

# TOWARDS A REGIONALLY BALANCED DEVELOPMENT

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## PART 1: ROOTS OF UNEQUAL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*“One can almost say that Lebanon includes one city only [Beirut] and that it constitutes the quasi-exclusive pole of the whole activities of the country.”*

(ARNAUD 1993: 7)

## Introduction

For Labaki, regional development has a triple signification: “In developing countries development aims at correcting distortions between sectors of exportation and the rest of the slower economic sectors. Development has also a social component, steering the disparities of wealth between people in such countries. Finally, development is geographical, trying to contain inequalities between regions, especially between rural and urban regions” (LABAKI 1999: 23). In Lebanon, regional development is mainly understood in the third geographic dimension.

This report discusses unequal regional development in Lebanon in three sections. First, it looks back at the roots of this inequality showing how the creation of Great Lebanon in 1920 will make the country endure from unbalanced socio-economic development and hence from political instability. The sec-

ond section examines the changes incurred on this imbalance by the sixteen years of the Lebanese war. We have compiled a set of demographic, social, economic and urban indicators from the post-war period that inform on the actual situation of regional development. We have then compared a set of indicators with pre-war or war figures, trying to inspect changing configurations of regional development. Our main conclusion states that the war changed the hierarchy of regions according to their level of development : the South and the Beqaa have progressed on the expense of the North, whereas Beirut and Mount Lebanon increased their social, economic, political, urban and cultural dominance. In this section, we also discuss the priorities of the policies of post-war reconstruction that increased the macrocephaly of Central Lebanon by concentrating the majority of projects on its coastal strip.

In the third section, we attempt to come up with some recommendations aiming at a national strategy of balanced regional development. Administrative decentralization and the creation of regional authorities on the levels of qada are an essential prerequisite to any balanced development master plan. Both public and private investments should capitalize on human resources and specialized educated youth in the fields of high-tech and agriculture-related industries (telecommunications, health engineering, information technologies) as well as in tourism and leisure activities, in the frame of a comprehensive environmental policy. Along this line, balanced development should invest in the establishment of cultural poles and sub-poles, promoting regional identities, a sense of belonging and responsibility. A careful study of the sites of geographical establishment of these poles, alongside with inventive incentive measures (such as “user fees”) promoted by regional authorities, should comfort balanced regional development.

### **Brief History of Regional Development in Lebanon**

In terms of development, the predominance of Beirut over the rest of the regions of Lebanon

(North, South and Beqaa) is a well-known imbalance that can be dated to the early century. With the expansion of Beirut in the 1870s, urban growth in the future capital-city outgrew Tripoli and Saida. Transportation routes, missionary schools, universities and hospitals as well as the Beirut port development and the commerce of silk participated to the fortification of Beirut as a major trade center for Mediterranean exchange (ARNAUD 1993; LABAKI 1999: 23). However, the establishment of Great Lebanon in 1920, under the French mandate, added the poorer areas of the North (Akkar), Beqaa (Baalbak-Hermel) and the South (Jabal Aamel) to the relatively affluent cities of Mount Lebanon. This addition made of Lebanon a country composed of unequally developed regions. This legacy will be a heavy load to bear socially, culturally, economically and politically. Even though the public policies elaborated by the young Lebanese State were attempting to have regional perspectives, the early urban planning schemes reveal a development approach exclusively axed on Beirut and its suburbs.

In 1932, the Danger plan proposes solutions for Beirut aiming at the amelioration of traffic and infrastructure. The 1944 Ecochard plan takes into account a larger territory in Beirut (from Nahr el-Mott to Ouzai), offering a zoning scheme composed of twelve sectors. The following Egli plan revises this zoning and sets the ground for a master plan for Beirut that will produce the 1954 zoning and the 1964 road plans. All these planning projects do not deal with the rest of the Lebanese regions and concentrate on the capital.

The Lebanese regions get shares of social and sanitary equipment as well as infrastructures. During Bechara el-Khoury mandate (1943-1952), one thousand public schools are inaugurated while networks of water and electricity are installed. With President Camille Chamoun (1952-1958), similar policies of public works continue. In the early 1960s, with Fouad Chehab (1958-1964), the slogan of balanced development, aiming to resolve regional inequalities, becomes a priority of public action. The ministry of planning has the responsibility of imple-

menting equipment and infrastructures in the poorer regions of Lebanon. With the IRFED mission conducted between 1959 and 1963, a scientific reflection is developed on the whole national territory, confirming the macrocephalic domination of Beirut over the North, the South and the Beqaa in the administrative, economic, social, cultural and urban fields<sup>1</sup> (Ministry of Planning, 1960).

The IRFED mission proposes an index of “global living conditions” per region, determined by an average of records (ranging from 0 to 4). Each region living conditions is measured according to a set composed of nine criteria: sanitary (number of doctors and hospitals, quality of water), economic and technical (mechanization and agricultural rationalization, industrialization), domestic (hygiene and housing equipment), residential (quality of urban services), housing (surface and comfort of housing), educational (regional educational equipment, educational frequentation, levels of education), cultural (literacy, cultural leisure activities), familial (family solidarity, women situation) and social (social solidarity, associational life). An average inferior to 1.0 reflects underdevelopment, while an average superior to 2.5 means an advanced development, while middle score ranges between 1.5 and 2.0, indicating respectively partial underdevelopment and instigated development (LABAKI 1999: 24).

