development*.[8] As such, urban design is premised on the basis of preserving and enhancing place identity, integrating mobility, promoting sustainability, upgrading the quality of public spaces, and regulating private redevelopment.

A Spatial framing consists of typologizing 'landscapes of crisis' in terms of their geographies (situation), landscapes (sites), and agencies of spatial disruption both natural and manmade. This substantive/descriptive track aims at investigating the 'morphologies of destruction' or the modalities of erasure of urban form with reference to traumatic actions ranging from street fighting to air bombing including urban renewal as a prime instigator of site clearance and surgical impositions (fig. 2). Analyzing the 'morphologies of destructions' allow urban designers to position physical disruption as an integral part of the evolution of cities and their spatial identity.

B Pedagogical framing refers to the ideological positions (both implicit and explicit) taken by advisors and students in defining their values, ambitions, and roles as agents of change. As stated by Moudon,

8 Saliba, 'Framing Urban Design'.

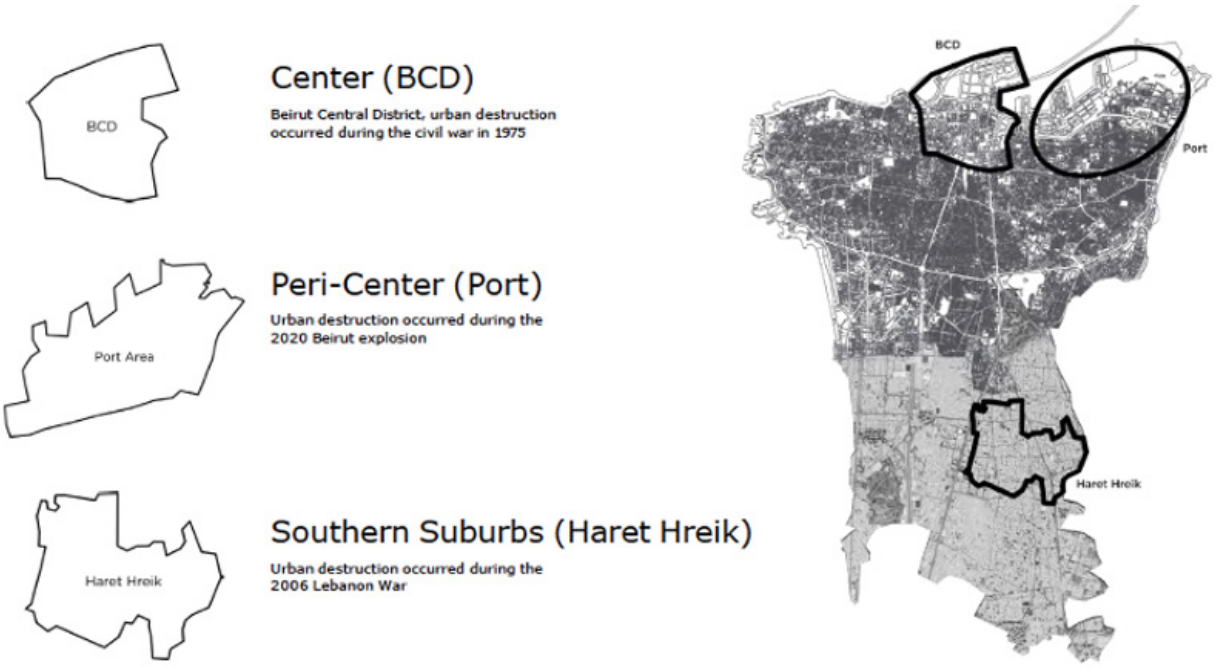

Fig. 2 Geographies of crisis: Situational typologies (source: Marwah Al-Dulaimi and Razan Elmrayed, Beirut in Flux: Trauma and Urban Form [Urban and Landscape Design Studio report, American University of Beirut, spring semester 2021].

'urban designers are mostly normative and prescriptive without stating clearly the 'why' or their underlying assumptions about society, social needs, the relationship of the physical environment with behavior, etc.'[9] Accordingly, five design approaches are identified in terms of their ideological positions: (1) the *culture-based* emphasizing heritage and identity, (2) the *market-based* emphasizing profitability, (3) the *social-based* emphasizing bottom-up initiatives and user participation, (4) the *ecological-based* emphasizing environmental systems; and (5) the *conceptual-based* open to spatial and formal experimentation. These positions intersect on one hand with Choay's historical classification of urbanism along two traditions: the culturalist (past-oriented) and the progressists (future-oriented);[10] and on the other, with the more recent classification by Kelbaugh of 'Three Paradigms: New Urbanism, Everyday Urbanism, Post Urbanism' that includes market urbanism as part of 'everyday' urbanism and recognizes environmentalism as a 'parallel school of thought'.[11] Along the same lines, Schwarzer differentiates in his 'Contemporary City in Four Movements' between 'Traditional Urbanism', 'Marketplace Scenarios', 'Social Movement' and 'Conceptual Designs'.[12] Although such classifications reference mainly the American urban experience, they tend to permeate global design thinking through collaborative urban design studios and courses in urban design history, and theory.

9 Moudon, 'A Catholic Approach'.

10 Choay, L'Urbanisme, Utopies et Réalités.

11 Kelbaugh, 'Three Paradigms'.

12 Schwarzer, 'Contemporary City'.

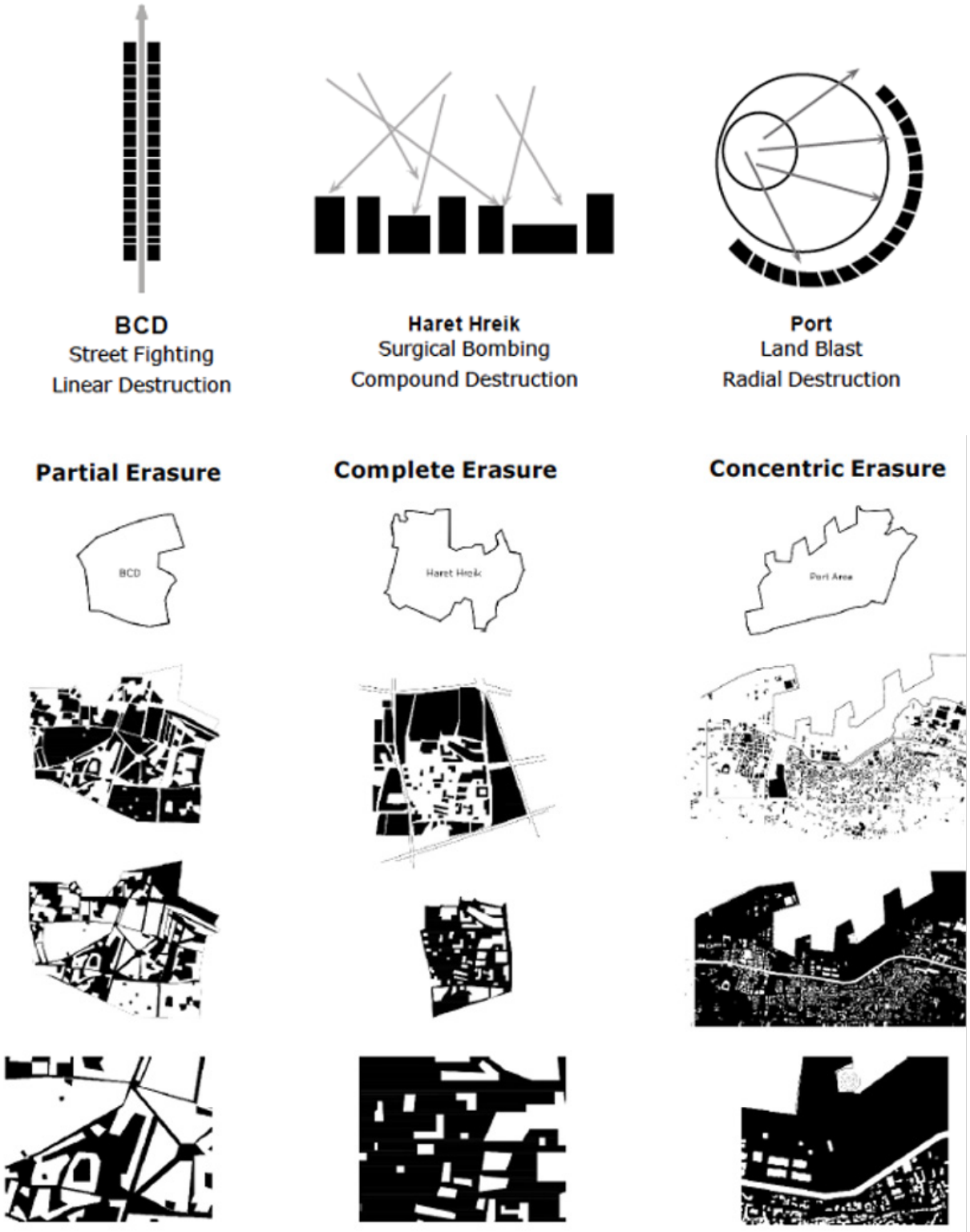

Fig. 3 Agents and landscapes of destruction (source: Marwah Al-Dulaimi and Razan Elmrayed, Beirut in Flux: Trauma and Urban Form [Urban and Landscape Design Studio report, American University of Beirut, spring semester 2021].

Intertwined with the design position is the designer's envisioned role in addressing specific issues related to post-disaster interventions. While Ellin in her 'axis of postmodern urbanism' defines the urban designer's role as proceeding 'from the businessperson and artist to the facilitator,

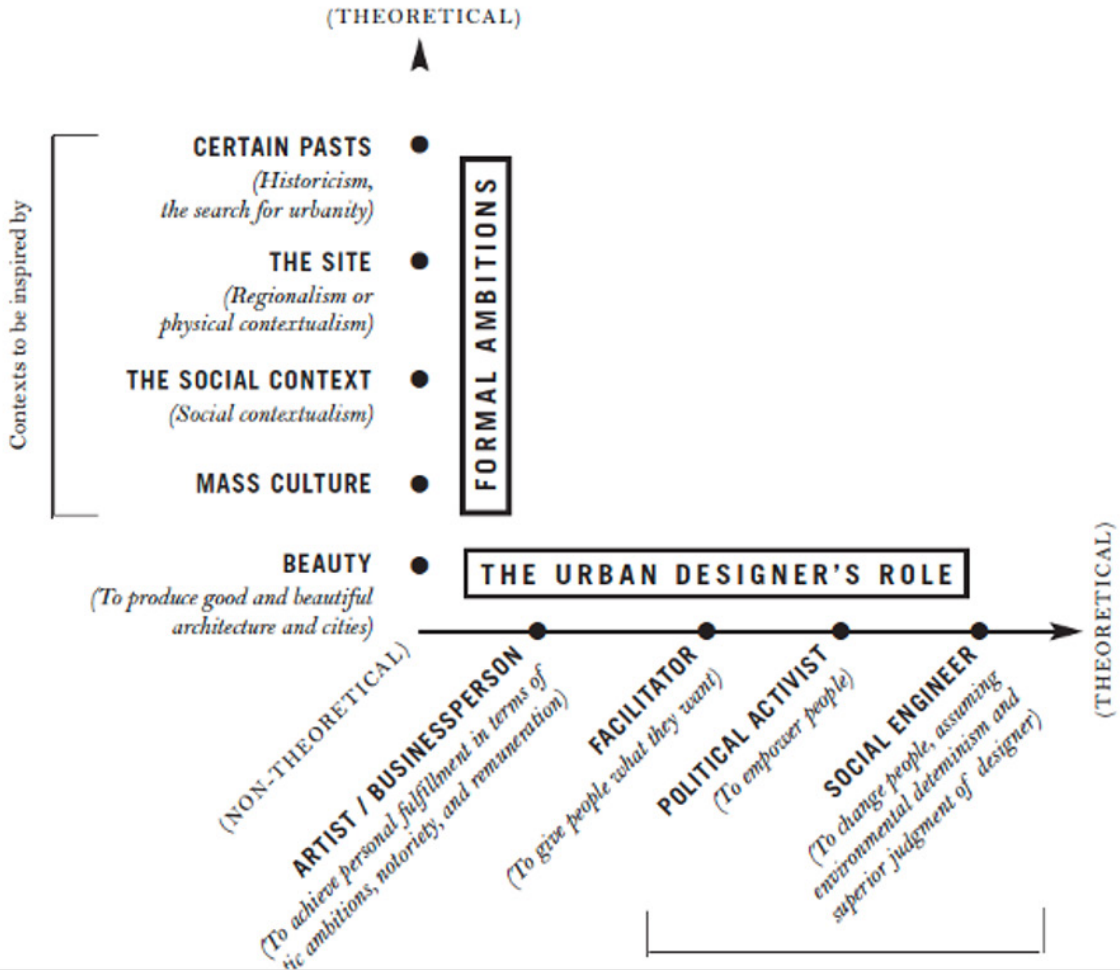

Fig. 3 The axis of postmodern urbanism (source: Ellin, Postmodern Urbanism, 155).

political activist, and social engineer' (fig. 3),[13] Charlesworth focuses on 'how architects have defined their role in rebuilding after disaster…: the architect as physician responding to the most immediate needs such as housing shortages, the architect as hero who rescues a city through urban design, or the architect as historicist who reconstructs destroyed buildings as collective memory'. Elaborating on 'what architects can do' Charlesworth explains: 'First, architects can analyze the role that buildings play or could play in urban conflict, acting as pathologists to diagnose the fractured urban condition and propose remedies. Secondly, architects can act as mediators within the planning process, drawing citizens together to consider a collective future… And thirdly, architects [as instigators] can teach, explicitly raising issues of social responsibility with students and introducing them to real-world situations'.[14]

To conclude: While the proposed conceptual framework allows for the synchronic framing of design studio output, it does not account for

13 Ellin, Postmodern Urbanism.

14 Read, 'Architects without Frontiers'.

the diachronic perspective that incorporates the paradigmatic change in urban design thinking for the past three decades and its impact on post-traumatic urbanism. From the neoliberalism of the 1990s (postwar Beirut), to the environmentalism of the 2000s (post-blitz Beirut), to the radicalism of the 2020s (post-blast Beirut), urban design studios have incorporated the progressive changes in urban design theory and enriched and complexified the post-traumatic urban discourse . Can we hypothesize about the emergence of a new field of urban design that has a coherent set of underlying principles and paradigms? As stated by Lahoud:

> While repair and reconstruction are automatic reflexes, the knowledge and practices of the disciplines need to be imbued with a deeper understanding of the effect of trauma on cities and their contingent realities… Post-traumatic urbanism demands of architects the mobilisation of skills, criticality and creativity in contexts in which they are not familiar. The post-traumatic is no longer the exception; it is the global condition.[15]

Therefore according to Robert Saliba, temporality is in the approach and themes of the design studios that reflected the issues facing cities at the time. Perhaps by being so close to the traumas with their complex and disputed past, their overwhelming present condition of destruction, the only way forward for the local studios was to enhance creativity by imagining an ideal future. After all the motto of Lebanon is ' The Phoenix shall rise'.

15 Lahoud, 'Post-Traumatic Urbanism'.

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PART TWO EXPLORING

Introducing Beirut

The Interface between Port and City

Robert Saliba & Hana Alamuddin

Beirut's central district (BCD) has traditionally acted as an interface zone between the port and the city where global, regional, and local networks meet. As a domain of interaction, it was imprinted landward by the port's accessibility to the hinterland, and seaward by the accessibility of the city to the waterfront (fig. 1). During the past century, the Foch-Allenby and Étoile area of the BCD has evolved from the port district of a small coastal town along the Eastern Mediterranean to a colonial gateway of the region, to the historic core of a globalizing city center. This chapter explores the dynamics of BCD's change in response to the successive waves of modernization from the mid-nineteenth century until now. It starts from the premise that the interface zone between port and city reflects the mutual adjustment to two different operative logics pertaining to external relations, spatial expansion, and functional and internal structuring. As an installation of substantial size, the port is conditioned in its spatial structure by global engineering standards and the evolution of maritime transport technology. Functionally, the port is both a terminus for passengers and cargo and a transit/break-in-transport site between international maritime trade and local or regional inland trade. The city, on the other hand, is by definition a central entity, that provides goods and services to surrounding areas; its functional and spatial structure is determined by civic design decisions, as well as by the specificities of its local socioeconomic and political dynamics. It is this difference between two spatial systems and functional logics that have conditioned Beirut's double function as a port and a capital city.

Pre-Industrial Port-City Integration

Early nineteenth-century Beirut was a pre-industrial town confined within the limits of its defensive walls. A caravan station at the city's eastern gate served as the main access/egress point to regional trade routes (fig.2). The intramural town consisted of a port-related lower town, the present Foch-Allenby sector, and a bazaar-related upper town, the present Étoile sector. Between the two, a main thoroughfare connecting the eastern and western gates occupied approximately the location of the present

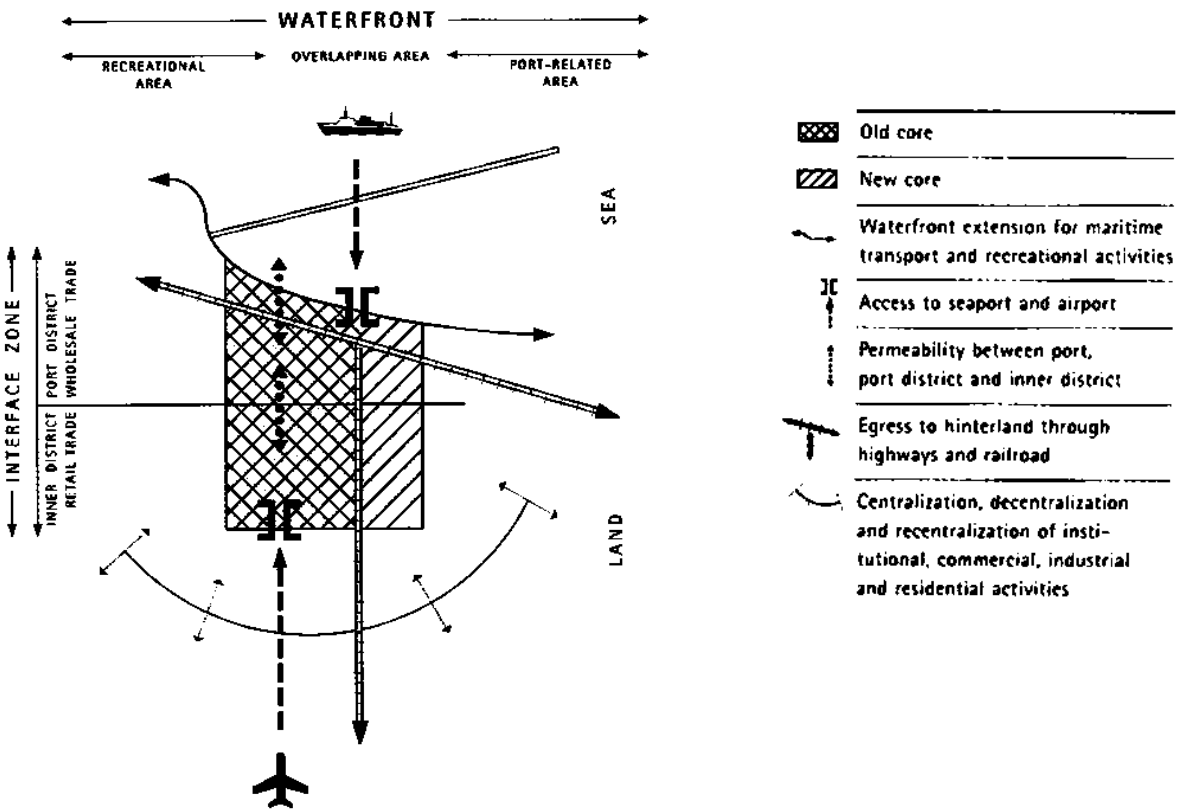


Fig. 1 Interface zone between port and city: Dynamics of change. Source: Saliba, 2004

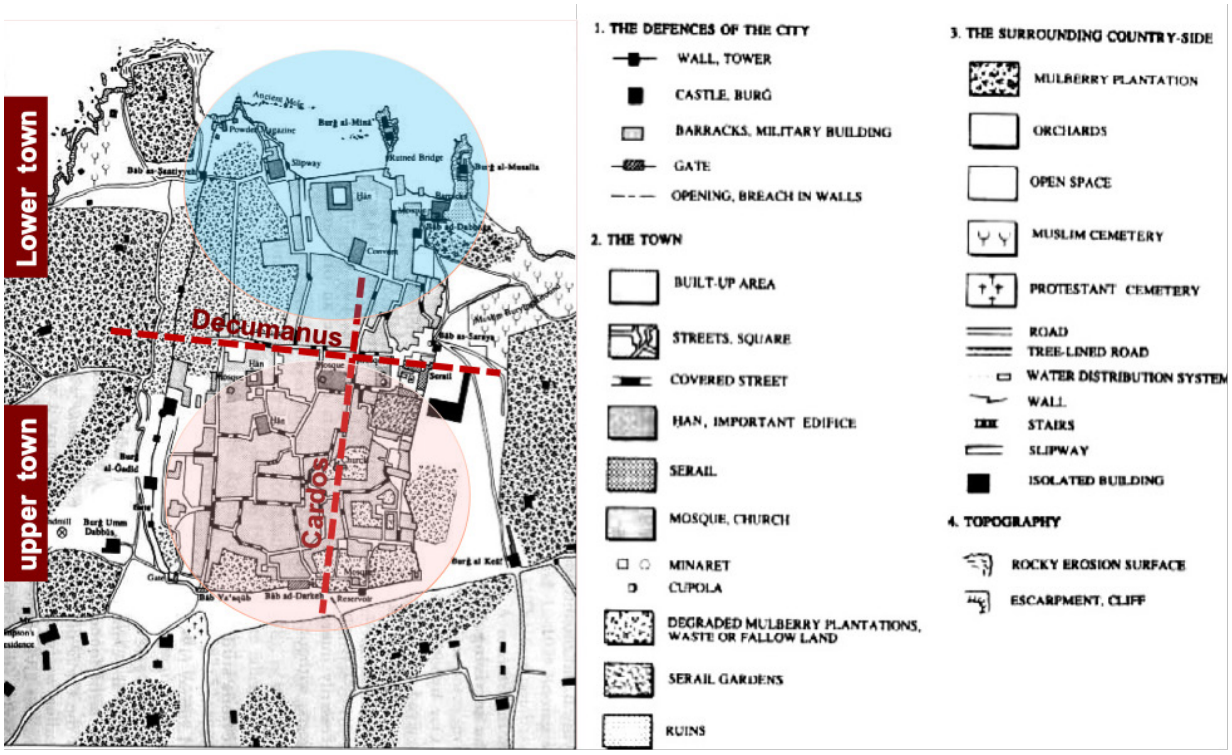
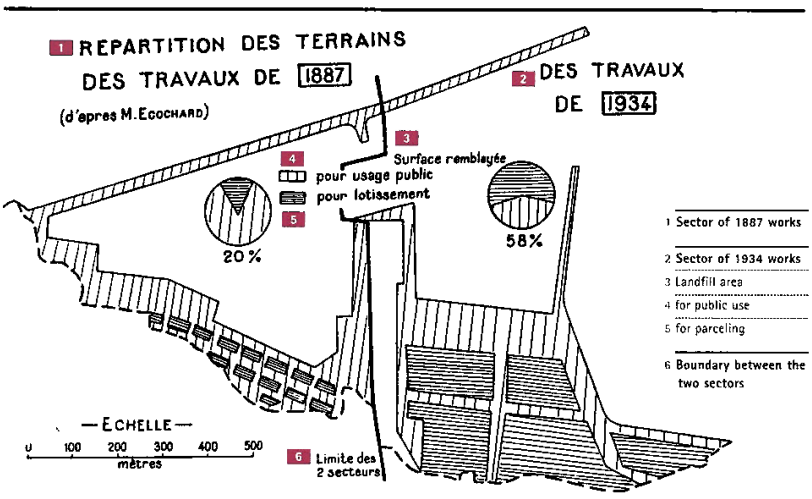


Fig. 2 Pre-industrial Beirut, 1840. Source: Based on Davie, 1987.



First phase: 1887 - 1893
Addition of a 770 m breakwater, a jetty, and 1252 m length of quays.
The reclaimed land amounted to 79,000 sq m. Around 20% were allotted for sale.

Second phase: 1934 - 1938
Addition of a second basin extending the existing breakwater from 770 m to 1200 m, and adding 1790 m of new quays, including 800 m of deepwater quays. Reclaimed land amounted to 167,000 sq m, with 58% allotted for the building of warehousing and a free zone.

Fig. 3 Two phases of the Beirut port extension: 1887, 1934. Source: Ecochard, 1943.

Weygand Street and corresponded roughly to the Roman Decumanus, formerly believed to be the Decumanus Maximus.

The harbor was strongly anchored within the intramural town, forming both a defensive front and a trading outpost. A network of north-south alleyways connected to the main thoroughfare and ensured functional and physical permeability between the port, the lower and upper town and town gate. A strong port-city integration prevailed in a context of slow maritime activity and limited population growth. Harbor-related activities and services, such as loading and unloading, warehousing and repair yards, generated little demand for additional space; and in the absence of rural to urban migration, the city did not need to expand beyond its defensive walls.

The area adjoining the port already exhibited a cosmopolitan character. As described by Leila Fawaz, 'Travelers first crossed a relatively new and pleasant part of the town just outside the port area. The only two good streets of Beirut were to be found there, lined with the largest stone houses of the town. Just beyond was the street inhabited by bankers and money changers, and beyond that the Greek quarter, with its coffeehouses and cabarets'.[1]

Emerging Segregation

The growth of Beirut is mainly due to 1) its promotion to the rank of a provincial capital in 1832; 2) the development of steamship navigation; and 3) the opening in 1857 of the Beirut-Damascus road linking the port to the Syrian interior. To accommodate the increasing freight activity, the enlargement and modernization of the traditional harbor became an economic necessity. Financed by the Compagnie Impériale Ottomane du

1 Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants.

Fig. 4 Inauguration of Beirut railroad station on March 1, 1903. Source: Debbas 1994.

Port, des Quais et des Entrepôts de Beyrouth, primarily with European investment capital, the projects undertaken between 1887 and 1893 led to the construction of deeper and wider basins and larger warehouses and the creation of more mechanized loading and unloading facilities (fig. 3). A railroad inaugurated in 1903 had its terminal located in the port area further enhancing accessibility to the hinterland (fig. 4). With the upgrade of its port facilities and land communications, Beirut evolved into a major port along the Eastern Mediterranean. In 1888, Beirut became the capital of a provincial administrative entity (Wilaya) of the Ottoman empire benefiting from the extensive urban development work initiated by the Ottoman authorities.

The modernization thus set in motion, seaward by the French and landward by the Ottomans, initiated a tension between the port and the city leading to a progressive segregation between the two. As early as 1863, M. Stoecklin, consulting engineer for the port extension, had remarked (as quoted by geographer Jean Laugenie): '[it] is not enough to build quays; these need to have convenient access to the city center. This is where difficulties begin. Old downtown quarters neighboring the port amount to a blind maze of dead ends, alleyways and covered passages through which it would only be possible to open an avenue at enormous cost... But a more radical solution is possible: the extension of Martyrs' Square over its full length all the way to the waterfront'.[2]

This early insight clearly brought forward the main issue of connecting

2 Laugenie, 'Le Port de Beyrouth'.

Fig. 5 Postcard of l'Avenue des Français. Source : https://www.hippostcard.com/listing/pc-cpa-lebanon-beyrouth-lavenue-des-francais-b23090/30376014 (24/3/2022)

Fig. 6: Modernization of the historic core. (Top left) Excerpt of the 1932 Danger plan for the renewal of old city core. (Top right) Superimposition of the Beaux-Arts fabric over the medieval fabric. Source: Davie, 2001 (Bottom) Implementation of the Danger plan over the razed fabric of Ottoman Beirut (1920): The Foch-Allenby area to the North as a new port and wholesale trade district; and the Etoile area to the South as a new administrative, institutional, and retail trade district, separated by the east-west Weygand Street. Source: Saliba, 2004

the port to its hinterland through the old town perceived as a barrier against fluid access to regional roads. By the turn of the twentieth century, the waterfront had become the nerve center of all transport routes, as well as the heart of merchants' activities. It also portrayed the flamboyant face of the modernizing city and its commercial and banking vocation, with key buildings such as the Imperial Ottoman Bank, the Orosdi-Back department store, and the Customs building, on the enlarged western docks fronting the old port district (fig. 5.a–c). The relocation of the Ottoman Bank from Bourj Square to the waterfront highlighted the tension between the two areas competing for pre-eminence as the new city core. The harbor became a showcase of maritime works and architecture, exhibiting imported engineering skills and stylistic trends from the Parisian École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées and the École des Beaux-Arts. The Beirut-Damascus road, as well as the railroad and the port, were managed by the French company La Régie générale des chemins de fer et des travaux publics.

Functional permeability was maintained between port and city and the new jetty became a popular promenade while the waterfront's western edge was developed into a hotel and entertainment area, enhanced by the creation of the Avenue des Français (fig. 5.e). By 1915, modernization had reached the heart of the old town. The port district underwent a major operation of urban renewal, and half a century after Stoecklin's recommendation, connectivity between port and city was finally initiated. The migration of residential functions toward the periphery accelerated the transformation of the city center into a modern business district, leading to an increasing centralization and specialization of financial, commercial, institutional, and transport functions.

Preponderance of Port over City

The opening of the old city core to the harbor proceeded in two phases: the making of Foch-Allenby as a new port and wholesale trade district in the 1920s: and the making of Étoile as a new administrative, institutional district in the 1930s. Hence, in less than twenty years, Beirut's dual identity as port and capital city was imprinted in its urban fabric with the superimposition of a Beaux-Arts geometric pattern over the medieval fabric (fig. 6). The east-west thoroughfare, re-labeled Weygand Street, separated the Foch-Allenby and Étoile sub-areas. The north-south arteries ensured horizontal integration between port, city, and regional routes. Foch Street linked the port to the Beirut-Damascus road, and Allenby and Maarad streets formed one continuous visual corridor connecting the port to the Place de l'Étoile, the new heart of the capital city.

