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Beirut's Urban Scars: A Dissonant Heritage

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Bachelor Degree of Architecture (B. Arch)

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Being a dissertation submitted to the faculty of The Built Environment as part of the requirements for the award of the MSc Urban Design and City Planning at University College London: I declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work and that ideas, data and images, as well as direct quotations, drawn from elsewhere are identified and referenced.

Nour Sinno

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لبيروت، مصدر إلهامي

To Beirut, my source of inspiration

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Beirut's Urban Scars: A Dissonant Heritage

Abstract

After a brutal 15 year civil war, Lebanon, and specifically its capital Beirut, underwent a historic reconstruction process lead by a semi-private company, Solidere. The reconstruction erased much of the city's heritage in order to hide all remnants of war and to present the city as an emblem of modernity. In line with a state sponsored amnesia, that discourages the discussion of war to sustain the existing political discourse, the Lebanese are still suffering from a segregated society, due, largely to a lack of reconciling the war.

However, a handful of buildings managed to survive the destruction of the historic city centre, as a result of conflict between their shareholders. These buildings, or urban scars, bear witness to the war and remind locals of the turbulent past by presenting them with bullet holes and shelling marks. Often abandoned and derelict, these buildings await an uncertain future.

In this dissertation I argue that these buildings present locals with stark reminders of the dangers of war and that they have the potential to reconcile the past. I do so by looking at two case studies; Burj El-Murr and Beit Beirut to understand local perceptions of the urban scar and the existing discourse of memorialisation. This will inform future conduct with these sites of dissonant heritage.

I- Introduction

Figure 1: Left: Burj El-Murr, Right: Burj El-Hawa Intervention on Burj El-Murr (El-Khoury, 2019)

On May 18th, 2018, Beirut awoke to a colourful intervention on one of its prominent scars of war. Street artist Jad El-Khoury, had covered the bleak windows of Burj El-Murr with the colourful curtains (Andrews, 2018) (El-Khoury, 2019)[1]. Burj El-Murr was an ambitious project, set to be the Beirut Trade Centre, commissioned in 1974. Construction of the tower was halted in 1975 with the outbreak of the civil war which lasted until 1990.

The tower became a sniper nest in 1976, used by a variety of militias to take control of Beirut. Missiles and bombs were often launched from its dark windows. The tower was soon transformed from a pinnacle of modernity and hope into a "killing machine".

[1] In an Interview conducted with Jad El-Khoury in June,2019

After the war ended in 1990, the tower remained a hollow shell, enisled from the rest of Beirut by the army. Disputes between the owners over its fate rendered it a frozen relic of war – an urban scar.

Burj El-Murr and several other scars are found inside or at the periphery of the Beirut Central District (BCD). Beirut's centre, on the other hand, was completely reconstructed by the private company Solidere[2], founded after the civil war by the then Prime Minister, Rafic Hariri. Having sustained the most violent clashes during the war, its marred buildings and souks became an urban project to symbolize Lebanon's prosperous future.

In an ironic approach, Solidere refurbished Beirut's historic centre by restoring old buildings and hiding all scars of war to promote Beirut as the Phoenix rising from the ashes and to consequently attract investment (Salaam, 1994). The narrative of the glorious historic city was to prevail above all remnants of war. Solidere even built entirely new neighbourhoods such as the Saifi quarter using architectural styles from the late 19th century to mirror the predominant architectural discourse (Nagel, 2002). It seems ironic that Solidere was using the history of Beirut as a marketing scheme but was denying its recent more turbulent past.

The Burj El-Murr intervention raised questions concerning these "urban scars". Someone had finally transfigured a buildings that seemed to be frozen in time. Reactions to this installation were varied and contradictory. While some regarded it as a means of moving on from the war, others criticized it for "mocking" the pain of those who suffered.

In light of this discussion, this dissertation will question the place of the urban scars in the memory of Beirut, and delineate the potential that they hold in reconciling a troubled past, in addition to focusing on how they can be conserved to create both a historically accurate narrative of the city and socially inclusive spaces that act as an anti-thesis to the commercialization of the city centre.

[2] Solidere: Société Libanaise pour le Développement et la Reconstruction du Centre-ville de Beyrouth, (The Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District)

Chapter Outline:

In the chapter (II) of this dissertation I will outline the research question and aims. In the chapter (III), I will briefly recount the history of the war and the reconstruction process in Beirut and will discuss different attitudes towards memory and their manifestations in the physical environment. In chapter (IV), I will discuss the methodologies conducted in this research and introduce my case studies. Chapter (V) will look at Burj El-Murr to understand local perceptions of urban scars while chapter (VI) will look at Beit Beirut, an urban scar adapted into a museum, to understand memorialisation practice and to inform future discourse. Chapter (VII) will analyse the findings and emerging themes. Chapter (VIII) will conclude with recommendations on dealing with urban scars in different settings.

II- Research Question, Aims and Objectives

1- Research Question

The aim of this dissertation is to locate the place of urban scars in the collective memory of Beirut and to attempt to recognise their place in future discourse.

2- Research Aims:

1- What is the local perception of these buildings?
2- How should planners treat these buildings?

3- Research Objectives:

- Locate the urban scars.
- Classify them in relationship to collective memory
- Collect a series of narratives and opinions concerning the urban scars
- Understand their potential in the democratisation of Beirut.
- Learn from existing discourses of memorials in Beirut
- Devise an understanding of their limitations

III- Literature Review

1- A Brief History of the War

The Lebanese civil war began in April, 1975 and lasting 15 years. It is often described as "one of the bloodiest civil wars of the twentieth century" (Chamie, 1977). It was comprised of a series of battles, as opposed to a war between two well-identified parties. The exact causes of the war remain vague to this day, but some have attributed it to "militia clashes, communal violence, and multiple foreign interventions" (Larkin, 2010)[3]. The outcomes of the war were not as vague. An approximate 170,000 dead, twice as many injured, (Khalaf, 2002, p.231), up to 1.3 million people forced to migrate (Harris, 2012) not to mention 17,000 missing civilians whose fates remain unresolved to date, with little to no effort being invested in finding them (HRW, 2017). In a country the size of Lebanon with a population of 3.5 million at the time, the gravity of these events are exponentially amplified (Khalaf, 2002).

The war also fragmented the population into "hostile groups" (Khalaf, 2002). This is highlighted in the urban realm whereby a demarcation line (or Green Line) divided Beirut into a predominantly Christian East and Muslim West. This line was a "fortified division more than 5 miles long" composed of cement blocks, barbed wire, and checkpoints. Crossing the demarcation line was difficult as it was controlled by guerrilla groups (Bollens,2012;p.146). An entire generation grew up with barricades cutting the city into two and hence limiting their understanding of the city into violent territories and destroying all forms of meeting places between different groups (Mermier, 2013). Furthermore, systematic approach of obliteration of all realms of civil society. The earliest pillars to be destroyed included prisons, hospitals, schools, and even cemeteries (Khoury,1995).

[3] Other experts traced the war back to "the weakness of the Lebanese state, colonial influence and regional interference, competing nationalisms and ideological battles, class struggles and economic disparity, or tribal and kinship loyalties." (ibid)

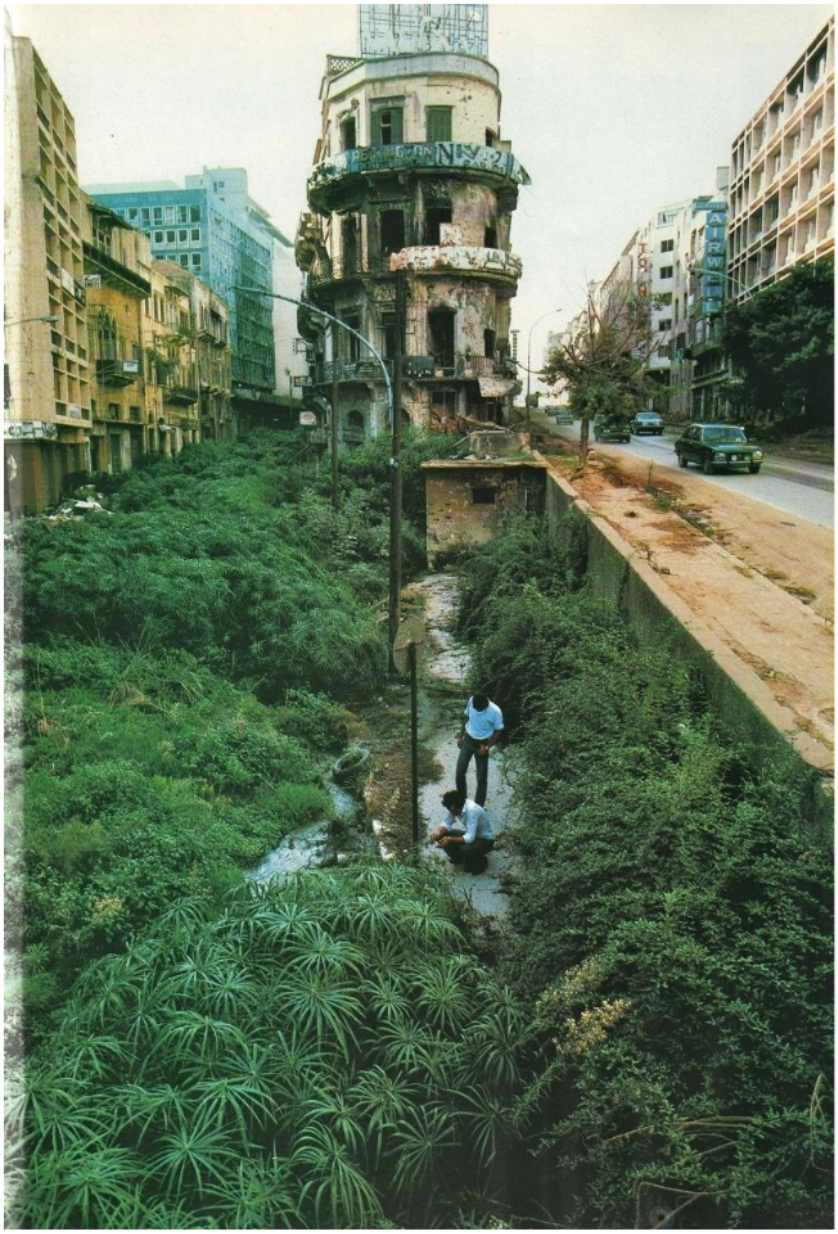

Figure 2: The Green Line, named after the vegetation that took over (R/Lebanon, 2018)

The war ended in 1990, with the Ta'if agreement, which restructured power distribution, and directed all efforts towards political and economic recovery. In 1991, a general amnesty law was passed that pardoned all forms of crime including "crimes against humanity" (Haugbolle, 2005) resulting in a sense of "uneasy peace" (Seidman, 2012). This granted the warlords who were

responsible for "massacres, theft, war crimes," etc… (ibid), redemption, and provided them with the legal framework necessary to become recognised politicians responsible for the reconstruction process (Makdisi, 1999;p.258). The basic structure of the law was inspired by the dogma of "no victor, no vanquished" which adopted a policy of amnesia and fostered the continuity of the existing socio-political system (Khalaf, 2002).

2- Beirut and Post-War Reconstruction

As mentioned in the previous section, the main goal after the end of the war was to rebuild the nation. In light of this need for reconstruction, Solidere, a "strange private-public hybrid" was created in 1991 to rebuild almost 200 hectares of the city centre (Wainwright,2015). The reconstruction of the Beirut Central District (BCD), was symbolic for rebuilding the country (Makdisi, 1997).

Figure 3: A Man holds a picture of the City Centre before the war, while standing in debris at the same spot (Baz, 1995)

Solidere and the Reconstruction of the BCD

Under state authorisation, following law 117, in 1991, Solidere was provided with the legal sanctions necessary to expropriate land and property from owners in exchange for Solidere stocks (Larkin, 2009). Solidere's strategy was to demolish much of the BCD to make space for a new vision which aimed to "utterly depoliticise" the space (Haugbolle, 2005;p.198). According to Makdisi, by 1993, around 80% of the structures were unsalvageable, although only a third of this damage was sustained by the civil war (Makdisi, 1997). In 1994, the final clearing of structures occurred in what was described as the "biggest land grab in history" (Fricke, 2005). This rendered the BCD a "tabula rasa" (Larkin, 2009).