According to the IRFED study, central Lebanon (mohafazat of Beirut and Mount-Lebanon, excluding Jbeil immediate hinterland) has the highest index (2.24). The North comes next (2.13), followed by the South (1.53) and immediately by the Beqaa (1.47) (LABAKI 1999: 24).

The IRFED mission did not produce any master plan for Lebanon that could remedy to the unequal regional development. By the mid-1960s, the ministry of planning tried to promote regional development through other means. Two series of projects were adopted: “the program of roads for poor villages” consisted of providing a paved access to every Lebanese village, and “the program for providing every Lebanese locality with potable water and elec-

tricity” (FAWAZ 1999: 5).

The Delprat study of 1970<sup>2</sup> shows that the indicators of living conditions in Lebanon proposed by the IRFED study have progressed while the hierarchy amongst the regions has not changed. Central Lebanon is still leading the way (2.59), while other regions have rapidly progressed in the course of ten years: North is at 2.52, South reaches 2.20 and Beqaa is at 2.00. The 1973 *Livre Blanc* is another diagnosis on the macrocephaly of Beirut, warning about the chaotic consequences of uncontrolled rural-urban migration on Beirut and its misery belts. Next development plans concentrate on resolving the capital’s urban growth problems: APUR plan for Beirut Central District in 1977 and the *Schéma pour la Région Métropolitaine de Beyrouth (RMB)* in 1983 are attempts to come up with urban policies guiding the expansion of Beirut, solving its transportation problems, and regulating its urban, social and economic functions.

Post-war, the slogan of balanced development, first embraced by the Chehabists, resurfaces with Taif agreement that makes it an essential element of national reconciliation (LABAKI 1999: 23). The Plan Horizon 2000 works on resolving the geographical imbalance in development through investing equipment and infrastructures in the regions. However, no social agenda and no environmental concerns accompany this plan, which priorities are mainly concentrated on the coastal line of Central Lebanon, as will be further examined in the second section of this report.

Where are we today from the regional imbalance in development in Lebanon? We will try to examine the evolution of this imbalance and the changes that affected regional development in Lebanon by looking at several social, economic and urban indicators. With the assumption that balanced development is “better” for Lebanon, we will also look at the possible recommendations that would orient a national strategy of equilibrated regional development.

<sup>1</sup> IRFED stands for “Institut de formation et de recherches en vue du développement”.

<sup>2</sup> DELPRAT R., *L'évolution du milieu de vie en milieu rural : 1960-1970*, Ministry of Planning, Beirut, 1970.

## Methodology

The three existing sources of indicators on regional development in Lebanon are found in the results of the IRFED survey mission (1959-1963), in the living conditions indicators of the 1970s, and in the recent surveys carried by CAS (Central Administration of Statistics) and MSA (Ministry of social affairs). Several methodological problems are encountered when comparing such indicators. In the recently available figures (CAS and MSA), there are major discrepancies due to the difference of sampling, since CAS have accounted in their figures the Palestinians living in Lebanon whereas MSA did not. Hence, crossing indicators from both studies is problematic.

For instance, in the population figures given by MSA and CAS, there is 893,000 difference due to the exclusion of non-Lebanese from the MSA figures. Total population for MSA is 3,111,828 whereas for CAS it amounts to 4,005,000. We have adopted the CAS figures since we believe development is also affected by the situation of non-Lebanese people. Moreover, there is a difference in the geographical distribution of regions. Whereas MSA adopts the mohafazat boundaries in producing indicators, CAS have divided Mount Lebanon mohafazat in two sections (Beirut suburbs and remaining sections of Mount Lebanon), producing indicators for Greater Beirut. CAS kept the other regions boundaries as

mohafazat (North, South, Nabatiyeh and Beqaa). Accordingly, to be able to compare development between regions, we have added in the case of MSA figures, indicators from Mount Lebanon plus those from Beirut, so they can be related to the CAS figures (where we added up Beirut, Beirut suburbs and remaining sections of Mount Lebanon). The possible discrepancies of the results due to the population difference between CAS and MSA do not affect our analysis because we are interested in comparing regions in terms of development rather than rely on exact figures.

We have privileged indicators that allow us to measure development scales and ranges. In the available socio-economic data (living conditions), we looked for figures of population (size, illiteracy), health, education and income. We also searched for urban indicators: housing characteristics, permits of construction and urban services (connection to potable water, sewage and electricity networks). We also searched for punctual indicators that inform on development such as number of branches of banks in the different regions, number of students in public and private schools, number of building permits. In our data collection, we tried to find the same indicators over the 30 years period we are covering (1960s-1990s) to be able to depict the configuration of the development in the regions over time and to observe the changes that occurred after the Lebanese war.