However, the modernization process did not come full circle. Design schemes for the Place de l'Étoile and Place des Canons (Martyrs' Square) remained partly un-implemented, due to the interference of

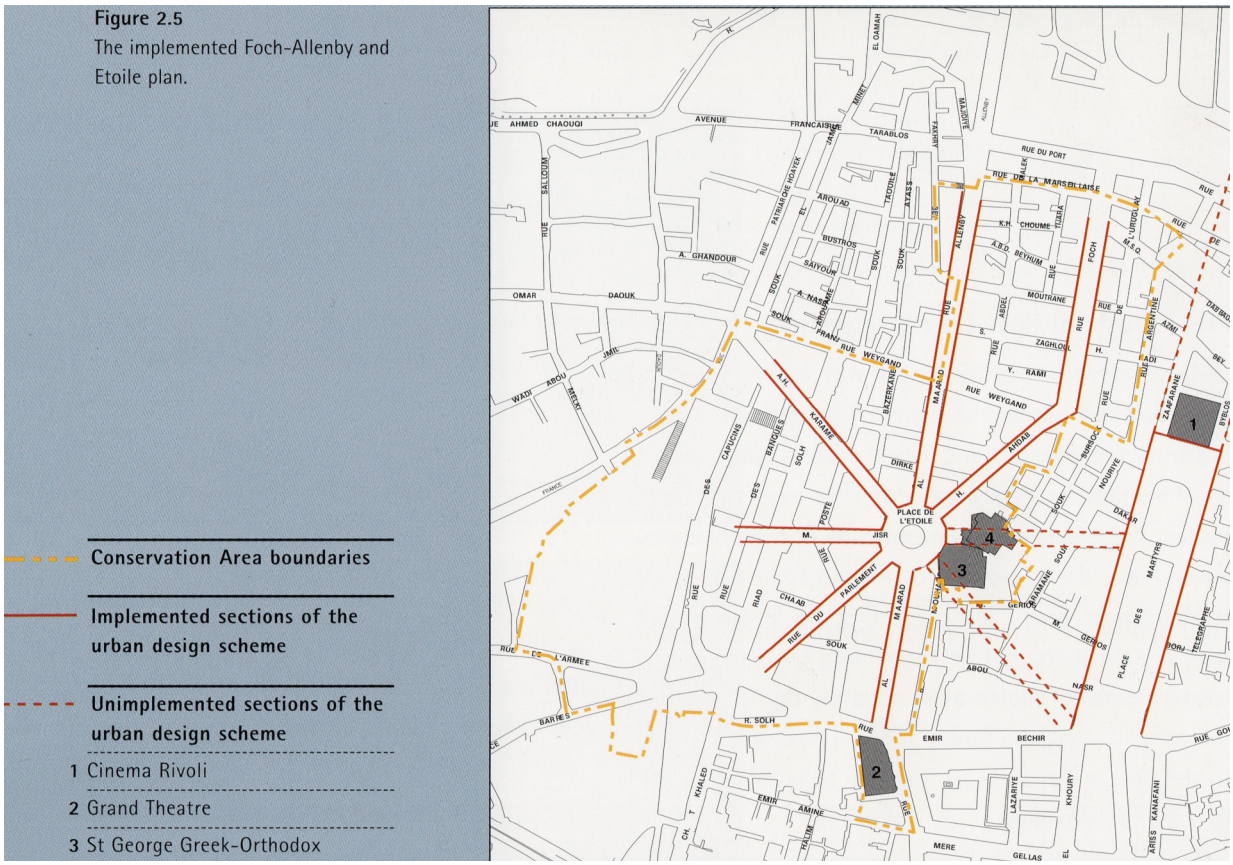


Fig. 7 The incomplete modernization of the urban fabric. Source: Saliba, 2004

powerful representatives of the Beiruti bourgeoisie and the diverse religious communities anxious to protect private developments, religious landmarks and communal properties (fig. 7). The active role played by local figures in challenging the decisions imposed at the metropolitan level (the French Mandate power) distinguishes Beirut from other Mediterranean cities, such as Alexandria, where modernization rested mainly in the hands of foreigners and left more leeway for a complete implementation of urban design intentions.

Growth, Centralization, Decentralization, and Decay

As mentioned above, underlying the differences in urban logics between port and city is the fact that the port could extend over the maritime public domain to reclaim land for infrastructure and allotment, while the city was constrained by its spatial structure. Furthermore, the port extension was carried out in strict conformity to engineering plans and a wider regional issue. The French and British mandates were competing for access to the Eastern Mediterranean hinterland with the former stressing the Beirut-Damascus-Baghdad axis, while the latter the Haifa-Amman-Baghdad axis. The upgrading of the Haifa port in 1932 gave the impetus to further improve the port of Beirut. A second basin was thus added between 1934 and 1938, and new warehouses and a free zone were built (fig. 3). This gave Beirut the edge over competing ports, further encouraging transit and trade and creating on-site product transformation industries for

re-export purposes. By the second half of the 1930s, Beirut had become a major regional port of the Eastern Mediterranean. The preponderance of the port over the city was commented on by the geographer Richard Thoumin: 'Between 1922 and 1930, business began to grow to hitherto unknown proportions. Agencies of all descriptions mushroomed, particularly commission houses and transport companies. These two types of activities sum up the functioning of Beirut itself'.[3]

Port company offices and warehouses created a clear physical edge between the city and the waterfront to the east of the central district. Port-related services, such as import-export agencies, banks and insurance companies moved west, penetrating the adjoining Foch-Allenby to reach up to Étoile. By the late 1930s, the old core had completed its modernization cycle. A composite landscape of medieval and neo-Ottoman souks extended east and west of the formal Foch-Allenby and Étoile area.

After Lebanon gained its independence in 1943, the dialectics between port and city continued to follow their course: landward through an increased functional specialization of urban functions; and seaward through additional port expansions. The port of Beirut flourished as the gateway for transit and re-export trade to Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, and the Arabian Peninsula. With the diversion of trade from Haifa to Beirut in 1948 following the creation of the state of Israel, Beirut became the prime port on the Eastern Mediterranean and a highly competitive break-in-transport pole for reaching the Middle Eastern hinterland. Laugenie emphasized the strategic location of the port of Beirut in 1955 when the port company's concession was coming to an end:

The port enjoys an exceptional location* despite competition from the Suez Canal. The distance between Beirut and Baghdad by road is roughly equal to that of Paris-Nice, while Beirut-Teheran only slightly exceeds the Paris-Lisbon trail. If, instead of passing through Beirut, goods reach Baghdad via Bassorah or Tehran via Khoramshar, further to paying dues for the right of way through the Suez Canal, they would have to travel an additional 5,000 km to Baghdad and 5,350 km to Tehran. This is about the same as the journey from London to Beirut via Gibraltar or from New York to Gibraltar (5,900 km). The journey would be extended by 12 to 15 days, as well as by some 580 km of railway between Bassorah and Baghdad. Given this, Beirut does seem to have earned some of the flattering designations that are sometimes conferred upon it.

*Road distances: Beirut-Damascus 150 km, Beirut-Amman 300 km, Beirut-Aleppo 380 km, Beirut-Baghdad 1,000 km, Beirut-Teheran 2,000 km.

3 Thoumin, Géographie Humaine.

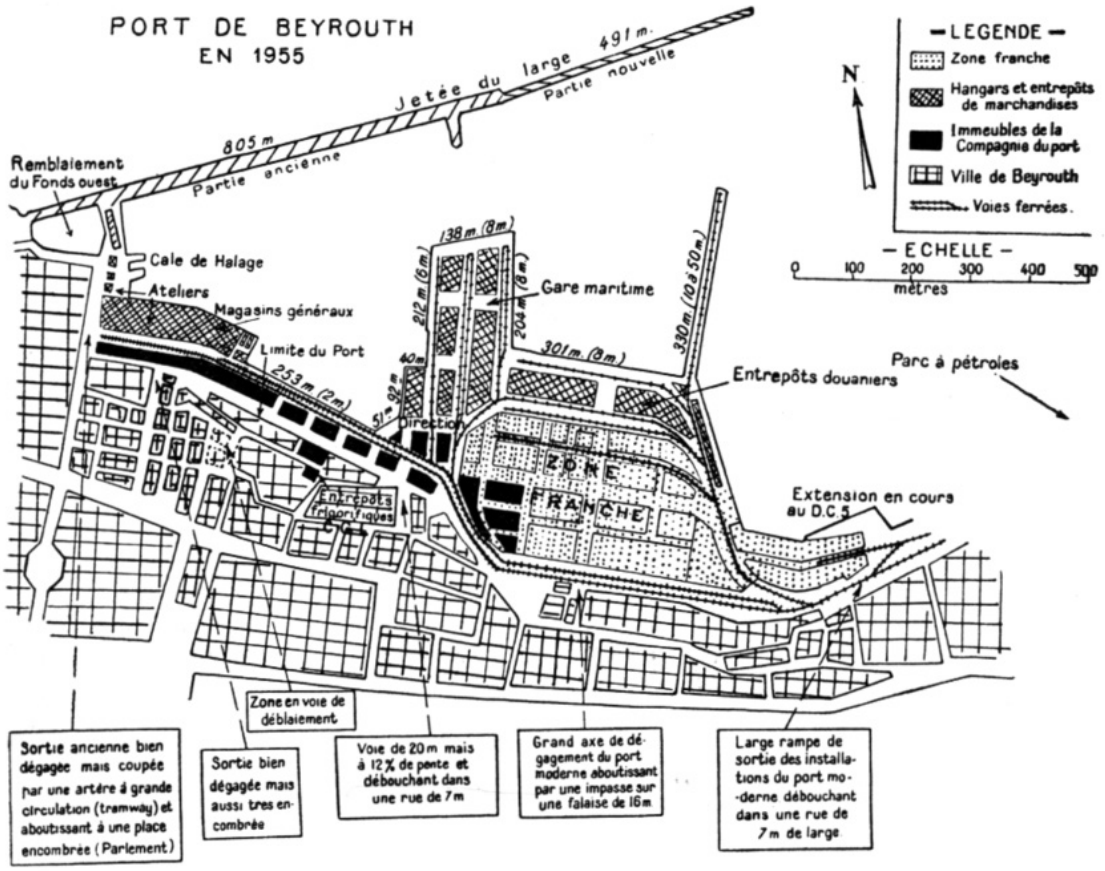


Fig. 8 Critical Assessment by Jean Laugénie of the accessibility to the port, 1955. Source: Laugénie, 1956 in Saliba, 2004

However, Laugenie reiterated the concerns expressed by Stoecklin, one century earlier, with respect to the port's inaccessibility to the city (fig. 8). The blockage of Martyrs Square from the sea and to the regional routes was once more presented as a central problem. This was compounded by the fact that Foch and Allenby streets were diagnosed as overcrowded arteries.[4]

The linear development of the buildings occupied by the port company, along with the railway itself, had set up an even stronger built-up edge between the port and the city. In addition, free zone activity encouraged the development of an adjoining wholesale trade area for storing and selling heavy or bulky merchandise (such as steel, wood, and sanitary equipment), which was outfitted with auxiliary facilities (such as cafes, bars, and accommodations for sailors, port employees, and truck drivers). This area further reinforced the visual, functional, and spatial barrier between port and city. The increasing pressure of maritime commercial traffic led to the addition of a third basin in 1967, and a fourth was approved before the start of the war in 1975 (fig 9). After 1950, a progressive shift in passenger traffic came as the newly opened Beirut airport created an alternative gateway to the city. However, by the mid-

4 Laugenie, 'Port de Beyrouth', 271–94.

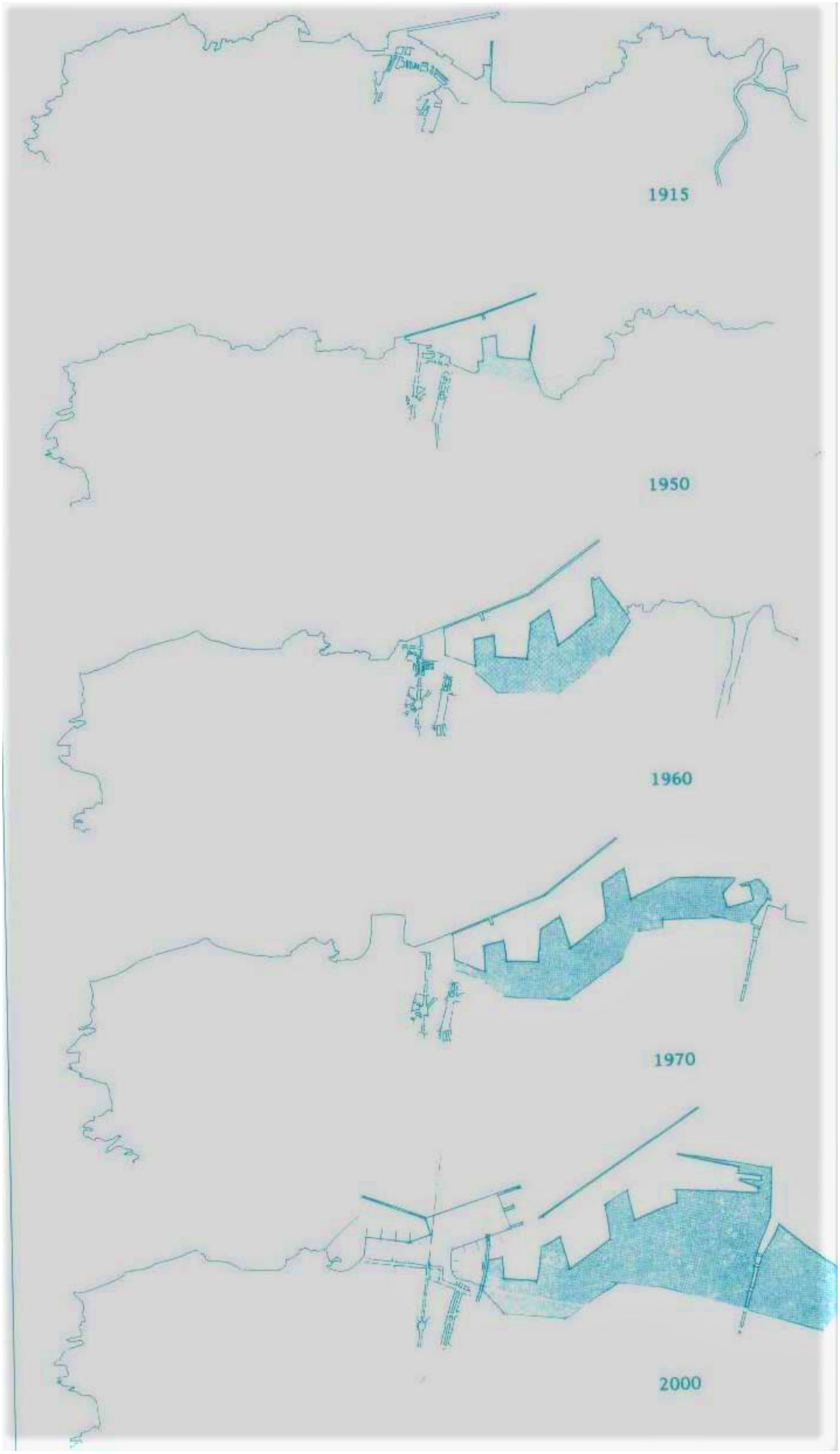


Fig. 9 The successive expansions of the port of Beirut 1915-2000. Source: Rowe, P. and Sarkis, H, 1995

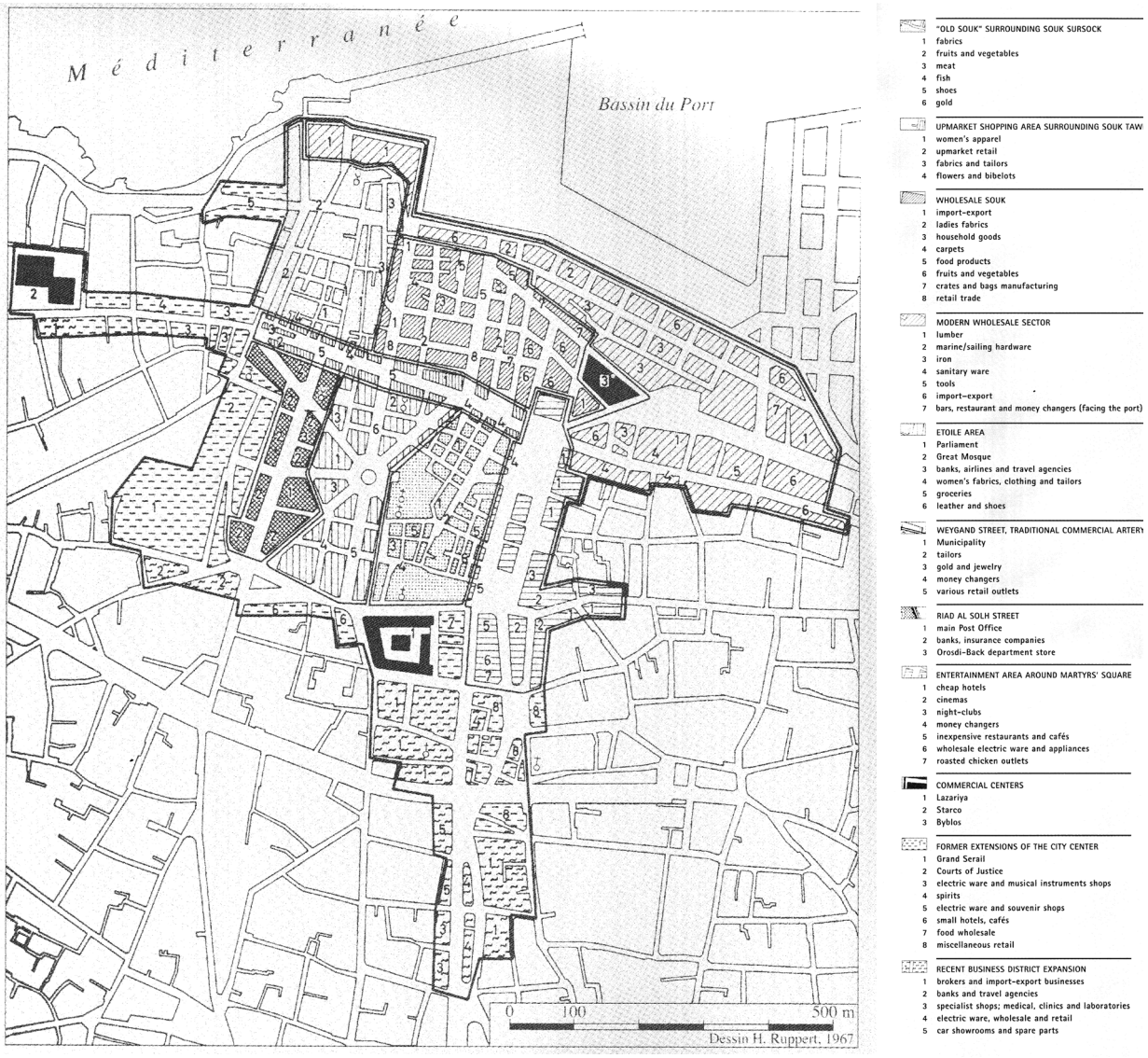


Fig.10 Beirut's Central District in the late 1960s. Source: Ruppert, 1969 in Saliba, 2004

1970s, the successive port extensions had taken over the city's eastern waterfront, stretching out beyond the periphery of the central district toward the eastern confine of municipal Beirut.

Despite the significant expansion in maritime activity during that period, the port was no longer the sole mover of the urban and national economy. Between the 1940s and 1960s, Beirut had developed into the region's financial center thanks to political stability and a liberal economic system. The economic growth reinforced the specialization of central business functions. Riad al-Solh Street, at the western edge of the Étoile area, emerged as a prime banking street for financial headquarters, attracted by the presence of such facilities as the Post and Telecommunications building. Foch-Allenby, on the other hand, continued to be penetrated by port-related wholesale trade and warehousing activity in addition to the existing banks and insurance companies (fig. 10).

During the first half of the 1970s the migration of commercial and

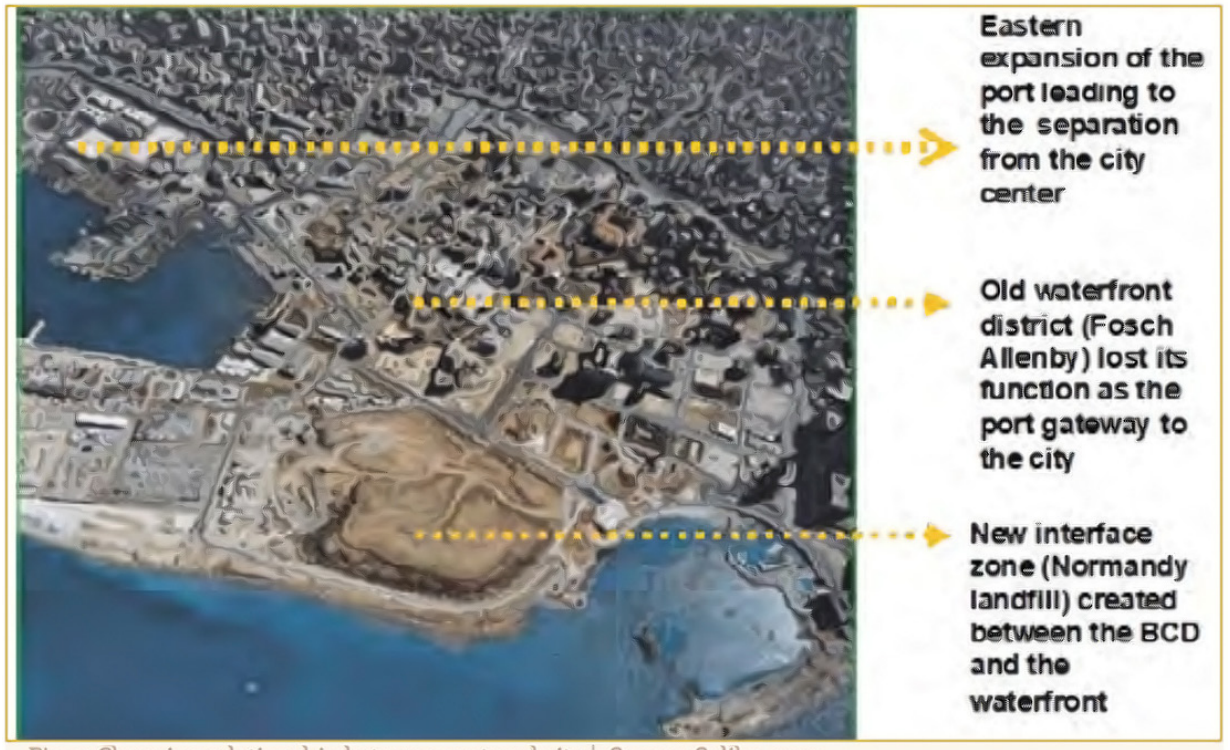


Fig. 11 Changing relationship between port and city | Source: Saliba, 2004

Fig. 11 Changing relationship between port and city. Source: Saliba, 2004

financial activities to the Hamra district in Ras Beirut was underway. In turn, government offices envisaged moving to the periphery, and a new parliament building was planned (and later implemented) outside the city center, facing the National Museum on Damascus Road. Concurrently, Place de l'Étoile had lost its original formal character and had become a crowded roundabout invaded by cars and pedestrians and the overflow of activities from the neighboring souks.

By 1975, at the outbreak of war, commercial port activities had moved further eastward, the bulk of passenger traffic had been diverted to the airport, and many business and administrative activities had relocated toward various peripheral centers. The hostilities triggered a cycle of destruction that extended over fifteen years. Beirut's port and central district were paralyzed at an early stage of the war and their infrastructure was heavily damaged. The Foch-Allenby and Étoile area and the Riad al-Solh Street, which were relatively spared, retained most of their buildings as well as their urban fabric. Consequently, they became central to the visions of postwar reconstruction plans as catalytic initiators of the central district redevelopment. The creation of a new waterfront district to the north over the Normandy landfill as part of the BCD reconstruction and development has resulted in further distancing Foch-Allenby and Étoile from the sea and the loss of its main function as the historic port district. Concurrently the eastern expansion of the port has led to its functional independence and spatial segregation from the city center (fig.

11). Beirut's port blast moved the problematic of port-city interface from the center to the peri-center inviting alternative dialectics and visions covered in this publication.

The port blast destroyed a large section of the fabric of the neighborhoods next to the port which highlighted the proximity of the waterfront to those areas opening new scenarios of the role of the port as an added value to the city and its citizens that desperately lack public space.

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Designing Post-Blast Beirut: Intersecting Perspectives

Reimagining the Edges between Port and City at a Time of Transition[1]

View From Delft (Delft University of Technology)

Paolo De Martino, John Hanna & Carola Hein

How provocative can visions about the future be? What is the role that education can play in helping (re)imagining port-city territories at a time of transition? In this contribution we will answer this question through the lens of master's elective course 'Adaptive Strategies' for the 2020/2021 spring quarter run by Carola Hein, Professor History of Architecture and Urban Planning at the Department of Architecture of Delft University of Technology, and co-taught with Nadia Alaily-Mattar, John Hanna, and Paolo De Martino.

The design studio explored adaptive strategies through the lens of the port city of Beirut, where an explosion destroyed a large part of the port in August 2020, generating enormous environmental as well as economic and social problems for the surrounding neighborhoods. This raised the question of how to (re)imagine the port-city territory. This juncture was the point of departure for the design studio and an invitation to students to critically reflect on the role the port could play in designing the future of Beirut.

Guest lectures by Christine Mady (Notre Dame University, Lebanon), Robert Saliba, and Nisreen Salti (American University of Beirut), Jana Haidar and Tala Alaeddine (Public Works Multidisciplinary Research and Design Studio, Beirut), and Peter Grudina (former master's degree student at University of Ljubljana) introduced students to the city of Beirut. Alan Plattus, professor of architecture at Yale University, offered input on the theme of port-city relationships.

1 Part of this essay was published earlier as a blog on the website of LDE PortCityFutures initiative. Alaily-Mattar and Hanna, 'Adaptive Strategies'.

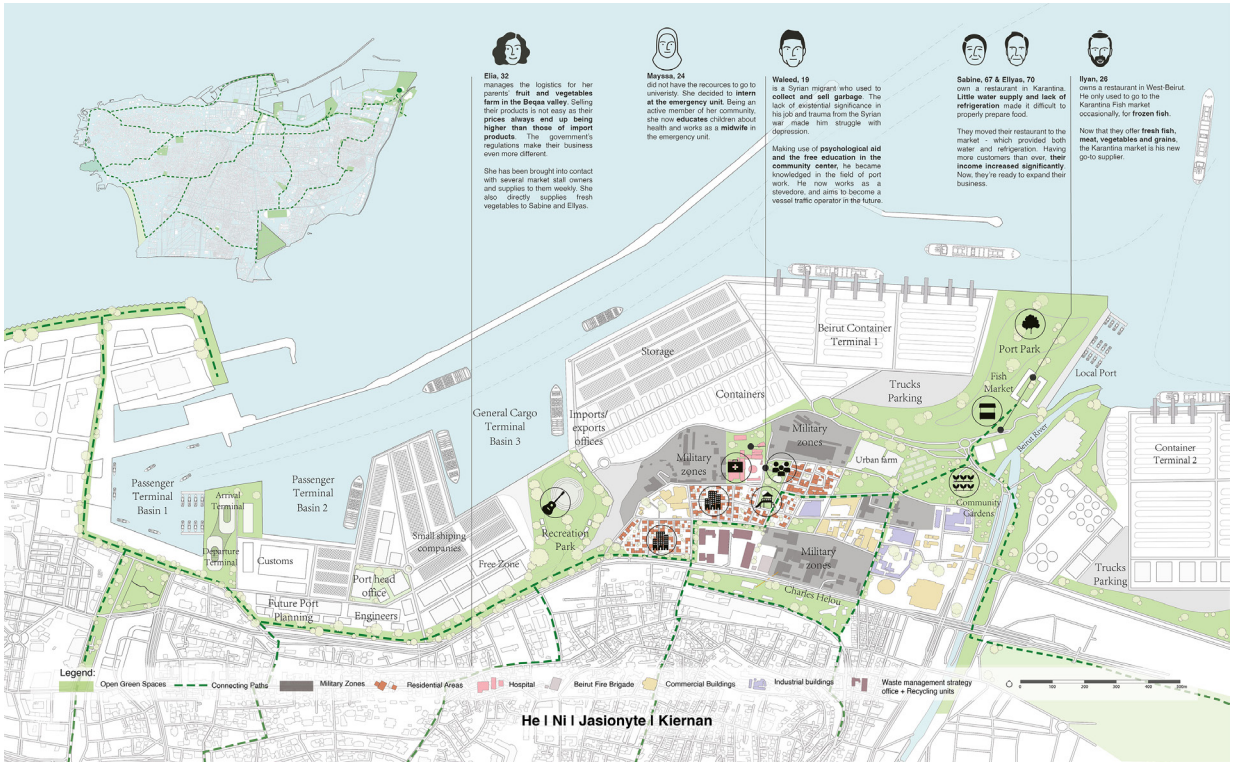

Fig. 1 Port for the People: A Citizen-First Vision for the Reconstruction of Karantina and the Beirut Port Cityscape (by Weiyuan He, Sandra Jasionyte, Giulia Kiernan, Yinan Ni)

From a methodological perspective, the course proposed to apply a scenario-thinking approach. Scenarios are normally in the form of 'what if', and they fit perfectly within contemporary design approaches to understand the spaces that Bauman has defined as liquid.[2] In contemporary society, different visions coexist and collide and the role of the scenario is that of defining a vision, a fascination, an image capable of tracing a direction, leading the current, in a context made up of differences, complexities, and conflicts. These scenarios are reflections, points for discussion, which do not claim to plan the territory in an assertive way but rather suggest possible new narratives for the future. The scenarios developed within the design studios presented and discussed in this article respond to this need and the necessity to build new interpretative models, planning approaches, and cultural mindsets.

But what does it mean to use adaptive strategies? And what possible, probable, and plausible scenarios is it possible to imagine? Scenarios do not only deal with space and this concept can be decomposed according to different layers. All of them have to do with going beyond the traditional idea of the masterplan. Therefore, the definition of adaptive strategies requires reflecting on some important themes: a) temporality – in relation to the transformation of the territory and of the different actors who inhabit it, considering that space, institutions, society, economies change with different modalities and speeds (as discussed in chapter 1); b) scale:

2 Laugenie, 'Le Port de Beyrouth'.

Fig. 2 Public and Healthy Port District (by Ghassan Mosto, Scott Spoon, Bram van den Berg, Kimberly van Vliet)

as a need to look at the territory moving beyond port or city borders but on the contrary look at the implications on a regional scale and even beyond; c) design: as a process that requires thinking of design not as a final outcome, but as a set of steps to be taken to define a vision; d) urban acupuncture: as an approach that looks at the porosities of the territory and the opportunities that these can offer in a regeneration project.

These themes have been discussed with students leading to reflections during the seminars on the reconceptualization of a masterplan that is no longer conceived as a system of prescriptions and definition of urban enclaves. On the contrary, scenario thinking helped to reframe the urban plan as a tool to connect the fragmentations of the territory. Scenarios meant working on projects capable of looking at the possible relationships between the port and the city at different scales. The scenarios discussed below are not intended to plan space in the traditional way, but to provide a suggestion, an image, fascinations that leaves room for uncertainty, and in this sense, adaptive. Working for scenarios helps reflecting critically on the evolutionary history of the places and the communities of people who developed it. And this took place through the processes of mapping the historical traces, the signs that still remain, the permanence of space, the urban and territorial palimpsest[3] as a first step to establish a relation with the port city.

The students were asked to focus their work on the Karantina

3 Corboz, Ordine Sparso.

neighborhood, a largely neglected urban pocket on the southeastern borders of the port of Beirut. This neighborhood shares some features with similar areas located near ports around the world. They developed as places for housing port workers or as makeshift sites for the city's newcomers. Throughout the nineteenth century, Karantina was central to the development of the port and Beirut as a whole. Lebanese historian Toufoul Abou-Hodeib discusses how the construction of Beirut's lazaretto in the Karantina area in the 1830s contributed to the expansion of the port's regional role and trade volume. As a result of the port's expansion, Beirut transformed from a coastal town with a port to a major Eastern Mediterranean port city.[4] During recent years, with the establishment of modern Lebanon as an independent state, Beirut's urban development efforts have been oriented more toward the land side. The port area and its surroundings slowly started to show different aspects of urban deterioration, such as the spread of perilous industries and informal developments. This has resulted in a strong visible and spatial separation between Karantina and the rest of the city.[5] The port blast of August 2020 brought additional complications to the neighborhood of Karantina as its buildings and urban infrastructure incurred massive destruction.[6]

The students participating in the seminar were asked to propose adaptive strategies for transforming Karantina while taking into consideration how the relation between the city of Beirut and its port can be redefined. Such an exercise required careful selectivity rather than comprehensiveness. It necessitated the development of a phasing logic for the implementation of the strategy over different time intervals. In addition, the exercise called for taking the different actors and their roles into consideration. The students' projects covered a wide range of aspects regarding Karantina's relation with both the port and the city.