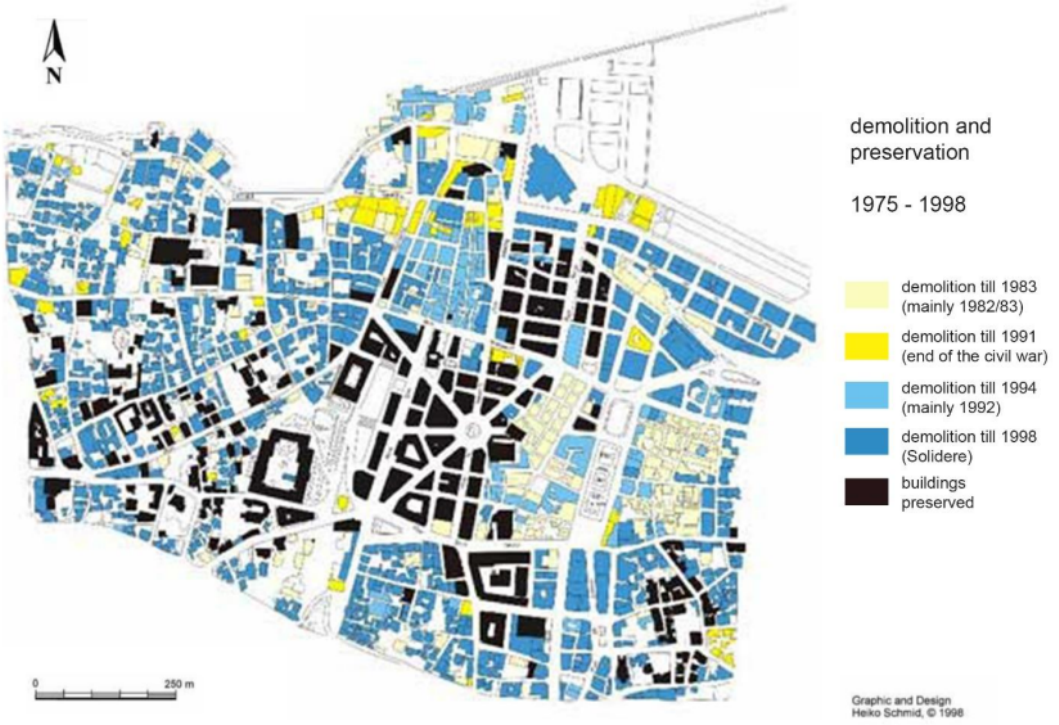

Figure 4: Solider's demolition of the BCD (blue) vs. that resulting from the war (yellow) (Schmid, 2006)

Solidere's adopted slogan was "Beirut: Ancient city of the future" which aimed to capitalise on an ancient heritage while eradicating the contemporary turbulent past to create the

image of the city that was set to regain its status as the financial hub of the Middle-East (Yaha, 2004) (Sarkis and Rowe, 1998).

Figure 5: Shot from Solidere Promotional Video (Firehorse, 1994)

The result was a central district built on neo-liberal, market-led notions of space highlighted by the gentrification of the area and the construction of a space used for commercial consumption that was too expensive for the recovering Lebanese citizens (Nagle, 2016). The new city centre catered to a small group of economic elite (Larkin, 2009). According to Marot and Yazigi (2012), the gentrification of the BCD was planting "seeds for future socio-political unrest" by creating a "level of inequality" which originally contributed to the outbreak of the civil war. Solidere was prioritising a vision of economic inequality and (Larkin,2009) over that of the urban melting pot, that used to be the BCD prior to the war, described by Sawalha (2010;p.26) as the point of interaction between "different classes, religious sects, and ideologies". Hence Solidere's discourse not only severed the city from its historic past, but also deepened the divide between its inhabitants.

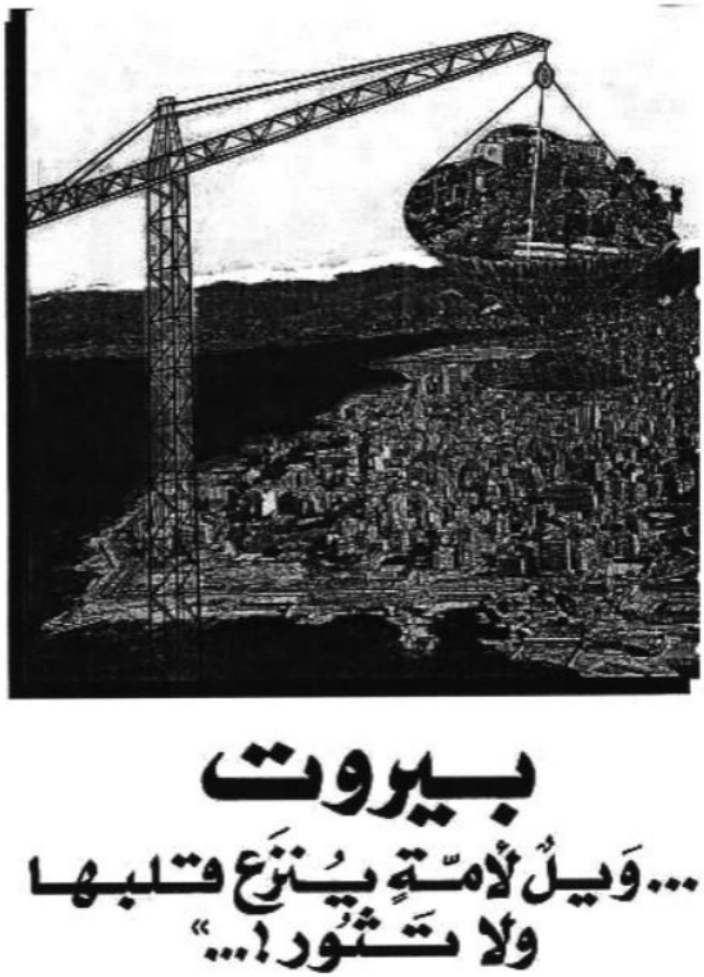

Figure 6: Poster reads " Beirut... Woe to a nation whose heart is removed and does not revolt"

Mapping Discourses of Amnesia and Remembrance in the City

In 1995, as Solidere was in the early stages of its (de)construction strategy, archaeologists were given the opportunity to unearth "Beirut's ancient Law School, the Roman city-state Berytus, the Byzantine city, and the Phoenician city" (Khoury, 1995)[4]. This was happening in parallel to a wave of destruction of more contemporary war torn buildings and the construction

[4] It is important to note that this was written in 1995, and since, Solidere has been infamous for destroying even the ancient layers of the city for monetary gain and the construction of high-end developments (Batah, 2017)

of a new city centre. Between the ancient past and the "bright" future, the turbulent "recent past" was to be erased from the city's narrative. This is a prime example of heritage being manipulated to serve elitist interests of regeneration and market-led gentrification (Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000).

Solidere's discourse of amnesia is a by-product of what Kassir (2002) coined a "state-sponsored amnesia" that was introduced by the Ta'if agreement. This amnesia, often discussed in literature dealing with postwar Lebanon, managed to seep into different realms of society. According to Larkin (2010), structured forgetting was encouraged via media censorship (1994 broadcasting law). Consequently the war was referred to as *al-ahdath* (the events), a sanitized version of the traumas that occurred. The term was even adopted by local newspapers to refer to the war (Fisk,1995).

According to Khalaf (2002), amnesia was the only way that the Lebanese population could deal with a war which began for no certain reason and had no definite no outcome but widespread devastation.

To make matters worse, history textbooks end in 1946 with the last reform in the history curriculum (Makdisi, 2006). In a discourse similar to that present in the urban fabric, the educational system highlights narratives of Phoenician, Roman, and Ottoman heritages but completely disregards the contemporary past (ibid). This process of forgetting is what Meskell (2002) refers to as "past mastering" whereby a society deals with trauma via a discourse of erasure.

It is important to note that even ancient heritage promoted by Solidere, is composed multiple heritages competing for legitimacy. As archaeological ruins were being unearthed, religious grouped feared these new findings would invalidate their narratives of sovereignty. Muslim leaders feared that Roman ruins would reassert Christian Maronite claims of glory while Christians feared Ottoman and Mamluk ruins (Fisk, 1995).

Parallel to these notions of amnesia, disconnect from the past,

glorification of the “sacrifices” made by party members was capitalised upon in order to promote private agendas which further deepened the serve in the Lebanese society (Barak, 2007)[5].

Hence, Beirut presents users with complex, and often conflicting understandings of space and competing discourses of heritage, remembrance and amnesia. Amidst these contested readings of the city, a few buildings stand tall, as stark reminders of the past which refuses to disintegrate despite being ignored. Much of the literature present discusses the erasure of Solidere and the reconstruction of a “boutique” city, however few sources discuss the buildings which survived the erasure process.

Figure 7. A still from Mashrou' Leila (2015) - (a Lebanese band) video. The lyrics read "help me forget who I am, I want to be like Beirut". This is symptomatic of the gravity of local amnesia.

[5] Haugbolle (2010,p.193) discusses these heightened notions of party sacrifices in the neighborhoods of Achrafieh, Basta and Dahya.

3- Introducing the Urban Scars

Defining the Urban Scars

According to Schudson (1997) the past, regardless of trauma, always finds ways of "seeping into the present" whether its memory is institutionalised or not, and often to the dismay of the "powerful elites". Similarly, "Solidere's hegemonic control of the city-centre … is incomplete". There remains a few buildings which Solidere could not expropriate acting as "ghostly ruins" that were spaces of terror and still bear the scars of war (Nagel, 2017); their power being in their symbolic meaning as "non-sectarian social movement actors demanding the state to open up a systematic process of dealing with the past".

These "urban scars", are buildings built before the war, but appropriated during the war by guerrilla fighters as spaces used for warfare and were part of what Khalaf (1993;p.93) describes as the "geographies of fear". After the war, these buildings survived demolition or refurbishment and currently stand frozen, often abandoned, haunting with a plethora of bullet

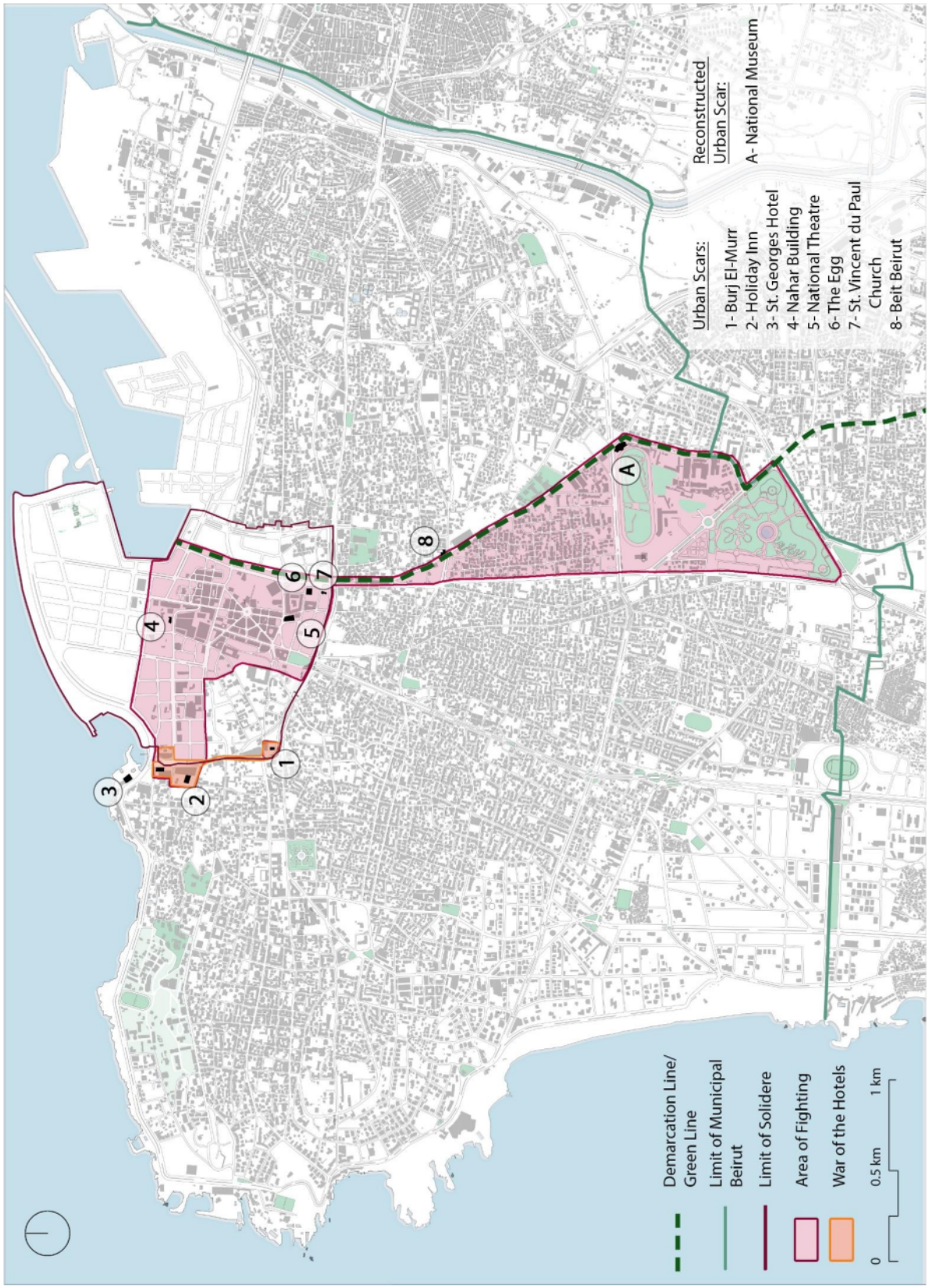

Figure 8: Mapping Urban Scars (Sinno, 2019)

1- Burj El-Murr; An unrealised office building
(Byrnes,2010)

2- Holiday Inn; Previously a hotel
(Karam,2014)

3- St. Georges; Previously a hotel
(Battah, 2009)

4- Edde Building; Previously a newspaper office
(Varzi,2016)

5- National Theatre; Previously Beirut's Theatre
(Ghorayeb,2016)

6- The Egg; Previously a cinema
(Swala, 2011)

7- St. Vincent du Paul Church
(Mitchell, 2009)

8- Beit Beirut
(Sinno, 2019)

4- Locating Memory in the Urban Environment

In the setting of a postwar nation suffering from state-enforced amnesia, selective remembrance, multifaceted narratives of the events of the war, and glorification of war in some contexts, one cannot but wonder what this means in terms of collective memory.