**Table 1** Population geographical distribution in Lebanon (according to CAS and MSA)

Regions (CAS)	Population (CAS)		Mohafazat (MSA)	Population (MSA)	
	Number	Percentage		Number	Percentage
Beirut	403,000	10.1	Beirut	407,403	13.1
Beirut suburbs	900,000	22.5	Mount Lebanon	1,145,458	36.8
remaining sections of Mount Lebanon	608,000	15.2			
North Lebanon	807,000	20.1	North Lebanon	670,609	21.6
South Lebanon	472,000	11.7	South Lebanon	283,057	9.1
Nabatiyeh	275,000	6.9	Nabatiyeh	205,411	6.6
Beqaa	540,000	13.5	Beqaa	399,890	12.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,005,000</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,111,828</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: CAS 1998 and MSA-UNDP 1998: 70

## PART 2: CHANGES IN THE CONFIGURATION OF UNEQUAL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CHANGE IN HIERARCHY OF REGIONS

In this section, we examine the changes in the unequal regional development in relation to the devastation of the sixteen years of war (1974-1990). The war multiplied internal waves of forced displacements and intensified rural-urban migration. It created a new social geography over almost all of the national territory. The fragmentation of Beirut produced new economic centers in the northeastern parts of the city (such as Bourj Hammoud, Antelias-Dbayeh, Jounieh, Brummana) and in its southern sections (such as al-Dahiyeh, Aaramun, Khaldeh) – centers that developed to form important urban poles, attracting real estate and housing investments. Thus, the development of Beirut that had started in the 1960s continued during the years of war, and was intensified by the population displacements to the capital city. This development into what has been termed Greater Beirut (Grand Beyrouth, Beirut al-kubra) can be seen through the increase of its construction activities: about 30% of the 1996 buildings of Kesrwan, Antelias and al-Dahiyeh were built during the years of war (1976-1990) for approximately 22% of the 1996 buildings of Jbeil, Metn, Chouf and Dbayeh<sup>3</sup>.

Although different in scale, primary cities in the North, South and Beqaa (Tripoli, Zahleh and Saida) were witnessing a comparable type of demographic, economic and urban growth. Even in the secondary cities of those regions (Jbeil, Zghorta, Bsharreh, Nabatiyeh, Tyre, Baakline, Baalbak), some type of development was taking place, comforted by private initiatives and investments.

As we have shown in the first section of our paper, the unequal regional development in Lebanon is not a novel issue. Since the creation of Lebanon, Beirut was a dominant center over the rest of the regions. Planning policies in the 1960s tried to revert this

macrocephaly and succeeded in ameliorating considerably the situations in the regions but the gap between Beirut and the rest of the country remained a sharp one. War times also affected the situation: changes of economic, social and political powers have reshaped urban geography and development. To what extent these changes have affected the unequal regional development of Lebanon? Even though Beirut is still undoubtedly overwhelming, what are the modifications in the indicators of development within the regions? And how do they inform on transformations in the balance of development across the regions? Is the hierarchy of the regions in terms of development changing?

We will try to answer these questions first by reviewing development indicators of the 1990s, trying to come out with a profile of the actual regional development in Lebanon. We will then compare a selection of indicators with those of the 1960s and the 1970s, aiming at establishing the evolution of the regions over the past three decades and the changes in their configuration and hierarchy.

### 1. Analysis of Regional Development Indicators for the 1990s

The household size indicator shows us highest averages in the Beqaa, the South (both 5.0) and the North, with the top rank for the latter (5.5). Beirut (4.3) and Mount Lebanon (4.5) are closer to family size standards in this regard. We have the youngest population in the North (45.5% are less than 20 years old) but the lowest schooling rates of the country (90%). Population is also young in the South (42.9%) and the Beqaa (41.4%), with respectively 12.7% and 10.6% difference with the figures found in Beirut and Mount Lebanon (33.2%), regions that have the highest rates of schooling (more than 96%). In addition, North appears again well behind in terms of illiteracy rates with the highest proportion of 16.7%. South (14.8%) and Beqaa (13.5%) are also quite behind Beirut and Mount Lebanon (both 8.7%).

<sup>3</sup> These figures are deduced from the numbers given in the CAS studies on numbers of constructed buildings during 1976-1990.

Hence in the hierarchy of regions for demographic profile, North comes last, followed by Nabatiyeh, South, Beqaa (where figures for the last two regions are closely similar) and then, on top of the scale, Greater Beirut.

Table 2		Demographic profile of the regions				
Size of household, Illiteracy rate, Schooling rate and Youth proportion						
Regions	Average size of household	Illiteracy rates (%)	Schooling rate (10-15 y.o.)		Individuals less than 20 y.o. (%)	
Beirut	4.3	8.7	96.1		31.7	
Beirut suburbs	4.6	8.7	94.9	Average 96.6	37.2	Average 34.7
remaining Mount Lebanon	4.4	6.6	98.4		32.3	
North Lebanon	5.5	16.7	90.0		45.5	
South Lebanon	5.0	14.4	93.3		42.9	
Nabatiyeh	4.4	14.8	96.8		38.8	
Beqaa	5.0	13.5	93.3		41.4	
AVERAGE	4.8	11.6	93.9		38.9	

Source: CAS 1998

Table 3		Socio-economic profile of regions			
Unemployment, Income and Living Conditions Index					
Regions	Unemployment (%)	Income (USD/month)	Poverty (LCI level) %		
			low	intermediate	high
Beirut	7.5	1,379	18.4	38.7	43.0
Beirut suburbs	8.6	1,149	24.7	43.6	31.7
remaining Mount Lebanon	7.0	1,297			
North Lebanon	10.6	823	43.8	37.6	18.7
South Lebanon	9.1	756	36.9	44.7	18.4
Nabatiyeh	9.6	726	51.0	39.8	9.3
Beqaa	10.7	842	40.6	43.3	15.9
AVERAGE	9.0	1,026	32.1	41.6	26.4

Source: CAS 1998

The rate of unemployment is the highest in the Beqaa and the North (10.7%); it averages to 9.4 % in the South and Nabatiyeh and decreases to 7.5 % in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, with a higher percentage in the suburbs (8.6%). The figures related to income show a similar hierarchy between the

regions: Beirut and Mount Lebanon average income rates<sup>4</sup> are 38% superior to the averages found in the North, the South and the Beqaa – with the lowest difference for Beqaa (34%) and the highest for Nabatiyeh (43%).