A number of student groups identified the waste treatment plants that already exist in Karantina as an opportunity. Their proposals (featured also on the PortCityFutures website[7]) included a transformation of these facilities that currently pose a number of negative externalities and threats, while retaining their function. By considering the value chains of waste treatment and the spatial distribution of such value chains, one student group expanded the function of the waste treatment plant and reorganized it as a central component in the neighborhood. Titled 'Karantina with 3S'es: Sustainability, Sociality and Sentiment', one student project envisaged an active role for NGOs in this transformation process, in which the organization of the collection and recycling of waste becomes

4 Abou-Hodeib, 'Quarantine and Trade'.

5 Khalaf, Heart of Beirut.

6 Al-Harithy and Yassine, 'Post-Disaster Karantina'.

7 Adaptive Strategies Exhibition, https://www.portcityfutures.nl/adaptive-strategies-exhibtion.

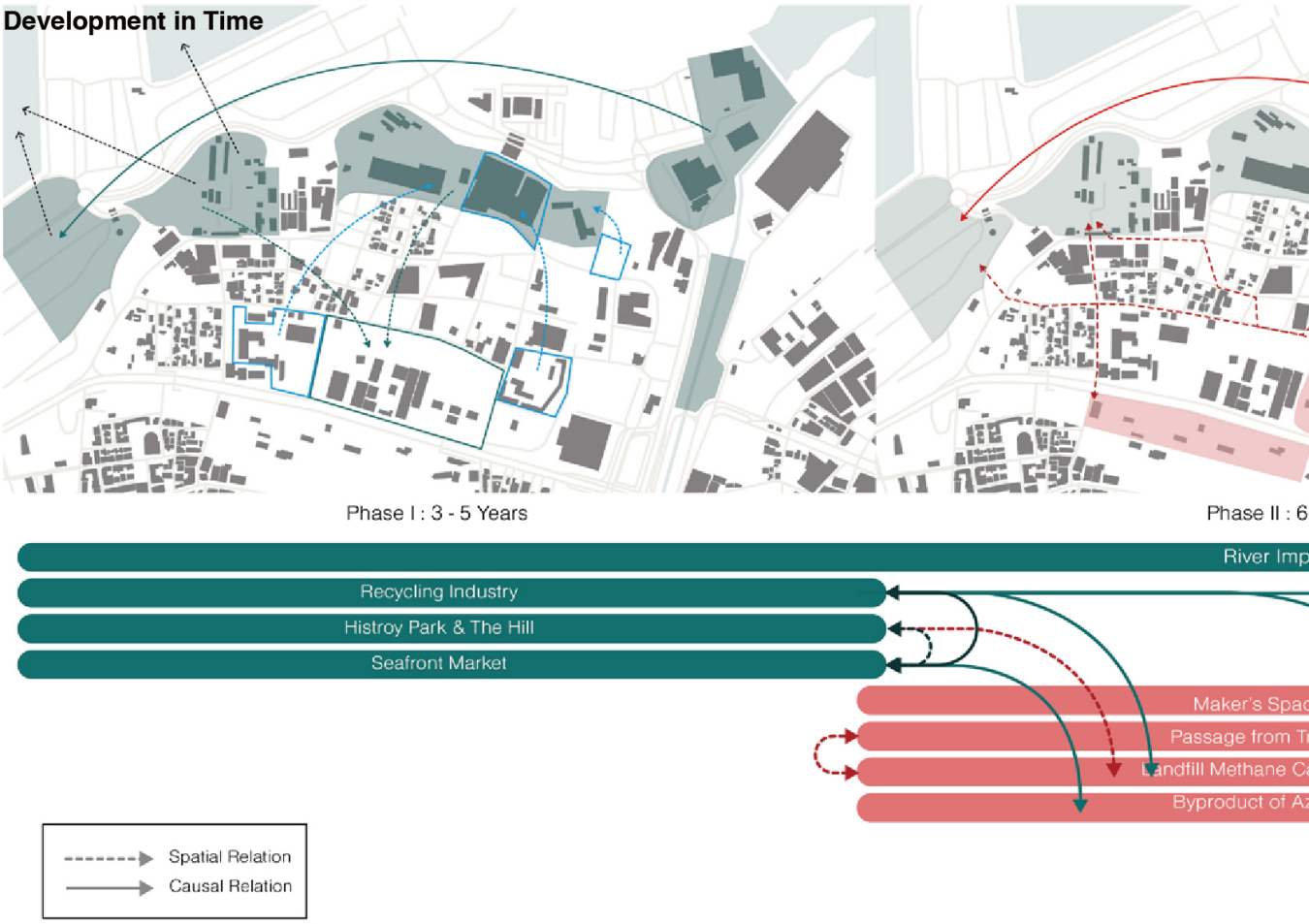

Fig. 3: Karantina with 3S'es: Sustainability, Sociality and Sentiment (by Hsiu-Ju Chang, Kianu Goedemond, Laura Wiedenhöver, Georgia Xypolia)

a form of 'urban manufacturing' that not only brings an opportunity for creating new jobs, but can also connect the residents of the city. In the words of the students: 'Where the confessional democracy in Lebanon fails, this initiated grass roots movement will increase understanding and cooperation across confessional boundaries. The sentiment of being dependent on a failing government will be replaced by a constructive positive attitude toward the offered local possibilities'.[8]

The challenge of the lack of connectivity of Karantina occupied a prominent position within the students' projects. Various projects featured proposals for addressing the pedestrian connectivity across the highway to the south and the connectivity to the Beirut River to the eastern borders of Karantina. The students proposed the introduction of new safe and friendly pedestrian corridors that can facilitate the mobility between Karantina and its surrounding neighborhoods. In many cases, these corridors were connected to new activities and urban nodes inside

8 Chang, et. al, 'TU Delft AR0110 Adaptive Strategies'.

Karantina in a way that brings the residents of Beirut closer to their port.

While all student groups proposed a number of incremental low-cost interventions, particularly in the early stages of the transformation process, some groups linked these to subsequent bold and high impact interventions. They will only become possible after the ground has been prepared, both physically and emotionally. For instance, one student group conceived of transforming part of the port into algae facilities for producing clean energy. By proposing such farms on prime real estate at the vicinity of the port and within visual sight from the city center and the highway, the symbolic potential of these farms becomes in itself an additional dimension of this proposal. In their words: the 'proposal is to use the port of Beirut to make a statement that the port does not exist solely to make money, but to support the lives of the residents of Beirut and provide a bright future'.[9]

The reality of devising adaptive strategies for urban transformation

9 Mosto, et. al, 'TU Delft AR0110 Adaptive Strategies'.

Fig. 4 Weaving Mobility: Reconnecting Karantina after the August 2020 blast (by Tasos Antonopoulos, Michalis Psaras, Alice Sikiaridis, Shing Yat Tam)

is a much tougher task than an academic exercise. Especially, when it takes place in contexts where a clear and a transparent mechanism for urban development and urban governance is largely missing. A main challenge for any transformation project for Karantina is how to manage ambitious and visionary thinking with the aspirations of those who need to be convinced of doing the legwork, transforming those ambitions into reality. Rebuilding trust between the local communities and the actors who will propose or even spearhead transformation processes is an urgent task which necessitates various levels of political reformation and promotion of active urban citizenship. The emotional sensemaking power of images should not be underestimated. Architectural thinking is powerful because it can generate images that make alternative narratives for the future plausible. With this power comes a responsibility of not being instrumentalized. Proposing changes to urban settings is therefore not a mere scientific or rational undertaking. In fact, such undertakings are always politically motivated, as disputes for finite resources need to be settled. The race to own the narrative will be won by those who deliver images the fastest. Unfortunately, a quick win is rarely a win for everyone. Academia can make a difference by introducing proposals that foreground long-term and collective interests.

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Experimenting Online Design Pedagogy: A Transcultural Effort from THU-MIT-AUB Collaborative Urban Design Studio

View From Beijing (Tsinghua University)

Jian Liu and Yang Tang

Origin of the Joint Studio

As a prestigious academic collaboration between Tsinghua University (THU) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the field of architecture that has continued for over three decades, the biannual THU-MIT Joint Urban Design Studio was supposed to take place in the spring of 2021 as usual in both China and the US. However, the sudden pandemic of COVID-19 all over the world beginning in early 2020 disrupted the original plan and the two parties had to think about another way to continue the collaboration. Almost at the same time, after a delegation from the American University of Beirut (AUB) chaired by Prof. Alan Shihadeh, Dean of Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering & Architecture, visited THU and its School of Architecture in late 2019, THU and AUB began communications on the possibility of setting up a collaboration between the two parties in the field of architecture. A delegation visit from THU to AUB was also planned in May 2020. Although the visit also had to be canceled due to the pandemic, the intention of collaboration between the two parties remained.

As the saying goes, 'when one door closes, another opens'. The tragic explosion of Beirut Port on August 4, 2020, attracted the attention of the world and aroused the sense of responsibility of architectural and planning professionals. In addition to AUB, which is based in Beirut, both THU and MIT showed their intention of contributing to the reconstruction of Beirut after the blast. At MIT, Prof. Brent Ryan, the MIT co-chair of THU-MIT Joint Urban Design Studio, submitted a proposal for the Dar Urban Research Seed Fund for the project 'Social Urbanism Karantina: Enhancing Public Realms'. While at THU, Prof. Jian Liu, the THU co-chair of THU-MIT Joint Urban Design Studio, also proposed taking the explosion accident in Tianjin Binhai New Area on August 12, 2015, and its experience of reconstruction as a reference for Beirut. The coincidental personnel

link among THU, MIT, and AUB also facilitated the agreement among the three parties on organizing a three-party collaborative studio on the reconstruction of post-blast Beirut with the theme of trauma urbanism.

An online lecture by Prof. Mona Fawaz, Head of AUB Department of Architecture, on November 20, 2020 organized by THU School of Architecture, with the title of 'Beirut Post-Blaster's Reconstruction between Anxieties and Interest', marked the beginning of the three-party collaboration. Over the following three months, six tutors from the three universities worked closely with each other online to prepare a syllabus that was feasible for all three parties despite the different academic calendars of the three universities and the different time zones of Beijing, Cambridge (Massachusetts), and Beirut. On February 23, 2021, the three-party studio composed of ten students from THU, four from MIT, and five from AUB, as well as two tutors from each university was launched in the first introductory seminar. The tutors were professors Robert Saliba and Hana Alamuddin from AUB, Brent Ryan and Nicolas Fayad from MIT, and Jian Liu and Yan Tang from THU.

Configuration of the Syllabus

Since the 1970s, Beirut, the capital city of Lebanon, has undergone successive waves of conflicts and catastrophes, ranging from civil war and aerial bombing to financial meltdown and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as massive anti-government protests from time to time, all of which make the city a site of permanent impermanency where trauma is no more the exception but the rule and where traumatic change is open to perpetual uncertainty. Taking that into consideration, the studio syllabus collaboratively confirmed by the three parties adopted the topic of 'Beirut in Flux: Trauma and Urban Form – Speculative Vision for Uncertain Future', with the hope that the studio would serve as an urban laboratory engaged in the dynamic manipulation of urban form responding to successive waves of conflicts and/or catastrophes for speculative futures of multiple imaginative scenarios. Students were expected to explore the impact of trauma on urban form and initiate speculative visions and design tactics for interventions, so as to bring forward the emancipatory potential of traumatic urbanism to reflect on the city and urban design. An area of about 6 km², centered on the explosion site, was delimited as the site for urban design while the whole metropolitan area of Beirut was the subject of study and analysis.

Because the academic calendars of the three universities were quite different from each other (Jan. 21st to May. 19th for AUB, Feb. 15th to May 21st for MIT, and Feb. 22nd to Jun. 11th for THU), and because the studio ran twice a week at AUB and MIT and only once a week at THU, the syllabus included a flexible program to allow both a collaborative studio of three parties at least once a week and independent studio of

each party according to their own schedule (Table 1). In the collaborative studio, the students from the three universities were grouped into mixed teams, with two from THU, one from MIT and one from AUB for each, participating in the introductory seminars and co-working on theme studies and conceptual design. In the independent studio, the students of each university continued to develop the design concepts, collaboratively decided on in the studio, into detailed design proposals in line with their own understandings.

In both the collaborative and independent studios, the THU students, either together with their partners or not, were required to 1) conduct theme studies on port redevelopment and new economy, housing development and social inclusion, ecological restoration and public space, infrastructure construction and urban management, actors of urban planning and development, 2) do multi-level analysis of the metropolitan area, the municipal area, and the neighborhoods of Beirut, and 3) produce problem identifications, strategy formulations, planning and design proposals, and action plans.

Organization of the Teaching

The teaching process at THU was divided into two phases of collaborative studio and independent studio according to the program fixed by the collaboratively authored syllabus, which was carried out online and offline respectively.

The five-week collaborative studio took place completely online via Zoom, with the weekly studio time of 3 hours being scheduled on Tuesday at 7:00-10:00 AM Boston time, 2:00-5:00 PM Beirut time, and 9:00-12:00 PM Beijing time. During part of these periods each party could run their own studio according to their own schedule. One exception was that the introduction seminars took place twice in the first week, which offered a great variety of information on Beirut through the presentations of the AUB students on their previous work and the lectures of the professors from AUB, MIT, THU, and TU Delft on various topics relevant to the theme of the studio. On the seminars, rich reading materials on Beirut, including both publications and research reports, were supplied to the students to facilitate their understandings about the city and their further theme studies in the following weeks. In addition, at THU, two Chinese specialists on Middle East were invited from THU Institute for International and Area Studies to help the THU students acquire basic knowledge of the history, society, economy, politics, religions, and cultures of Lebanon to better understand the urban issues in Beirut.

Following the introductory seminars, the five mixed groups respectively adopted a theme from the five themes proposed in the syllabus, in view of the actual problems of Beirut after the explosion, based on which a conceptual design was developed accordingly. The teamwork

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Phasing</td><td>Time</td><td>Grouping</td><td>Status</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="11">Joint studio</td><td rowspan="2">Introductory seminars</td><td>1 week (Feb. 22nd - 26th)</td><td>5 mixed groups, 4-5 for each</td><td>Online</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Main Tasks</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Lectures and discussions: Introduce the site context, design issues and related knowledge to the student, preparing for site investigation and design theme selection.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="8">Theme studies & conceptual design</td><td>Time</td><td>Grouping</td><td>Status</td></tr>
<tr><td>4 weeks (Mar. 1st - 26th)</td><td>5 mixed groups, 4-5 for each</td><td>Online</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Main Tasks</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Site studying and concept design: Investigate the site situations, spatial typologies, urban issues, etc., from multiple perspectives; focusing on certain themes, concepts or theories to find the strategies for urban recovery and redevelopment; and formulate a speculative vision and conceptual design for the site as a holistic intervention.
Five themes suggested:
Port redevelopment and new economy
Housing development and social inclusion
Ecological restoration and public space
Infrastructure construction and urban management
Actors of urban planning and development</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">THU Independent studio</td><td rowspan="4">Intensive design</td><td>Time</td><td>Grouping</td><td>Status</td></tr>
<tr><td>11 weeks (Mar. 30th - Jun. 11th)</td><td>5 THU groups, 2 for each</td><td>Online</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Main Tasks</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Design schemes and outcomes:
Translate the vision and concept into a deep urban design scheme and address the focused issue selected by each group, such as urban identity, infrastructure, ecology, open space, and development mode; and finish the final design outcomes, including master plan map, renderings, detailed design drawings for significant blocks, report file and so on.
Potential outcomes from each group:
Problem identification
Strategy formulation
Planning and design proposal
Action plan</td></tr>
</table>

Table 1. THU Syllabus for the THU-MIT-AUB join studio

in mixed groups gave the students from different universities and with different cultures the opportunity for transcultural communication and cooperation to collaboratively work out solutions to the urban problems that they identified through analysis. The comparative advantages of the students from the three universities were also fully played, reflecting to a certain degree the diverse characters of urban design education at the three universities. The AUB students contributed more to the urban morphological analysis on Beirut, thanks to their personal knowledge of the city; the MIT students contributed more to the urban design of certain neighborhoods thanks to their interest in social urbanism; while the THU students contributed more to the urban system planning, thanks to their skills of physical planning for large-scale development. For all students,

the collaborative studio was also a process of co-learning and co-sharing, which concerned not only the professional knowledge of urban planning and design, but also personal understanding of urban life. Although they could only communicate with each other virtually, they did learn from each other and inspire each other through discussions, negotiations, and arguments, crossing the obstacles of time, distance, language, and culture.

The collaborative studio had a review on March 26, 2021, during which the five mixed groups presented their conceptual design proposals for the reconstruction of post-blast Beirut with the respective titles of 'Social Utopia', 'Heterotopia', 'Green Utopia', 'Dystopia', and 'Fluid City'. Their speculative visions for the uncertain future of Beirut were highly appreciated by the six tutors. Afterwards, the three parties continued in a parallel way their own independent studio respectively, with AUB holding its final review on April 27, 2021, in which Prof. Jian Liu from THU was invited as critic; THU and MIT holding a collaborative mid-term review on May 11, 2021, at which professors Robert Saliba and Hana Alamuddin from AUB were invited as critics; and THU holding its final review on Jun 9, 2021, to which professors Robert Saliba and Hana Alamuddin from AUB were invited again as critics. In the eleven weeks of independent studio, according to the requirements set by the THU syllabus, the five groups of THU students continued their teamwork to develop the conceptual design proposals from the collaborative studio into systematic urban design schemes through three design phases. They further specified the theme of studies of social structure, landscape ecology, public space, urban governance, and infrastructure and worked out urban development strategies and urban design schemes on multiple levels ranging from metropolitan area to municipality and neighborhood. Thanks to China's effective control of the epidemic , the independent studio of THU took place totally offline, which helped ensure the completion of the students' work.

Assessment of the Online Collaboration

The THU-MIT-AUB Collaborative Urban Design Studio tested the imaginative design approach without having access to the site for direct experience to stimulate personal imaginative responses, which is supposed to be necessary for fictional construction and theoretical exploration. It also tested the effectiveness of virtual teaching, which may bring about great changes in education in the future as a kind of post-pandemic new normal in education. There are several factors contributing to the success of the collaborative studio in spite the remarkable difficulties, such as lack of access to the site due to mobility restrictions during the pandemic and the time difference due to the broad geographical dispersion of the tutors and students.

From a technical standpoint, the Zoom platform ensured a stable and easy link among the three parties, as well as other partners involved, for all the meetings that took place over about six months, from early preparatory communications to successive seminars and studios. The information and network technology ensured that every member of the studio had access to the common nourishment of global media diffusion, satellite imagery, and online documentation and communication. This access greatly helped facilitate a transition from the real to the imagined through a speculative design way of thinking, a new pattern of pedagogy in architectural and urban design.

From an organizational viewpoint, the careful preparation for about three months before the launch of the studio, through the frequent and regular virtual meetings among the six tutors from the three universities, worked out an effective and feasible pedagogic framework and working program which ensured the smooth proceeding of the studio in spite the obstacles of time and distance. The combination of a collaborative studio of the three parties and an independent studio of each party, as well as the mixed grouping of the students, ensured the accomplishment of both international collaboration and individual curriculum. The collaborative studio and the collaborative studio reviews provided both the tutors and the students, as well as the invited critics, the opportunity of transcultural sharing and learning, while the independent studio allowed each party to further develop the common conceptual design into different imaginative urban design proposals according to their own interpretations.

Last but not the least, special acknowledgment should be given to the AUB team, including both the students and the faculty members, for their kind and great support to the studio by serving as a consultant agency about all aspects of Beirut. Without their information and explanations, it would have been impossible for the THU team to understand the site and the city and to complete the design process as expected, considering the fact that site visits and face-to-face communication became impossible due to the international travel restrictions amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This gave us a unique chance to test the potential of doing a studio at a distance and online. The experience proved that this is absolutely possible and efficient from a technical perspective. The advanced internet technology, in particular the online meeting systems, greatly facilitated information collection and instant communication. However that technology could never reduce the value of site visits and face-to-face communication, which would afford the students not only the information they could gain from the visit but also allow them to develop emotional perceptions of the site, the city, and the local people, all of which would allow a better design proposals.

Examples of THU Students' Work

Based on the conceptual design as the outcome of the collaborative studio, each of the five groups of THU students worked out design proposals according to the requirements of the THU syllabus. Three of them are presented here as examples.

The first design proposal is entitled 'Urban Farm, a New Heterotopia for Beirut'. According to David Shane's urban conceptual model, a city can be divided into enclave, armature, and heterotopias. Beirut has separate enclaves and a badly connected armature and is currently a heterotopia suffering from economic strain, employment, food security, and high-urbanization crises. In order to address this situation, the design proposes the urban strategy of adding urban farms to Beirut as a new heterotopian element. The hope would be to promote social integration, stimulate economic development, provide job opportunities, improve food safety, and create public and refugee spaces in the city.

Based on a careful analysis of the current spatial conditions of Beirut, four kinds of urban farms – sea farms, land farms, community farms, and vertical farms – are planned throughout the city. Among them, sea farms can realize the functions of vegetable planting, fish raising, algae breeding, and temporary storage, further strengthening the interaction between the city and the sea. Land farms not only support cultivation, but also reserve land for future urban development. Land farms are further classified into four types – agricultural field, city park, allotment garden, and green corridor – which can be transformed into other types according to the actual needs of the city. Community farms can take over the residual space in the city and be shaped in various forms. Vertical farms can make full use of the vertical space of buildings, bridges, and containers to create a new urban landscape and produce food.

A detailed urban design proposal is made for Beirut Port and Karantina, in combination with the planned urban farm system. In the traditional community of Karantina, five green axes are designed to connect Karantina with the city center and the port area of Beirut and a series of allotment gardens are created in the green corridors on the edge of the community to provide local residents with rentable planting space. Moreover, thirty-two community farms and three community parks are designed to improve the environment and stimulate the vitality of the community. Centering on the explosion site at Beirut Port, a monumental park and a series of agricultural fields are designed to re-energize the abandoned space after the explosion by transforming it into an open space shared by people from different enclaves.

The second design proposal is entitled 'Beirut: Once Again a Public City'. The blast creates an opportunity to rethink about the future of Beirut. Historically, Beirut nurtured rich urban public life thanks to its natural

Fig.1 Overall aerial view of Beirut Port and its surroundings, from the proposal of 'Urban Farm, a New Heterotopia for Beirut', by Weijian Li and Yifan Zhang

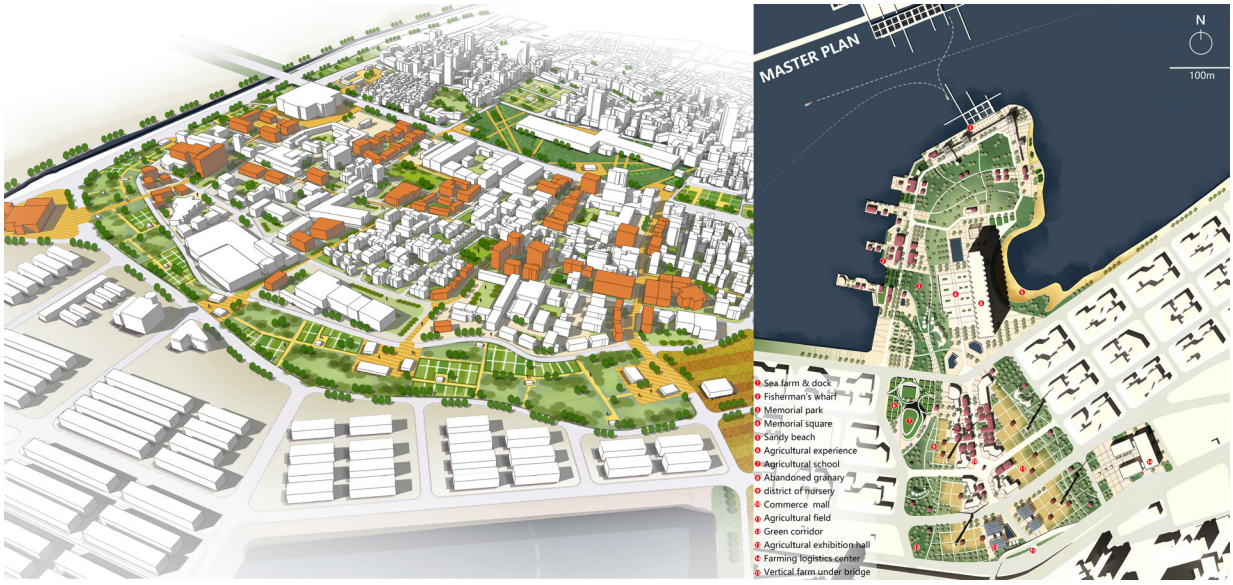


Fig. 2 Detailed design for Karantina community and Beirut Port, from the proposal of 'Urban Farm, a New Heterotopia for Beirut', by Weijian Li and Yifan Zhang

situation and geographical location. However, the civil war from 1975 to 1990 and subsequent problems caused the collapse of its public space. This can be seen in problems of segregation, privatization, fragmentation, and pollution. In spite of this, Beirut citizens are still reshaping public life and public space through abundant social-spatial practices. Based on the characteristics of formal (permanent, top-down planning) and informal (transient, bottom-up impromptu) activities, the design proposes the concepts of formal and informal public space. Through a network-and-nodes strategy, the design aims to achieve the goals of integration, inclusion, and ecologicalization and to resume the vision of 'Beirut, Once Again a Public City'.

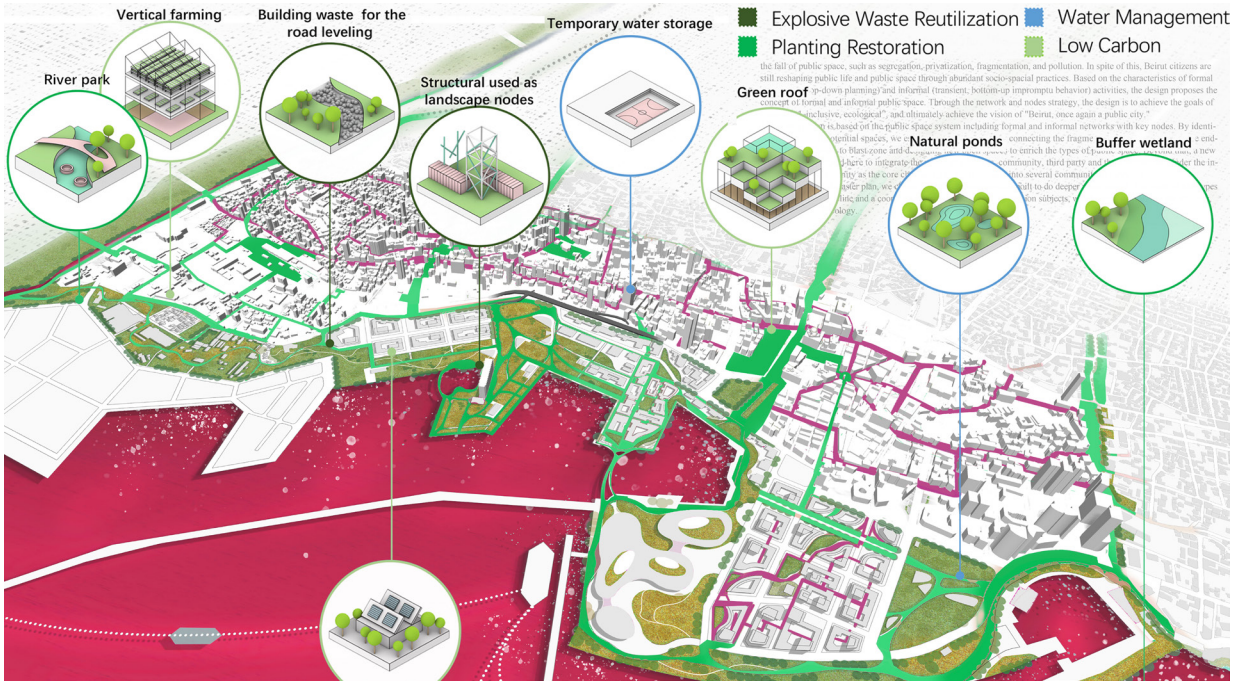


Fig. 3 Overall aerial view of Beirut Port and its surroundings, from the proposal of 'Beirut: Once Again a Public City', by Chengyan Xia and Hengyu Ye

The conceptual plan is based on the public space system including formal and informal networks and key nodes. Identifying potential spaces, the plan uses strategies of reconnecting fragmented networks, extending the endpoint of the networks to the blast zone, and designing new open spaces to enrich the type of public space. Accordingly, a new institution is proposed to integrate the strength of residents, communities, third parties, and governments to carry out the strategies, among which communities play the key role. Based on the proposed master plan, a detailed urban design proposal has been developed as an example, which establishes two types of urban design guidelines and a cooperation mode for different construction subjects, aiming at enhancing integrity, inclusiveness, and ecology.

The third design proposal is entitled 'Beirut as Social Utopia'. Suffering from the blast and the domestic macroeconomic environment, there are many problems in Beirut, including an economic recession, a high unemployment rate, a housing shortage, and class and spatial segregation due to sectarianism and neoliberalism. This proposal suggests transforming the port area, which caused great damage to the integrity of the city of Beirut, into an urban space. Regarding the four aspects of employment, housing, education, and accessibility, which concern the primary and secondary distribution of benefits, the following strategies are proposed for the renovation and reconstruction of the site. The hope is to create a better future for Beirut as a utopia, a city for everyone.

1) By exploring the comparative advantages of Lebanon and Beirut and integrating the advantageous resources around the site, such as the

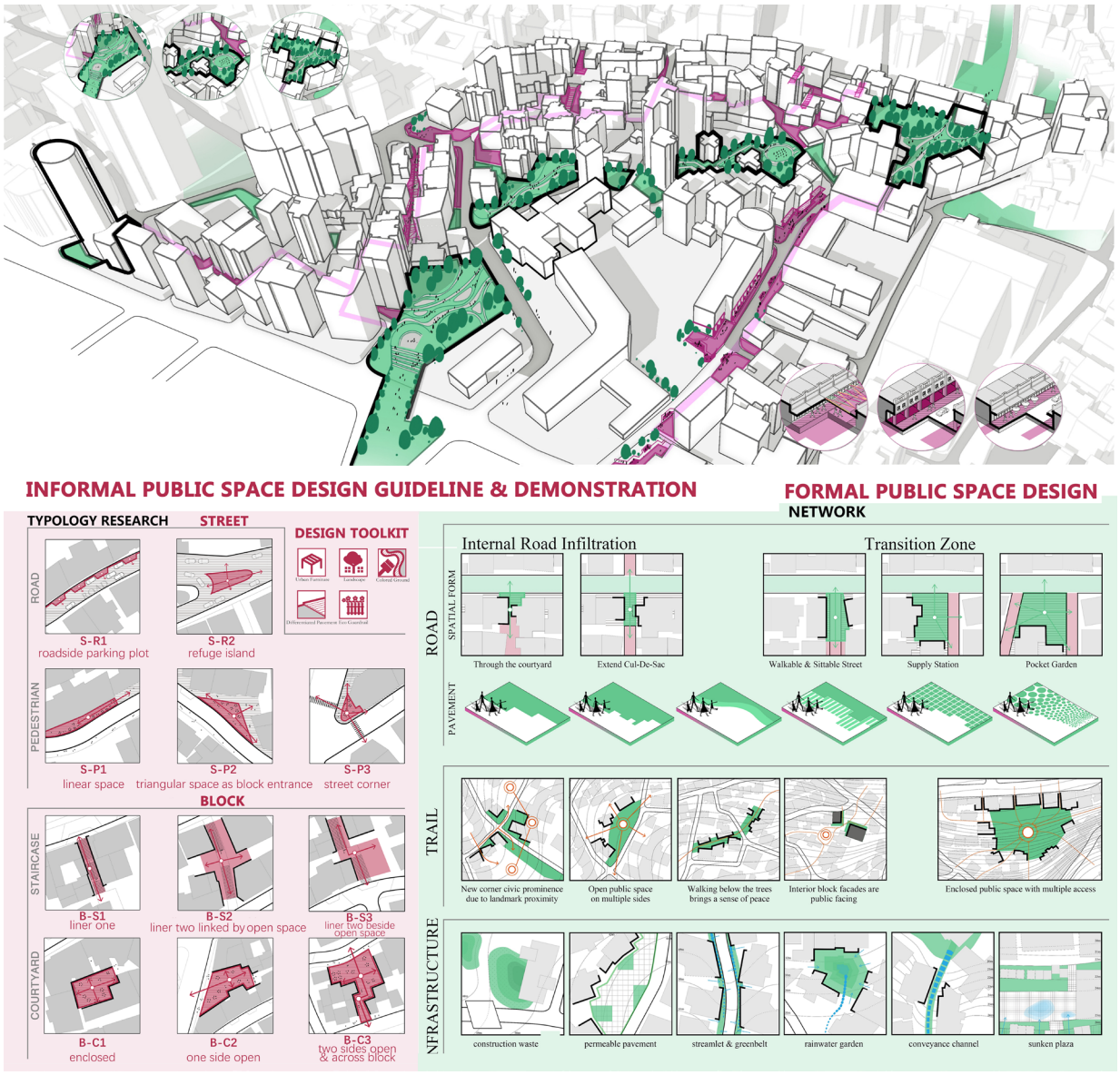


Fig. 4 Detailed design for micro public spaces, from the proposal of 'Beirut, Once Again a Public City', by Chengyan Xia and Hengyu Ye

financial industry, knowledge economy, tourism, and CCI, an inclusive job market suitable for the local context is proposed, with various industries being carefully distributed around the site to create a feasible industrial layout.