According to Confino (1997), collective memory "is an exploration of a shared identity that unites a social group, be it a family or a nation, whose members nonetheless have different interests and motivations." In light of this understanding of collective memory, perhaps the only reading of the war which unites the Lebanese is that of victimisation. Saunders and Aghaie (2005), argue that it was easier for the Lebanese to think of themselves as victims of a war – caused by foreign intervention[6] - than to think of themselves as victimisers, responsible for the war.

On the other hand, Parkinson, et al. (2016), differentiate between collective memory and "collected" memory, where the latter is "is comprised of personal memories that have been subject to 'external programming'… [and] to the influence of media reporting, and others' memories of the same event". Hence the competing narratives presented can be grouped under the term "collected" memory.

Boyer (1994:9) translates the notion of the collective memory into the city and argues that the City of Collective Memory is one that exhibits a palimpsest of historical layers "touching but not necessarily informing each other", offering the urban realm diversity. He notes that these historic "fragments" often provide viewers with pleasure by allowing them to create "imaginary narrations". Although the urban scars in Beirut do offer alternative narratives to the city, they do not offer "pleasure" as they trigger painful memories or imaginations[7] of terrors which occurred in them. However, these painful memories vary in different groups and hence form a series of collected memories within the realm of the City of Collective Memory.

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[6] The civil war is widely referred to as the "war of others on our land" following the discourse of victimization (ibid)
[7] In the case of the postmemory generations

Furthermore, the understanding of the urban scars in relationship to Hirsch's notion of postmemory is of relevance to the younger generations which did not witness the war. Hirsch defines postmemory as the "relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right" (Hirsch, 2008). Hirsch adds that albeit the postmemory generation has no recollection of the traumatic events, they "remember" through "stories, images, and behaviours" passed on (ibid). In the context of Beirut were the youth have limited access to memories of war, these buildings have an amplified role of transmitting memories. Larkin (2010) labels these buildings as "the most enduring reminders of war" for the post-war generation.

Hence, from these different understandings of memory, the urban scars can be understood both as emblems for promoting a narrative of victimisation in lieu of the collective memory, but can also bear personalised meanings, based on experienced or inherited narratives of war under the notion of collected memory. But above all, they are sharp reminders of an abstract past for a postwar generation.

5- The Urban Scars in the Heritage Debate: Wreck, Ruin or Monument[8]?

Nagle (2016) describes the urban scars of Beirut as ghosts that "haunt the regulated city and impossible dreams of totalisation". Although quite romantic, this places the urban scars in the realm of the metaphysical. To locate these structures in the urban realm, one has to place them in relation to heritage. Hence the question; are these buildings considered wreck, ruin or monument?

"Wreck" is defined as "broken remains" and as "something in a "state of dilapidation"[9]. Although urban scars bare signs of destruction, they are not in a state of "wreck" as they are structurally sound and have the potential, at least architecturally, to adapt new usage.

[8] Adapted from an interview with Dr. Walid Sadek on 10th June, 2019.
[9] Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition

McFarland (1981,p.19) defines the ruin as “work uncompleted or edifice decayed” with a “sense of eternal power and of a divine spark” which conjures a sense of romanticism and mystery. Sadek (2016), adds that the ruin is an “aestheticized” framing of a “distant and settled past”. Although these buildings do stimulate a sense of “dark” mystery, they do not speak of the divine, but rather of the wretched qualities of man, nor do they inspire nostalgia. They also belong to a near and unsettled past and hence are not ruin.

Young (1993) differentiates between monument and memorial whereby “monuments commemorate the memorable and embody the myths of beginnings. Memorials ritualize remembrance and mark the reality of ends... monuments make heroes and triumphs... memorials… honour the dead". However both monument and memorial serve remembrance. This does not resonate with urban scars, which do not serve remembrance as they stand in abandonment and do not accurately present locals with truthful narratives. Rather they are used to promote what Larkin (2010) identifies as an “inherited sectarian historiography[10]” or imagined narratives.

Hence, the urban scars are neither wreck, ruin nor monument. This leads us to explore the realm of Meskell’s notion of Negative Heritage defined as a “conflictual site that be the repository of negative memory in the collective imaginary. As a site of memory, negative heritage occupies a dual role: it can be mobilized for positive didactic purposes (e.g. Auschwitz, Hiroshima) or alternatively be erased if such places cannot be culturally rehabilitated and thus resist incorporation to the national imaginary”. The urban scars of Beirut fit well within this form of dissonant heritage. Most of these buildings are currently abandoned, or closed off from the city and their fate remains undetermined; they could either be rehabilitated and serve the memory of the city, or remain abandoned as spaces that couldn’t be reintegrated as they are deemed too traumatic, or finally demolished in parallel with the discourse of amnesia.

[10] Identifies as the selective remembrance of events, and the omission of others, to serve sectarian agency (ibid)

6- Heritage in the Built Environment of Beirut

It is important to note that in Beirut, buildings that conform to traditional understandings of heritage are constantly destroyed. Fisk (1997), describes development in Beirut as rooted solely in monetary value and completely indifferent of "sentimental or architectural value" which has resulted in the demolition of most of the city's historic buildings. This leaves the urban scars, with their painful memories, in a particularly vulnerable place.

Moreover, many of Beirut's urban scars are located inside the BCD, or directly outside its periphery. This area is identified as the highest land price in Beirut, reaching 10,000 USD/m^2. (Krijnen & Fawaz, 2010). This puts the urban scars at the continuous risk of being demolished. According to B., a main figure from Save Beirut Heritage (an active heritage NGO), the public is often unaware of plans to demolish heritage buildings, as property owners fear activism, hence these buildings are demolished overnight, without public consent[11]. Nagle (2016), notes that the only reason these urban scars managed to survive Solidere and the greed of developers was because of disagreements between their stakeholders. Hence this raises an urgency to recognise the urban scars as heritage sites and to identify their importance in the urban fabric.

As outlined in this chapter, much of the literature present deals with Solidere's discourse of amnesia, while some briefly discuss the urban scars as an anti-thesis. Informative as these analyses of the urban realm in Beirut are, they tell us little about the place of the urban scars in Beirut, or their perception by locals. Furthermore there seems to be no literature discussing their potential in creating historically accurate narratives of the city and as socially inclusive spaces that act as an anti-thesis to the commercialization of the city centre and its refurbishment into a sterile boutique environment. Moreover, not only is there an apparent gap in the literature regarding these buildings but there is also an urgency to answer these questions, in light of the capitalist driven approach to heritage in Beirut, in order to make informed decisions about their future.

[11] Interview with B. on June, 15th, 2019

IV- Methodology

1- Research Framework

To gain an understanding of the role of urban scars in Beirut, a qualitative approach was adopted. Qualitative research is used to develop a deep understanding "through the description of multiple realities" using a multifaceted approach (Trumbull, 2005).

In light of the research gap identified earlier, this dissertation is structured around two case studies of urban scars and how they are being renegotiated from relics of war to sites of potential reconciliation. According to Yin, case study research is employed to answer questions of "how" and "why", and to gain a deeper understanding on a set of decisions (i.e. "why were they made, how were they implemented and with what result").

Case Study Choice:

a- Burj El-Murr:
Previously discussed, the tower was chosen as it is one of the largest urban scars in Beirut and because of its heavy persistence in the Lebanese imagination. This building raises questions about the place of the urban scar in local perceptions.

b- Beit Beirut:
A residential building that was transformed into a sniper nest during the war. After the war the building stood in ruin until it was reappropriated into a museum of memory. This case study will inform possible discourses of memorialisation, which are often suggested when dealing with urban scars.

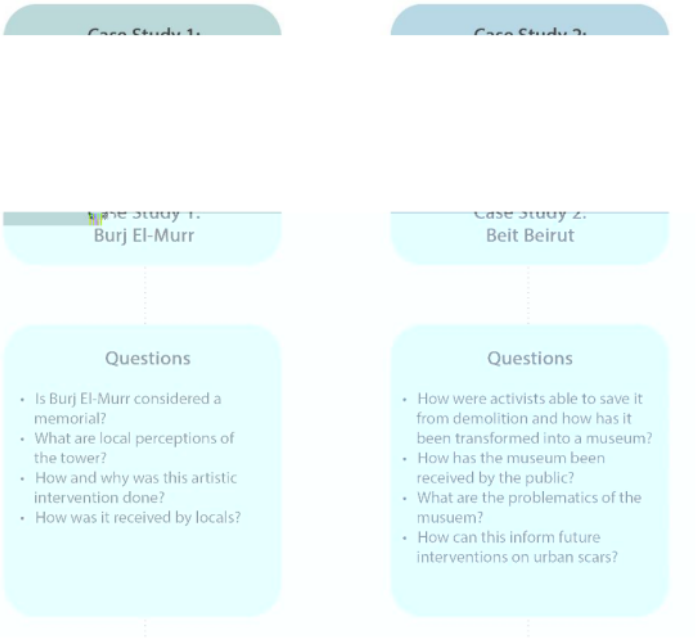


Figure 9: Case Studies

2- Case Study Structure

The two case studies not only vary in terms of scale (one is 4 levels while the other is 40) but have been dealt with in different ways –one has been converted into a museum and given new purpose while the other remains an awkward relic of war. Each of the case studies was analysed with respect to 4 different periods:

Figure 10: Timeline by which scars will be discussed[12]

[12] 2005 was a shifting year in Lebanon's contemporary history (BBC News, 2018) (See Appendix 8)

3- Research Methods

Several methods were employed to discuss each of the case studies.

Interviews

Since this dissertation deals with memory, heritage and the human experience in Beirut, it was important to interview specialists from different fields (architecture, urban design, heritage preservation, history, art and human sciences) to get a global understanding of the role of urban scars.

Person Interviewed	*Occupancy*

and had a general idea about the topics to be discussed. Participants were also asked for permission to take notes, quotations, and to record the interview. They were also asked to sign a consent sheet (Appendix 2).

Interviews were conducted in a mix of English and Arabic following the local dialect. Although questions were asked in English some responses were in Arabic. These responses were transcribed in English and consequently some discrepancies are possible.

The interviews were semi-structured, "conversational" and open-ended with a few outlined questions, however participants were allowed to "explore issues they felt were important" (Longhurst, 2016) which allowed new themes to emerge.

Some of the participants live in Beirut and hence provided a detailed understanding of the local account. Participants who do not live in Lebanon provided insight from a distant perspective, often necessary to be critical.

The interviewee's names were anonymised (by substituting their names with random letters) with the exception of the academics mentioned above (with their consent), as this paper discusses research published by them. Moreover, the interviews overlapped with their research and consequently, it would be unethical not to reference the ideas discussed in this dissertation to them. Also Jad El-Khoury was not anonymised as he was discussing his art installation.

Guided Tour

A guided tour through Beit Beirut with project's pioneer, Mona Hallak, was conducted. This provided an in-depth understanding of the history of the building and the process of transforming it from ruin to a museum. The guided tour also provided an in-situ spatial understanding of the building and its modes of operation in various time periods.

Informal Discussions

Informal discussions were conducted with locals in Beirut. This was done to gather accounts which helped shape understandings of the local perceptions concerning urban scars. These accounts will remain anonymous.

Survey of Local Media

To gain an understanding of local perceptions of the urban scars, a survey of newspaper articles, short documentaries and social media posts was conducted to collect a variety of opinions.