<sup>4</sup> Note that there is a 10% difference of income rates between Beirut and the remaining areas of Mount Lebanon (average 1,264\$/month) and Beirut suburbs (1,149\$/month).

The UNDP-MSA study has computed an index called LCI (Living Condition Index) informing on the levels and ranges of deprivation according to a set of indicators related to four fields: housing, water and sewerage, education and income-related indicators (MSA-UNDP 1998: 18). Following the Basic Needs Methodology (UNDP-MSA 1998: 27-33), the Living Condition Index has set three main levels of deprivation: low, intermediate and high. According to the study, Beirut and its suburbs contain 25.3% of the total deprived population of Lebanon, with the qada of Baabda itself grouping 11.8%. In terms of mohafazat, Nabatiyeh and the North have the highest percentages of low LCI, with the qada of Akkar<sup>5</sup> reaching 12.5% (respectively 51% and 43.8%). The Beqaa and the South have better results with 40.6% and 36.9%; in these last two regions, the majority of the population enjoys an intermediate LCI (43.3% and 44.7%).

The LCI index is a useful indicator that informs about the actual situation concerning the regional levels of deprivation and thus about the geographical distribution and ranges of development. It shows that the macrocephaly of Greater Beirut (Beirut and Mount Lebanon) over the rest of the regions has not changed. Central Lebanon still has the highest living conditions. The average number of households having high LCI in Beirut and Mount Lebanon is 37.4%, while 21.5% have low LCI. The change is seen in the hierarchy amongst the Lebanese regions, where the North appears as being the most deprived region, followed by the Beqaa and then by the South.

Having a closer look at the LCI figures according to their qada's distribution, we can see that the imbalance amongst regions is not only between Central Lebanon and the other mohafazat but also amongst urban and rural areas. Amongst the 14 qada's that fall below the LCI national average, the majority is from the South (Bint Jbeil, Marjeyoun, Tyre, Hasbaya, Nabatiyeh, Jezzine), followed closely by the North (Akkar, Minieh, Tripoli, Bsharreh, Batroun) and the Beqaa (Hermel, Baalbak, Rachaya) (UNDP-

MSA 1998: 73). Above the LCI national average, in the South, the qada of Saida stands out; in the North, Koura and Zghorta are achieving good scores; in the Beqaa, Zahleh and Western Beqaa are prominent; and in Mount Lebanon, Kesrwan is on top of the list with the highest LCI (Beirut coming in second position), followed by respectively Metn, Aley, Jbeil, Chouf and Baabda.

**Table 4 a** Social services in the regions: Health

Infant mortality rates (per 1000 live births-less than one year)	
Regions	Infant mortality rate
Beirut	19.6
Mount Lebanon	27.6
North Lebanon	48.1
South Lebanon	27.2
Nabatiyeh	--
Beqaa	39.8
AVERAGE	27.9

Source: League of Arab States 1996, quoted in MSA-UNDP 1998: 45.

The types of indicators informing on quality of social and urban services are also useful to deduce information concerning the configuration of regional development. The figures about infant mortality rates by region show us serious discrepancies between the regions, especially in the North (48.1) and the Beqaa (39.8) where the difference with Beirut (19.1) reaches respectively 42.1% and 33.7%. It is noticeable that the averages found in Mount Lebanon (27.6) are comparable (and even higher!) to those found in the South (27.2), revealing the highest quality of services found in health centers in the South.

Concerning educational services, we have computed the number of students enrolled in public and private schools from the CAS 1998 tables. The results show us that private actors are dominant in education services with an average distribution of 64.6% of students in private schools for 35.4% attending

<sup>5</sup> When the percentage of deprived households according to place of registration of the household head is related with the total number of household in the qada, the highest percentage of low LCI are found in the qada's of Hermel 61.4% and Akkar 55.6%.

public schools. The results vary between the regions since we find the highest concentration of students in private schools in Beirut (77.4%) and Mount Lebanon (45.7%). The distribution is more balanced in the North (52.7%), with a stronger tendency towards private education in the South (54.3%) and

in the Beqaa (58.1%). Over all Lebanon, 54.5% of the students in the central mohafazat attend private schools whereas the proportion drops to 16.8% in the North, 15.8% in the South and 12.9% in the Beqaa.

**Table 4 b**

**Social services in the regions : Education**

Percentage of students enrolled in public and private schools

Regions	1997 *			
	Students in public schools		Students in private schools	
	by mohafazat	over Lebanon	by mohafazat	over Lebanon
Beirut	22.6	6.2	77.4	11.5
Mount Lebanon	24.3	25.1	75.7	43.0
North Lebanon	47.3	27.6	52.7	16.8
South Lebanon	45.7	24.2	54.3	15.8
Beqaa	41.9	16.9	58.1	12.9
AVERAGE	35.4 (as total % of public schools)	100	64.6 (as total % of private schools)	100

\* The percentages are computed from the samplenumber of students in Lebanon (CAS 1998: 192).