2) By learning from the experience and strategy of providing social housing in developed countries, a pioneering and distinctive mixed-housing system is designed for the city. Based on Beirut's population structure, different proportions of private housing and public housing are set up, so that the residents of different social strata can be fully mixed in one block. Moreover, housing is also mixed with job locations, so as to facilitate mixed development for a reasonable balance between jobs and housing.

3) By analyzing the current situation of sectarian education and the massive increase of low-skilled unemployment, a three-dimensional

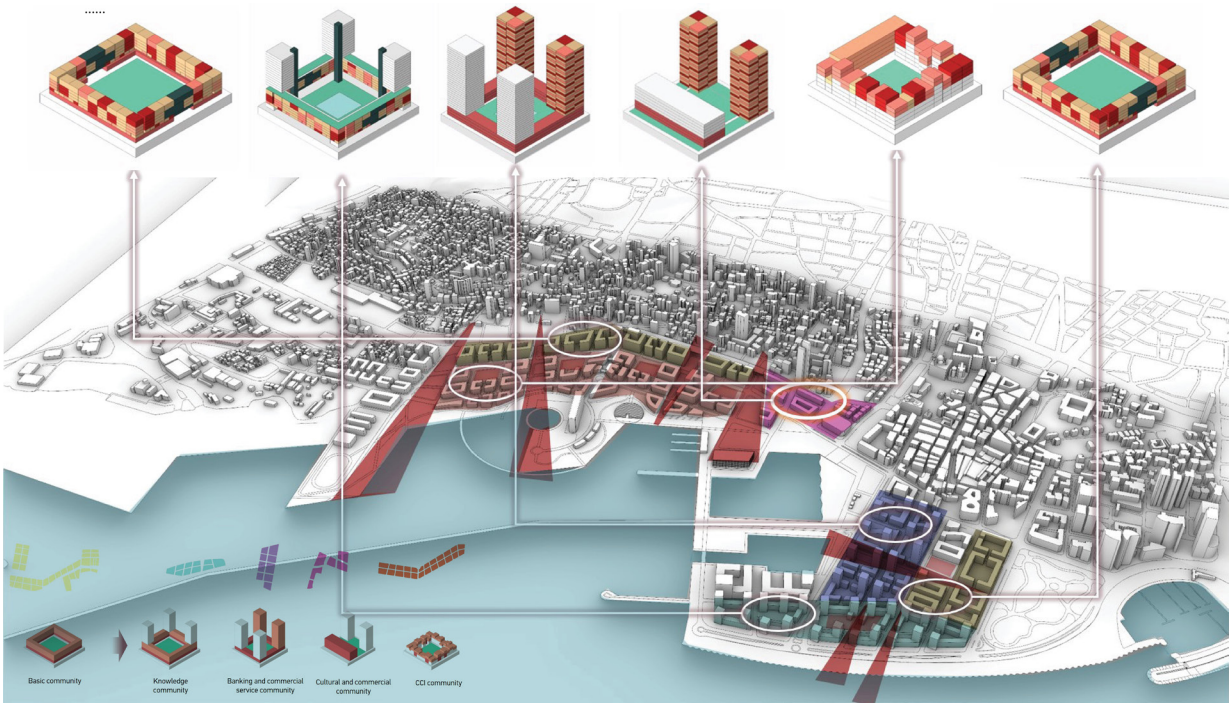


Fig. 5 Overall aerial view of Beirut Port and its surroundings, from the proposal of 'Beirut as Social Utopia', by Lelin Chen and Yuhan Guo

public education system that includes religious education, normal education, and vocational education is proposed and laid out, which may also help strengthen the national identity of the residents and minimize the structural division caused by the short-term economic crisis.

4) By reconfiguring the road network that caused spatial separation and opening up the connection between separated communities on the site, a public space system is proposed to create more punctual and linear public spaces and enhance the interconnection among communities and the accessibility of the city to the sea. Meanwhile, the strategy of public transportation is also proposed to reduce residents' transportation costs and increase the urban transportation efficiency.

This Tsinghua-MIT-AUB collaborative urban design studio was a unique experience. The theme of traumatic urbanism had much to teach the young students and even faculty members who have never experienced a disaster. Also, the online pedagogical process with multiple partners around the world and in the context of the COVID pandemic provided a transcultural exchange experience for all participants.

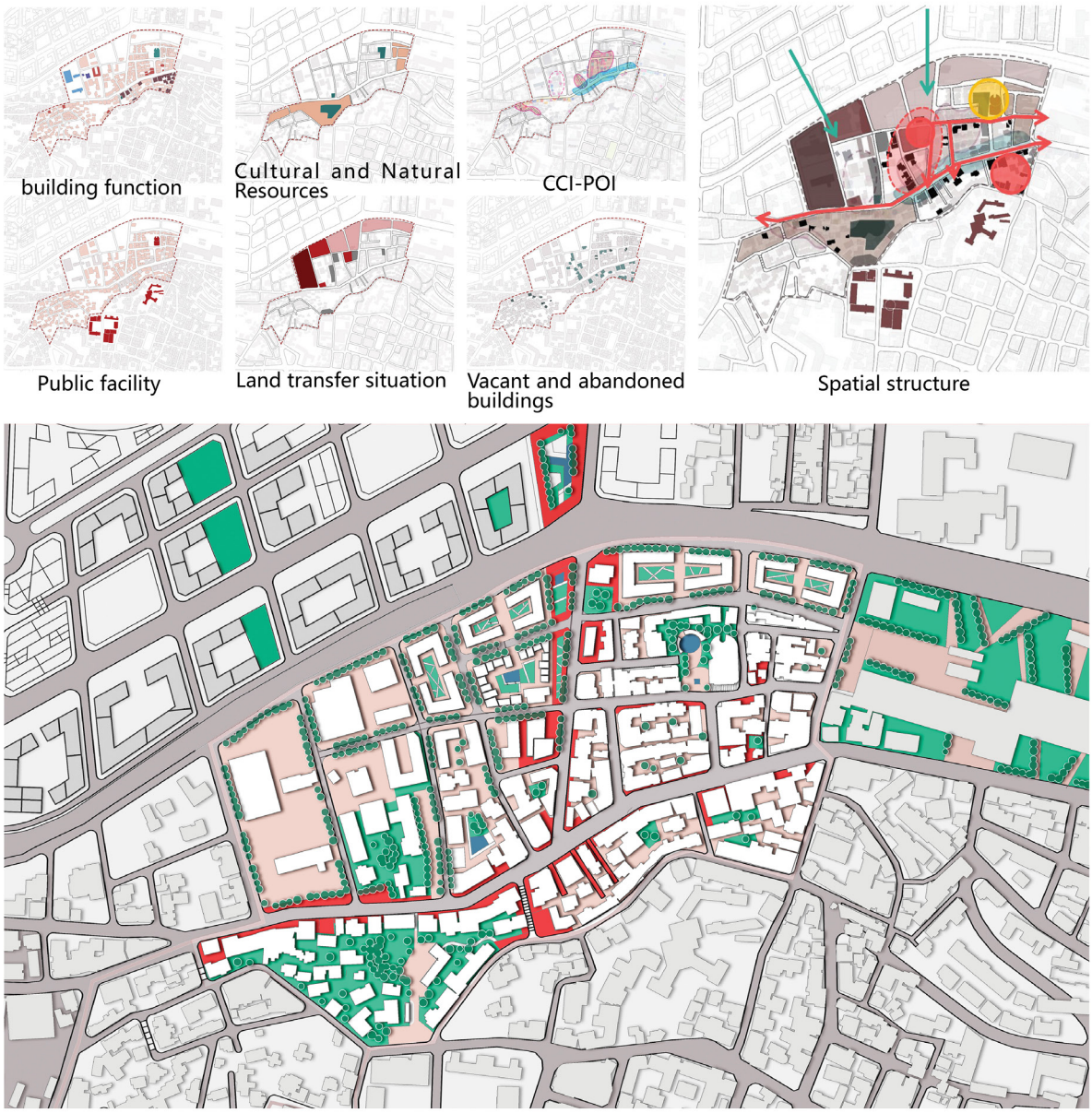


Fig. 6 Detailed design for Mar Mikhael community, from the proposal of 'Beirut as Social Utopia', by Lelin Chen and Yuhan Guo

The Port and the City: Super-Edge and New Corniche

View From Miami (University of Miami)

Jean-François Lejeune

What is the Mediterranean? It is one thousand things at the same time. Not one landscape but innumerable landscapes. Not a sea, but a succession of seas. Not a civilization, but civilizations amassed one to the others. To travel to the Mediterranean is to encounter the Roman world in Lebanon, prehistory in Sardinia, the Greek cities in Sicily, the Arab presence in Spain, Turkish Islam in Yugoslavia. It is to plunge deeply into the centuries, down to the megalithic constructions of Malta or the pyramids of Egypt. It is to meet very old things, still alive, that rub elbows with ultra-modern ones: beside Venice, falsely motionless, the heavy industrial agglomeration of Mestre; beside the boat of the fisherman, which is still that of Ulysses, the dragger devastating the sea-bed, or the huge supertankers. It is at the same time to immerse oneself in the archaism of insular worlds and wondering in front of the extreme youth of very old cities, open to all the winds of culture and profit, and which, since centuries, watch over and devour the sea.[1]

From antiquity to the present, from Amsterdam to New York to Singapore, port cities have emerged and developed as sites of social, economic, and cultural exchanges, where people from different parts of the world have mixed and influenced one another at one of the greatest paces in the history of civilization. The Mediterranean was a cradle in that evolution, with cities like Barcelona, Marseilles, Genova, Naples, Algiers, Alexandria, Haifa, and many others. Beirut, a city of extraordinary heritage, is located at the strategic midpoint of the Lebanese Mediterranean coast. It is one of the oldest cities in the world, having been inhabited for about 5000 years. As a result, Beirut has a multi-ethnic history, which has left significant marks on the city's culture, architecture, and urbanism. Unfortunately, it is now a city that, on the verge of collapse, struggles to preserve its rich historical heritage; it is also a city in a state of constant political and economic unrest. In this context of latent violence, the disastrous explosion that took place on the 4th of August 2020 at the heart of the

1 Braudel, La Méditerranée.

port created a path of death and destruction that shook the foundations of the civil society, both polis and civitas.

From Miami in 1992 to Beirut 2023

In the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew (Miami, 1992) and similar destructive events in Puerto Rico, Haiti, and the Bahamas, the University of Miami School of Architecture has repeatedly challenged the conceptual and practical process of reconstruction and reinvention of the devastated areas. Over the years various strategies have been put in place and experimented with. The post-Andrew initiative ranged from a county-wide two-week 'charrette-workshop', followed by a publication, an exhibition of drawings at the Center for the Fine Arts (now PAMM), and the participation of the faculty in a year-long elaboration of new and more stringent building codes.[2] In the following years, entire semesters have been dedicated to the dramatic earthquake of 2010 in Haiti and the devastating Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas in 2019. Since 2010, the School of Architecture has been teaching design studios and seminars on issues of climate change, sea-level rise, and ensuing challenges on the future of various districts, including historically protected ones.

Held at the University of Miami School of Architecture from January 15 to May 1 , the Beirut for All studio was designed to generate ideas and visions to rebuild the Port of Beirut and, most importantly, strategies to bring it back to the people. It aimed at developing innovative ideas that would reinvent the interface Port/City and transform the post-explosion spaces of risk and danger into spaces of trust and safety. The students – eight undergraduate students and three graduate – were asked to imagine a new era by establishing new relationships between the commercial activities of the port and the civil life that parallels it but which has remained totally separate for many decades. In coordination with the international partners, and in particular the School of Architecture and the Built Environment at TU Delft, it was decided to put particular emphasis on the district of Karantina, one of the poorest and most disarticulated neighborhoods in the city.

The first section of the studio (two weeks) analyzed twelve port cities around the Mediterranean and attempted to synthesize their historical development and that of the port. Students focused on the interface between city and port, identifying specific types of urban spaces, such as seaside paseos in Barcelona and Naples, the waterfront corniche in Alexandria, and the infrastructures of arcades, ramps, and terraces overlooking the port of Algiers. Focusing on the eastern and southern coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, this analysis emphasized the contrast between the original Arabic nuclei and the forms and methods of

2 Hector, Hurricane Hazard Mitigation.

modernization that, in cases of the African Mediterranean and the Middle Eastern one known as Levant, resulted from the process of Western colonization. Colonization took various forms, ranging from the addition of completely new neighborhoods like in Algiers, Casablanca, and Tunis, to the radical transformation of the original center such as happened in Beirut under the French Protectorate. In many Mediterranean port cities, the waterfront avenues and promenades became 'the spatial support for the staging of a form of urbanity constructed with reference to a universal network of ways of being and of appearing'.[3]

The second phase (two weeks) saw the students working in teams to produce a series of Powerpoint-based research reports on the architecture of Beirut (from antique times to contemporary), the historic evolution of the city plan and historic cartography, the main housing typologies, the city's neighborhood structure, and a timeline of the main historical events from antiquity to the port explosion.

Karantina

Wandering around Karantina is an assault on the senses, due to the fact that there are too many sources, all contradictory. One should look but not listen, or listen but not look. The misery is obvious, yet the inhabitants deny it. One can roam through an industrial area, followed by a residential zone in less than five minutes. The unsubtle shift is radical, unethical. The industrial zone gives warning of what lies ahead, when you see the robust facades of the factories you also hear the voices of children playing and the voices of street vendors.[4]

In the last and design phase of the studio (ten weeks), the analytical study of the urban cartography of Beirut and, in particular, the neighborhood of Karantina revealed a century-old increasing process of isolation and civic erosion. Due to its historical context and the place that it occupies in the city, the Karantina district faces a series of issues that have impeded its positive development. The growing extension of the port on the eastern side of the city center, the construction of the multi-level Charles Helou transportation terminal, and the widening of the entry road from the east of Beirut into a quasi-expressway – Charles Helou highway – contributed to isolating the district from the thriving neighborhood of Rmeil on its southern border. From the 1940s on, new landfills for port activities were created to the east of the city center, along the original coastline leading to Karantina, and that irremediably separated the neighborhood from

3 Barthel, 'Mondialisation, Urbanité'.

4 Karantina: False Thresholds'.

the sea. In January 1976, Karantina was the site of a massive civilian massacre at the onset of the civil war.

In the spring of 2021, wandering virtually in Karantina with the students was a thought-provoking and rather puzzling experience. Google Earth revealed a fragmented landscape of blocks, streets, informal and formal parks, damaged and abandoned warehouses and factories, waste treatment plants, children's activity structures, night clubs and art galleries. Fast-running short films, shot from the helmet of architect Bernard Khoury, showed the author of the famed nightclub B018 at the eastern edge of the district straddle a powerful motorbike, ride down the industrial elevator of his Karantina studio, and charge through the lawless streets and avenues of the city to inspect apartment construction sites.

Following a ten-day workshop, the studio participants decided that the main focus of the design would be the interface between the mostly destroyed port and the Karantina district. Hence, there was no fixed program to respond to but rather an intense exploration of sites and proposals that involved infrastructures, social housing, preservation, and urban design. Over the ten weeks of design, the four teams of students imagined, shared, and eventually refined a series of interconnected questions and design proposals:

1. Extend the Corniche from the center of Beirut to Karantina as a linear – 2800 meter long – park, paralleling the new port;

2. Rebuild the port as a secure complex (up to 600000 square meters) but visually open to the city;

3. Redesign the geographic borders of Karantina as a 'super-edge', housing both public and infrastructural functions for sustainability;

4. Provide a mix of new housing opportunities ranging from formal to informal (from 1500 to 2000 units), with an extensive use of disabled military-controlled public areas;

5. Locate a series of civic amenities which could include, depending on the projects, a school, a home for elderly residents, a new waste management facility, sport facilities, and a live-work village for street children modeled on UNESCO examples.

Before developing the various principles that the teams shared to various extents, it is important to remark that the diversity of design questions that the students set up to confront was quite unusual in a school where urban design has often been construed—whether it is true or not—with the American-based New Urbanism and the popularity of the market-based Master in Real Estate and Urbanism. Eventually, the students reasonably succeeded in addressing issues of design at a larger scale

such as industrial typologies and infrastructures. Using the classification developed by Robert Saliba in his essay, the proposals responded to different degrees to three ideologies: the first one, culture-based, definitely involved issues of heritage and identity of a troubled city and society through the medium of public space rather than works of architecture; not being able to travel to Beirut, students still had aspirations at responding to 'social' issues, even though they did not come from local actors; finally, some groups produced a timid, but promising, attempt at addressing new building typologies and programs to respond to the huge ecological challenges of Beirut and other cities in the Middle East.

1. Extend the Corniche between port and city as a linear park

The Beirut city's center, largely reconstructed under the French Protectorate in the 1940s with the Place des Martyrs at its heart, was before the start of the civil war, the place of concentration and convergence of economic, social and political activities. Its symbolic function resided in the assumed capacity of its network of modern streets for positive exchanges between the components of Lebanese society (regional, community, social) according 'to the former model of the souk as a negotiated social order.'[5] Indeed, if the city center was the place of contact between the various groups of the city, it was also open to local and international exchanges. It then represented the 'space of the public' in the city. The civil war not only destroyed the use of the central areas but their public spaces burst into territorialized entities, known as the spaces of militias. In 1976, many merchants, forced out of the historic center, set up their makeshift shops on the sidewalks of the Corniche. The seafront road and promenade west of Beirut's heart became de facto the only safe place of relief, social interaction, and commerce during the civil war.

Nowadays, as the city center was reunified and a new urban order regulates its socio-political and physical structure, the Corniche has been asserting itself as a major public space open to very different categories of populations. Adjoining the perimeter of the reconstruction, the Corniche occupies a central place in the new urban configuration: 'Where do you want us to go? ... it's the only place we have left… It is during the war that we got used to coming here and we cannot do without it': Beirut inhabitants evoke the destruction of the city core, their socioeconomic exclusion from the partially reconstructed center, the scarcity of other public or pedestrian spaces, the density of traffic, the seaside hardly accessible elsewhere.[6]

On the basis of this analysis, students' proposals concentrated on developing the interface port-city as a continuation of the Corniche from

5 Khalili, 'Politics of Pleasure'.

6 Delpal, 'Corniche de Beyrouth'.

the city core to Karantina. Taking advantage of the existing relief and denivelation—up to 40 feet—between the Charles Helou highway, the neighborhood, and the port itself, this decision resulted in four projects of infrastructure and public works. Acknowledging the Corniche as a critical element of Mediterranean urbanity, the students competed in the production of Rhino-generated views of the proposed new Corniche, often associated with a linear park, and demonstrating the potential of the new public spaces to link Karantina to the city downtown while permitting views over the port and the sea. In the proposals, the new Corniche was divided in three interconnected sections: to the west, a linear and narrow park-like promenade starts at the edge of Place des Martyrs and parallels some renovated port warehouses and the proposed cruise terminal at port level; a central elevated section more or less at the level of the Charles Helou highway provides both a linear walkway and a series of terraces—which could be occupied by cafes and other functions—overlooking the port warehouses; the third section occupies the new edges of Karantina, transformed by erasing the remnants of the historic coastline and replacing it with a new geographical and topographical ground for public space and public housing. As a result, the new Corniche provides a comforting boundary between the adjacent neighborhoods and the port where people can enjoy the views, walk, run, and socialize in various places. In some projects, the Corniche and adjacent new parks give rich opportunities for new public infrastructures such as schools, sport facilities, and markets.

2. Rebuild the Port as a secure complex open to the city

Dealing with an industrial program—the reconstruction of the port infrastructures—proved to be a challenging task whose scale and operational issues were hard to comprehend by the teams. Three of the four groups took the challenge and designed a new complex of industrial structures oriented both toward the sea and the residential neighborhoods on the southern side of the Helou highway. They imagined the installation of a new cruise terminal located in proximity of the city center and the Martyrs' Square, and proposed to leave the ruins of the heavily damaged grain silos as a memorial to the explosion and its victims. Running in parallel with the new warehouses, they designed the extension of the Corniche toward the east, rising from the port level to the entrance of Karantina, about 40 feet above sea-level, and thus avoiding major interference with the security and operational efficiency of the port installations. Particularly notable was the solution proposed by Group A: a series of long automated two-story warehouses, green and energy efficient, with large-scale solar infrastructure on their roofs. Placed perpendicularly to the sea, they would provide a more efficient organization at the port level and allow more open views toward the sea at the citizens' stage. At the heart of the main complex, one of the

warehouses transformed into a public and cultural infrastructure serving as a bridge over the slightly depressed Charles Helou highway and thus allowing to create a strong and safe pedestrian connection from the new Corniche to the neighborhoods of Rmeil on the other side of the highway.

3. Redesign the geographic borders of Karantina as a 'Super-edge'

As a result of the port extension during the twentieth century, the original coastline—which formed a picturesque cliff bathed by the Mediterranean Sea—was transformed into a mere and untidy hillock overlooking the landfilled areas of the port. The actual lack of a genuine boundary between the port and Karantina encouraged the placement of landfill residues, unregulated waste management facilities, unsafe industrial facilities, parked trucks, and abandoned containers. To assure the security of the port, the Lebanese army and other branches of the government continue to control the entire strip of land that abuts the port directly, thus preventing the residents to enjoy the edge of the district and the distant views of the sea.

The resulting absence of public space along the edges overlooking the port and the pressing issue of rebuilding safe waste management resources enticed the students to fully reinvent the edges of Karantina by establishing new linear boundaries and a new interface between port and district. Taking advantage of the publicly owned parcels on the current edges, all students groups developed ambitious proposals of public infrastructures. In order to achieve their visions, they radically altered the section of the district's edges and the altitude of the new public ground replacing the current uses controlled by the government, in some proposals up to 40 feet above water level. Inspired by a project for the edge of a favela in São Paulo—studied by the ETH Zürich and MAS Urban Design in the early 2010s—they focused on the concept of *super-edge*.[7] Generally speaking, they envisioned to create man-made edges to replace the current hillocks. In their proposals, Karantina and the port meet at the programmatic heart of the Super-edge, i.e., the linear park or Corniche established on the roof of a linear center accommodating recycling, waste management, and services for the port. Thus, the Super-edge port/Karantina can double as functional spaces for port usage and storage, while the elevated public promenade allows views over the port and the sea. Some groups developed variations on the theme that, for instance, allow the Super-edge to open not only to the port but also to the interior of the district and thus create flexible community space at ground level for public and commercial functions.

4. Provide a mix of new housing opportunities ranging from formal to informal

7 'Super-Edge: A Multi-Functional Strip'.

Overall, the students were quite successful in designing the new boundaries of the port and district. Yet, grasping the reality of Karantina's urban fabric without being able to visit it and having good but incomplete and fragmented digital material, proved a significant challenge. That being said, it became clear to the groups that Karantina benefits from a permeable and relatively well interconnected urban structure of streets, alleys and blocks that does not require major transformations to offer new opportunities for infill and small-scale buildings ranging from the formal to the informal. Students' proposals acknowledged this condition by improving the street network, dividing exceedingly large blocks, and improving interconnection between blocks and streets. In light of the social, ethnic, and typological complexity of the district fabric, proposals avoided the high-rise model, acknowledging that this typology symbolically advertised the process of gentrification. Within the neighborhood, the proposals aimed at increasing housing density and inserting public buildings to serve the residents: the groups developed various strategies for schools, a sports and library center complete with a swimming pool, a fish and furniture market, and a children's village. Throughout the district, new green spaces and parks were incorporated as 'people's places' where meetings and gatherings can occur.

The difficulties in addressing the differences between formal and informal typologies—hard to detect within the existing fabric of Karantina—may have induced an excess of prudence and/or a fear of falling into the trap of gentrification. However, it is on or along the publicly owned Super-edge that the teams imagined new housing typologies for social housing and middle-class housing. In order to prepare and evaluate the new building grounds, located along the Corniche and now significantly elevated above the port area, they proposed to extend the city's street grid to the edge of the Corniche and its adjacent parks, thus creating new blocks. Students of Groups A and D proposed simple housing blocks organized around a courtyard. Those of Group C lined up the Corniche, partially elevated over the interior of the district, with a series of five-story linear apartment structures built on pilotis. Ramps and staircases permit access to the elevated promenade, under which various commercial and community spaces can be created. Between the housing slabs, plazas and parks are formed at street level. As for Group B, they imagined a series of blocks, partially pyramidal in section as in Adolf Loos's unbuilt projects for twenty villas on the Côte d'Azur of 1923.

5. Provide refuge to street children in jeopardy

In her master's thesis titled 'Urban Ruins converted to Hope: A Children's Village in Karantina, Beirut' and led in parallel with the design studio, Chinese student Jiaxin Li designed a village for refugee and other local street children. Her research led her to realize that children have been and continue to the biggest victims of the war, the explosion, and their

aftermath. They are suffering from displacement, lack of education, forced labor, child violence, child marriage, and other persecution. Many have nowhere to escape and often become the victims of adults' crimes. Jiaxin's thesis focused on how to improve the living conditions of refugee children in the ruins of the city after the Beirut explosion. Using the data and examples provided by UNICEF, she designed a shelter village accommodating two hundred children, located at the heart of Karantina and integrated within the masterplan designed by Group A students. A linear spine containing public rooms for exhibition, meetings, performances, lectures, and management divides the complex in two two-story sections articulated around patios and terraces: to the east for housing and to the west for technical and building workshops and several large classrooms. The selected construction techniques encourage the participation of the children in the assembly of their rooms and services. Within the environment that allows them to safely sleep, learn and practice skills, be educated, and play, the children can grow, integrate into the community, and become citizens of the city.

Acknowledgment

Thanks to all the students and the critics and lecturers, in particular Robert Saliba, who participated by giving lectures and discussing the projects. Special thanks to Dean Rodolphe el-Khoury who gave full support to the studio. Special thanks as well to my friend and colleague Michael Stanton, long-time resident of Beirut, who participated in multiple Zoom encounters with the students. The project developed by Group A received the 2021 Student Merit Award at the 30th Congress for New Urbanism in Oklahoma City (March 2022).