The researcher is well aware that opinions gathered from these sources cannot be used as generalisations of the opinion of the wider public (as not everyone has access to voice their opinion via social media or journalism). Rather, these opinions aim to give samples of a spectrum of views that complement the informal and formal interviews.

Observations

Observations were conducted on the sites of the case studies to get a well-rounded understanding of the local context, culture, perceptions and modes of operations. Photographs and note-taking were utilised to collect data.

Access to Beit Beirut was possible on two occasions; one with Mona El-Hallak, and the other with a group of tourists. Photographs were collected both inside the building and in its surrounding. Access inside Burj El-Murr was not possible, as it is currently operating as a military base. Observations were limited to its surroundings.

4- Data Analysis

Data collected was transcribed directly after the site visits, interviews or informal discussions to minimise loss of information and discrepancies in translation. In addition, coding was utilised to group similar themes within the interviews. A research journal was utilised to map the progress of the dissertation, encounters and interviews.

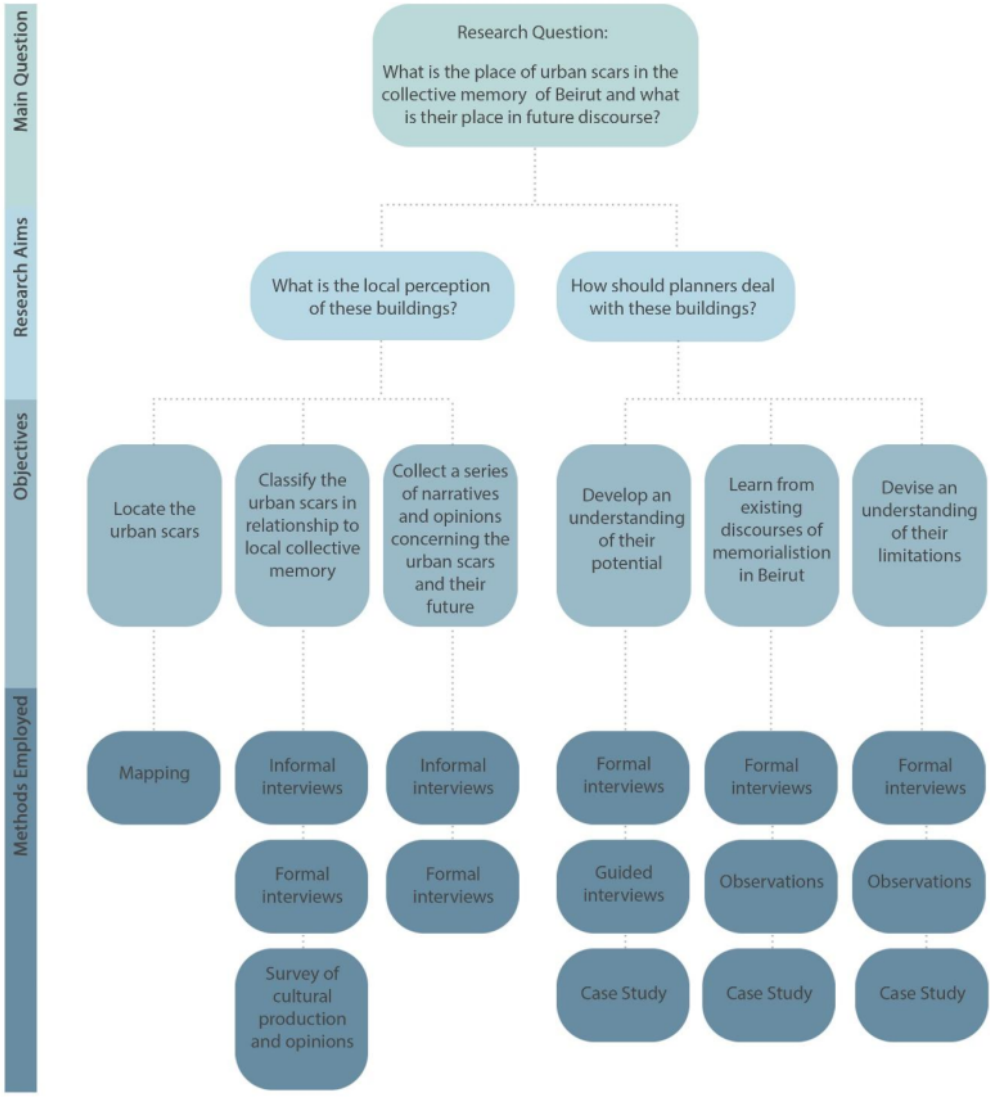


Figure 12: Research Framework (Sinno,2019)

5- Research Context

This research took place in Lebanon where access to information is often difficult due to bureaucratic standards, lack of transparency, and a "weak system of accountability" (Safieddine, 2005). In addition, Burj El-Murr is owned by Solidere, a company infamous for not disclosing information, even to its stakeholders (ibid). However this didn't impact the research as it is based on a theoretical understanding of urban scars, local perceptions and an analysis of recent interventions, all of which are independent from any proposals that Solidere may have for these spaces.

6- Ethics

This research was designed with attention to ethical implications. Consequently, it was planned with due diligence to ethics and the consideration to all participants. Prior to any interview (including informal discussions), participants were given an information sheet (Appendix 1) to understand the research. All contributors participated without any coercion and had the option to end the interview at any moment. In addition they were asked to sign a consent sheet (Appendix 2) and were aware that the findings of these interviews would be integrated in the research.

All forms of data gathered have been transcribed in lieu of the UCL data protection rules (The Research Ethics Guidebook, 2019).

V- Case Study 1: Burj El-Murr

Figure 13: Burj El-Murr (Harb, 2004)

1- History

Burj (Tower) El-Murr, is one of the most iconic urban scars in Beirut, paralleled in scale only by the nearby Holiday Inn. It's monolithic features tower over the Beirut skyline.

1974-1975

The tower, named after its owners the Murr brothers, was supposed to be the Beirut Trade Centre and the tallest building in the region. The project was to include:

- 34 floor - office space (300m^2 each)
- 2,500m^2 retail space
- A rooftop restaurant
- A 500 seat cinema
- 600 parking spaces

The brutalist building was built out of reinforced concrete and was an emblem of a bright future (Khoury, 2018) (Speetjens, 2004).

El Murr Tower was built in the 1970s, and was the highest tower of its time, the 40-story building was built at a pace of one floor every day. El Murr Tower is located in the heart of Beirut and incorporates modern apartments and offices.

Figure 14: Burj El-Murr during construction and model (right). Caption retrieved from El-Murr company website - symptomatic of amnesia (Group Murr,2016)

1975-1990

After the outbreak of war, the tower was reappropriated by militias into a sniper nest. It was a logistic stronghold due to its location near the demarcation line and its height which allowed fighters to target most of Beirut. The basements housed “detention rooms”, where prisoners were tortured and killed. In a documentary, one witness recollects going inside the space during a ceasefire and not being able to delve deeper than the second basement due to the stench of rotting bodies (Mayassi, 2015). Another witness recollects stories of people being thrown from its high windows (VP, 2018)

The building was used by militias from both sides but was mostly under the control of militias from West Beirut, targeting East Beirut. The tower soon transformed into a panopticon holding the citizens of Beirut as prisoners (Khoury, 2018).

Figure 15: Military looking from Burj El-Murr onto Beirut (Abou-Khalil, 2007)

1990-2019

After the end of the war, the building was bought by Solidere in 1994 and was set to be refurbished. Plans by Norman Foster were set to keep the building as a shell and expand its floor plate and add a skin. The plans never saw the light of day due to budget cuts. Rumours say that Solidere might demolish the tower, however in a recent statement, the company said it had no plans for the tower in the near future (Speetjens, 2004) (Boano & Chabarek, 2013).

The building's fate remains uncertain. After the assassination of PM Hariri in 2005, the Lebanese Army took control of the tower and has been using it as a military base since. Rumours concerning the structural integrity of the building were widely circulated; the tower does not have skin protecting its steel rods from the humidity, and due to the lack of maintenance, they have been rusting. Also, the building received a fair amount of shelling during the war which further supports this rumour (Mayassi, 2015).

For a detailed timeline of Burj El-Murr, see Appendix 4

Figure 16: Burj El-Murr with reconstruction proposal (Yurman,1997)

2- Burj El-Murr: Local Perceptions

Perceptions on the building vary. Some locals view the tower as a monument. One artist suggests that the tower is monument for Beirut similar to the Empire State Building in New York.

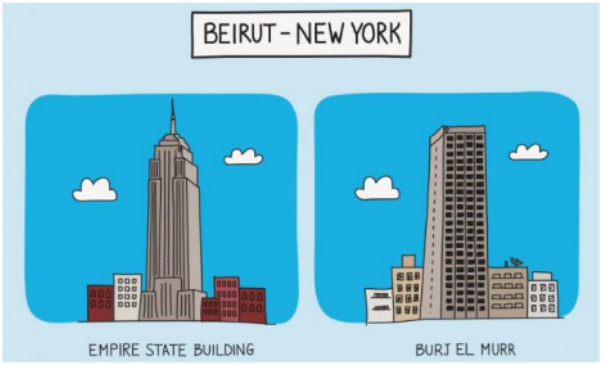


Figure 17: Burj El-Murr as Monument (Zankoul,2016)

In a similar approach, the tower has been a recurring motif in Lebanese cultural production and is often portrayed as an uncanny monument in the city that serves to remind locals of the atrocities of war, in a society which would rather forget.

Figure 18: Baalbaki (2014)

In another account, a local states that the tower is a landmark in the city

"*You can see the tower from all of the city. I couldn't imagine Beirut without its domineering presence. It's a landmark!"*

However amongst these accounts, an odd pattern appeared amongst participants, both from the war generation and those who did not witness it. Many mentioned that they simply no longer see the tower.

"*Every day I drive past the tower on my way to work but I don't notice it. It's somehow invisible."*

This trend could be attributed to two possible reasons. The first is a coping mechanism similar to that of the local amnesia discussed in the second chapter whereby a tower, 157 metres tall, is no longer visible. Another reason could be attributed to the fact that the tower has never been accessible to the public and hence had never hosted practical function. Without any functionality, a site loses significance in the cityscape.

3- Intervening on the Tower

In May 2018, Jad El-Khoury intervened on the tower in an installation named Burj El-Hawa (tower of wind). He covered 432 windows on tower's main façades with colourful curtains, local to Beirut, often used to cover balconies in populous areas. It was the first intervention on the tower and came as a surprise. Jad executed his installation by getting clearance from the army in a laissez-faire approach. Solidere was not supportive of the installation and forced El-Khoury to dismantle it within 4 days (El-Khoury, 2019)[13].

El-Khoury describes the building as a monument. "Paris has the Eiffel Tower and Beirut has the Burj El-Murr. It may have some terrible memories associated to it, but it's still a monument in Beirut".

[13] Interview with Jad El-Khoury on 14th June, 2019

He explains his short lived intervention as an “attempt to give the city some positivity and to hide the negative energy that shoots out of the building’s ominous windows.” El-Khoury, in his late twenties also remarks, “I did not live the war, it was the war of my parents’ generation. I think this building stands as reminder of the horrors and as a warning against future conflict”

Sadek names this intervention “the most eloquent marker of the time after the time of the post-war”. It’s the beginning of a new phase where the need to reconstruct has been satisfied and the traumas of war diluted. “Nothing remains but a nebulous bad memory to be dispelled by ornament” (Sadek, 2018).

In an interview with Sadek, he warns that the main issues of the war remain unsolved. “The missing are still missing and we still do not know what really happened in the war and why it happened. These are all questions that still linger in the Lebanese collective memory. It is troubling that people are assuming that art/design can solve these issues” (Sadek, 2019).

4- Speculating the Future

Solidere is currently not disclosing any information concerning the building, and so its fate is uncertain. The following is a survey of visions collected for the tower that help inform future plans but also highlight the problematic urban scars pose for the urban environment.

The tower’s hubristic features have inspired many architects to propose visions for the tower. Architecture office JPAG (2019) proposes to bring the tower back to life by bracing it via an external skeleton and adapting it into a mixed-use tower. Similarly Boutros (2018) proposes to revitalise the tower by giving it new use. Abou-Raad (2007), on the other hand sees the building as a ruin similar to those found in ancient Baalbek (Appendix 5) and wishes to transform it into a cultural space. Similarly, El-Khoury would like to see the “tower transformed into an art gallery and a space for temporary installations”. It is important to note that these proposals all come from members of the postmemory generation, whose distance from the war, which facilitated their conceptions of positive visions of the tower. Furthermore, the tower is able to gain new meaning, even if only in the realm of the imagination via artistic production and architectural proposals, because it does not adhere to “traditional protocols of the monument,

namely, to produce symbols that serve either to console viewers or redeem tragic events" (Elias, 2018:133)

Figure 19: Boutros Proposal (Boustrous, 2018)

Others, see the reconstruction of the tower as true end of the war. An old shopkeeper near the tower says

> *"Once they refurbish Burj El-Murr, the war would have officially ended."* (Mayassi, 2015)

C., a prominent architect and urban designer and a lecturer at AUB, suggests that the value of the building is not in its physicality but rather in its memory.