**Table 5**

**Urban services in the regions**

Percentage of transportation status and of access to water and sewage

Regions	Transportation		Housing connected to water network	Housing connected to sewage network
	Housholds with at least one car	Lack of public transportation		
Beirut	65.2	21.6	95.1	98.3
Beirut suburbs	65.5	34.6	77.3	89.3
remaining Mount Lebanon	81.3	49.0	89.2	33.9
North Lebanon	53.2	41.7	67.6	53.5
South Lebanon	51.4	42.6	79.0	42.1
Nabatiyeh	52.1	67.6	90.4	23.8
Beqaa	58.7	85.7	70.8	41.1
AVERAGE	62.4	46.7	79.9	58.5

Source: CAS 1998



It is a common fact that education quality in the public schools is poorer, especially in consequence to the war devastation when numerous public schools buildings were damaged or occupied. Moreover, socio-economic background of students in public schools is mainly lower: 57.4% of students enrolled in public schools in Beirut in 1995 come from poor households (UNDP-MSA 1998: 107). In addition, efficiency is deficient in public schools where student to teacher ratio is lower: in 1994-1996, the ratio in public schools was 8 while it reached 15 in private schools (ISKANDAR 1994: 100). Hence, the concentration of students from the regions in public schools indicate a sign of poorer development in the North, the South and the Beqaa and a wider gap between those regions and those of Beirut and Mount Lebanon. Although one has to emphasize that attending a public school in some peripheral qada's is the only choice students have.

The urban indicators reveal yet other types of discontinuities between Beirut, Mount Lebanon and the rest of the Lebanese regions<sup>6</sup>. We have chosen to examine the state of transportation and the accesses to water and sewage networks as they all disclose significant information on the levels and ranges of urban development. As far as transportation is concerned, the absence of public transport is highest in the Beqaa (85.7%). It is noticeable that Mount Lebanon has the third highest captivity percentage (49%), however countered by the highest average of car ownership (81.3% have at least one car). Lack of public transportation averages to 42.1% in the North and the South, where car ownership figures are the lowest (an average of 52.3%). The Beqaa has slightly higher averages for car ownership (58.7%) probably related to its largely absent public transportation, whereas Beirut and its suburbs figures equate around 65.3%.

The connection to water and sewage networks show the supremacy of Beirut and its suburbs over the other mohafazat, including Mount Lebanon. Urban indicators are so far the only indexes that show hia-

tus between the capital, its agglomeration and the rest of the country. Indeed, Beirut has the highest rates of connection to water (95.1%) and sewage (98.3%) networks. Beirut suburbs have more problems related to access to water (rates drop to 77.3%) rather than to the sewage network (89.3%). The situation is drastically reversed in Mount Lebanon, where we find the lowest rate of connection to the sewage network (33.9%), well behind the North (53.5%), the South (42.1%) and the Beqaa (41.1%), where the situation is not propitious either. Access to the water network is better in Mount Lebanon (89.2%), lifting up the region to highest position amongst the mohafazat. The South has the highest access rates to water (79%), followed by the Beqaa (70.8%) and by the North (67.6%).

## 2. Changes in the Indicators of Regional Development (1960s-1990s)

We have seen the actual state of regional development, as revealed by a selected number of social, economic and urban indicators. The imbalance between regions is still present, with a clear advantage to Beirut, its suburbs and Mount Lebanon, although certain discrepancies amongst these three areas exist, especially concerning urban indexes.

The Lebanese war has certainly affected the inequalities between regions. It has ameliorated the situation in some regions (Mount Lebanon, the South, and the Beqaa) and has impaired development in others (the North). Several factors can explain this modification. For Mount Lebanon, internal displacements have favored the concentration of population near the capital city and its markets and allowed the socio-economic development of the mohafazat. Today, Mount Lebanon has several of its qada's enjoying good levels of living conditions and low rates of poor population (all above the national average of 32.1%). Kesrwan comes first nationally with 13.5% of deprived households, Metn is next with

<sup>6</sup> In several cases, the region of Nabatiyeh show extreme averages (lowest or highest) related to its small size as a mohafazat and its limited population (forming 6.5% of the overall Lebanese population). Hence, in our analysis of figures, we have chosen to override its figures since they cannot compare methodologically with other regions, namely Mount Lebanon which groups 37% of the total population.

19.7%, Aley has 25%, and Jbeil is at 30.1%, while Chouf and Baabda come last with 31.3% of low LCI population.