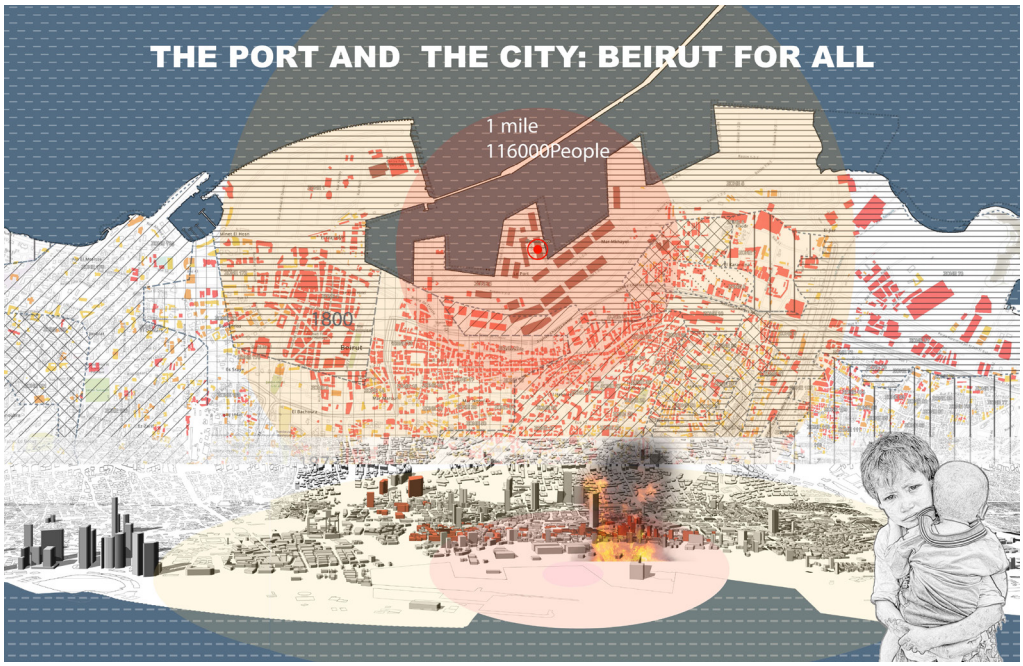


Fig. 1

Fig. 2 (Group A)

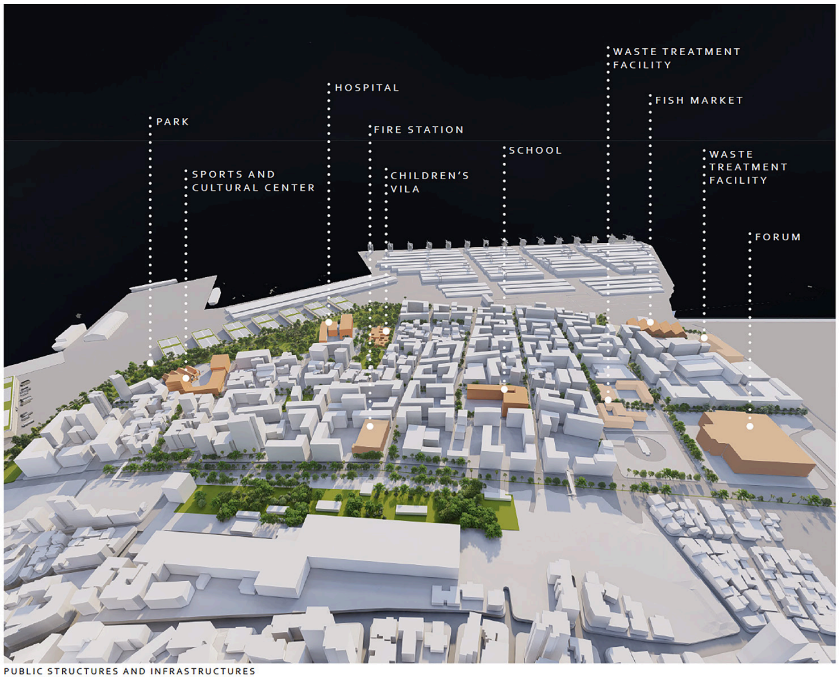
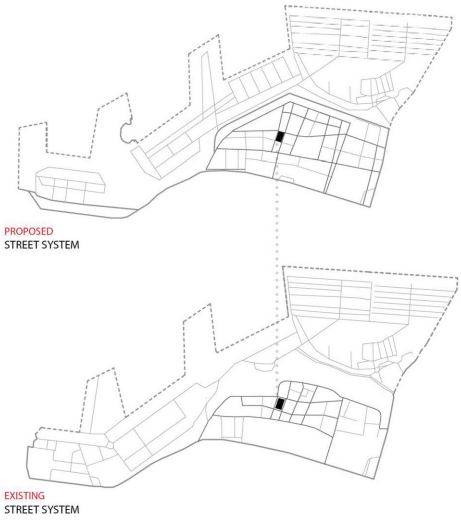
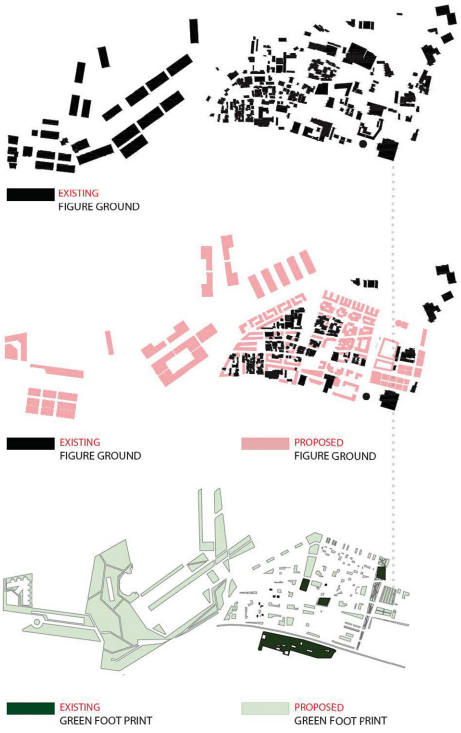


Fig. 3 (Group A)

Fig. 4 (Group A)

EXISTING VS. PROPOSED
DIAGRAMS





KARANTINA & EDGE
KARANTINA RESIDENTIAL EDGE TYPE I

EDGE TYPE II

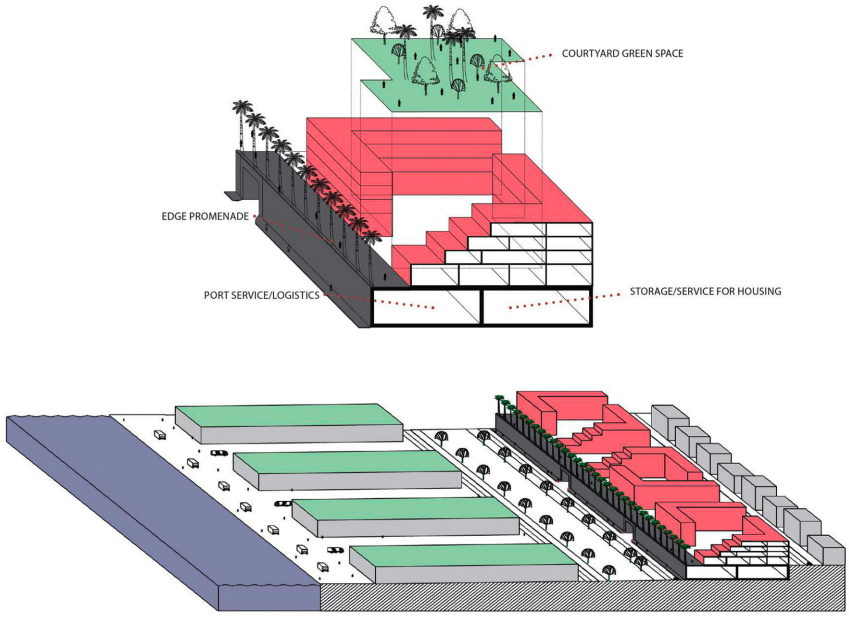


Fig. 5 (Group B)

Fig. 6 (Group C)

Fig. 7 (Group D)

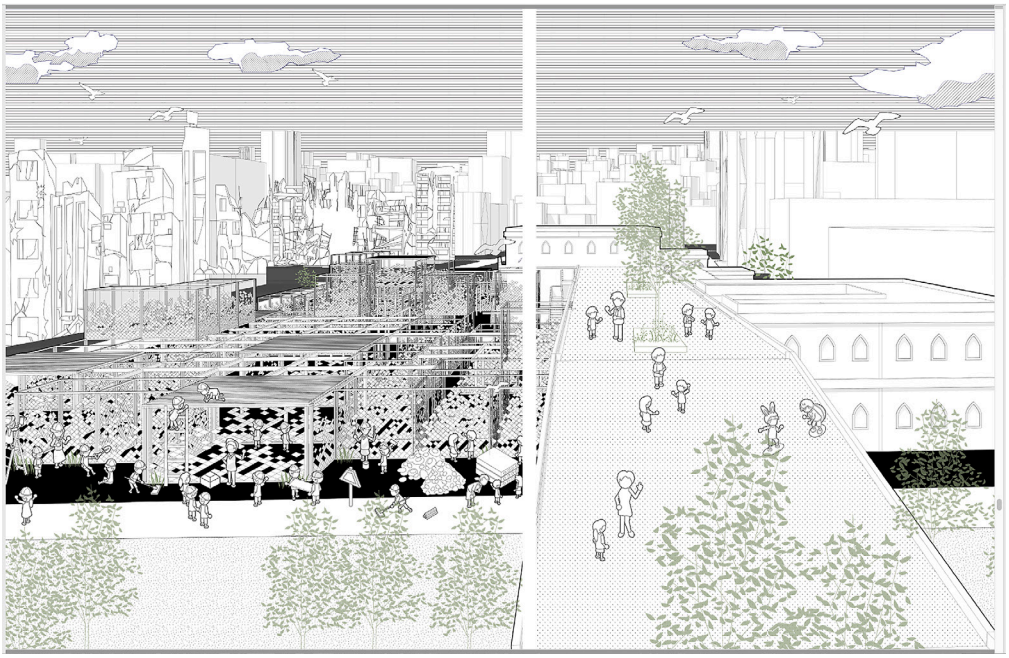


Fig. 8 Children

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BEIRUT ’21: A Collaborative Urban Design Studio on Trauma Urbanism

View From Boston (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

Nicolas Fayad & Brent D. Ryan

Tragedy in Beirut

On August 4, 2020, a massive blast detonated in Beirut’s port under a burning evening sun. Made possible by a system of corruption and bribes, the perfect bomb had been sitting for years unattended in the port’s warehouse 12: fifteen tons of fireworks, jugs of kerosene and acid, thousands of tons of ammonium nitrate. In just a few seconds, the ‘coup de grâce’, which could be heard in Cyprus, about 145 miles away, dilapidated surrounding neighborhoods, leveled buildings, and reduced the urban fabric to hollow frames. Killing and injuring thousands of people and leaving half a million homeless, the blast is considered one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history.

This unprecedented catastrophe, which has left Beirut reeling after over a year, has come at a time of extreme economic and political instability in Lebanon. Since post-civil war reconstruction of Beirut began in 1991, the Lebanese government has exhibited a blatant disregard for the city’s rich cultural heritage in favor of private interests. In 2013, for example, the construction of a luxury hotel and mall complex had already begun on one of the city’s most archaeologically significant sites before being halted due to pressure from activists. As Sandra Frem and Boulos Douaihy suggested in their exhibit for the 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale, the government-owned port, which stretches for over one-third of Beirut’s coastline and serves as the main maritime entry point into Lebanon, is in fact a physical manifestation of the state’s chronic dysfunction. For decades, it has been the backdrop of urban fracture, disconnecting and disfiguring the relationship between land and sea, haphazardly reshaping the interface between private and public. Years of private development along the water has turned the urban experience of Beirut’s coastline into isolated heterotopic landscapes: expansive stretches of reclaimed land stand disconnected, inaccessible and sometimes derelict. The reshaping of the natural coast over time has resulted in an archipelago of man-made landfills; a failed attempt at regenerating the city’s relationship to the Mediterranean Sea.

In order to identify patterns of urban disruptions and their multiple narratives, it is important to reflect on the city's failed attempts at renewal over time. At the beginning of the Lebanese civil war in 1975, Beirut, which had been transformed by the French Mandate in the aftermath of World War I and the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire, was a predominantly modern city with very few traces of its medieval past. The postwar reconstruction project of the 1990s constituted a second wave of modernization. Both renewal efforts have successively promoted the erasure of Beirut's history from the port, some of which dates back to the Phoenician era. In the early 1900s, the port ground stretched to the east using the debris of the medieval city to expand the cargo areas. A second significant wave of transformation came a century later with the postwar reconstruction project of downtown Beirut, replacing the western historical center of the port's colonial quarters with contemporary high-rise buildings.

The latter reconstruction project has injected a sense of estrangement and alienation to the city's sanitized downtown area, encouraging retail therapy for a country that has never known nor come to terms with its historical truth. Until the break of the civil war in 1975, the city center was a symbol of coexistence in Lebanon. It is now a no man's land for the elite. The contrast with the hustle and bustle of prewar downtown, where public space and social interaction prevailed, is said to be stark. Perhaps this outcome is neither coincidental nor purely driven by commercial interest. It appears that Beirut's urban development has been driven by a state-sponsored cultural amnesia, promoting consumption as an indirect form of post-conflict reconciliation. Hadi Makarem , a Lebanese scholar, argues that Beirut's city center has been stripped of its history, reconstructing a depoliticized forged past, purely based on an ethos of consumerism and commercialism.

Following the 2020 explosion, Beirut is once again facing a reconstruction challenge, and is in desperate need of stability and collective recovery. For architects, designers, and planners, the inextricable link between the port's historical isolation and its recent destruction presents an opportunity to investigate the emergence of new modes of negotiation between the city, the port, and its surrounding urban enclaves. The unavoidably apparent relationship of trauma with Beirut's urban fabric sets the stage for engaging design to manipulate urban form, addressing successive waves of conflict and catastrophes. As the city has rebuilt itself over time, trauma urbanism has become more apparent, encouraging rupture and disappearance over transparency and inclusivity. But in order for re-urbanization to be successful, it is crucial to confront past trauma.

How do we recover the city while recognizing trauma in an attempt to reclaim Beirut's forgotten past? Moving beyond the established history as presented and reproduced through spatial structures and everyday

behavior, how can we imagine a new spatial contract for Beirut? In order to answer these questions, one should challenge the dominant reconstruction framework and redefine it along the lines of a holistic and inclusive recovery, which is people-centered, participatory, socially just, and culturally-sensitive. It is crucial to embrace recovery as a process that not only restores social and economic networks but most importantly recovers spaces of shared memories and social significance.

Trauma Urbanism

The Beirut tragedy, occurring in the midst of a global pandemic that has not ended as of the time of writing (January 2022), provided an opportunity for a unique pedagogical innovation. MIT's School of Architecture + Planning, closed to in-person teaching for the 2020-2021 academic year, has a longstanding partnership with the Architecture and Planning School at Tsinghua University (THU), China's leading research institution. This partnership, extant since the 1980s, necessarily had to innovate in order to provide a collective studio experience during a time when international travel for students was scarcely possible. A second, shorter-term partnership between THU and American University Beirut (AUB) proved to be the spark for a unique twist in the MIT-THU partnership. With travel impossible, and with students and instructors located in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia, the opportunity to offer a collaborative MIT-THU-AUB focusing on the trauma urbanism of Beirut was important and necessary.

Operating as a collective enterprise between three universities with necessarily different academic calendars, student backgrounds, and curricular imperatives, the collaborative studio curriculum at MIT accommodated these differences with a three-phase syllabus. The first phase accommodated different starting points in each university's semester and permitted students at each university to initiate their investigations at the scale of the city independently. The second phase, which was collaborative between the three universities, occurred comparatively early in the semester and permitted teams composed of students from all three schools to work together on conceptual design studies for the blast area. The third phase was different at each university and permitted resolution of more detailed strategies at whatever scale each university chose for its investigations. Below, the MIT studio curriculum is explored in more detail.

The first studio phase, conducted between February 15 and March 4, 2021, introduced students to Beirut's inherent complexities and history of traumatic processes through a series of workshop sessions and live site visits. Students examined an extensive set of research papers, cartographic documents, and relevant bibliography in order to understand the state of the city and its many layers, particularly those changes that

occurred through trauma. Each student was asked to produce an applied research document that offers critical and analytical information about the city and its relationships with the larger territory of the region and of Lebanon. This phase encouraged explorative research methods through experimental representation techniques that instigate unique mapping and design processes. The intention of this phase was for the collective body of work to inform and guide future design explorations.

Each student was asked to diagnose the multiple morphologies of the city and its evolution through time. The animating question for this phase was, What are the physical registrations of the city's trauma as seen in its built environment? Studio findings were classified using these themes: disappearance (fabric that has been demolished, obliterated, suppressed); rupture (where fabric has been broken or violated); illegality (where fabric has been 'formally' altered in ways that violate either law or other standards, e.g., by government, army, developer); and incrementalism (fabric that has been added to in informal or accretive ways, e.g., refugee camps).

The second studio phase, conducted collaboratively between MIT, THU, and AUB from March 5 to March 23, 2021, investigated urban issues and site situations from multiple perspectives. Focusing on themes, concepts and theories, the phase critically reflected on strategies of urban recovery and redevelopment to formulate a speculative vision/fiction and conceptual design as a base for a holistic intervention. A 5.85 km2 site for conceptual design was identified. This area was open to modification according to the analysis of each group. Five mixed groups of students composed of members from THU, AUB, and MIT each examined a 'patch' as an approach to understanding the city and the site and to identifying key issues for design. Patches were pioneered in the 2019 MIT-THU collaborative studio and were defined as topical and spatial foci for design. Patches included the Port (industrial restructuring and interaction with the city); Community (form and strength of local communities of various religions, either mixed or separated); Infrastructure (gray, green, and social, and their spatial impacts); Public Space (green fields, squares, and plazas and the way they are utilized by local people); and Cultural Network (heritages, educational facilities, cultural facilities, and entertainment).

The final studio phase, conducted from March 30 to May 18, generated detailed urban design schemes for the Karantina neighborhood. MIT teams took the perspective of a principal actor, such as the Port Authority, as an agent for construction of urbanism, and teams were able to adopt a more decentralized perspective. One team selected the interface between port lands and Karantina's urban fabric as a site for intervention, utilizing four Lebanese Armed Forces sites as catalysts for new housing, community facilities, and institutional space in tandem with connective urban space linking to the Beirut Corniche to the west. The second team

took a topographical approach, utilizing the dense street network above and south of Karantina as a generative frame for connecting multiple avenues of pedestrian space through the neighborhood to its northern edge and beyond, projecting into the port area through infrastructural paths.

Beirut as Open System

Ultimately, the proposed design interventions investigated the deployment of a new infrastructural ecology for a city that operates as an open system. The reimagined border space between Beirut and its port was conceived as a green armature, negotiating the relationship between the existing urban fabric and the port operational networks, while the introduction of hybrid communal programs, suggested access to public space on one hand and catalyst functions for urban renewal on the other.

The unique collaborative studio between MIT, Tsinghua, and AUB, conducted in the midst of a global pandemic, generated a placelessness that ironically made possible a highly situated and specific studio addressing a traumatized urban site. Student collaborations provided opportunities for mutual learning and collaboration, as well as for faculty communication and curricular transformation. The lessons from the collaborative studio will be longstanding and will provide additional room and space for reflection as future collaborative studios between MIT and THU are composed in the coming years.

In Beirut, the tragedy of the port explosion necessitates reflection on the city's history of erasure, amnesia, trauma, and reconstruction. As Beirutis face another chapter of their city's recovery, they must consider the balance between amnesia and nostalgia, remembering and rebuilding. The obliterated port ground offers an opportunity to imagine a new maritime façade for the city, one that allows the public to experience the water's edge and reflects on a time when the city and the port co-existed. If Beirut is to truly 'rise from its ashes' after the blast, it will need to consider multiple ways of retrieving its history and collective memory. Karantina, as a site of particular social, physical, and institutional trauma, must be a locus for future rebuilding and reconstruction efforts. Finally, there is a chance to create public spaces in Beirut that couple the vibrancies of a distant past with the urgencies of an uncertain future.

Student Project: Post Traumatic Infrastructural Reconfiguration

Figs. 1-8 are a collection of images from a student project at the American University of Beirut entitled "Post Traumatic Infrastructural Reconfiguration", by Jariyaporn Prachasartta and instructed by Nicolas Fayad & Brent Ryan. The iterative design proposition for post-cataclysmic Beirut is in an attempt to decipher intricate urban infrastructure. To further develop these traumatic spaces, a set of urban transformation toolkits

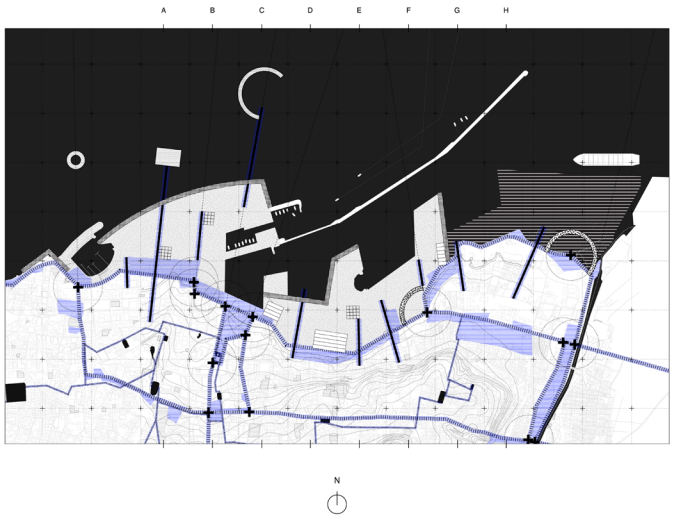


Fig. 1

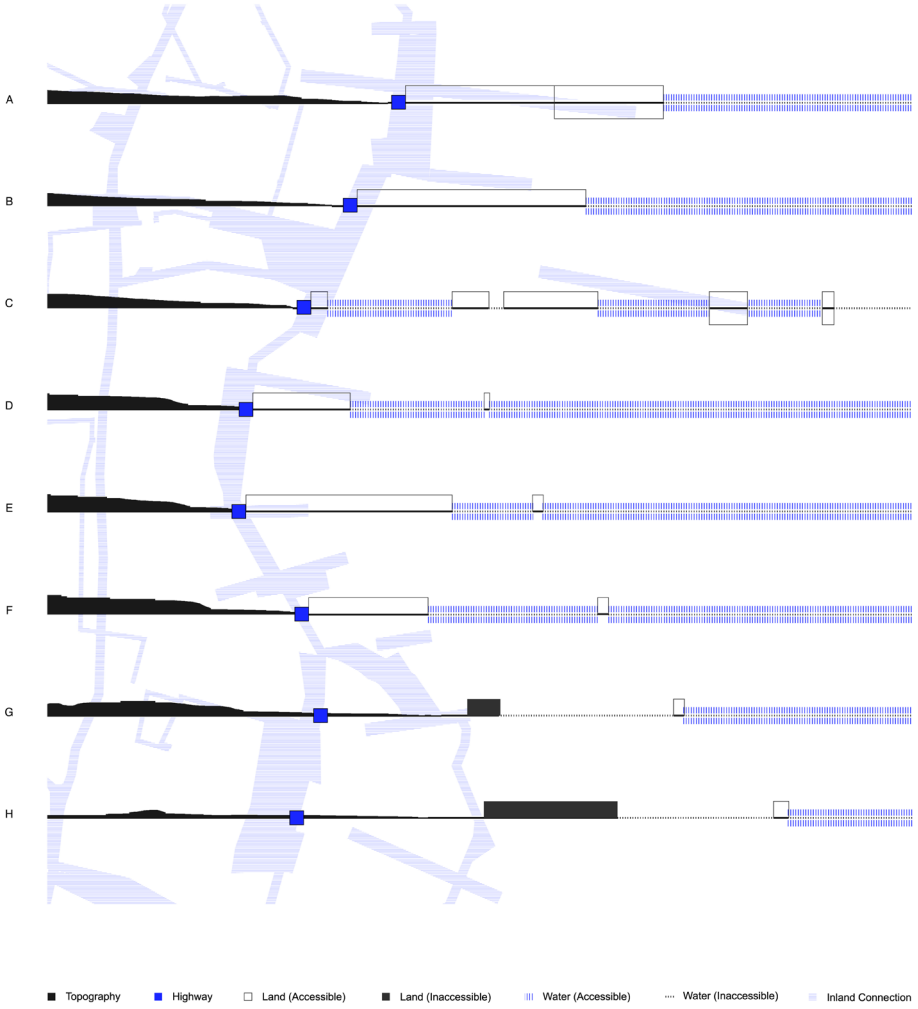


Fig. 2

with phases is thus proposed with the objective of generating inspiration and guidance for design protocol that can be deployed in the future based on current circumstances.)