"The building can be easily renovated by reinforcing its structure using an external skeleton and it can be adapted to fit a variety of uses. However it might also be demolished, as Solidere is the sole owner. Either ways, the building's stronghold is not its physical presence, rather its memories. Any project needs to highlight the memory of the building and the traumatic events that revolved around it. It also needs to be accessible to the public, and to act as a cultural space of social benefit. This site's memories belong to the people of Beirut and they should have access to it."

On the other hand, some locals find the memories of the tower too dark to overcome and so support the demolition of the tower and replacing it with a new project. Gabriel El-Murr, one of the previous owners of the tower claims:

"It broke my heart that we built a 40 story tower only snipers would use to shoot on us (East Beirut)…. The tower is now outdated …in terms of memory, I think it's better to build something new and destroy the past and forget Burj El-Murr and all of its horrors. It's better to forget and not remember the ominous war." (ibid)

Another local who witnessed the war claims:

"This building needs to be removed from its roots. We need a new building filled with positivity not with blood"

As illustrated above, urban scars presents planners with the dilemma of deciding their fate. Many of these buildings have an inherent architectural value, but it is their vault of painful memories that separates them from other heritage sites.

VI- Case Study 2: Beit Beirut and the "Museum of War"

Figure 20: Beit Beirut (Sinno,2019)

1- History

1924 - 1975

Beit (house of) Beirut, originally the Barakat Building, was constructed in 1924 as an avant-garde family villa by renowned architect, Youssef Aftimus, and composed of 4 floors (a commercial ground floor, and 3 residential levels). Built in a neo-ottoman style, and with a mix of oriental and art deco ornaments, the buildings was highly prized. Located at a major junction in Beirut, the building's most successful feature was what architect Mona Hallak, Beit Beirut's project pioneer, names "the void". The void at the corner of the building, offered a unique sense of transparency and a "visual vista" which provided 17 of the building's rooms with panoramic

views of both streets[14].The building was a symbol of Beirut's grandeur and was often visited by presidents and local nobility.

1975 -1990

Within two months of the outbreak of war, the building was rendered uninhabitable as it was exactly on the demarcation line. Its owners abandoned it and it was infested by militias who used it as a point to "protect" East Beirut. The building was reappropriated into a "killing machine". Walls up to 2 metres in thickness where built using sand bags with boxes puncturing them to create "shooting boxes"[15]. The building's prized transparency was now offering snipers a 270º view, looking at both East and West Beirut (Larkin, 2019), allowing them to kill anyone who passed. The junction was appropriately renamed "the crossing of death".

During the guided tour, an ex-militant, A., joined and added:

"*It didn't matter who was crossing the road, weather they were on our side or theirs. We just shot to protect our territory.*"

Figure 21: Checkpoint on the Green Line with the Barakat Building on the left (Elias, 2018:121)

[14] Information gathered from an a guided interview with the Hallak, June 12, 2019
[15] Ibid.

1990-2003

After the end of the war, the building, an urban scar, was left derelict and abandoned until 1997, when the owners wanted to demolish it and redevelop. Demolition works began until activist groups lobbied to preserve the building (Brones, 2012). Hallak was the main lobbyist for the building and states that she went to "every newspaper and media outlet that would listen". "The building has amazing potential, I can't believe they don't see it", she adds. In 2003 a decree was issued to expropriate the building for public interest. The project was then put on hold for 3 additional years.

2006- Present

In 2006, the municipality of Beirut finally bought the building and planned to transform it into a "Museum of Memory" for the City of Beirut (ibid). The building was refurbished to preserve the scars of war, such as bullet holes, damaged walls and broken columns and the museum opened in April 2016 after much delay.

For a detailed timeline of Beit Beirut, see Appendix 6

Figure 22: Beit Beirut Interior (Sinno,2019)

Figure 23: 3 "Shooting Boxes" (Sinno,2019)

Figure 24: Beit Beirut Evolution (Karam, 2016)

2- Museum Narrative and Problematics

The museum is under the patronage of the municipality of Beirut, an acting body of the Lebanese government which endorsed the "state sponsored amnesia", and was conserved as a result of grass-root initiatives lead by the civil society, responsible for all attempts at discussing the war (Larkin, 2019). Consequently, the space is witnessing an apparent power struggle.

First, in contrast to conventional museum practice, whereby a curator and a collection are appointed prior to the opening, Beit Beirut has yet to house a permanent collection (Hallak, 2019) , 3 years after its opening. The only exception is the "Photo Mario" exhibit which displays a collection of photographs, dating back to the pre-war era, found in a studio in one of the commercial shops. The museum does not even have official opening hours nor museum staff. During my visits to the space, I learned that the space is only open when hosting temporary exhibitions.

Second, many of the exhibitions hosted in the space have dealt with issues such as remembrance and forgiveness. Although these exhibitions deserve merit for opening a discussion about the events of the war, they are rather ambiguous in nature and discuss notions such as forgiveness and healing without holding offenders accountable for their war crimes (Larkin, 2019) (See Appendix 7).

Third, the museum does not adhere to its initial vision of a "Museum of Memory", celebrating the history of Beirut (from the Ottoman era to the present). The absence of a permanent collection has allowed the design of the building, which highlights the war aesthetic, to overshadow cultural events taking place in the "museum". Consequently, many locals and prestigious media outlets mistakenly refer to the building as the "Museum of War" [16], denying the building from moving past the image of a "relic of war" and from acquiring new meaning. This doesn't adhere to discussions in heritage conservation, where heritage sites are considered "a living entity from the past, in the present, and for the future" (Pendlebury, Short and While, 2009) and must be allowed to acquire new meaning and use. The intersection of different "timescales" is essential for the success of the conservation practice (ibid).

[16] See Saadi, 2016 and Loveluck, 2018

Fourth, Beit Beirut has been described as an elitist, exclusive space which accommodates tourists and members of the intellectual elite[17]. Moreover, in the absence of honest narratives around what happened in the building, the space has been appropriated as a tourist attraction under the pretext of what Meskell (2015) identifies as a commodified space which encourages "tourist voyeurism". Moreover, the "war museum" embellishes the war aesthetic to no longer seem offensive under the notion of "sanitization of violence" (Elias, 1998) (Sadek, 2019). In order to avoid the dilution of the traumatic events which took place in the building, and to encourage meaningful discussions around the history of the space, authentic and detailed commentary alongside imagery which describes the evolution of the space are necessary (Wight, 2006)

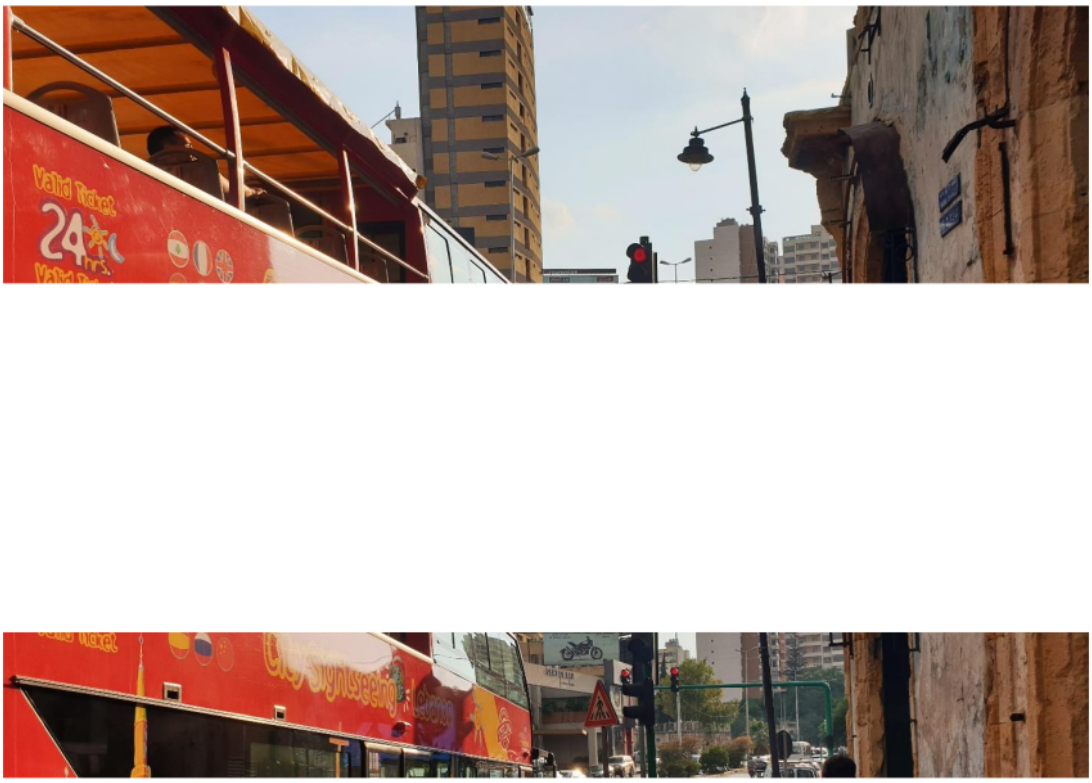


Figure 25: The Beirut Tour Bus has an official stop at Beit Beirut, a recent "attraction" (Sinno,2019)

[17] Such cultural spaces attract a specific portion of locals, not "representative of Beirut's comprehensive civil society" (Boano, 2010)

3- Hope for the Future

During our walk inside Beit Beirut, Hallak, has been the main activist for the museum for 20 years, expressed optimism in the future.

> *"The important thing is that we saved the building and a large collection of the objects inside. The space needs proper curatorship, but we'll get there"*

Furthermore, Hallak often gives tours of the building alongside ex militia fighters, from a local NGO, "Fighters for Peace", who engage in open discussions about the war. Hallak's tours often highlight the graffiti inside the space and engage in discussion around whose heritage is being preserved and the experience of the snipers, as human beings manipulated into warfare. Hallak's tours act as a temporary, yet extremely powerful, substitution to the absent museum commentary. Hallak also adds:

> *"I don't want this to be a museum of war but rather a museum of the human experience."*

Hallak's dedication to the space is admirable and is an example of local agency acting as a motivator for change against the prevailing discourse of amnesia. In addition, for this project to move forward, it needs to become an active public museum representing the "Memory of the City" with proper curatorship and collections, include accurate narratives concerning the history of the space, and become more inclusive locals.

Figure 26: Cellist Yo-Yo-Ma playing from the balcony of Beit Beirut to locals. An effort to open the space to a wider portion of the public (Shaaban, 2019)

VII- Findings and Analysis

1- The Time After the Post War

2005 was a marker in Lebanese history with withdrawal of the Syrian army, a major actor in the civil war, and the increase in the need to confront the war due to rising tensions (similar to the environment preceding the civil war) (see Appendix 8). Consequently, 19 initiatives to confront the war and consolidate its events were recorded (Bou Khaled, 2015). This was one of the markers of Sadek's (2018) "time after the post-war", in which intervening on the urban scars became feasible.

During this phase, and particularly in the postmemory generation, the urban scars, became uncanny monuments, as displayed in the discussion of Burj El-Murr. In one of Jad El-Khoury's earlier installation, he painted graffiti on the exterior of the Holiday Inn, but was heavily criticised for defiling a "monument" (see Appendix 9). These scars were reminiscent of a dark period in history but the postmemory generation was fighting to conserve them (Springer, 2013) as they found an inherent value to them.

In addition, intervening on these buildings became feasible as a need to confront the war had risen. Although Beit Beirut is one of the first spaces that discuss the war, sanitising what happened and using vague recollections of the events is highly problematic. Edkins (2003:226-227) warns about "using too many euphemisms for what happened" which "rob[s] people of the ability to re-live it [the trauma] and therefore motivate them to prevent it from happening in the future"[18]. Similarly, Sadek (2019) warns that simply conserving an urban scar does not remind younger generations of what happened nor does it warn them from repeating the mistakes of their parents. Rather, they need to be presented with work that "not only reminds but actively bears responsibility for what happened".

Likewise Larkin (2009) discusses the dangers of not having accurate narratives which clearly depict the war which enables "inclusive ambiguity" and "allows for multiple interpretations [and

[18] While discussing the memorial site of 9/11

imaginations] of the war". It is hence essential for these site to accurately present historic facts and narratives.