For the South, political reasons clarify the socio-economic progression and the urban upgrading. The growing presence of Shiites within the Lebanese political system since mid-1980s has contributed to provide more social and urban services to the South. From the time Nabih Berry, leader of Amal (the Shiite political movement of the deprived) participated to the government in 1984 as a minister, the South begun to benefit from public aids through jobs, infrastructures or services – aids legitimated by the ongoing confrontations with the Israeli occupants. Today, compared to the North and the Beqaa, the South is well ahead in a number of indicators. It has the highest schooling rate (93.3%), the lowest rate of deprived population (36.9%) – although Bint Jbeil is the poorest qada of Lebanon (67.2% of deprivation), while Marjeyoun is at 60%, Tyre at 45%, Hasbaya at 41.5%, Nabatiyeh at 40% and Jezzine at 35.7%. South has also the lowest rate of unemployment (9.1%) and the lowest infant mortality rate (27.2). It is also the region with best connection to the water network (79%). However, its average income rate lags at 756\$/month, the lowest amongst the regions. Its connection to the sewage network loiters (42.1%) and its educational system endures, since it still relies on the suffering public system (45.7%), while illiteracy rates amount to 14.4%.

For the Beqaa, urban and social upgrading was not as important as in the South. However the progress in indicators is explained by the growing economic importance of the Beqaa during the war, through the Masnaa' trade exchanges and the drug business. Today, Beqaa has the lowest rates of illiteracy (13.5%), a high schooling rate (93.3%) and the lowest number of students in public schools (41.9%). It also has the highest income rates (842\$/month) and a high figure of car ownership (58.7%). Nevertheless, the South precedes it in major indicators. The Beqaa has a large percentage of deprived population (40.6%) – with peaks in Hermel (65.9%), Baalbak (49.2%) and Rachaya (39.5%), the

highest unemployment rate (10.7%), a high infant mortality rate denoting a poor health system (39.8), and very poor connections to water (70.8%) and sewage systems (41.1%).

The North is the region that has the most suffered from the war since it lost its leading position amongst the regions and is now at the bottom of the hierarchy. The factors explaining this alteration are mainly related to demography (internal and external migrations) and to political factors, since the political leaders of the North represent mainly the qada's of Tripoli, Bsharreh and Zghorta, ignoring the poorer areas of Akkar (63.3% of deprived population), Minieh (54.2%) and Batroun (34.2%). However, despite this political representation, Tripoli and Bsharreh are below the national average in grouping high numbers of deprived population (34.9%). Also, the North might have paid the price of its pre-war reputation as the second most developed region after Central Lebanon: aids, infrastructures and services were mostly directed towards the occupied South and to the Beqaa, where the rapid progression occurred making the North lag behind. Today, the North has the highest illiteracy rates of Lebanon (16.7%), the highest rates of young population (45.5% are below 20 y.o.) for the lowest schooling rates (90%). It is also the poorest region with 43.8% of households having low LCI, although its average income rates place it above the South (823\$/month). Services wise, its health system endures the highest infant mortality rate (48.1), while its students rely predominantly on the poor public system of education (47.3%); households have the lowest average for access to the water network (67.6%) but the highest for sewage connection (53.5%).

We have tried to understand the change of configuration in regional development by working onto certain indicators over time. We have selected the indicators that are related to geographical distribution and that inform on development progress, stagnation or decline.

The highest increase of establishment of bank branches over 1974-1998, as related to population of the mohafazat, is found in Mount Lebanon (76.3%

Table 6

Bank Branches in the Beirut and Regions: 1970's-1990's

Regions	1974		1974		1974	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Beirut and suburbs</b>	310	75.6	557	74.2	692	69.8
<b>Mount Lebanon</b>	28	6.8	67	8.9	118	11.9
Jounieh, Zouk, Kaslik	9		27		45	
Jbeil	3		9		13	
Aley	3		6		9	
Baakline	-		3		5	
<b>North</b>	38	9.3	61	8.1	73	7.4
Tripoli	33		43		49	
<b>South</b>	24	5.8	41	5.5	61	6.2
Saida	14		26		26	
Tyre	9		9		18	
<b>Beqaa</b>	10	2.5	25	3.3	47	4.7
Zahleh	7		11		14	
Chtaura	2		8		13	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: ABL 1995 : 112

between 1974 and 1998), in the Beqaa (78.7%) and in the South (60.5%). In the North, the growth is only 48% while it is the only region where the percentage of bank branches is decreasing (from 9.3% in 1974 to 7.4% in 1998). Since 1982, the branches are mainly concentrated in the cities, with the highest average in Tripoli where 70% of the North branches are found; also in Jounieh-Zouk-Kaslik where 40% of the branches of Mount Lebanon are situated; in Saida and Tyre where figures reach approximately 40% and 30% of the South branches, and in Zahleh and Chtaura which group almost 60% of the Beqaa branches.

This indicator shows us the tendency of economic development over the past seventeen years. Beirut and its suburbs are still attracting the majority of concentration of banks responding to demographic and economic requirements. The growth of the Mount Lebanon region is the sharpest amongst the rest of the regions. It is difficult to show tendencies of development from figures that do not sharply vary over the years. However they suggest a change of hierarchy in favor of the Beqaa and the South on the expense of the North region.

The indicator of building permits allows us to notice the clear progression of construction in the regions of the North, the South and the Beqaa.

Table 7

Distribution of Building Permits in Beirut and the Regions: 1980's-1990's

Regions	1981		1995	
	sq.m.	percent	sq.m.	percent
<b>Beirut</b>	751,173	12.8	1,731,000	5.0
<b>Mount Lebanon</b>	4,498,682	76.7	19,366,000	56.5
<b>North</b>	59,521 *	1.0	3,983,000	11.5
<b>South</b>	360,109	6.2	5,988,000	17.4
<b>Nabatiyeh</b>	-		-	
<b>Beqaa</b>	193,597	3.3	3,286,000	9.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,863,082</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>34,264,000</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Number excludes Tripoli and suburbs - Source: Iskandar 1994: 47 and 1982:42.