URBAN ARMATURE

- Nodes & Fabric-

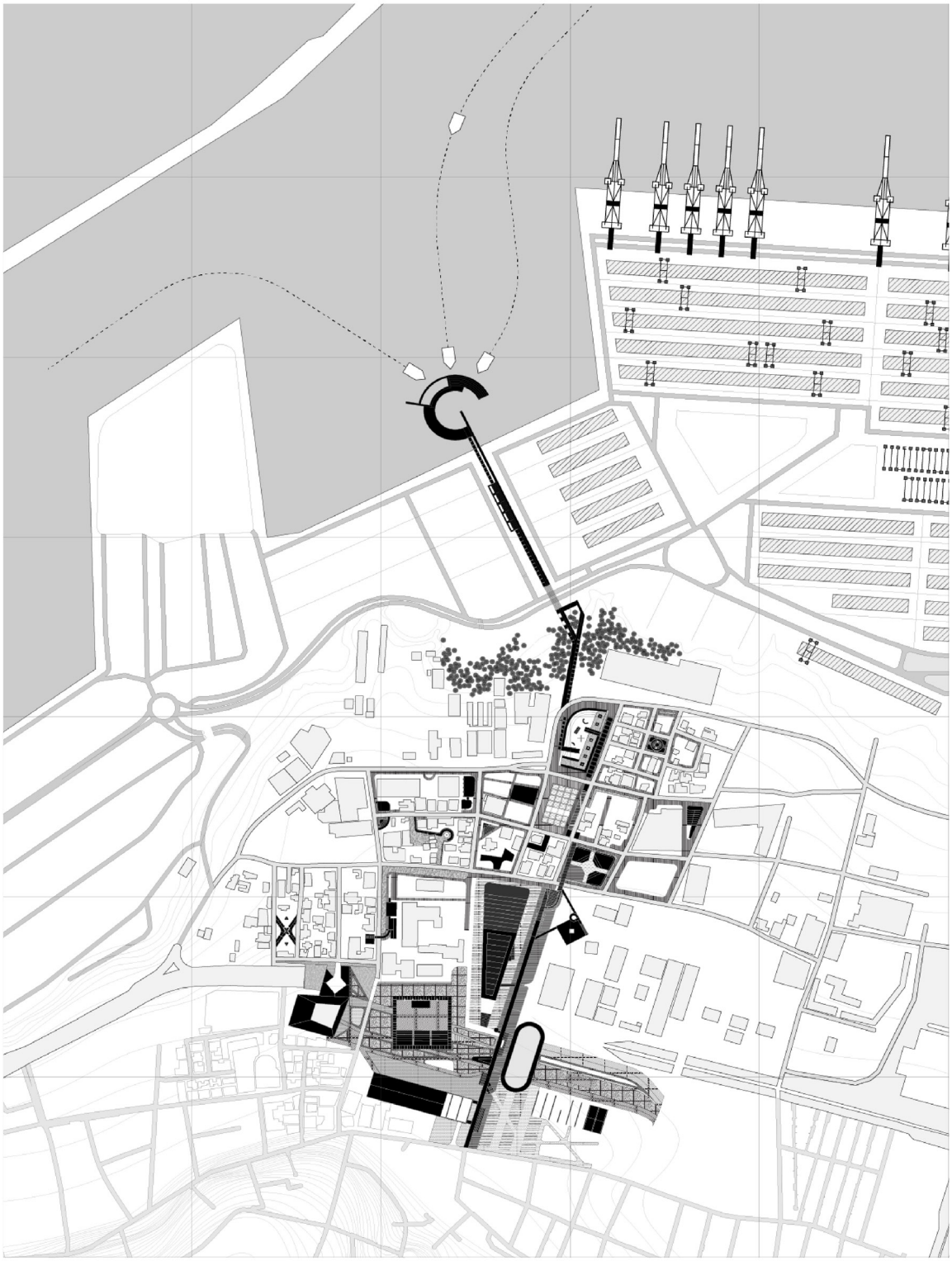


Fig. 3

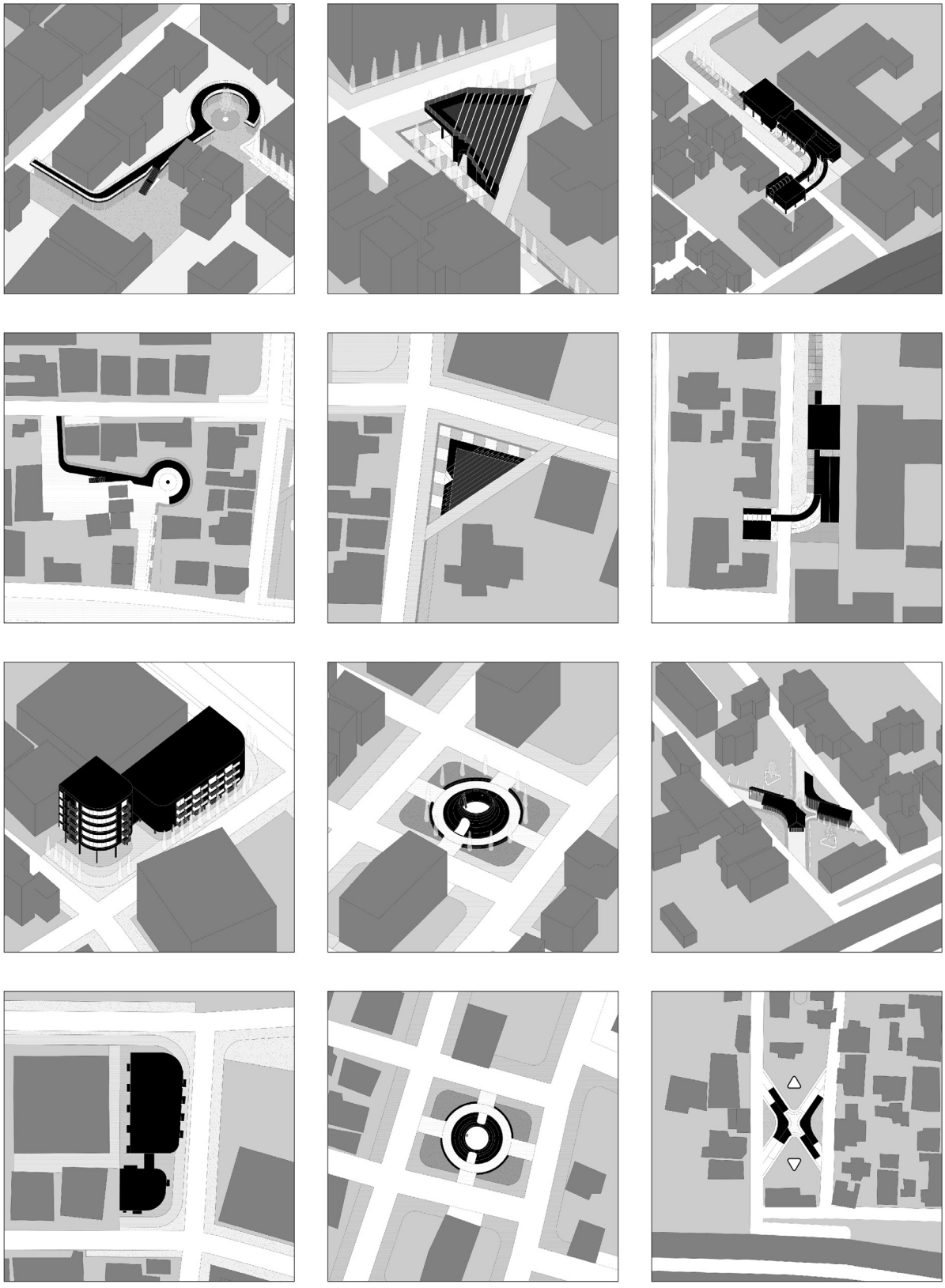


Fig. 4

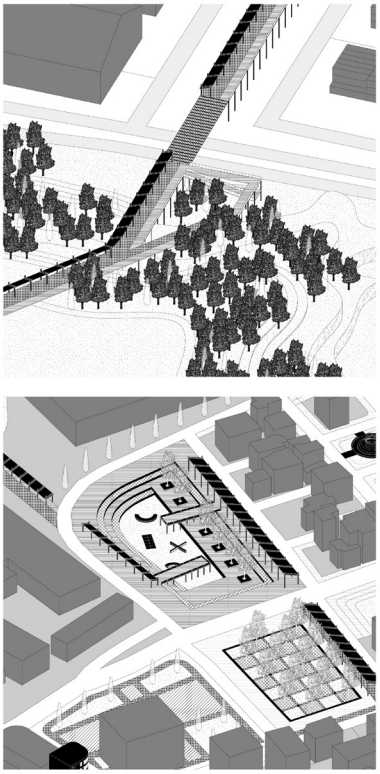


Fig. 5

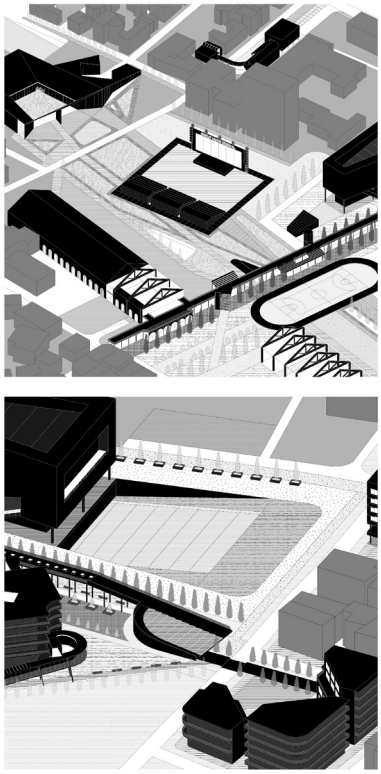


Fig. 6

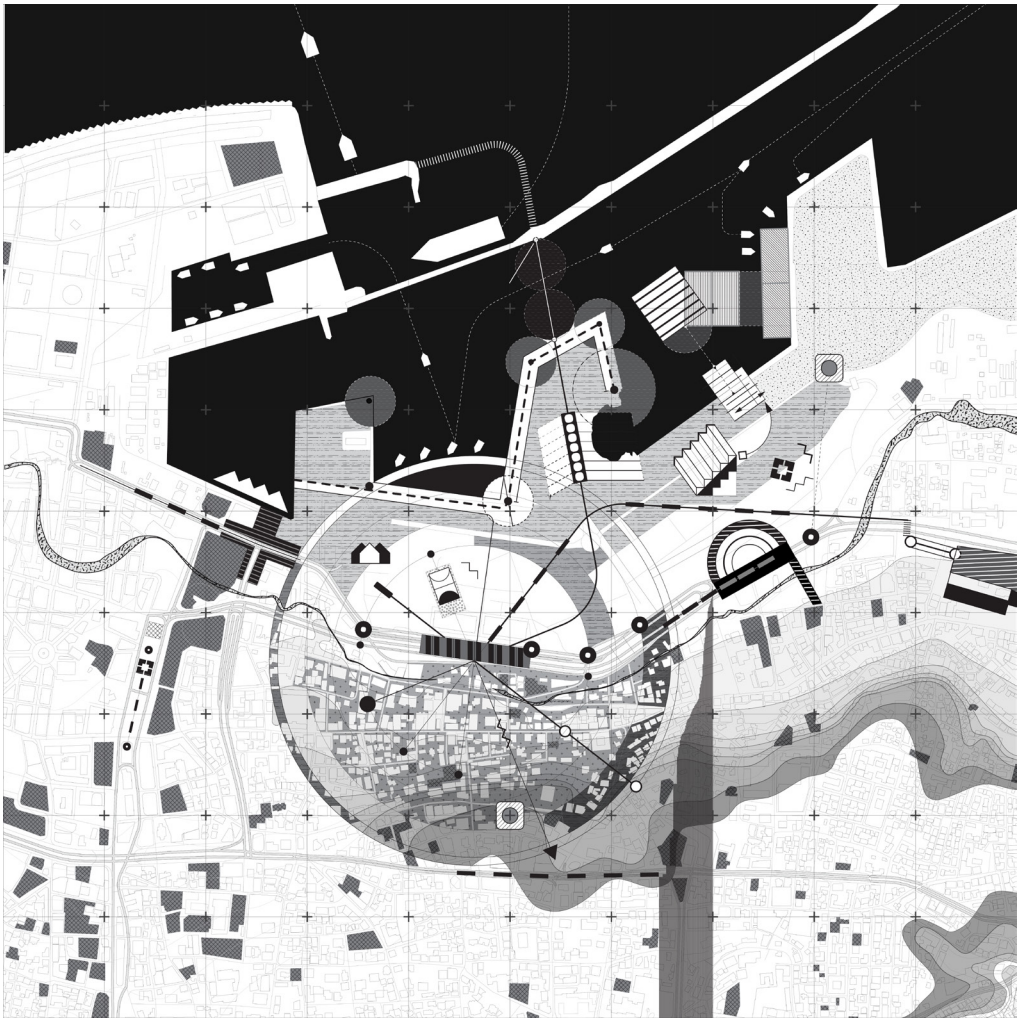
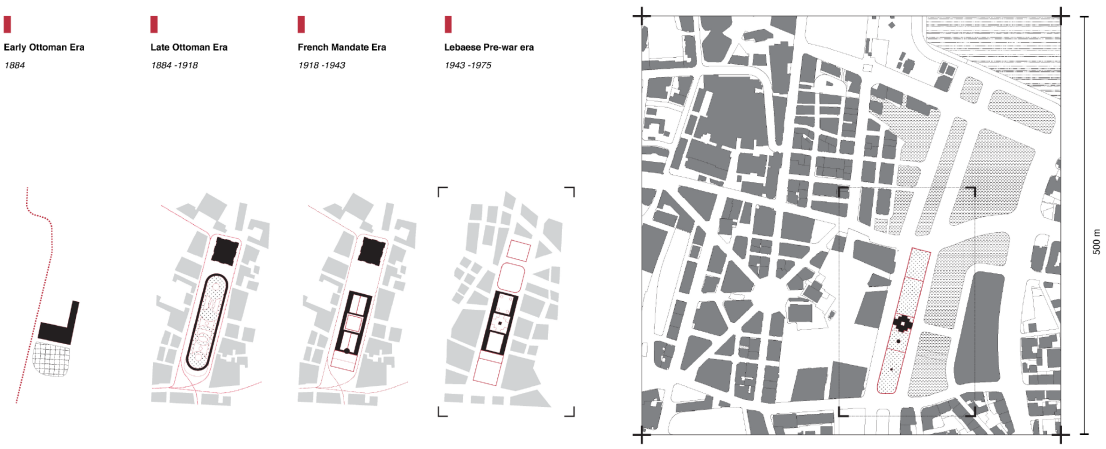
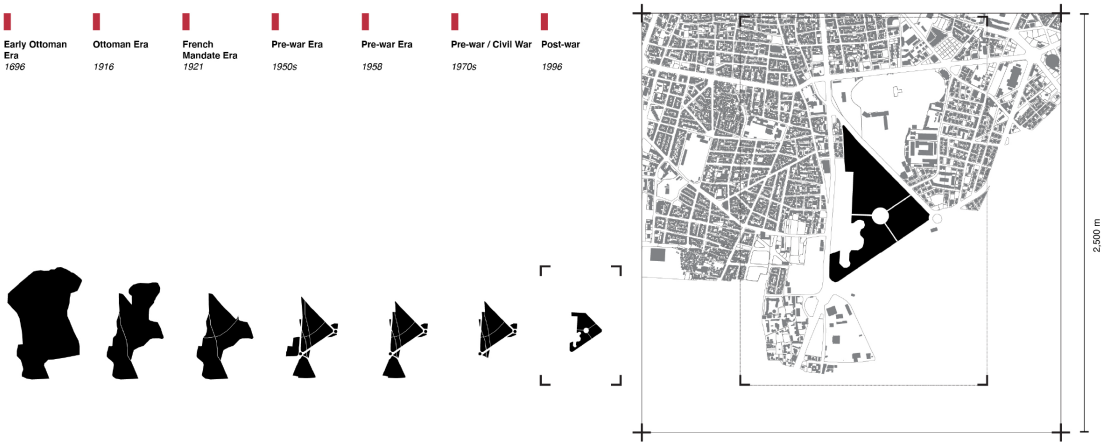


Fig. 7

Disappearance of Martyr's Square



Disappearance of Pine Forest



Disappearance of Shoreline

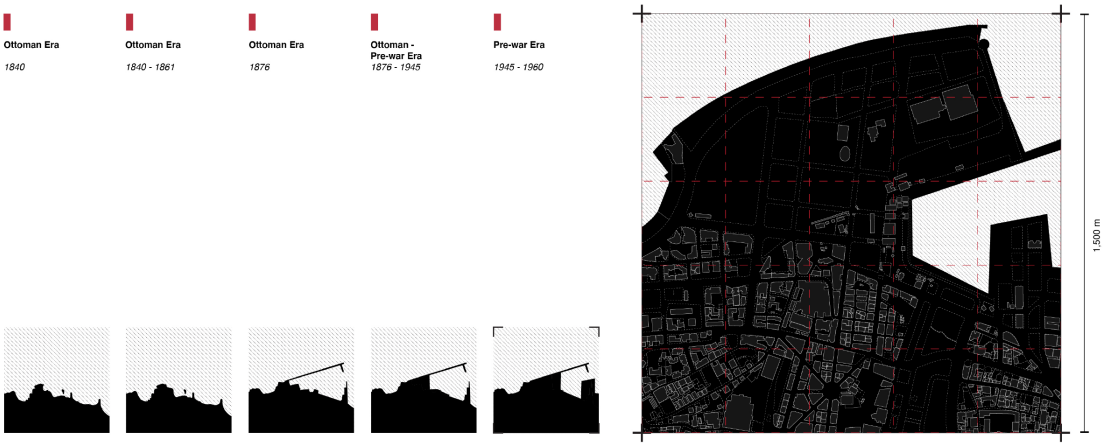


Fig. 8

What Crisis?

View From Cairo (German University in Cairo)

Holger Gladys & Rana Elrashidy

The world is as it is, but it could be otherwise. The concept of crisis is crucial to the 'how' of thinking otherwise.

– Janet Roitman

Following the endless daily news, crisis narratives are omnipresent and most often it seems difficult to attribute a crisis to a single event or situation. Recently and during the lockdown, days were filled with alarming media news concerning the global health pandemic. Due to the pandemic's immediate impact, it almost crowded out other urgencies with perhaps even wider-reaching implications. Sometimes, it feels as if crisis has become the new normal.

In light of the unremitting progression of climate change, and in its widest sense, environmental degradation, resource depletion with the possible consequence of emerging geopolitical tension and violence, Reuters journalist Gavin Jones, reflected on the intergovernmental forum of the G20 in July 2021, quoting New York-based non-profit organization Avaaz, 'The G20 is failing to deliver. Italy's G20 tagline is "People, Planet, Prosperity", but today the G20 is delivering "Pollution, Poverty and Paralysis", followed up by his own conclusions that the 'energy and environment ministers from the Group of 20 rich nations have failed to agree on the wording of key climate change commitments in their final communique. …. Commitments made today lack substance and ambition'.[1]

Trying to digest the unwieldy statements, the progressing global crisis reveals itself as an outspoken political crisis with global health, economic and environmental fault lines, and it is hard to neglect that this is combined with severe democratic shortcomings. The G20 represent approximately 65 percent of the world population, 80 percent of world trade, 85 percent of the world economy and 80 percent of the world carbon.[2] The group of leading industrialized and so-called emerging economies would

1 Jones, 'G20 Fails'.

2 Palmer and Jeyaratnam, 'The G20 Economies'.

have been expected to act competently and effectively according to the entrusted mandate .

After all, what kind of crisis do we have in mind? What do we consider a crisis? In tune with Janet Roitman, we may want to ask if empirical observation is sufficient to declare a crisis or if it needs a conceptual claim?[3] And then, how to possibly reflect the subject of education and 'teaching design in times of crisis' if crisis is everywhere? Without exception, the Global North as much as the Global South should feel concerned.

How can one look at the subject from a local/regional perspective, where—in addition to the seemingly inescapable global threat— crises are manifold? Accessible data and empirical observation reveal high poverty levels, mounting socioeconomic problems, constant housing shortages, often paired with precarious living standards, high rates of unemployment, and even more unregulated employment, severe water scarcity, grave pollution levels, and an ailing health care sector. And as if the list wouldn't be long enough, it extends into the educational sector, where the quality of base and higher education remains a major challenge, frequently falling short of recognized standards.

It seems astonishing that perceived crises in places of the Global South hardly provoke analytical thought and consequent action. Instead, they makes institutions and people drift apart from each other. While the critical topics may suggest urgent revisions of the active operational administrative and decision-making processes and structures, public management institutions tend to respond with inertia and retreat into the authoritarian columns of their own resorts, effectively avoiding each other's expertise.

State-endorsed urban planning persistently calls for new developments, smooth and smart, newness outside the existing; as if there would be an outside to the world. Solutions are always grand solutions, yet mostly out of reach for the substantial number of the population below the poverty line, most likely also for the extra-large, low-income middle class. This is a case of administration versus insight. Engineers are leading the way, unaffected, singing the song of technological advancement, while reconfiguring metropolitan areas with outdated versions of the automotive city and extensive suburbia in the form of new town developments. Investments are often incomplete, leaving these developments uninhabited for decades. The faith in Western models of modernization is apparently undisturbed. Despite all contradicting knowledge and defying insight, the liberal economic belief in the associated concepts of human betterment and social progress, the promises of a good life and upward

3 Roitman, Anti-Crisis.

mobility, seems unbroken. Huge investments in flagship infrastructure projects heroically pave the way to the new cities' premium properties and other so-called economic key drivers. These investments promise expanding possibilities while essential questions about real existing realities remain unanswered and tasks remain untouched.

Studio Approach

Apparently, design studios in academic educational environments cannot solve the grand problems of our times. Most likely, that would be overambitious. Nevertheless, design studios are places of reflection and action, places to promote awareness and to build genuine commitment. Design is essentially change: there is no need to design if everything is to remain the same. And particularly, advanced design studios may take up the task to reconsider generally accepted professional practices, entrenched routines, data, and standards. Studios are shared spaces to raise questions and to provide meaningful answers with regard to the production of the built environment, yet most importantly, they provide space for alternative imagination.

Encouraged by Neil Brenner's rethinking of inherited conceptions of the urban, the design studio aims at:

- Motivating students to embrace reflexivity as 'the base attitude for evaluation, imagination, contextualization, and orientation for design and planning action'.

- Stimulating students to avoid purely formal or technical orientation and standards, in favor of acting 'more politically and socially engaged, humanitarian in the work, radical in the design'.

- Encouraging students 'to produce visions and strategies for alternative urbanisms and new pathways of urban and territorial transformation'.[4]

Our fifth-year undergraduate design studios have worked over the years on many metropolitan areas – Mumbai, Accra, Rio de Janeiro, and obviously, on the Greater Cairo Region – yet the Beirut study has been of a different kind, and of another extent. None of the studio participants had ever been confronted with a war condition; none of us – tutors or students – had ever experienced anything comparable to the devastating explosion, that one moment that changed everything, that catastrophe that ripped Beirut on October 4th, leaving its residents shocked and traumatized. As we understood, the massive amount of explosives, stored with gross negligence, killed hundreds and injured thousands of

4 Brenner, 'Agency of Design'.

people. The resulting shockwave leveled many buildings near the port and caused extensive damage over much of the rest of the capital. Health, shelter, water, and food were immensely affected. While volunteer helpers and organized aid sought to relieve the hardship on ground, the sheer magnitude of the catastrophe left us breathless and silent – though far away in our safe homes.

How should one respond to a situation that rejects any form of rationality? How should one respond to the additional suffering the people of Beirut must endure? We sense the fragile existence, the tenacious grief and mourning. We read about the authorities not taking responsibility, shamelessly obstructing the victims' quest for truth and justice. We hear about the collapsing economy, almost non-existent electricity and fuel, but also soaring prices. We try to sort and rationalize the political confrontations and polarization, yet the sectarian, conflict-prone environment only emphasizes the diffuse nature of the persistent challenge. To work on Beirut requires a lot of optimism.

Generally, students participating the course are undergraduate students with basic knowledge and experience in thinking in territorial scales. That is a challenge in and of itself. Where to start while due to the pandemic it is even impossible to travel? What to assume? Apparently, history that describes the transformation of a lived environment over time is a valid entry into any subject matter. What are the political and cultural intricacies that brought us to where we are? The uneven ground of Karantina's history seems to condense a much larger history into a single place. In a fast-forward scroll mode, we may want to outline and depict the neighborhood in its formation as an arrival place for migrants and refugees, but also record the appalling atrocities against its population during the civil war, only to find Karantina literally turned into Beirut's backyard and garbage dump during the country's most recent waste crisis.

Because of those early insights, the students were invited to advocate for the community's position as part of the city proper and the larger region. Neighborhoods need neighbors; and Karantina's residents certainly deserve a perspective that breaks free from the state of neglect. Within that line of thought, students are asked to develop grounded strategies that would speak to the people, avoiding the mistakes of earlier large-scale urban reconstruction projects. 'The point is to observe crisis as a blind spot,' as Janet Roitman would elucidate in her writings, 'and hence to apprehend the ways in which it regulates narrative constructions, the ways in which it allows certain questions to be asked while others are foreclosed'.[5]

Facing the overwhelming complexity of the task, the studio on Beirut's

5 Roitman, Anti-Crisis.

Karantina kept the assignment in the form of open questions. Avoiding the technical fix-the-problem/solution-focused approach, the educational setting took a step-by-step approach that includes (1) articulating the notions and observations of the various on-the-ground realities; (2) declaring the projects' premises, design ambition, and imagination; (3) speculating on the means and matter necessary to reconfigure current dynamics; (4) eventually arriving at possible design answers to many sensitive questions.

Studio Dynamics

According to the study regulations for the architecture and engineering faculties at the German University in Cairo, students complete their bachelor's thesis trajectory at the end of the fourth year. Accordingly, the fifth and final year of the undergraduate studies allow for an individualized deepening of major design subjects and research fields.

The students are encouraged to work more independently on assigned tasks, which involves strengthening the fundamental values of self-reliance, personal responsibility, and autonomy during the course of the project and beyond. Apparently, this is a major learning step and while the students receive direction and feedback on their work and work pace, they need to develop self-initiative and draft their personal assignment within the frame of the general study subject. The current setting provides the students with the space to take real ownership of their projects, evenly processing findings and mistakes while accomplishing upcoming tasks.

How then to draw up scenarios bringing forward fresh readings about a 'world in becoming',[6] change, and motion? Where to position themselves and their projects in that? What are the observable mismatches, apparent dissonances, hidden incongruities, and contested rationalities? What to critique and expose? Why to reconstruct at all? And if so, for whom and how? Again, Roitman would help us to find a reasonable path while questioning normativity: 'Evoking crisis entails reference to a norm because it requires a comparative state for judgment: crisis compared to what?'[7]

Most students would concentrate on the area of Karantina, studying its transformation over time, its fragmented being, its broken spatial relations with the surrounding neighborhoods, and the weak utilitarian public spaces. Hardly any of the projects would question the role and spatial structure of the exclusive port. Most of the groups left the port area untouched, accepting that Karantina had long ago lost its connection to the sea.

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6 Braidotti, 'Interview with Rosi Braidotti'.

7 Roitman, Anti-Crisis.

Fig. 1 Historic Maps of Karantina's growth from 1923-1974, by Omar Take (1974)

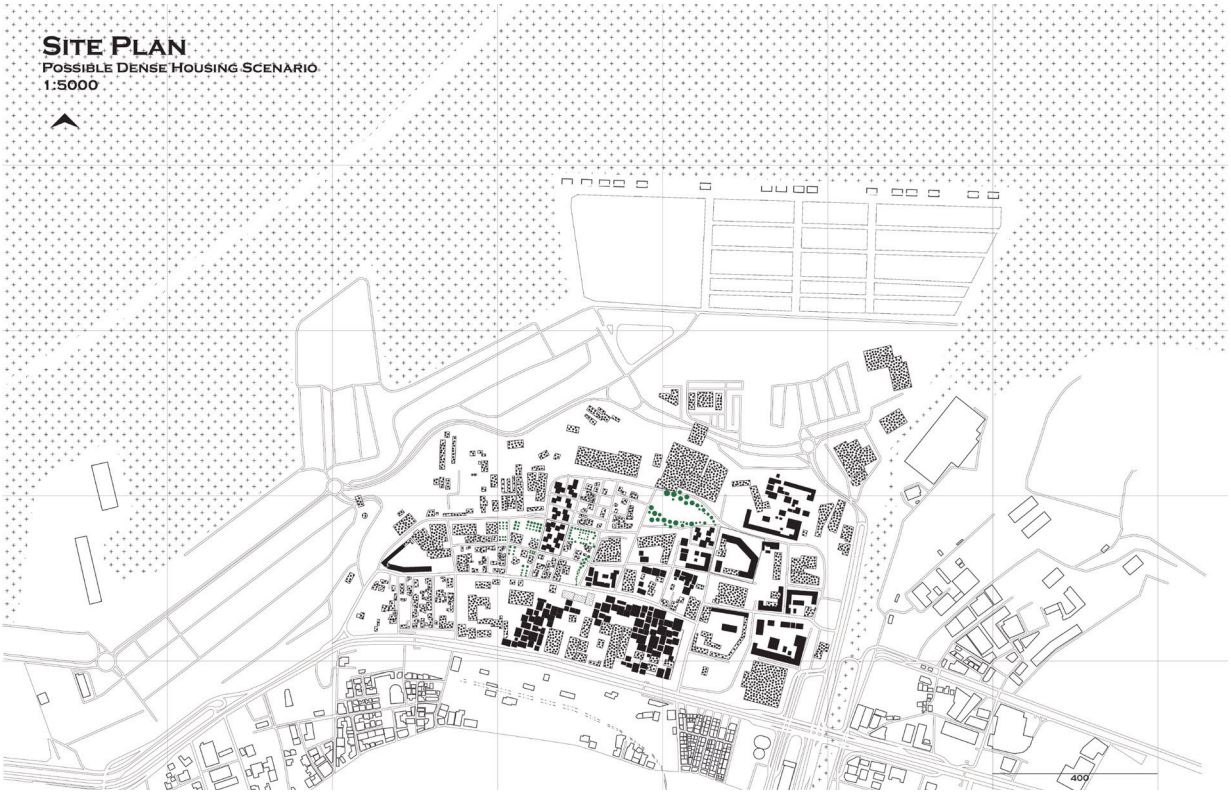

Fig. 2 'Dar 70/30' project's masterplan illustrating the changed land usage and redensification of Karantina, by Noha Mostafa (2021)

Some working groups would recognize Karantina's commercial-industrial overweight and the few remaining housing patterns in the area. Their projects would investigate a re-densification of the neighborhood in favor of more neighbors. While accepting the fragmented nature of the area, the students would insert new housing projects, carefully fitting them in the gaping unused or underused plots and areas.

One of the course's students, Noha Moustafa, has been deeply focused on the enduring conflict of Karantina's grim and difficult 100-year-history as a receiving place for refugees with migrants successively arriving from war-torn places in Armenia, Palestine, and Syria, but has been particularly concerned with the atrocious massacre of the people of Karantina in 1976. During her research, she would adopt Omar Take's study and map of Karantina from 1974,[8] showing the then existing dense informal housing clusters, giving shelter to many migrants at the time. Her project 'Dar 70/30' attempts to reverse the unfavorable proportion of housing to commercial units. The project translates the memory and spatial setting of the early informal clusters into a contemporary version with ground prepared for a socially more stable and attractive habitat.

Throughout the studio, students would generally shy away from explicit socio-political statements. However, Amena Toubar, Sara Mahmoud, and Yasmin Salaheldin presented almost the opposite inclination. The three students engaged in a playful mode with the small-scale environment of Mar Mikhael, projecting the perceived creative user structure of the southern neighborhood onto the Karantina area. Learning from Mar Mikhael, the idea is that new housing, small manufacturing, and other creative work facilities would diversify Karantina's microcosms and relink the two neighborhoods across Avenue Charles Helou. In this reconnection process, the project claims the former railyard as a place of streetwise exchange and cultural outlet. As a second layer, the student team adds a graffiti-like structure of animated gardens and playgrounds, ultimately banning today's tristesse from the ground up, and from the inside out.

Most projects would dwell close to the two scenarios, in one way or another reflecting the circumstances in Beirut, admittedly from within the 'comfort zone' questioning Karantina's isolated position in the larger city, the apparent shortcomings in the housing provision, the lack of appealing public spaces, the missing connections with public transport and others. Struggling with the many contextual research questions, the educational setting of weekly studio meetings would deliberately dedicate time to move out of the defined subject field and delve into related themes in local climes. Within the range of student projects, two stand out and certainly deserve a more extended portrayal in this publication. Though from very different angles, both projects engage with the momentum of

8 Take, 'Urban Dwelling Environments'.

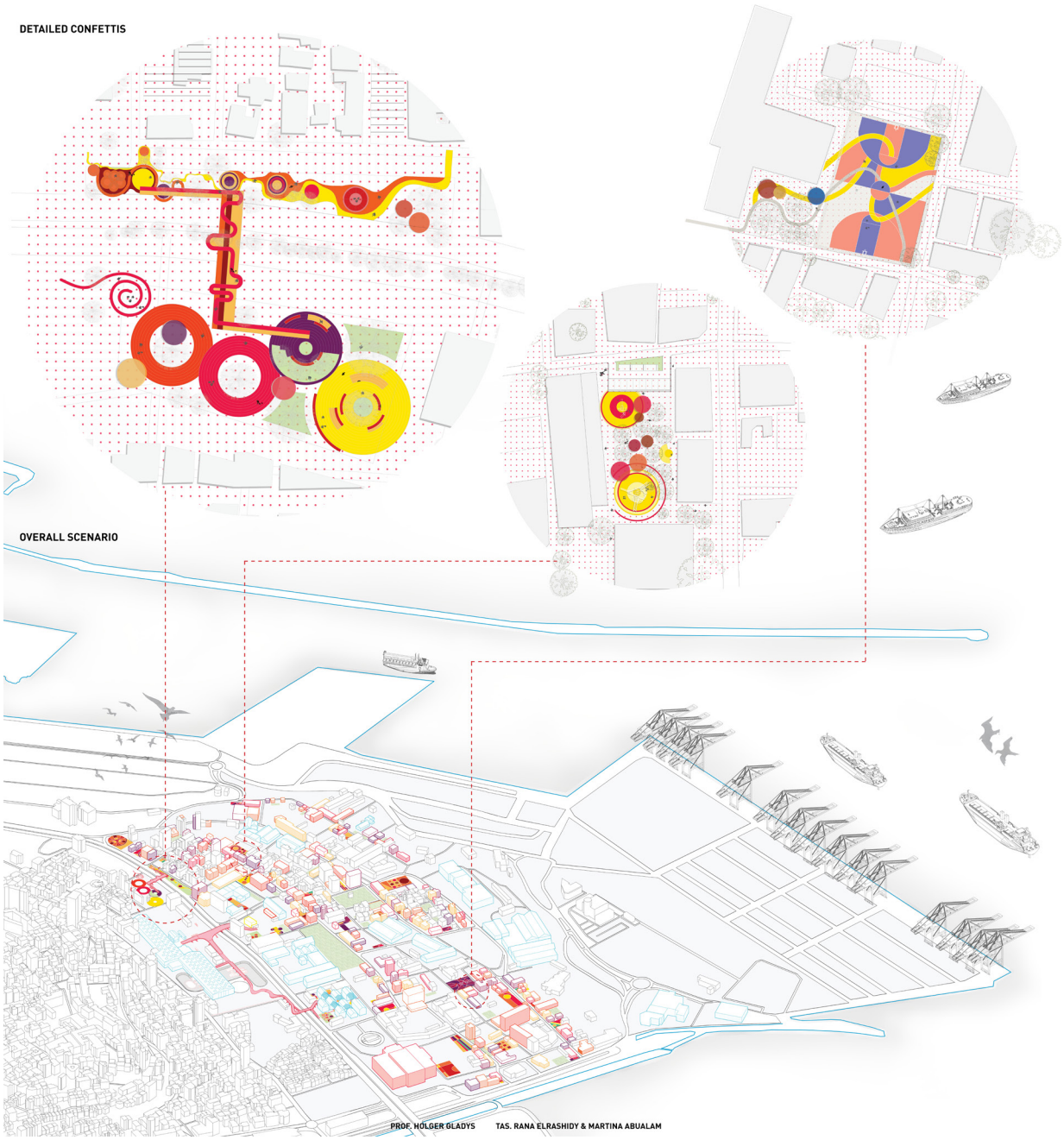

Fig. 3 Axonometric view and zoom-ins from the project 'Architecture of Consequences, the case of Mar Mikhail and Karantina', by Amena Toubar, Sara Mahmoud and Yasmin Salaheldin (2021)

crisis and its reflection on the city.

Studio Imagination

'Reimagining Beirut's Waterfront', by Abdulrahman Gomaa, Farida Khalaf and Maryiam Soliman, is the only project that actively engages the current port and future port extensions as a design task. The student project recognizes the different functions of the port structure including the container terminal, general cargo, vessel terminal, and a free economic zone that altogether block any public from the city's northern coast. They also understand that the problem of inaccessibility is not addressed by any of the two post-blast reconstruction proposals to rebuild the Port of Beirut.

The proposals from early 2021 by the German/international management consultancy Roland Berger and the French container-shipping group CMA CGM hardly consider any topic that may reflect the current situation on ground. Instead, the French company outlines a straightforward and self-serving reconstruction of the damaged docks and warehouses, along with an expansion of the operational container terminal. The German initiative is much bolder in launching a maximum multi-billion-dollar proposal, commonly termed sustainable development. The Berger scenario promises to not only reconstruct the port and expand it to the east, but by unlocking the commercial value of the land and assets on the western parts of the former harbor, it turns the iconic waterfront into a premium high-rise residential and office district with cruise liners and luxury yachts as scenic backdrop.

Understanding ports essentially as economic machines and assets, not necessarily linked to the cities where they are located, but simply part of a national big-player economy, the students imagined an alternative answer to the two scenarios above. 'From an international perspective', the student team states, 'Beirut's port proves to be in a strategic and important location for transshipment activities in the Mediterranean and the Middle East'. The shipping industry and port operators are not only pleased by a growing maritime transport system, but the trends of transport vessels getting significantly bigger and shipment handling in ever-narrower time windows also challenge them. In fact, the biggest ports in the world based on cargo enlarge and deepen port quays and turning basins, modernize and digitize. These ports, not only due to the sheer size and lack of sufficient space, but also due to logistic requirements, become separate entities, detached from cities. Rotterdam does this, Mumbai does, and Beirut may consider doing so as well.

The students pick up this thread critically. To unlock the coastline from its current function, they imagine a newly constructed, highly rational, and efficient linear port structure, establishing a hub for transshipment out of the shore into the sea. The strategy of freeing the coastline from its current major function is a gift to the city, it bears the one-off opportunity to carefully weigh, consider, and reconsider the use-value of the land along the northern coast.

In their scenario, the student team imagines the freshly claimed slices of land as places of interaction and adaptation, a lived-in district that may build on the necessities and needs of the larger city, but also the needs of Karantina. Finally, after a long period of enacted isolation, Karantina can extend into the linear dockland district. According to the proposal, the coastal evolution may kick-off with temporary, productive and buffer land-uses. Suggesting temporary and adaptive use, the students are responsive to the necessary post-blast needs of housing, medical centers, and educational institutions. Workshops, co-working spaces,

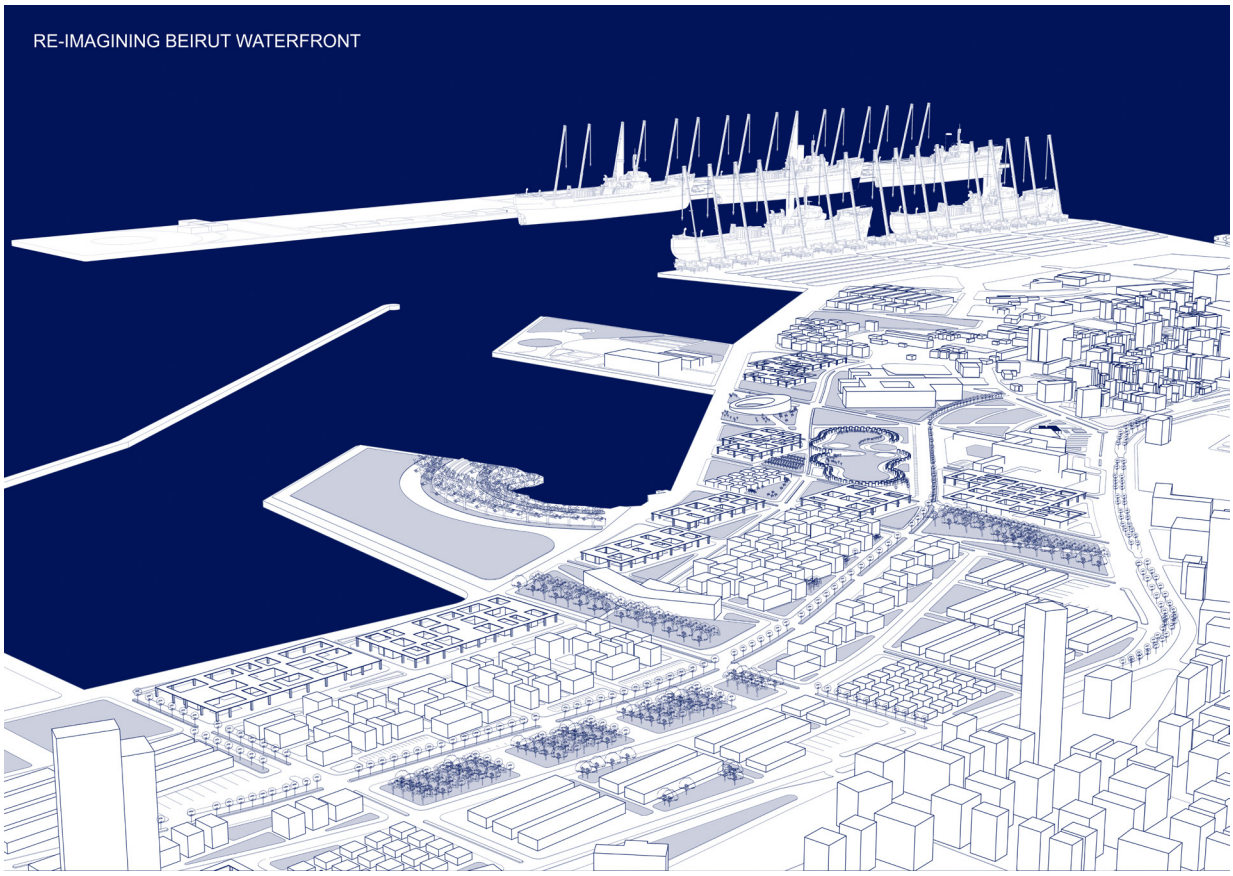

Fig. 4 Aerial visualization of the reimagined waterfront of Beirut, by Abdulrahman Gomaa, Farida Khalaf, and Maryiam Soliman (2021)

and essential services are integrated in newly built structures. Most importantly, Beirut's citizens may want to reclaim the waterfront. What do people really desire? The students understood that appropriation processes take time and that there is no need to freeze the program in an early stage. The main issue is to make the waterfront accessible to the public and provide guidance in re-familiarizing the residents with the recovered docklands and waterfront. Everything else may come at a later stage.