2- Whose Heritage?

Essential to portraying accurate narratives of what occurred in these spaces is presenting a wide array of experiences within the site. According to Lefebvre (1996:159), it is essential "to multiply the readings of the city" and to have an assemblage of narratives. In addition, the "pluralistic vision of the city" decreases segregation in divided cities (Nagle, 2009). Moreover, research has supported that recounting narratives from a variety of experiences is essential healing from traumatic events such as the war (Saunders and Aghaie, 2005) (Bevan, 2016). The physical manifestation of these narratives, found inside the urban scars, act as a powerful affirmation of these stories (ibid).

Inside Beit Beirut, the architects were keen on highlighting a multiplicity of stories. Those include graffiti drawn by snipers. This sheds light on the humane side of militia fighters. In her tour, Hallak (2019) emphasised the importance of portraying a spectrum of narratives – even those of the snipers who were often coerced into fighting as children and were not fully aware of the impact of their actions. She continues:

> *"I want this space to talk of the human experience – even that of the snipers."*

In parallel, El-Khoury (2019) discussed graffiti he found inside Burj El-Murr:

> "*I found a lot of graffiti inside the building. There were some cartoons, portraits commemorating lost comrades, and even poetry!"*

Even during the peak of the war, when atrocities were committed inside these buildings, these spaces housed other, functions that relate to the general human experience. These spaces served as spaces of mourning and remembrance, as spaces that bared witness to expressions of love, spaces of entertainment with games such as tic-tac-toe and humorous cartoons. They also were spaces of creative expression with poetry discussing universal topics such as mortality and

the passage of and poems about freedom alongside drawings of white doves (Hallak, 2019) (ibid).

These sotes offer the city spaces that counter the amnesiac discourse. They act as a link between past and future (Zistel and Schaefer, 2014). In order for these sites to act as spaces of reconciliation, these unique narratives need to be highlighted and discussed. Furthermore if at the peak of war these sites served a wide spectrum of uses, it seems unjust to label them as regalia of war (Harithy, 2019)[19]. It is imperative for their continuity and reintegration into the urban fabric that new meanings and usages unfold within them (ibid).

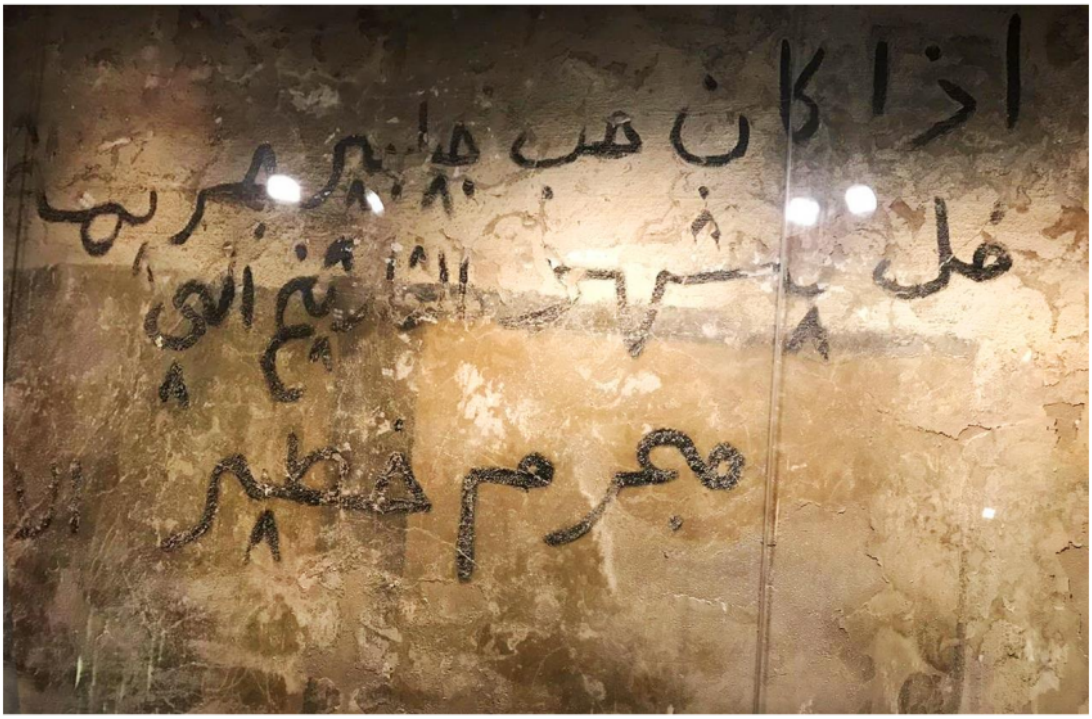


Figure 27: Graffiti inside Beit Beirut expressing a militant's love for a man named Gilbert. Reads "If loving Gilbert is a crime, then let history witness, I am a dangerous criminal" (@HelemLebanon, 2017)

[19] Interview with Dr. Harithy on 17th June, 2019

Figure 28: Portrait inside Burj El-Murr memorialising a lost comrade (El-Khoury, 2019)

Figure 29: An unlikely narrative in time of war: Lebanese Army soldiers set up a Christmas tree to celebrate Christmas. (Ismail, 1987)

3- Spaces of Inclusivity and Interaction

According to Ohaness, a professor of politics at AUB, the Lebanese "are raising another generation of children who identify themselves with their communities and not their nation". (Antelava, 2009). Khalaf (1993:33) adds that the divide is "sustained by the psychology of dread [of the other], hostile bonding and ideologies of enmity". In light of this omnipotent, yet physically invisible, remnant of war, there rises a need in the urban realm for spaces of exchange and interaction between the different groups.

Salaam (1993), recognises the vital role of urban spaces which bring citizens from different backgrounds, sects and class together in contested cities. It is only when different groups meet in everyday life that they acquire "moral sympathies for the other" which allows the development of a civil realm (Bloomfield & Bianchini 2004:37). Boano (2010) adds that although spaces of integrations may not abolish overarching tensions in Beirut, they may foster environments in which "more moderate positions" are acquired and assist in the suspension of secular hostilities.

The urban scars not only present the city with opportunities to remember, but also with spaces to gather and exchange experiences. With a lack of both public space in and spaces to discuss opposing viewpoints, these sites can offer Beirut a much needed public realm (Larkin, 2019). They also offer an opportunity to redeem the BCD from Solidere's exclusive and commercial strategy. As outlined in chapter VI, although Beit Beirut is currently struggling to provide such an inclusive environment, it has the potential to do so.

For these space to become truly inclusive, foster exchange, and help reconcile the war, they need to be designed with inclusivity at the core of their strategy. Design strategies are key in creating inclusive spaces in the city (Carmona et al., 2003:124) and should be central to any conservation scheme implemented in the urban scars.

Moreover, as highlighted by both case studies, attempts to reconcile the war have been a result of advocacy from grass-root initiatives from the civil society. Furthermore, Lefebvre's "right to the city" requires that citizens should not merely dwell in urban space but should

participate in the ongoing production negotiation of space (Lefebvre,1996). Hence any design strategy which aims to target inclusivity and reconciliation efforts, must include the civil society as a major participant in the design process.

Finally, for these spaces to be reintegrated into the cityscape, they need to house a variety usages which reinstate their position in the urban realm as places of function. C.(2019) added that "through new use, these buildings can acquire new meaning whilst still carrying the layers of the past." He also adds that the urban scars are left to deteriorate due to the "failure of the urban imagination".

4- The Limitations of Urban Environment

Although the urban scars present the city with an opportunity to reconcile the past, one must be conscious of the limitations of the urban realm in dealing with such a deeply rooted, socio-political, and "wicked problem".

First, it's imperative to recognise that the physical act of reconstructing an urban scar is not sufficient to reintegrate it into the cityscape. Doing so would only memorialise the structures as relics of war. Elias (2018) classifies such practices as the "logic of spectacle" – referring to Solidere's reconstruction of the BCD. Furthermore, relying solely on the physical reconstruction of these buildings renders them as memorials devoid of any meaning or context. C. compares this strategy to a powerful war memorial outside the Ministry of Defence in greater Beirut. He notes that although the monument, Espoir de Paix (hope of peace) is extremely powerful, it is decontextualized and does not offer viewers narratives of the past and hence does not serve reconciliation efforts nor does it speak of the dangers of conflict. Similarly, if the buildings are reconstructed without presenting accurate narratives and historic facts, they become merely physical object of "spectacle".

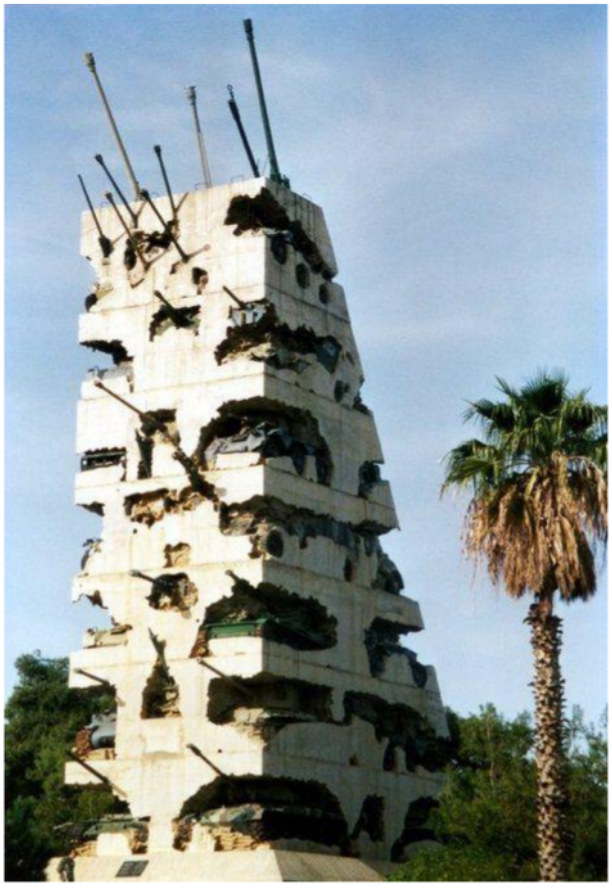


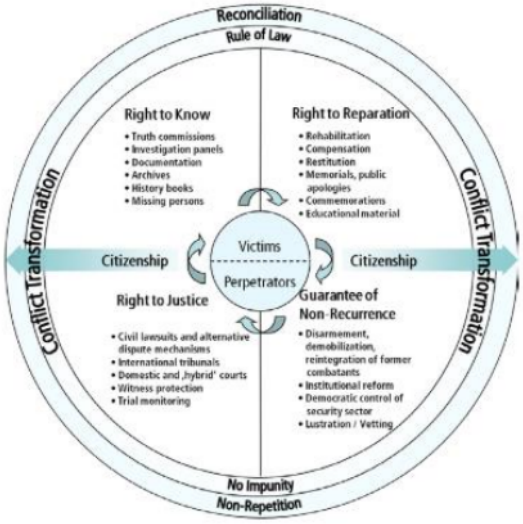
Figure 30: Espoir de Paix (Arman,1995)

Second, planners need to be weary of the fetishization of the war aesthetic. Focusing heavily on bullet holes and shelling marks can hinder a city from moving forward from the traumatic events, by presenting it as a continuous space of conflict (Harithy, 2019). Similarly, Sadek (2018) argues that the fetishization of the urban scar dilutes the traumatic events of war. C. (2019) adds that the glorification of the war aesthetic, in the absence of a concise history of events, promotes the development of inaccurate narratives, or "inclusive ambiguity". Moreover, as described in Chapter VI, the war aesthetic can attract "tourist voyeurism" which in turn reduces the powerful memory of the space into an attraction (see Appendix 10 for a subtle example of preserving the aesthetic of war).

Figure 31: Still from a Scorpions music video in the ruins of the Holiday Inn, fetishizing the destruction of war (Scorpions, 1996)

Third, as previously discussed, the issue of reconciling the past and preventing future conflict, *is* a socio-political problem. Larkin (2019), insists on the role of education to counter the divide in the Lebanese society. Moreover, the UN proposes a quadripartite "holistic strategy" for reconciling traumatic events. The scheme includes (UN,2005), (Swisspeace, 2012):

- the right to know
- the right to justice
- the right to reparations
- the guarantee of non-recurrence



© FDFA/swisspeace 2006, inspired by the Joinet/Orentlicher Principles

The urban realm falls under the right to reparation, particularly the symbolic rehabilitation. Similarly, cultural trauma theory suggests that the events of the past "inhabit the present as a transmission of cultural memory" (Stamm et al., 2004). In lieu of this theory, the only way for a nation to transcend the traumatic effects of a troubled past is to acknowledge, admit and take responsibility for the gruesome events (Staub, 2006). As previously highlighted, this a mostly a social issue. However, the urban scars are the manifestation of the inability to deal with the past. Their mere existence, as discussed in Chapter III, is a result of the failure to take decisions regarding their fate.