**Table 8** Percentage of students enrolled in public and private schools, 1980's-1990's

Regions	1997 *				1980 **			
	Students in public schools		Students in private schools		Students in public schools		Students in private schools	
	by mohafazat	over Lebanon	by mohafazat	over Lebanon	by mohafazat	over Lebanon	by mohafazat	over Lebanon
Beirut	22.6	6.2	77.4	11.5	30.1	9.2	69.9	23.9
Mount Lebanon	24.3	25.1	75.7	43.0	37.4	26.3	62.6	49.4
North Lebanon	47.3	27.6	52.7	16.8	71.0	25.7	29.0	11.9
South Lebanon	45.7	24.2	54.3	15.8	77.0	22.7	23.0	7.6
Beqaa	41.9	16.9	58.1	12.9	71.6	16.1	28.4	7.2
AVERAGE	35.4 (as total % of public schools)	100	64.6 (as total % of private schools)	100	52.9 (as total % of public schools)	100	47.1 (as total % of private schools)	100

\* The percentages are computed from the sample number of students in Lebanon (CAS 1998: 192).

\*\* The percentages are computed from the total number of students in Lebanon (Iskandar 1982: 186-195).

We have already discussed the issue of students in public and private schools in 1997. Comparing the figures to the 1980 situation reveals the nature of change that occurred after the war. There is a clear progression of private education accommodating more and more students, especially in the regions. The progression in Beirut and Mount Lebanon is relatively slow (5.1% and 9.5%). The 1980 balance between private and public schools students in all Lebanon (47.1% and 52.9%) is now in clear favor of private education (64.6% and 35.4%). The regression of public education has provoked the emergence of alternative private education. Regions are responding to this change by having students attending more private schools and abandoning public education. The increase in private teaching between 1980 and 1997 is highest in the South (40.5%), followed by the Beqaa (34.4%) and the North (29%).

This table confirms the tendency we already pointed to: regional imbalance in Lebanon is changing in terms of hierarchy of regions. Beirut and Mount Lebanon are still dominant in terms of revenue per capita (442,300 LBP/month), but the South (276,500 LBP/month) and the Beqaa (252,800 LBP/month) are no longer at the bottom of the scale, North has replaced them (228,700 LBP/month). One explanation is that large infrastructures and services were provided for the South where the number of population is relatively low (747,000) compared to that in the North (807,000), which did not receive similar aids. Another is the political justification of having public institutions directly providing the South with aids (such as Council of the South) and the increasing power of the political Shi'a since the 1980s – Shi'a being the main community living in the South.

**Table 9** Regional Living conditions: 1960's-1990's

Mohafazat	1960		1970		1997	
	Living conditions	Hierarchy of regions	Living conditions	Hierarchy of regions	Revenue per capita (LBP/ month)	Hierarchy of regions
Beirut and region	2.24	1st	2.59	1st	442,300	1st
North	2.13	2nd	2.52	2nd	228,700	4th
South	1.53	3rd	2.20	3rd	276,500	2nd
Beqaa	1.40	4th	2.00	4th	252,800	3rd

Source: B. Labaki, 1999: 26.

## Development priorities of post-war reconstruction policies

The actual configuration of regional development in Lebanon shows clear discrepancies between the regions with a dominance for the Central Lebanon region. After the end of the war, the State appointed the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) to examine these regional inequalities; CDR designed “Plan Horizon 2000”, a scheme aiming at balancing development amongst the regions, especially in terms of infrastructures and economy recovery. Plan Horizon 2000 is the only post-war development initiative with a regional outlook. The other development projects elaborated by the State are all concentrated within Greater Beirut (Lebanese university, Congress palace, Sports city, Airport, Government hospital...) and more particularly on its coastal strip; Solidere, Elyssar, Linord, Khoury’s Marina are undergoing or planned projects that aim at developing tourist, commercial, trade and residential investments.

The post war development policy of the State, promoted by Hariri government (1992-1998), is centered around balanced development and is widely inspired by the 1943 Pact and the 1989 Taef agreement (LABAKI1993: 104). However the application of this policy aims mainly at the rehabilitation and construction of roads and infrastructures (electricity, telephone, sewage). Another of its components is the rehabilitation of government buildings (airport, port, schools, universities and hospitals...). Transportation projects (mainly concentrated on the coastal line) constitute 25% of the budget of 10-year economic plan developed by the CDR (BAALBAKI 1994: 90). However, all these projects are predominantly concentrated around Beirut, ignoring the regions. The underlying goal behind the development policy is making Beirut a city able to face future global economy stakes, after the establishment of peace in the Middle East. This widely debated image has made of the development policy an

actual policy of reconstruction æ exclusively centered on Beirut (CORM 1993: 158). The portion bestowed to rural areas and to agricultural regions from the 10-year plan does not exceed one-third of the planned reconstruction expenses during the first stage, although these zones form 80% of Lebanon and group almost half of its population (BAALBAKI 1994: 90).