While the former project derives from an utterly realistic but also imaginative stance, the second project by Mariam Nada, Nada Waleed, and Reem Ayman takes full advantage of the freedom to deviate from the subject of the post-blast reconstruction, developing conceptual lines based on Hiba Bou Akar's 2018 book For the War Yet to Come.

For the students, the book became a mental travel guide in understanding Beirut's hidden logic of urbanization, 'the underlying alignments between everyday urban transformations and shifting sectarian fault lines'[9] that may result in spaces of conflict, but also in actual or potential frontiers. Their project desires to engage those perceived frontiers, anticipating the 'no-longer and not-yet' or, closer to the book title, 'what is yet to come'.

9 Pérez, 'Review'.

As Mona Atia highlights in her noteworthy book review, 'Rather than privilege a particular frame, Bou Akar analyzes the continuities and discontinuities between neoliberal urbanism, religious ideologies, transnational militarization, and the concomitant rise of sectarianism, territoriality, and violence. Through a grounded discussion of the way sectarianism plays out in specific neighborhoods via real estate transactions and zoning laws, Bou Akar demonstrates how sectarianism is constructed, lived, and practiced'.[10]

The students adopted the author's spatial and temporal practices and logics, expressed through the deep concepts, study, and experience of' 'doubleness of ruins, lacework of zoning, and ballooning frontier' that describes the way 'how construction and destruction, displacement and homemaking, expansion and containment, and sectarianism and pluralism overlap, coexist, and collide in contemporary Beirut'.[11]

The three students were intrigued to work with the vague terrain of the Bachoura neighborhood. The area just south of downtown Beirut transforms strongly and the Beirut Urban Lab details in its report, 'Bachoura stands out among the neighborhoods for the heavy presence of political parties who control its public spaces. In addition, it has characteristics of intense poverty, a relatively high level of informality, and the most dynamic construction activities that have caused substantial demolition of its historic housing stock, resulting in the forced displacement of many residents'.[12]

Struggling with the many unsettling narratives on and about Bachoura, the students decided on three sites of reflection and intervention that in their view would stand out as a manifestation to the bitter memory of conflict, the abandoned Burj al Murr, the Cemetery of Bachoura, and parts of the Green Line.

The question of how people endure the pain of their memories becomes substantial. Speaking about Burj al Murr, the students envision emasculating 'the tower of its bitterness ', the city's infamous symbol of brutal violence and intimidation, and change the perception of the empty concrete shell that during the civil war was occupied by snipers. Countering its destructive history, the ruin is intended to host a 'parliament for the people', a sequence of stacked, formal art spaces and other spaces, neatly locking-up Hashim Sarkis' entrepreneurial and commercial yellow hot-air-balloon, leaving the landing pavilion vacant. Indeed, the cored tower would turn into an operational thinktank for insurgent citizenship serving much needed cultural, political, and social exchange and dialogue. The cathartic intervention at Bachoura Cemetery balloons and superimposes

10 Atia, 'Review'.

11 Bou Akar, *Planning Beirut's Frontiers*.

12 Beirut Urban Lab, 'Bachoura Urban Snapshot'.

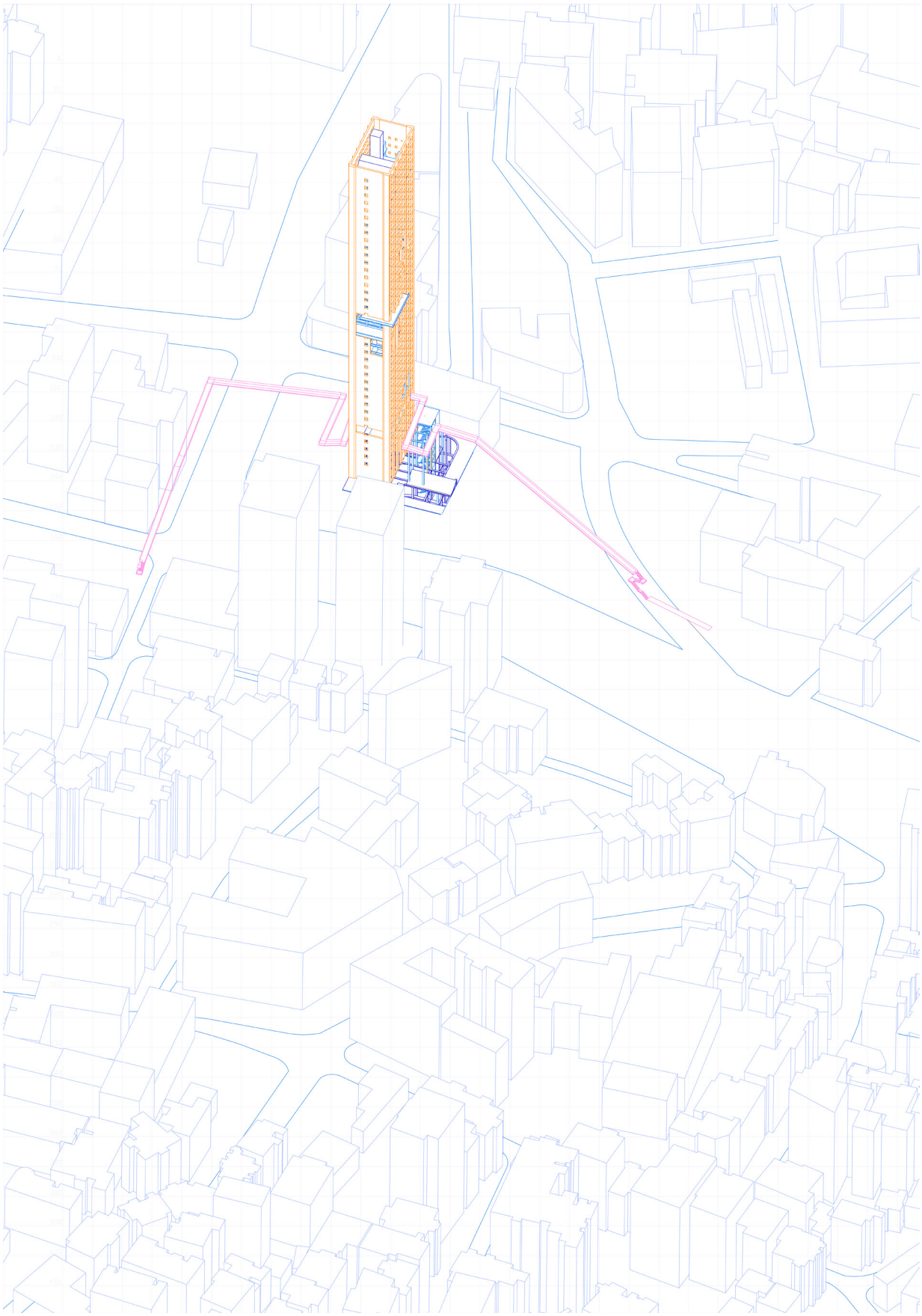

Fig. 5 Aerial visualization of the Green Line, by Mariam Nada, Nada Waleed, Reem Ayman (2021)

Fig. 5 Aerial visualization of the reimagined Burj al Murr (right), the Cemetery of Bachoura (left), by Mariam Nada, Nada Waleed, Reem Ayman (2021)

fifty social play structures to commemorate the antagonism and mass murder that marked the place. The wall, a living room away from home engages spaces across the Green Line, this time not a separating building element, but a space of connection and exchange. The porous wall resembles the skeleton of a house, a programmed horizontal bar that bridges the former demarcation line. That 'some people don't know how the other side looks like' has influenced the idea of a wall that rigorously stitches Bachoura to the loosely connected Saifi, one way or the other.

While the student project takes the ideas of doubleness, lacework, and ballooning quite literally, it succeeds in stimulating thought about what could be otherwise.

With crisis as a relative concept in a malleable reality, the studio has been eye-opening and meaningful. The students chose their own subjects and defined their tasks, not necessarily resolving the grand issues, yet actively listening and committing emotionally and intellectually to what is happening on the ground.

In terms of scale, some thought big, others small, but they all transcended the limitations of normalcy and crisis, the 'usual academic boxes' in Roitman's terms. With changing perceptions, the students recognized varying blind spots in Beirut's reconstruction efforts.

While some students believed that a healthy neighborhood begins with a healthy mixed-use ratio as it once had been, others completely reimagined the haunted memory of sorrowful structures. Following Roitman's 'anti-crisis' narrative, the studio asked 'if Beirut deserves better, what can be done?' In response, the students contextualized their response of 'everything'.

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Studio Culture/Trauma Culture: Contested Dynamics of Design Education in Times of Crisis

View From Beirut (American University of Beirut)

Robert Saliba & Hana Alamuddin

For the past three decades, Beirut twice occupied the central stage of the international urban design imaginary. First, in the 1990's, with the postwar reconstruction of its central district. And then, in 2020, with the post-blast reconstruction of its peri-central districts.

In both times the theme of 'Beirut as port city' was central to the debate. In the 1990s the waterfront was considered a dumping site to be reclaimed as a new financial and entertainment extension of the city. In 2020, the devastated port district posed the question of whether it could be reintegrated in the city and region.

In both instances, Beirut became a prime destination for international and local faculty and students to interact through collaborative urban design studios either physically, as in 1990, or virtually, as in 2020, due the mobility restrictions imposed by COVID (as also discussed in chapter). The present studio was initiated when the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture at AUB visited Tsinghua University, was very impressed with their work, and put the department in touch with them to take part in their collaborative studio with MIT.

Having witnessed both phases, I would like to reflect in this essay on two complementary issues:

1. Physical distance: What was the impact of the lack of physical access to the site on comprehending the socio-spatial specificities of a city-in-flux like Beirut?

2. Cultural distance: What were the commonalities and differences between the views of international and local participants in approaching the same problematic of post-traumatic urban recovery (the view from Beirut vs. the views from Miami, Boston, Tsinghua, Cairo, and Delft)?

Physical Distance

Based on Bertrand Russell's classification of knowledge,[1] I will differentiate between two ways of apprehending sites: 'knowledge about' and 'acquaintance with'. While the first relies on rational investigation tools and secondary sources of information leading to an outsider's objective view (indirect, mediated, and inferential knowledge); the latter refers to empirical observation and living experience generating an insider's subjective view (direct, unmediated, and non-inferential knowledge). The first is necessarily relied on by international participants with no access to the site, while the second is contributed by local observers. A continuing subject of debate is whether knowledge by acquaintance offers a stronger or more legitimate perspective then remote engagement with a site.

'**Knowledge about**': Urban design, as taught and practiced, is destined to operate mostly in territories that are unfamiliar to the designers, whose aim is, paradoxically, to reinforce the 'identity of place'. International competitions and urban design studios increasingly operate on the premise of remote reconnaissance tools relying on online access to a vast array of maps, videos, images, documentaries, and scholarly articles. In this respect, the quality of students' spatial and temporal analysis of Beirut's waterfront and its framing within its regional and global contexts was positively surprising. In that sense, 'knowledge about' was highly effective in providing a common base shared between local and international students as a preparatory phase for design conceptualization and development. Another common base was the ongoing global discourse in urban design ranging from the ecological, to the social, to the participative, signaling a strong paradigmatic shift from the 1990s' focus on neoliberal and postmodern urbanism (e.g,, Solidere's reconstruction of Beirut's central district). This shift toward environmental sustainability, equity, and emergency responses to traumatic events signaled the presence of a 'unified urban design culture' that transcends physical and cultural boundaries and permeates urban design education worldwide.

'Acquaintance with': Interestingly (and unfortunately), all studios insisted on targeting the most socially complex part of the port blast site, i.e., the Karantina district (derived from the original Quarantine zone), a transitional infrastructural site shaped by successive layers of migration, gentrification, and militarization and a high mixture of commercial, residential, and industrial interpenetrating uses. Remote knowledge acquired through interviews, documentaries, and the mediation of local informants proved to be both reductive and misleading due to the illusion of capturing the real complexities and identity of place. Sites like Karantina can only be comprehended through fieldwork with

1 Russell, 'Knowledge by Acquaintance'.

micro-scale observation of social practices, interviews with community representatives and residents, the input of the NGOs working on site, and the collection of oral histories. In this regard, the most pertinent thinking was not generated by student groups with social or activist agendas but by the ones who focused instead on the spatial, environmental, and ecological conditions and speculated on the geostrategic context of the port itself. This is where global 'knowledge about' may best inform, enrich, and complement local 'acquaintance with'.

Cultural Distance

Overall, the contributions by international universities were underlined by humanitarian, remedial, and pedagogical motives. Work by students was either conceptual/generative and issue-oriented (MIT, TU Delft), or operational, comprehensive, and project-oriented (UMSOA and THU). By contrast, the view from Beirut may be qualified as speculative, diffident, and visionary-oriented (AUB), distrustful of humanitarian stands and anticipative foresights.

As mentioned in the course syllabus, Beirut [was] approached as a site of permanent impermanency where trauma is no longer the exception but the rule, and where traumatic change is open to perpetual uncertainty. Hence the studio engages the agency of urban design not in humanitarian, remedial, and short opportunistic terms but as dynamic manipulation of urban form responding to successive and open waves of conflict or catastrophes. The purpose is to investigate urban form under trauma on its own terms identifying its vocabulary and syntax (morphologies of destruction), multiple narratives (dialectics of reconstruction) and diverse design tactics (magnification, catalysis, morphing, retrofitting…). As such, Beirut 'fit the bill' as a complex investigation site embodying spatial fragmentation, sectarian division, and landscape devastation, and as a testing ground for the predominant design discourses under the umbrella of post-traumatic urbanism. In that sense, AUB students ' proposals with their 'dystopian' and 'heterotopian' visions were in line with what Rem Koolhaas once mentioned in his 1985 essay 'Imagining Nothingness': 'it is a tragedy that planners only plan and architects only design more architecture. More important than the design of cities will be the design of their decay'.[2]

After several discussions between the instructors, it was decided to start the design studio by analyzing the effects of the various different traumas on the city fabric and then open up the scope to allow the students to develop a vision for the area and its urban fabric.

2 Koolhaas and Mau, S, M, L, XL.

Syllabus

Beirut In Flux: Trauma and Urban Form – Speculative Visions for Uncertain Futures

Instructors (AUB): Robert Saliba and Hana Alamuddin

Instructors (THU): Jian Liu and Yan Tang

Instructors (MIT): Brent D. Ryan and Nicolas Fayad.

On August 4, 2020, Beirut was devastated by an explosion at its port facilities that left 204 deaths, 7,500 injuries, and USD$15 billion in property damage, and leaving an estimated 300,000 people homeless. Since the 1970s Beirut underwent successive waves of conflicts and catastrophes starting with fifteen years of civil war (1975-1990), to the air bombing of its southern suburbs (2006), followed recently by massive anti-government protests (October 2019) exacerbated by an economic, financial meltdown. Another major trauma that Beirut, along with the rest of the world, is going through today is the COVID-19 pandemic, which has put into question standard notions of time, city, public space, and community.

Therefore, Beirut will be approached as a site of permanent impermanency where trauma is no more the exception but the rule, and where traumatic change is open to perpetual uncertainty. As such the city will be conceptualized as an urban laboratory for speculative futures open to multiple imaginative scenarios bringing forward experimental thinking about the city and urban design.

Hence the studio engages the agency of urban design not in humanitarian, remedial, and short opportunistic terms but as dynamic manipulation of urban form responding to successive and open waves of conflict or catastrophes. The purpose is to investigate urban form under trauma on its own terms identifying its vocabulary and syntax (morphologies of destruction), multiple narratives (dialectics of reconstruction) and diverse design tactics (magnification, catalysis, morphing, retrofitting…) bringing forward the emancipatory potential of traumatic urbanism, and engaging contemporary theories of urbanism, ranging from architectural to infrastructural to ecological and landscape urbanism, to formulate a speculative vision/fiction as a base for a wholistic intervention

The purpose of this studio is to explore the impact of trauma on urban form to instigate speculative visions and design tactics of interventions ranging from erasure to inhabitation. As such, traumatic urbanism is defined as an opportunity to test emerging forms of urban design thinking about cities-in-flux, starting from the premise that short-term emergency interventions and strategies are restrictive in rethinking the dynamics of an ongoing traumatic process of continuity and change.

The studio builds on the inaccessibility to the site for direct experience to stimulate personal imaginative injections, fictional construction, theoretical exploration…. as nourished by global media diffusion, satellite imagery, and online documentation and communication operating a transition from the real to the imagined through a speculative way of thinking.

Schedule

Phase I: Reading / Decoding the Post-Blast City

(AUB students / 3 weeks / 28 Jan-19 Feb)

The purpose of this research/analytic phase is 1) to ground the post-blast impact zone in its city's spatial and temporal contexts; 2) to create a shared frame of reference and material across the collaborative urban design studios between AUB, THU, and MIT; and 3) to engage contemporary theories of urbanism ranging from architectural to infrastructural, to ecological and landscape urbanism, backed by relevant case studies to articulate a theoretical position and vision as a base for a speculative intervention

Phase II: Joint Introductory Seminar

(AUB-THU-MIT / 1 week / 23-26 Feb)

The purpose of the seminar is to share research findings with the collaborative studio participants and to initiate a dialogue around key urban design issues and problematics related to the post-traumatic city. The seminar will be divided in two panels:

Panel 1 consists of AUB faculty lectures and students' presentations on Beirut with selected interventions from graduate students having worked on key related topics through their MUD theses.

Panel 2 consists of THU and MIT faculty lectures on the role of urban design in urban development and planning in China and the US.

Phase III: Re-envisioning the Post-Blast City – Mixed Conceptual Design

(AUB-THU-MIT / 3 weeks / 2-19 Mar)

The third phase consists of articulating a concept and speculative vision grounded in contemporary theories of urbanism ranging from architectural to infrastructural, to ecological and landscape urbanism and the implications for traumatic urbanism. Students will work in mixed groups between AUB, THU, and MIT.

Phase IV: Parallel Design Development

(AUB-5 weeks /23 Mar-27 Apr)

The last phase consists in translating vision into urban design strategies and representations addressing the generic issues of identity, infrastructure, ecology, open space, and private development.

Below is a summary of the workshop's calendar:

Phase I: Reading / Decoding the Post-Blast City (3 weeks)

Feb. 2-15: Historical and spatial background (Assignment 1)

Feb.13-19: Urban design theories and case studies (Assignment 2)

Phase II: Joint Introductory Seminar (1 week)

Feb. 23: AUB Panel (presentation of Assignment 1and 2)

Feb. 26: THU-MIT Panel

Phase III: Re-envisioning the Post-Blast City (3 weeks)

Mar. 2: Joint Phase starts > mixed groups (Assignment 3)

Mar. 5, 9 and 12: Joint discussion

Mar.19: First collaborative review (mid-term for AUB / early stage for THU-MIT) Phase IV: Parallel Design Development (5 weeks)

Mar. 23: Action Area > Design problematic, objectives, Intervention scenarios (Assignment 4)

Apr. 9: Pin-Up (AUB)

Apr. 27: Second collaborative review (final for AUB / mid-term for THU-MIT)

May 14: Third collaborative review (only faculty for AUB / final for THU-MIT)

May 15: Submission of Final Report (AUB)

The final projects of the students followed various approaches. Ghida Sbytte proposed a masterplan for Medawar Eco-District which promotes sustainable development and provides the vision of what the neglected area of Beirut could become if the governmental and non-governmental organizations collaborate together. This could establish common aims such as prevention of further environmental degradation and improvement of quality of life of Medawar's inhabitants. The project

Fig. 1 Post-Blast Beirut as Green Utopia: Karantina Eco-District (by Ghida Sbytte)

shows the compatibility of light industrial, mixed-use and residential eco-blocks, which can be achieved through appropriate sustainable strategies of landscape and ecological urbanism.

Focusing on the social challenges of Beirut, Marwah Al-Dulaimi proposed a vision that has three main goals. 1) A united Society instead of the fragmented one: Coexistence of different socio-economic and religious groups. 2) People over Capital: Developments and infrastructure towards public good instead of market-driven development. 3) Social Equity: Right to housing, education, food, healthcare, jobs, and leisure. Al-Dulaimi argued that these goals could be achieved through four main strategies: 1)Mixity and Affordability: Creating mixed-use developments with affordable/social housing (Low income, Medium income). 2)Connectivity and accessibility: By providing public transportation (bus, tram, ferry) and soft mobility. 3)Social Infrastructure: creating abundant green public spaces, public beaches, and well-distributed educational facilities. 4) Urban Agriculture: Creating community gardens where people can plant their food which will, to a certain extent, offer them food security.

An open-ended development of the port is proposed as an efficient strategy due to Beirut's complex situation and its uncertain future. Unlike the traditional master plan, which is rigid and clearly defines the project in a certain number of years, the open-ended master plan responds to unprecedented changes and has the potential to adapt to any emerging need.

Razan Elmrayed used Michel Foucualt's Heterotopias as a conceptual frame for her design proposal for Beirut. She proposed The design

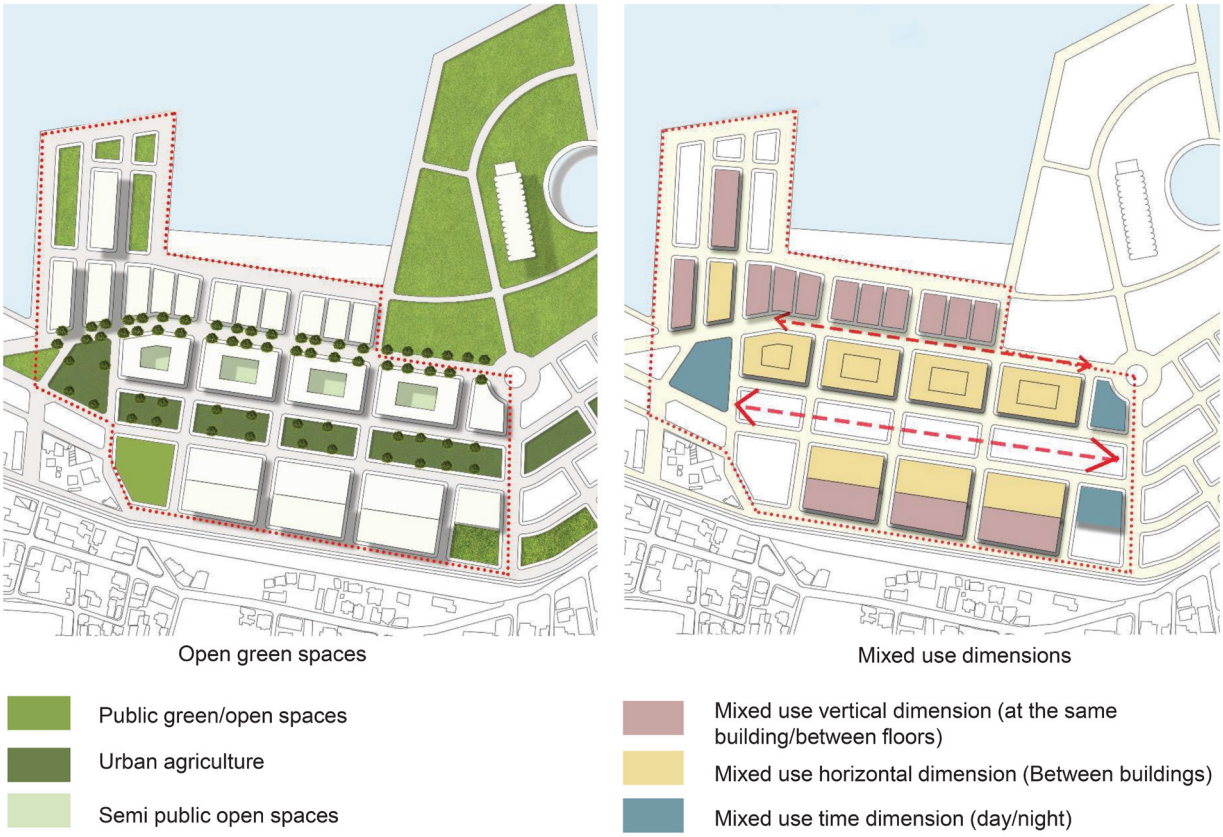

Fig. 2 Mixed Uses Development Strategy: Industrial Fabric (by Marwah Al-Dulaimi)

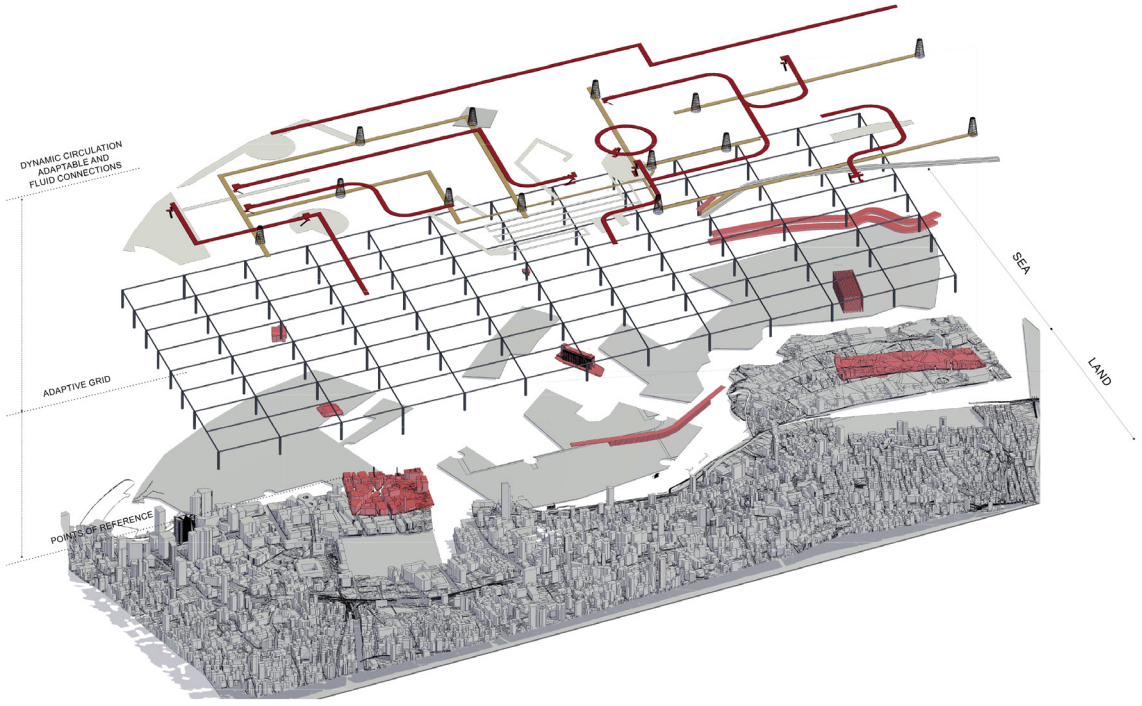

Fig. 3 Independent Urban System, connecting Islands with adaptable fuild connections (by Razan Elmrayed

intervention sought to reinforce existing heterotopic conditions by fragmenting the coastal edge to emphasize the separate identities of the patches and encourage their autonomous development. The vision attempted to transfer the dependency of the patches from the city to the sea through strategies of separation. These included, an independent connective system superimposed on the patches that controls vehicular and human accessibility through a time-related operation schedule. As well as a dynamic sea and air transit system that reshuffles relations based on vocational necessities and limits spillover between the patches. Lastly, points of reference are distributed along the system as dispatch and arrival stations.

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PART THREE DEBATING

Prospects

Towards an Enhanced Practice of International Design Studio Collaborations

John Hanna interviewing Mona Harb

Scholars of architecture use the epistemological practices of science and art to imagine alternative futures and identify their spatial prerequisites. Despite, or perhaps because of, the protected laboratory setting of academia, design studios have the potential to demonstrate and illustrate the possibilities of foregrounding different politics. Beirut is a city in perpetual social, economic and political crisis. Tackling case studies during times of crisis, such as Beirut, introduces a particularity to academic studios owing to the pressing urgency to identify levers of change. The academic design studio exercise as an epistemological exercise can generate knowledge which can spill outside the academic setting to affect prevailing public discourse. However, this can lead to a tension in education between a) training students how to solve real world problems versus b) having students produce knowledge that can help solve real world problems.

In this chapter we engage in a discussion with Prof. Mona Harb from the American University in Beirut to highlight the limitations and potentials emerging out of decisions regarding how to run a collaborative studio, from distance in a post-disaster situation. We ask her about the different power dynamics which are involved in such collaborations, what outcomes could be expected? whose interests do these collaborations serve? And what are the best practices to maintain the productivity of such encounters?

Interview

John Hanna: I would like to start by asking you about Beirut as a hot topic for design studios. I understand this has been the case since the civil war. Studio Basel explored Beirut in 2009. The Bartlett in 2012 and the ETH between 2017 and 2019. How do you see this, and what kind of challenges and opportunities can you identify?

1 An earlier version of select questions was developed in collaboration with Nadia Alaily-Mattar, Riwa Abdelkhalek and Paolo De Martino.

Mona Harb: I would like to start by saying it's not just about studio teaching. Let's reflect more on design pedagogy rather than just the studio teaching.

I think that Beirut has been an object of study and a topic of interest to foreign researchers since a very long time. This is not even just about the post Civil War phase. I think the Civil War catapulted Beirut to a place to study post-war reconstruction, so it became interesting to designers and planners who are interested in conflict, post-conflict, and post-war contexts. But I think if we want to place it historically, Beirut has been a city that has attracted foreign designers, planners, and urbanists since the 1950s.

I'm thinking about Michel Ecochard, Raymond and René Danger, and Constantinos A. Doxiadis. These urba experiments have been happening in Beirut for a very long period of time. And, it is not exclusive to Beirut. This is also the case for Syria, Egypt, Morocco, and many post-colonial countries. The Gulf countries are also another very interesting geography where you can see that happening. It is important to reflect on the fact that these are terrains that attract the attention of foreign scholars and foreign practitioners because of the very possibility of doing experiments that maybe are not as possible in their own contexts. There is always this exotic interest or gaze on these territories.

And I'm not saying this interest is something that comes just from the foreign experts themselves. It's also a demand by many locals. There's a demand from rulers, decision makers, university presidents, and heads of departments for these experts to come and collaborate.

There is an interesting dynamic of interaction around these terrains that is important to note without value judgment. There have been many publications about it. I'm thinking about the very good book of Joe Nasr and Mercedes Volait, Urbanism: Imported or Exported?, or people like Eric Verdeil, who also highlight these influences in several countries, and of the works of many French urban scholars who work on this topic too. For me, it's important to historicize all this and to place it in a larger geography and history.

Now to go back to Beirut itself, I think your question raises a key issue. There are both opportunities and challenges in this, the opportunity is clearly a learning opportunity. We learn better when we are exchanging ideas with each other and when we are comparing our context and our case-study to other cases and other contexts. Learning is expanded and amplified. It becomes enriched through these diversifications of ideas. The opportunities that are created by such exchanges are very clear.

With regards to the challenges, I don't know how much it is clear for people who engage in such programs, but I'm very conscious of it. Maybe

because I have been engaged in several such exercises. They relate, I would say, foremost to language. Most of the time we are dealing with people who do not speak the local language, whether they are educators or learners, students or professors. This creates gaps in knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange. Sometimes, these gaps are important and difficult to bridge.