Hence, I argue that planning can reintegrate these sites into the city, and hence offer locals a physical recognition of their past which may then host and inspire efforts to socially recognise the traumas of war.

VIII- Conclusion

1- Urban Scars in the Context of Beirut

While writing this dissertation I was repeatedly confronted with the reality of war. Much of the people who suffered from it still do. Almost 30 years later, the 17,000 individuals are still missing and Lebanon's economy is suffering from the costs of the postwar reconstruction. The war still exists but in subtle forms such as social segregation. Hence, it would be naïve to assume that the rehabilitation of these buildings alone would end sectarian divisions or heal the trauma of war.

However these buildings do present the Lebanese with the opportunity to acknowledge their turbulent past. In this dissertation I argued that these buildings are often perceived as monuments. Consequently, their conservation and integration into the cityscape can offer locals spaces of remembrance and inclusive interaction, which can help soothe secular tensions. Furthermore, these sites can host discussions of the painful memories and consequently assist in reconciling the past. This should be part of a larger scheme which includes integrating the history of the war into school curricula.

As previously outlined, the successful integration of these buildings is dependent on several factors. First, these spaces should offer remembrance by portraying accurate narratives of the events that took place in-situ. They should also present an assemblage of narratives from different users and "timescales". Second they should offer the city spaces of inclusivity and for open discussion, alongside other practical functions. Third the design process should include participants from the local community to advocate public benefit. Finally, creativity is necessary when dealing such sites. Banal solutions would be missed opportunities of activating the full potential of these sites.

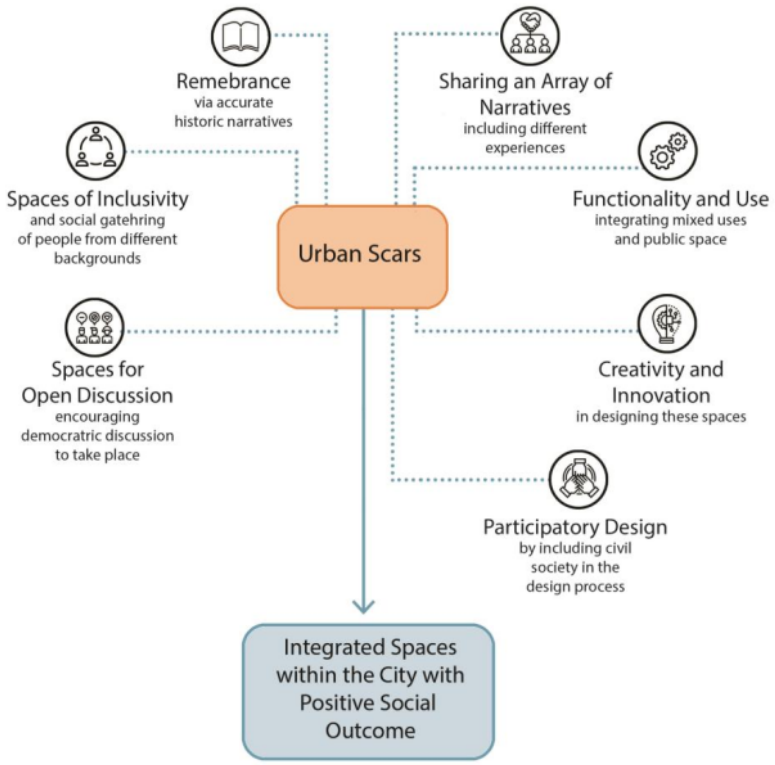


Figure 32: Proposed scheme to integrate the Urban Scars in the City (Sinno, 2019)

2- Contribution to the Field

Urban scars are not limited to Beirut nor to other contested cities such as Belfast. The findings of this dissertations can be applied to sites of dissonant heritage in global contexts, such as the abandoned Punte tower in Johannesburg. The findings are also relevant to the reintegration of abandoned sites or in contexts of adaptive reuse.

Keeping forgotten structures frozen in time as relics doesn't provide social or economic benefit. It is hence best to engage with these sites by design, while taking into account public consideration. Furthermore it is advisable is that designs which engage with the spaces contribute

to remembrance, provide spaces of public benefit and adapt new uses while respecting the past and its array of narratives.

Figure 33: Prussian Navy Bunker reimagined to Trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Center (Arkitekter,2018)

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X- Appendix

Appendix 1: Information Sheet

Research Information Sheet

Please review the Information Sheet prior to signing this consent sheet

Title of Study:

Beirut's Urban Scars: A Dissonant Heritage

Department:

The Bartlett School of Planning

Name and Contact Details of Researcher:

Nour Sinno
MSc. Urban Design and City Planning
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Name and Contact Details of Supervisor:

Michael Short
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University College London
michael.short@ucl.ac.uk

Information About the Research:

1. **What is the research about?**

   - This research deals with heritage and memory in Beirut. It tries to locate buildings that have been scarred by the civil war and have been abandoned since, such as the Burj El-Murr or the Holiday Inn, within the realm of memory and the cityscape of Beirut. These

Appendix 2: Consent Sheet

The Bartlett School of Planning

UCL

Participant Consent Sheet

Please review the Information Sheet prior to signing this consent sheet

Title of Study:

Beirut's Urban Scars: A Dissonant Heritage

Department:

The Bartlett School of Planning

Name and Contact Details of Researcher:

Nour Sinno
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Name and Contact Details of Supervisor:

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Thank you for considering to take part in this research. Please make sure to read this document and the information sheet before signing you agree to take part in the research. If you have any questions concerning this sheet, the information sheet or the research in general, please ask the researcher before signing for consent.

Appendix 3: Urban Scars

1- Burj El-Murr:
See Chapter V

2- Holiday Inn:

The once stylish Holiday Inn functioned as fashionable hotel in Beirut for two years before the outbreak of war. During the war it was infested by snipers and was a strategic site, particularly in the battle of the hotels. After the war, it lay in devastation. Its shareholders are currently in disagreement whether to demolish it or refurbish it. It currently acts as a military base closed off from the public (Nayel, 2015)

3- St. Georges Hotel:
The St. George Hotel was the most notable hotel in Beirut prior to the war. Built in the 1920's it had a legacy before the outbreak of war. During the war, the hotel was looted by militia fighters and left in a derelict state. Currently the hotel's beach is functional however the building itself has not been refurbished due to disagreements between the owners and Soldier (Biedermann,2017)

4- Edde Building:

No published sources discuss this building. But according to local discussions, the building was once an office for the Al-Nahar newspaper. During the war, the building was damaged and its fate is currently uncertain.

5- National Theatre:

Constructed in the 1920's, the national theatre was a glamorous site in Beirut hosting internationally acclaimed acts. However during the war it was heavily damaged and

reappropriated by militia fighters as a private cinema. Solidere currently owns the building and plans to refurbish it into a boutique hotel (Ghorayeb, 2016).

6- The Egg:

The egg, or dome, was part of a larger city centre complex alongside two towers. The egg functioned as a cinema for a few years before the outbreak of war, whilst only one tower had been constructed. By the end of the war, the owners of the complex demolished the tower but kept the egg. Recent rumours of its planned demolition sparked activism around the city. Its owners recently declared that the egg will not be demolished and will be incorporated in any new scheme (Springer, 2013)

7- St. Vincent du Paul Church:

The church was heavily damaged during the war due to its location in the BCD. The congregation of the Society of the St. Vincent du Paul have recently declared that they are in the process of gathering funds to reconstruct the church (Tibúrcio, 2018)

8- Beit Beirut:
See Chapter VI

Appendix 4: Burj El-Murr Timeline

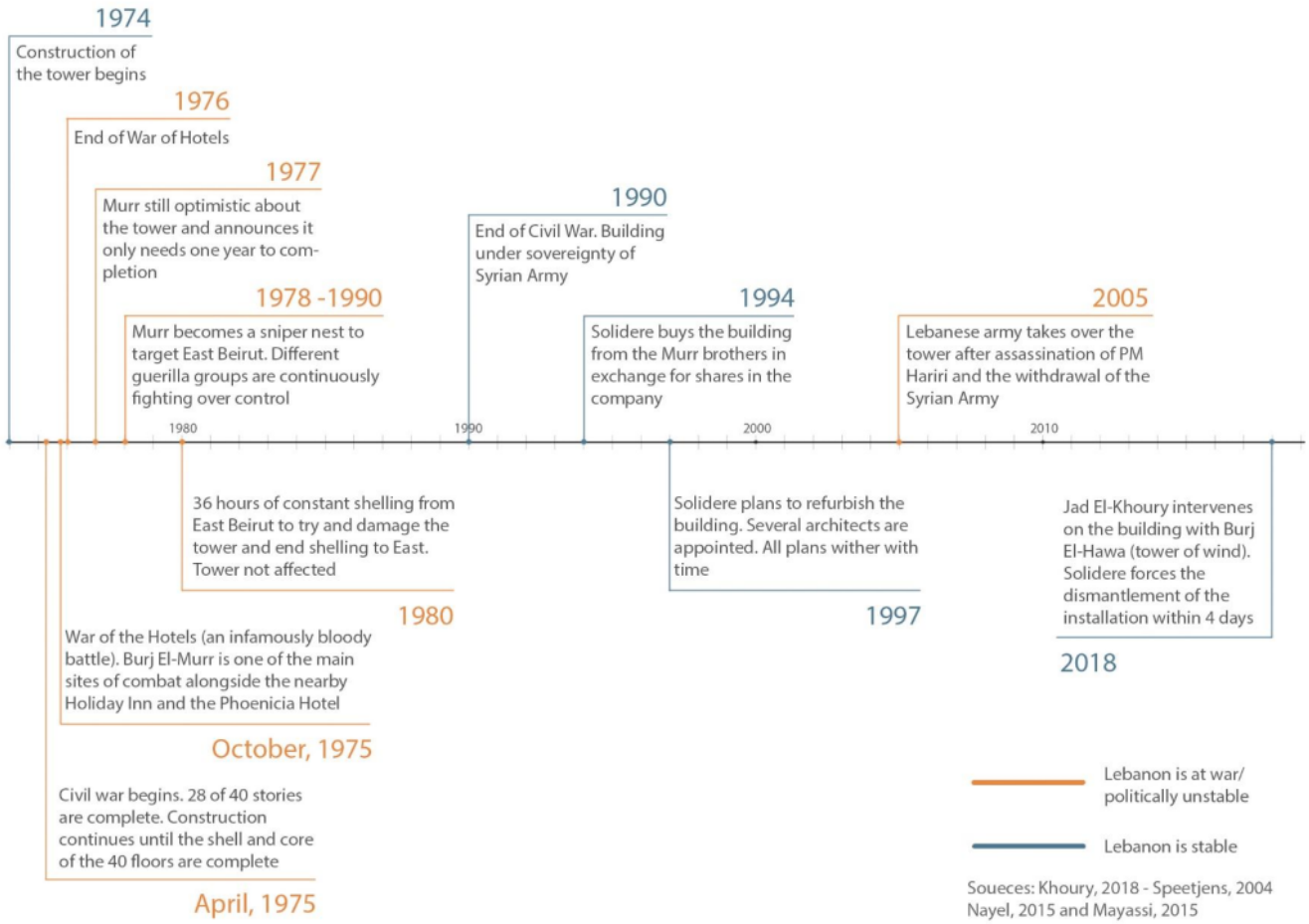

Figure 34: Burj El-Murr Timeline (Sinno, 2019)

Appendix 5: Burj El-Murr Architectural Proposals for Adaptive Reuse

Figure 35: Architect Abou-Khalil proposes to turn the tower into a cultural centre (Abou-Khalil, 2007)

Figure 36: Architecture studio JPAG proposes to give the tower new life (JPAG, 2019)