The other major challenge is time. There is often not enough time to build substantive exchanges, so we often stay at the level of exchange that is at face value. We don't have the opportunity to go more in depth to explore further issues. The type of work that comes out can be more descriptive than analytical.

I feel there's always a missed opportunity of going more in depth because of this lack of time. I mean, because we're stuck in semester calendars that are often not aligned among all partners. The calendar of the semester in one place is not the same in another place. There are also other academic limitations related to learning outcomes or due dates or to pedagogy in general.

And often there is no follow-up. I think it's interesting what you are doing, that you are trying to explore your exchange through a publication where there is some sort of follow up that can happen through the publication itself, and you can reflect and be more analytical about what has happened. This is a great example of possibilities of how to take the conversation further, but it comes more from West-based scholars because they have more time and more resources. They have an opportunity to take this further. But the people on the other side, in the studied places of conflict or of war, are less able to engage or come into the project at the same level.

What you are doing with this publication is already more engaging than many others. I mean that you are inviting me to reflect on this. Others would not even take the time to do this. In that sense, sometimes there is erasure of the natives' voices that happens. That is an actual risk.

Most of the time it is not an outcome of ill intentions, and it is mainly due to circumstances, to structural considerations of institutions rather than wanting to exclude or wanting to erase. This is the way academia works and this is the way scholarly exchanges work. And they sometimes are stronger than the intentions of people with regards to whom to include and whom to engage.

I would say that, I am at a stage in my career where I am very conscious of such requests that come very often. If we have a crisis or if we don't, if we have an explosion or if we don't. There are these temporal patterns. For instance, now in the summer, foreign students or experts visit Beirut because they have time and funding to visit, whereas this is the time for us

to write and to rest and to spend time with our families. The temporality of this is quite interesting: people come during their breaks, during the times that fit them. And they don't take much into consideration what's happening in the host country that is their object of study.

For me, I think the feeling is mixed. On one hand, there is an excitement of wanting to exchange with others and share knowledge and mentor younger scholars and meet colleagues and peers and grow ideas together. And there is a frustration of always being the object of study of other people––the exchange is going in one direction. Mostly sharing the knowledge that people living in the studied context have been nurturing for decades, which has a very precious value. Sometimes one needs to be also cautious of what they are sharing, especially in these times of crisis where both sides of the exchange do not have the same opportunities and resources to publish as much or publish as quickly.

We take much more time to be able to write and reflect in a context where the crisis impedes our ability to produce. We have to worry about mundane things that people living abroad do not have to worry about, at least not to the same degree. To make it concrete, we wake up and need to deal with issues related to water and electricity crises, transportation, and care––childcare and elderly care. These are things that are taken for granted in other contexts and there are social infrastructures and social protection networks that support women and men who are responsible for taking care of others—at least, partly.

This is not to ignore the other concerns that people abroad have that we don't have here, like the neoliberal university and demands for publications that are very high and competitive––this maybe exists to a lesser extent in our academic institutions.

I am not saying that one context is better than the other. I'm just saying there are different temporalities for research and publications. Sometimes, especially when I was younger, I often felt that conversations I had with people who would come and visit would end up being published before I would even have time to work on them and publish them on my own.

I learned, I would say the hard way, to become careful about what I share, with whom I share, and with whom I work. The ethics of the people involved and their positionality makes a huge difference. When we are cooperating with people we trust and we know them to be ethical teachers and researchers––like for instance, you know that one of our former colleagues was involved in this project (from Delft's side) early on and that was a huge seal of approval concerning ethics and morality. This is always helpful for the facilitation of the exchange.

When you know that there are people like them involved, you realize that these relationships are going to be more equal, more careful, more ethical,

and it facilitates the exchange enormously.

The Lebanese diaspora (and I would say unfortunately, the Arab diaspora) is growing so much in recent years as a result of the authoritarianism in our countries, which is making people leave to find work elsewhere. It becomes "interesting" that now whenever we need to cooperate with people abroad—at MIT, at Harvard, at TU Delft, or in France or London—there's always a Lebanese or Arab scholar who knows one of us and who is going to facilitate this exchange in a way that gives it the ethical seal I am talking about.

The fact that you are trying to find a way of doing this exchange that is more inclusive and more equitable is exactly what I'm talking about. It is a value set that is very important in these sorts of exchanges. I think this value set was not as common at the time when I started my work 20 years ago.

Maybe it was because we did not even have such a big scholarly diaspora abroad, and maybe this is something that is interesting to reflect on, that we have more of a generational shift. We have younger scholars abroad from the Arab region who are populating the institutions of Europe, the US, and the UK and maybe Australia as well. This generation can make these exchanges easier. Mediating these types of exchanges is very interesting and productive because they have this value set given their ability to navigate both terrains.

They know how to connect people in Beirut with people in the West and they can read the terrain of the authoritarian context well. They have been there, they know how it works, the codes, and which value sets matter.

John Hanna: With the Beirut blast taking place during Covid, many design studios in foreign universities were not able to travel and access the site. They had to do this from distance. What do you think is the main challenge of doing this? In your opinion, what do you lose as a design educator, particularly in a context similar to Beirut, when you run a studio at distance?

Mona Harb: It's a huge challenge. There's a lot that you lose when you pilot a studio at a distance. The feel of the terrain, the emotions, and the affective dimension. You lose all the sensory experiences that design educators feel when they're teaching. Also, learners miss a lot when they need to respond to a design brief of a site that they're not able to walk in, look at, feel it, hear the sounds around it, observe people and things and how they move around it. It's really hard to do that.

It can be mitigated by having access to audiovisuals or YouTube videos that can also serve as a proxy for doing that. One can even conceive of commissioning videos ahead of time to share with students and with the design educators.

There are ways around it, but I think that it's still a big loss –I would say in any context you would lose a lot; my answer is not specific to Beirut. Even if you are studying a desert or an empty place, the feel of it is very important and so is the emotional dimension.

John Hanna: In response to this inaccessibility to the site, many studios decided to work together closely with Lebanese universities. Speakers were regularly invited to give input over Zoom, and some student groups worked closely with local students' groups who acted as their eyes on the field.

How do you see these power dynamics? For instance, when they ask the local students to go to the field and take photos for them, do you see some sort of asymmetry there?

Mona Harb: Absolutely. The asymmetry is there. There is a real danger of the students becoming like native "fixers" for the foreign commissioners. It is very important to think ahead about this asymmetry.

Today, for instance, I received an email from someone asking me to share data and maps for a particular area in Lebanon. This was coming from students and not colleagues. There is, sometimes, a sense of entitlement in requests for data coming from foreign students.

But I would say in the design studios and the way it happened after the blast, the requests we got from colleagues to cooperate on studios were generally professional. I didn't witness much of asymmetry, but I think the problem you are highlighting here is super important.

With regards to our local students, I think because we conceived the studios jointly, and because the cooperation happened early on, the requests for the local students to share field data were conceived in a more structural way, where they understood that they will be sharing with their foreign colleagues images, videos, and readings of the local context so that they could become integrated in the designs.

And in exchange, the foreign partners would also share their expertise on specific themes and topics. We were dealing specifically with TU Delft as a key center of knowledge on port cities and this was a possibility for our students to learn directly from the experts on the issue through comparative case studies.

From my experience as a colleague who was observing this, I thought that this was a win-win collaboration because we also had substantive content that was coming into the studio from the universities involved. It was designed in a way which I don't think made our students feel that they were working for someone else. The field material they shared was documentation they needed to do anyway for their own studio and they were sharing with a bigger group to reflect collectively on it. And I think

that is the right way to do it.

I think sometimes it is also interesting for the local students to hear reflections on a place from people who have never visited it. It brings a way of looking at the site that is very different. I'm not advocating that this should happen, but if it were to happen because of the circumstances, like what happened during the pandemic, it could become an interesting encounter.

It also happens when you have foreign students visiting Beirut for just for a week. The way they see Beirut is very different from people who have lived in the place. They ask questions that are very raw that we don't ask. There's a freshness or originality to the way the designer eye operates when you don't know the place. That can be very productive for the interrogation as long as it is coupled with the (local) eye that knows.

John Hanna: What impacts could foreign university-based design studios have on Beirut the city? And on the foreign institutions themselves? In which directions do you think students need to be steered to generate such impacts?

Mona Harb: I think one of the impacts is that they amplify the learning for both the Beirut-based institution and the foreign one. When you have multiple people from different trainings, journeys, backgrounds, disciplines, experiences, thinking about the same issue, it certainly enhances the way we think about it.

I think there are a lot of opportunities to take it further. There are opportunities in terms of dissemination and continuing the work beyond the exercise of the studio.

One possibility is to do publications in multiple media formats. To document what happened, producing websites or videos about the experience. Also, to document very carefully the methodology of the work itself, the teaching, the exchange, and to highlight what worked and what didn't, so that it becomes an attempt to take this further in another episode of learning beyond the crisis.

Institutions can start thinking about how to continue to work together by establishing MOUs, mobility exchanges, or trying to seek collaborative funding. If this was a productive experience for both, if there are working relations that got established between faculty members in productive and interesting ways, it is important that the foreign institution (which often has more time and resources) try to find ways of pushing it forward.

Crises never end, right? The crisis was there in Beirut before, and continues after the explosion. There are multiple crises, not just one. Acknowledging this and thinking like: "okay, the, explosion was an opportunity to forge links, but can we continue building those links on a more regular basis

and seek to institutionalize these partnerships?" An ideal scenario would be to apply for funding together to support the people we worked with at these institutions beyond that moment of crisis.

The publications you're doing are a very good example of how it could be disseminated further. There is a choice for approaching this with reflective effort, highlighting what worked, what didn't, and how we can improve. This is definitely something that is a good outcome of such a prospect, to take the time to do this, and to have the institution invest resources in this.

A long-term impact could also be seen in a possibility to continue the student exchange through workshops, visiting studios, but not only by bringing the foreign students to Beirut, but also to bring Beirut-based students to Delft.

I talked about this with colleagues regularly. It's very important that it is a two-way street, and I am not only talking about faculty mobility, but student mobility. I know it is much more expensive, but we need to find ways to motivate our institutions to fund these traveling studios or to find ways through larger funding schemes such as perhaps EU programs.

With regards to the impacts of such design studios on the city itself—that is a much harder question.

I've become very interested recently in how culture plays a major role in situations of crisis. I am thinking about exhibitions, performances, installations. Sometimes these types of interventions in cities are much more beneficial to the city than a paper that we publish, or a book that gets read by a few.

Beirut is a city that has many cultural activities happening and there are a lot of artists and designers that are intervening in the city itself. They are making interventions in public space, in open venues that can be accessed by passersby and residents. And that is an interesting opportunity.

Consider when you are doing something that deals with a city in crisis, that some of the outputs that could be more impactful in the long run and engage more people could be installations, performances and exhibitions that have a component that takes place outside the confines of the academic institution, and which could stay for a prolonged period in the city itself. That would engage more students, more residents, and a larger public.

John Hanna: Do you think these kinds of studios could be informative to the actual planning of the city in any way?

Mona Harb: We should not be overly ambitious. The studios are very confined by learning outcomes, and they're also very constrained by the abilities of students just to take stock of what they need to do for the

studio itself. We often load them with a lot of requirements and demands. We do not want to transform them into unpaid consultants.

For me, it's important that we acknowledge the fact that students are students and that they're here for the learning experience and the exchange, and that they also have a lot of limitations, especially in times of crisis. By crisis, I'm talking about youth everywhere because this is a generation that is dealing with a very deep malaise related to the crisis of capitalism. There are lot of burdens on mental health. It becomes hard to ask students to play a professional role, in addition to everything else.

If we want to impact planning at the level of the city, we need to impact public authorities and decision makers. We need to think about different types of collaborations between foreign and local institutions. There are many modalities through which this can happen. Through visiting professorships or experts' mobility, faculty can travel and give lectures or workshops.

At the Beirut Urban Lab, we have been keen in supporting the Port Authority of Beirut and the municipality of Beirut in the post-blast construction and recovery. We are able to host people who would come and support us to continue the work that happened in the studio ¬–beyond the studio. And, we have much more in-depth workshops with advanced professionals, local and foreign, to push our ideas further, and to come up with multiple scenarios which we can then pitch to decision-makers.

This also needs to be planned and organized in relation to funding. We need to hire people to draft, produce drawings and base maps, to collect information from places and prepare presentations. It doesn't need to be a fully-fledged consultancy like for a private firm, it can be conceived as action research. While this could also be beneficial for people in academic institutions, it can be conceived at the level of professionals where the students can take part, but then they would take part as part of a research team, not part of a limited design-studio. I would decouple the studio from the planning expert advice.

The co-director of the Beirut Urban Lab, Professor Howayda al-Harithy, did it the other way around over the past year. She taught a studio based on the research and professional work she had done with the team in Karantina. They had done a strategic plan for a network of open spaces in Karantina, but they could not design all of them. The brief for the studio asked students to design these open spaces and the students produced drafts for design projects for public spaces, based on high-quality research and professional analysis that was done before the studio started. The students' products could be taken up by NGOs or municipalities if they had resources.

John Hanna: Did you witness any difference between the approaches of the local design studios and the international ones when they addressed the blast? Or between the different local design studios?

Mona Harb: I was not involved with the design component of our studio, so I didn't fully experience that.

There's a time for different approaches and one needs to be very attentive and careful in traumatic moments like what we experienced, with the explosion and the fragility. There is a risk of erasing the trauma that people are going through by wanting to go to design experimentations that maybe appear to go beyond the problem.

It also has to do a lot with the pedagogies you suggest in the title of your book. At AUB, we teach architecture according to a specific epistemology. We teach architecture as a culture practice, and we teach it in interdisciplinary ways. We are very conscious of the social, economic, and political dimensions. We aim to integrate the process with the product, methodology, and representation. We are very far from the Beaux-Arts practice.

There are many other schools in Lebanon and the Arab world that teach architecture in the Beaux-Arts way, where it's not as interdisciplinary. It becomes much more about the product and the forms. It is much more about the representation, especially in these days of digital tools.

At the AUB's Department of Architecture and Design (ArD), most teachers are going to ask more questions about conceptual framing, about process, about political and social issues, and about economic issues. They are going to be less interested in the final product and more interested in modalities through which that final product will be defined. This distinguishes the type of approaches that will be followed. And I think this helped the collaboration with TU Delft, MIT, and Tsinghua: our similar design pedagogies. This is the way professors teach in their design studios, irrespective of case studies and crisis or not crisis. The briefs will be very similar. The questions asked during juries and reviews will be similar.

John Hanna: Even for local design studios, accessing the site of the blast and some of the surrounding areas like Karantina can entail some complicated power dynamics. How do you prepare your students for this within the working frame of the Beirut Urban Lab?

Mona Harb: Yes, absolutely. Especially this generation who is very immobile in their neighborhoods and their enclaves. And I would say not only in Lebanon. I mean young people are walking less and less in their cities and experiencing less and less the neighborhoods that they don't live in or work in. They only know the ones which they visit frequently because they have family there or for leisure.

Within the design studio, there are students who have never visited those sites, who have no rapport with those sites and who might have had a very distant relationship to the sites. Who might even have biases against these sites and prejudices against them depending on positionalities. Students can be prejudiced against the populations living there or the areas themselves because they are outside the city, or peripheral to the city, or because they are seen as "immoral" areas or poor areas.

Typically, the way we do it, is in the first phase of the studio, students need to record their impressions of the site, and do what we refer to as "reconnaissance." This is where we can identify who is familiar with the neighborhood, who's not familiar with it, who's worried about it, who's afraid of it, who has traumas related to it, and the histories of the place.

We send the students there without prior information about the site. We don't assign readings yet, and we don't talk to them about it yet. We send them off to capture their initial impressions of the field trying to minimize any influences on their readings.

It is always hard because they come back to you and they want to convey what they think you want to hear. We try to push them to get rid of these expectations that they think we have as well.

Following this first phase, we address upfront the preconceptions they have, the binaries, and their stereotypes about the place. We unpack them through discussions. Typically, students will feel differently about the same place. The discussions that take place between these students is very important. Then we assign sets of readings to go through. We ask them to refer to these readings when they reflect back on the site through more and more field visits. It is a very intense process that involves a lot of senses, emotions, and affect in addition to scholarly and scientific type of work to enable discussing the concepts related to cultural, political, economic, and social dimensions.

It is during this process where we unpack concepts of class, sectarianism, public/private, formal/informal, state, society, agency, and structure. We bring them to class and we discuss them together, sometimes through lectures or film screenings.

John Hanna: Do you include something on the ethics of field work or decolonizing ethnography, anthropology, or do you think it could be too much for architecture students?

Mona Harb: Certainly not too much. But we are not into the decolonizing framework because we'd like to think we are quite decolonized ourselves.

My colleagues and I are already very embedded in local realities and are rather aware of coloniality and have decolonized the curriculum a while ago. For us, decoloniality is not a frame we use, but we understand it well

because we practice it. We make our students very aware of the contexts within which concepts are conceived and developed and how they are imported into the context of Lebanon and we cross it with scholars who work on sectarianism and class and the works we've done ourselves on financialization, gentrification, sectarianism and territorialities.

The students start combining theories that come from more colonial frames with decolonial and interdisciplinary frames. They work on urban politics, urban sociology, urban anthropology, and urban history, with a lot of planning case-studies from the Global South.

John Hanna: Particularly for studios running in foreign universities, to what extent do you think an awareness of the political history and present conflicts is necessary for running such studios? Do you think they can distract the students from the design task and limit their creativity?

Mona Harb: Yes, there is a risk of becoming hyperrealist. I don't know if we can call it a hyperrealism or falling into despair. For designers, they feel that there's nothing they can do to repair any of this through their designs.

We make sure to tell them that design cannot solve things. We scare them off with annihilating the power of design (laughs). It is a real danger. That's why, and this is something I learned from the designers in our team, we use the first phase of the design studio to ask students to share with us their raw impressions, before this somehow heavy input.

One of my colleagues does this exercise of what she calls visioning, where she pushes the students to envision another reality of the place without knowing anything about it. To envision something for the place and draw it in any possible way. The visioning can also be a collage of sorts. She does that in the very first two weeks before they read anything and as a response to their first impressions.

It becomes a phase where we try to capture that creativity or that instinct that is important for designers and planners. They put their ideas on paper and keep a record of them. They capture early on their initial impressions and then we go into the deconstruction: the scientific dimension and the unpacking phase, where they become more bombarded with the planning and social science bits which grounds them in different ways. After that, they need to (re)navigate the design part with the social science part. Then, at the end of the studio we expect them to go back to the visioning, but a visioning informed by all the knowledge they acquired through the readings, through the field work, but without losing the creative part –the imaginative part.

What we try to do is to also share with them examples of case studies, drawings, and design cases that can inspire them to reconnect to their creative core. Design and planning are very important and powerful

preconfigurative tools, because they help imagine another urban reality, and helps envision it. Even empirically through the drawings of students, we become able to imagine a different port of Beirut that could inspire other people to continue the struggle for a better future.

Through the power of their drawings, we can start having discussions about how amazing it would be if the Port of Beirut could be linked to the city center and to the rest of the city, or how wonderful it would be to have a green path cut across Ashrafieh and link its upper parts to the port through a beautiful green promenade. It is because they're able to draw this that we become able to talk about it and present it and share it. It inspires people to continue the struggle on the street. These types of discussions and these types of writings on urbanism as a powerful emancipatory force are important, and I lecture a lot about this in my classes because I don't want students to fall into despair. I want them to feel they could have the power to. Yes, the market forces are very hard. If they work in private offices, it will be very difficult for them to do that, but they still have the tools to do it, and they can do it by being engaged in the struggle for a more just city. They can work with NGOs, with research centers, or teach, and inspire other generations of students to do the same.

I try to take them there as someone who's not a designer or a planner, but who teaches designers and planners. I cannot just teach them to be to be depressed designers and to feel helpless facing so many forces that are bigger than they are. I take them through the work of Forensic Architecture, for instance. I try to show them how design tools can be very powerful for investigating situations of violence and conflict like they do in their work on Palestine or for the Port of Beirut. I also bring in the works of architects like Alejandro Aravena, who works on recycling building material at the borders of Mexico and USA into informal housing units. I show them the work of Ayham Dalal, who worked on the refugee camps of Jordan to show the agency of refugees and how in many ways architects can learn from what they do. I show them how design can be a tool of research to document and to learn from. I try to bring the work of our own Beirut Urban Lab, or the Cairo-based centers such as CLUSTER and Takween/ Tadamun. The work of Catalytic Action is also a very good example: it is an NGO that has been designing lot of playgrounds for children in Beirut and in refugee camps in Jordan. It is led by an Architecture graduate of AUB. I show them examples of people they can relate to that have graduated from the same institutions, or from peer institutions in the region and who are trying to make an impact in the city, a real tangible, physical impact. I show them all of this and I try to tell them that there are real ways through which we can make impacts on cities through documenting, researching, and intervening whenever we can.

Authors Biographies

Nadia Alaily-Mattar is a research associate and lecturer at the Chair of Urban Development at the Technical University of Munich. She is an architect with a PhD from University College London. Her research focuses on the role of architecture in urban transformation processes as well as tools and methods for futures oriented urban planning.

Hana Alamuddin, LEED AP in Neighborhood Design, heads an award winning practice, Almimariya, Architects and Designers for Sustainable Development in Lebanon. The practice works on architectural, urban design and landscape projects in Lebanon and the Arab world. Projects executed range from residential, educational projects, heritage preservation to post war reconstruction. She has several articles published about reconstruction and heritage preservation and a children's book illustrating the environmental quality and sustainable practices of a traditional house. Ms. Alamuddin has been a senior lecturer at American University of Beirut since 1994. She was a board member of the Lebanon Green Building Council from 2014 until 2018 and served as jury member for The Green Building Council MENA Awards during four cycles. In mid 2020, she joined the WGBC MENA team for the formulation of the SRGs and proposed the addition of a chapter on heritage which she later on wrote.

Rana Elrashidy is an architect, urbanist, and gates' scholar. She graduated from the University of Cambridge and the German University in Cairo. Her research investigates new urban developments, and the intertwined socio-political dynamics. She conducted research on the coproduction of urban space in exclusive urban communities in both Cambridge and Cairo. From 2017 till 2021, Rana worked at the German University in Cairo as a research fellow and teaching assistant. She taught a wide spectrum of courses and was mainly focused on Visual and Urban Design courses. She worked closely with and under the guidance of Professor Holger Gladys.

Nicolas Fayad is a Beirut based architect and educator who completed his Bachelor in Architecture at the American University of Beirut before earning a Masters in Architecture with distinction from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. He is a founding partner at East Architecture Studio, an award-winning collective practice committed to architectural design and experimental research. The studio yields innovative built environments of various scales ranging from master planning to interior design and adaptive reuse, engaging both contemporary society and traditional culture. Nicolas' work has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale, the Chicago History Museum and the RIBA North National Architecture Center and published in Wallpaper Magazine, New York Review of Architecture (NYRA), and Architectural Record. He is the recipient of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (fifteenth cycle) and was recently awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award, offered by the American University of Beirut, honoring his achievements. In 2021, he served as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Architecture at MIT, where he co-instructed a graduate architecture and urban design option studio 'Trauma Urbanism', using Beirut as a site for investigation in post-blast reconstruction strategies. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Practice in Architecture at the American University of Beirut.

Holger Gladys is an architect and urbanist. He graduated from the Cologne University of Applied Sciences and the research-based Berlage Institute in Amsterdam. He practiced architecture and established a partnership firm in the Netherlands between 2003 and 2016. In addition, he held the positions of Associate Lecturer at the Amsterdam Academy of Architecture. Between 2010 and 2016 he also

held the position of Research Associate at the Weimar Bauhaus University. He was an active member of the Weimar Institute for European Urban Studies and in 2013 became the Guest Professor at the Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Washington Alexandria Architecture Center. Over the course of 15 years, he was the Master Thesis Committee Member in Amsterdam, Weimar, and Leuven; Guest Critic at design studios in Delft, Stuttgart, Innsbruck, Washington DC; and Visiting Teacher during international summer schools in Amsterdam, Istanbul, and Porto. In 2016, Holger joined the German University in Cairo as Associate Professor, teaching urban design and theory as well as urban economics. His activities were mainly dedicated to the 5th year Major Urban Design Studies, a pre-master program composed of intense design instruction and extensive applied research on the urban environment. Under his guidance, the program/research cluster attempted to recalibrate the discourse on the formation of metropolitan urban-regional-rural-agglomerations away from a Euro-American dominated narrative and reposition the cities of the global South towards the center of theory-making. Holger designed the program in such a way to break open black and white thinking, to consider and re-consider outdated hegemonies, and to carefully position and re-position the global South at eye-level on the agenda of critical reflection and space-making. His ambition was to create fresh and unbiased insights on the repertoire of metropolitan conditions, particularly reflecting the vocabulary of the Greater Cairo Region as source and inspiration. In addition to teaching, mentoring, and co-supervision of masters' theses at GUC, Holger was responsible for curriculum development and accreditation as well as for building a massive library with updated selection of exquisitely critical books. He kept a stream of peer-reviewed publications and analytical scholarly articles that were largely based on first-hand research and studies and participated in international academic conferences and forums.nHolger was an avid reader, a curious traveller, and a critical analyst of urbanism. He visited many cities around the world, and in Egypt, documented buildings and curated and archived original and digital photographs, maps, floor plans and designs.

John Hanna is a lecturer and researcher at the Chair of History of Architecture and Urban Planning in the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at Delft University of Technology. His research is centered on the spatial aspects of urban conflicts, primarily focusing on Paris and Beirut. John Hanna is also a member of the Leiden . Delft . Erasmus center for PortCityFutures, where he spearheads various research and educational initiatives, with a particular emphasis on North-Sea and Mediterranean Port Cities.

Mona Harb is tenured professor of urban studies and politics at the American University of Beirut where she is also co-founder and research lead at the Beirut Urban Lab. Her current research investigates disaster governance and city-making in contexts of dysfunctional states, and the role of urban and environmental movements and activists in oppositional politics. She is the author of *Le Hezbollah à Beirut: de la banlieue à la ville, co-author of Leisurely Islam: Negotiating Geography and Morality in Shi'i South Beirut* (with Lara Deeb), co-editor of *Local Governments and Public Goods: Assessing Decentralization in the Arab World* (with Sami Atallah), and co-editor of *Refugees as City-Makers* (with Mona Fawaz et al.), and of more than eighty journal articles, book chapters, and other publications. Harb is the recipient of multiple research grants and awards (IDRC, Open Society Foundation, Ford Foundation, LSE-Emirates Fund, EU-FP7, Wenner-Gren, ACLS, Middle-East Awards). She serves on the editorial boards of *Environment and Planning C, CSSAME* and *IJMES*. She is also the coordinator of the AUB graduate programs in Urban Planning, Policy and Design, and was previously Associate Dean of her faculty, and Chairperson of the department of Architecture and Design. She provides professional advice on urban development issues for several international organizations (ESCWA, WB, EU, UNDP).

Carola Hein is Professor History of Architecture and Urban Planning at Delft University of Technology, Professor at Leiden and Erasmus University and UNESCO Chair Water, Ports and Historic Cities. She has published widely in the field of architectural, urban and planning history and has tied historical

analysis to contemporary development. Among other major grants, she received a Guggenheim and an Alexander von Humboldt fellowship. Her recent books include: Oil Spaces (2021), Urbanisation of the Sea (2020), Adaptive Strategies for Water Heritage (2020), The Routledge Planning History Handbook (2018), Port Cities: Dynamic Landscapes and Global Networks (2011).

Liu Jian received her Bachelor degree in Architecture and Master and Doctor degrees in Urban Planning & Design from Tsinghua University. She is Registered City Planner in China, Associate Dean and tenured full professor of Urban Planning & Design at Tsinghua University School of Architecture. She is the Managing Chief-Editor of China City Planning Review, editorial board member of Urban Design and L'architettura delle città - The Journal of the Scientific Society Ludovico Quaroni. She was the Executive Member, Vice President, President of Asian Planning Schools Association, Council Member and Vice President of World Society for Ekistics, Scientific Committee Member of International Forum of Urbanism, Vice Director of International Urban Planning Academic Committee and Member of Rural Planning and Development Academic Committee of Urban Planning Society of China, Member of Female Urban Planners Committee of China Association of City Planning. She was Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Graduate School of Design Harvard University in 2016, visiting scholar at l'Oservatoir d'Architecture de la Chine Contemporaine in 2000 and 2003, and visiting scholar at UBC Center for Human Settlements in 1995. She works as professor, researcher and city planner/designer, with particular interests on urban and regional development, town and village planning, urban regeneration and redevelopment, planning institution and management, and international comparative studies. She publishes both domestically and overseas, such as Urban Space in Cultural Perspective, Reforming The Urban Planning System, a Research Based on The Comparison of China, Japan and France Amid Transition, Towards Socially Integrative Cities: Perspectives on Urban Sustainability in Europe and China, and so on. She chairs or co-chairs both national and international funding research projects, as well as a number of practical projects of urban and rural planning in a number of Chinese cities, which were rewarded with either national or ministerial prizes.

Jean-François Lejeune graduated from the University of Liège (Belgium) and owns a Ph.D. from TU Delft Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment. He is a professor of architecture, urban design, and history at the University of Miami School of Architecture and is since 2022 Adjunct Professor of History at the University of Notre-Dame Rome Gateway. His research ranges from Latin American architecture and urbanism to 20th-century vernacular modernism in Spain and Italy. His most important publications include The Making of Miami Beach 1933-1942: The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon (Rizzoli, 2001), Cruelty and Utopia: Cities and Landscapes of Latin America (Princeton Architectural Press, 2005, CICA Prize Best Exhibition Catalogue 2005), Sitte, Hegemann, and the Metropolis (Routledge, 2009), Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean (Routledge, 2010, with Michelangelo Sabatino), Rural Architecture and Water Urbanism: The Modern Village in Franco's Spain (DOM Publishers, 2021), and Cuban Modernism: Mid-Century Architecture 1940-70 (Birkhäuser, 2021, with Victor Deupi). In addition, he has contributed multiple essays published in journals such as Rassegna, ANTA, The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts, as well as in exhibition catalogues, and other publications. He is currently at work on two books, Loos and Schinkel (Routledge) and The Other Rome: The Splendid Ordinary 1870-1960 (Birkhäuser). He has received multiple grants including from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Arts and was an Affiliated Fellow at the American Academy in Rome in 2008. He is a founder and director of DoCOMOMO-US/Florida.

Paolo De Martino graduated in Architecture from the Department of Architecture of the University of Naples Federico II (DiARC). After graduating he worked as an architect in Naples, focusing mainly on the reuse of the existing architectural heritage and on urban regeneration. In 2014 he moved to Delft, the Netherlands, where he completed a PhD in a dual research program between Delft University of

Technology (TU Delft) and University of Naples Federico II. His research, entitled "Land in Limbo", investigates port cities from a spatial and governance perspective, analyzing the impact that actors have in shaping spatial development. The city of Naples is an emblematic case to question how to rethink the areas of land-sea interaction, at different scales, as opportunities for territorial regeneration. Since 2017 he has been teaching at the Department of Architecture of TU Delft where he is tutoring students in Design Studios such as "Architecture and Urbanism beyond oil", "Adaptive Strategies" and "Designing Public Spaces for Maritime Mindsets", coordinated by Carola Hein. Since 2021, in collaboration with TU Delft, he has been involved in teaching two MOOCs entitled: (Re) Imagining Port Cities: *(Re) Imagining Port Cities: Understanding Space, Society and Culture* and *Water Works: Activating Heritage for Sustainable Development*. Paolo De Martino is a member of the PortCityFutures research group and since 2022 he is a Post doc researcher at the University IUAV of Venice, under the supervision of Prof. Francesco Musco, working on the theme of Maritime Spatial Planning.

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