Appendix 6: Beit Beirut Timeline

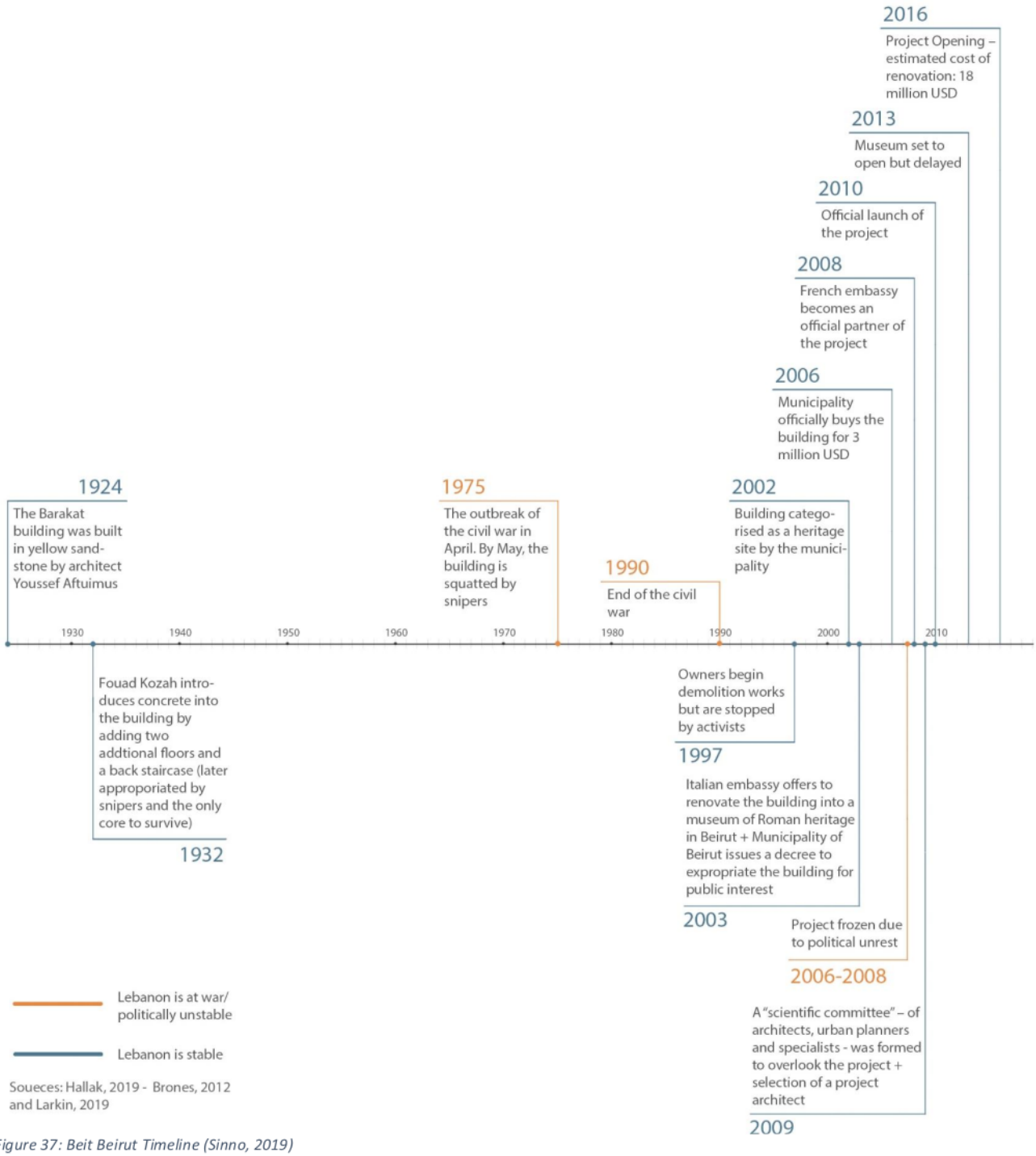

Figure 37: Beit Beirut Timeline (Sinno, 2019)

Appendix 9: Holiday Inn as a Monument

Figure 38: The Holiday Inn (Springer, 2013)

In November 2013, Jad El-Khoury painted his signature graffiti on the Holiday Inn, a prominent urban scar, currently an army base. Locals were unhappy with the intervention as it altered a "landmark building". One architect compared the building to a "sacred monster" … "in the sense that it holds so much meaning in history but it talks about such a horrible past". She added "I think the Holiday Inn deserves something that has meaning, layers, something specific to it … It's a beautiful and very imposing structure".

Similarly another architect claimed that the intervention "is an outrage! An outrage to Beirut, an outrage to memory, an outrage to everything!" The paintings were then covered with white paint by the army (Springer, 2013).

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

FIELD / LOCATION WORK

The Approved Code of Practice - Management of Fieldwork should be referred to when completing this form

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/estates/safetynet/guidance/fieldwork/acop.pdf

DEPARTMENT/SECTION: MSC. URBAN DESIGN AND CITY PLANNING
LOCATION(S): BEIRUT, LEBANON
PERSONS COVERED BY THE RISK ASSESSMENT Nour Sinno

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF FIELDWORK Fieldwork will be limited to interviews with stakeholders dealing with the urban scars, professionals dealing with Beirut's urban fabric and civillians who witnessed the traumas of the civil war. In addition, I will conduct site visits to the urban scars when possible.

Consider, in turn, each hazard (white on black). If **NO** hazard exists select **NO** and move to next hazard section.
If a hazard does exist select **YES** and assess the risks that could arise from that hazard in the risk assessment box.
Where risks are identified that are not adequately controlled they must be brought to the attention of your Departmental Management who should put temporary control measures in place or stop the work. Detail such risks in the final section.

ENVIRONMENT	**The environment always represents a safety hazard. Use space below to identify and assess any risks associated with this hazard**
e.g. location, climate, terrain, neighbourhood, in outside organizations, pollution, animals.	Examples of risk: adverse weather, illness, hypothermia, assault, getting lost. Is the risk high / medium / low ? Medium

CONTROL MEASURES	**Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk**
☐	work abroad incorporates Foreign Office advice
☒	participants have been trained and given all necessary information
☐	only accredited centres are used for rural field work
☐	participants will wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the specified environment
☐	trained leaders accompany the trip
☐	refuge is available
☐	work in outside organisations is subject to their having satisfactory H&S procedures in place

☒	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

Visiting some of the urban scars which are abandoned such as the egg in downtown may pose some danger. To avoid any harm, I will only enter these spaces with the consent of the owners and will not do so alone. I will be accompanied with a partner and will leave the premise if any form of danger appears.

EMERGENCIES	**Where emergencies may arise use space below to identify and assess any risks**
e.g. fire, accidents	Examples of risk: loss of property, loss of life

No

CONTROL MEASURES	**Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk**
☐	participants have registered with LOCATE at http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/
☐	fire fighting equipment is carried on the trip and participants know how to use it
☐	contact numbers for emergency services are known to all participants
☒	participants have means of contacting emergency services
☐	participants have been trained and given all necessary information
☐	a plan for rescue has been formulated, all parties understand the procedure
☐	the plan for rescue /emergency has a reciprocal element
☐	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

EQUIPMENT	**Is equipment used?**	**NO**	**If 'No' move to next hazard** **If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks**
e.g. clothing, outboard motors.	Examples of risk: inappropriate, failure, insufficient training to use or repair, injury. Is the risk high / medium / low ?		

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

☐	the departmental written Arrangement for equipment is followed
☐	participants have been provided with any necessary equipment appropriate for the work
☐	all equipment has been inspected, before issue, by a competent person
☐	all users have been advised of correct use
☐	special equipment is only issued to persons trained in its use by a competent person
☐	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

LONE WORKING	Is lone working a possibility?	NO	If 'No' move to next hazard If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
e.g. alone or in isolation *lone interviews.*	Examples of risk: difficult to summon help. Is the risk high / medium / low?		

Lone interviews will not be conducted as the topic at hand is rather volatile. I will do all forms of fieldwork while accompanied by trusted companions.

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

☐	the departmental written Arrangement for lone/out of hours working for field work is followed
☒	lone or isolated working is not allowed

☐	location, route and expected time of return of lone workers is logged daily before work commences
☐	all workers have the means of raising an alarm in the event of an emergency, e.g. phone, flare, whistle
☐	all workers are fully familiar with emergency procedures
☐	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

ILL HEALTH	The possibility of ill health always represents a safety hazard. Use space below to identify and assess any risks associated with this Hazard.
e.g. accident, illness, *personal attack, special personal considerations or vulnerabilities.*	Examples of risk: injury, asthma, allergies. Is the risk high / medium / low? Medium

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

☐	an appropriate number of trained first-aiders and first aid kits are present on the field trip
☐	all participants have had the necessary inoculations/ carry appropriate prophylactics
☒	participants have been advised of the physical demands of the trip and are deemed to be physically suited
☐	participants have been adequate advice on harmful plants, animals and substances they may encounter
☐	participants who require medication have advised the leader of this and carry sufficient medication for their needs
☐	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

The context in which the fieldwork will be conducted will be surveyed before visiting for research purposes to scan for any hazards

TRANSPORT	Will transport be Required	NO	X	Move to next hazard
		YES		Use space below to identify and assess any risks
e.g. hired vehicles	Examples of risk: accidents arising from lack of maintenance, suitability or training Is the risk high / medium / low? Low			

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

☐	only public transport will be used
☐	the vehicle will be hired from a reputable supplier
☐	transport must be properly maintained in compliance with relevant national regulations

☐	drivers comply with UCL Policy on Drivers http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/docs/college_drivers.php
☐	drivers have been trained and hold the appropriate licence
☐	there will be more than one driver to prevent driver/operator fatigue, and there will be adequate rest periods
☐	sufficient spare parts carried to meet foreseeable emergencies
☐	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

Transport in Beirut is relatively easy and not dangerous. Having lived there will facilitate commuting between different sites

DEALING WITH THE PUBLIC	**Will people be dealing with public**	**YES**	**If 'No' move to next hazard** **If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks**
e.g. interviews, observing	Examples of risk: personal attack, causing offence, being misinterpreted. Is the risk high / medium / low? Medium		

CONTROL MEASURES	**Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk**

☐	all participants are trained in interviewing techniques
☐	interviews are contracted out to a third party
☐	advice and support from local groups has been sought
☒	participants do not wear clothes that might cause offence or attract unwanted attention
☒	interviews are conducted at neutral locations or where neither party could be at risk
☒	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

Interviews will not be conducted alone

WORKING ON OR NEAR WATER	**Will people work on or near water?**	**NO**	**If 'No' move to next hazard** **If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks**

e.g. rivers, marshland, sea.	Examples of risk: drowning, malaria, hepatitis A, parasites. Is the risk high / medium / low?

CONTROL MEASURES	**Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk**

☐	lone working on or near water will not be allowed
☐	coastguard information is understood; all work takes place outside those times when tides could prove a threat
☐	all participants are competent swimmers
☐	participants always wear adequate protective equipment, e.g. buoyancy aids, wellingtons
☐	boat is operated by a competent person
☐	all boats are equipped with an alternative means of propulsion e.g. oars
☐	participants have received any appropriate inoculations
☐	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

MANUAL HANDLING (MH)	**Do MH activities take place?**		**If 'No' move to next hazard** **If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks**
e.g. lifting, carrying, moving large or heavy equipment, physical unsuitability for the task.	Examples of risk: strain, cuts, broken bones. Is the risk high / medium / low?		

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

- ☐ the departmental written Arrangement for MH is followed
- ☐ the supervisor has attended a MH risk assessment course
- ☐ all tasks are within reasonable limits, persons physically unsuited to the MH task are prohibited from such activities
- ☐ all persons performing MH tasks are adequately trained
- ☐ equipment components will be assembled on site
- ☐ any MH task outside the competence of staff will be done by contractors
- ☐ OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

SUBSTANCES	Will participants work with substances		If 'No' move to next hazard If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
e.g. plants, chemical, biohazard, waste	Examples of risk: ill health - poisoning, infection, illness, burns, cuts. Is the risk high / medium / low?		

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

- ☐ the departmental written Arrangements for dealing with hazardous substances and waste are followed
- ☐ all participants are given information, training and protective equipment for hazardous substances they may encounter
- ☐ participants who have allergies have advised the leader of this and carry sufficient medication for their needs
- ☐ waste is disposed of in a responsible manner

☐	suitable containers are provided for hazardous waste
☐	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

OTHER HAZARDS	**Have you identified any other hazards?**	**NO**	**If 'No' move to next section** **If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks**
i.e. any other hazards must be noted and assessed here.	Hazard: Risk: is the risk		

CONTROL MEASURES	**Give details of control measures in place to control the identified risks**

Have you identified any risks that are not adequately controlled?	**NO** ☒ **YES** ☐	**Move to Declaration** **Use space below to identify the risk and what action was taken**

Is this project subject to the UCL requirements on the ethics of Non-NHS Human Research?	No
If yes, please state your Project ID Number	

For more information, please refer to: http://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/

DECLARATION	The work will be reassessed whenever there is a significant change and at least annually. Those participating in the work have read the assessment.

Select the appropriate statement:

☒ I the undersigned have assessed the activity and associated risks and declare that there is no significant residual Risk

☒ I the undersigned have assessed the activity and associated risks and declare that the risk will be controlled by the method(s) listed above

Nour Sinno

NAME OF SUPERVISOR Dr. Michael Short

**** SUPERVISOR APPROVAL TO BE CONFIRMED VIA E-MAIL ****

FIELDWORK **5** May 2010