The actual Hoss government is preparing a five-year plan aiming at regional development. Its broad lines have not been uncovered to the public yet. However, any development plan for Lebanon has to take into account the actual inequalities between the regions and their changes over the years of the war. The unequal regional development is not limited to a simplistic division between Beirut and the regions. The inequality is also related to an urban-rural imbalance<sup>7</sup>. The discrepancies in deprivation indicators show a hierarchy placing Beirut and Mount Lebanon at the highest level, followed by other urban poles (Saida, Zahleh, Tripoli) and placing rural areas at the lowest (Akkar, Hermel, Baalbak).

## PART 3: COMPONENTS OF A NATIONAL STRATEGY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

The 1970 study on active population in Lebanon has shown that Lebanese population is divided along two types of residential groupings. The first is formed by groups of less than 5,000 people and constitutes 40% of the Lebanese population, the second is composed of cities above 100,000 people and makes up 51% of the population (80% of which are in Beirut and its suburbs). Around 10% of the population live in groups of 5,000 to 10,000 people. The study explains this distribution by the rural-urban migration that pushes demographic growth from small villages and cities towards Beirut and centers of mohafazat (DSC 1972: 59-60).

<sup>7</sup> It is beyond our scope to define here what is urban and what is rural. Urban societies would be characterized by their important population composed of very different groups, in the context of high density. Cities would be the sites of grand size “*altérité*” and proximity. They would also be the place of anonymity (Pettonnet C., “L’anonymat urbain”, in Ghorra-Gobin C. (dir.), *Penser la ville de demain? Qu’est-ce qui institue la ville ?*, Paris, L’Harmattan, p. 17-21).

This geographical situation has not changed drastically after thirty years. The war has introduced some modifications and provoked some returns from the cities to their villages. However, these modifications have not affected the regional imbalance found in the regions. It has increased the number of residents proportionally without affecting the geographical distribution. Emigration is an important factor in explaining this relative regional constancy (GHOSSEIN 1998: 534-535). The dynamics of “developed centers vs. underdeveloped peripheries” has still a materiality. We have noted that the modification induced by the war on regional development is mainly a change in the hierarchy of the regions, whereby the South and the Beqaa development indicators have increased on the expense of the North. However, it is crucial to emphasize again that the difference of development is not simplistically between Central Lebanon and its three mohafazat. Even within Beirut and Mount Lebanon, certain areas suffer from low indicators of development, within the qada’s of Aley or Chouf for instance (BAALBAKI 1994: 26).

Regional inequalities have multiple consequences on balanced development. Economic and productive sectors are concentrated in or near large cities (Beirut, Tripoli, Zahleh, and Saida), where manpower, labor and markets are found. The growth of medium sized centers is not being facilitated in such configurations. Political factors are also contributing to the reinforcement of the unbalanced regional arrangements formed by strong attractive centers and repulsive peripheries. Leaders of public institutions encourage establishment of state services in the capital and in mohafazat centers.

The Lebanese war has provoked three types of mutations in spatial organization: first, the destruction of buildings and infrastructures; second, the fragmentation of urban structures and decentralization of spaces and activities into confessional territories forming unequal new centers; third, the urban extensions of cities and the formation of suburbs.

However, until this day and despite these important spatial, demographic, economic and political transformations, no master development plan for Lebanon, including a socio-economic vision, was adopted. And, within the actual international changes concerning urban management and the drifting away from the production of such prescriptive planning towards “urban governance” types of guidance, it seems hypothetical to expect such a global outlook from the State<sup>8</sup>. The 1992-1998 policies of reconstruction were composed of punctual schemes of rehabilitation of infrastructures, without spatial coordination. Moreover, several of those projects are mere updates of pre-war plans (VERDEIL 1999:1-4). Hence, planning policies are only limited to being urgent management of urban services.

The hypothesis of this study claims that regional imbalance should be remedied by equilibrating development towards a better territorial distribution of opportunities, facilities and resources. How can this be accomplished? It is well beyond our aim and our capacities to design here a national strategy of regional development. We will try however to pinpoint and emphasize recommendations and guidelines that a development policy intending regional equilibrium should take into account.

### **1. Finding the adequate actors for balanced development: a stronger State establishing regional authorities and partnerships with civil society**

To be able to fulfill balanced development, it is necessary to revisit the actual distribution of administrative functions at the local level and to promote administrative decentralization. It seems difficult to encourage development in the regions if there are no regional authorities at the level of qada’s capable of initiating development actions. The only existing local authorities are municipalities and still, half of the Lebanese territory does not have municipal representation<sup>9</sup>. The Taif agreement has acknowledged the urgency of establishing elected regional councils

<sup>8</sup> A “plan d’aménagement du territoire” has been planned to take place by CDR for the past two years without developing into a concrete initiative yet.

<sup>9</sup> Nabatiyeh has the highest percentage of municipalities (69%). The Beqaa (58%), Mount Lebanon (53%), the North (39%) and the South (35%) follow it. The average of municipalities by region in Lebanon amounts to 50.8% (GHOSSEIN 1998: 527).

(majlis qada's). Such actors would be specialized agencies aiming at developing their region comprehensively. They would also contribute to assert regional identities that would help promoting private investments in economic activities.

In implementing administrative decentralization, it is also necessary to redefine the boundaries of the actual administrative regions on the basis of demography and geography, and not on the sole grounds of sectarianism and elections stakes. This redrawing of geographic boundaries has to take into account urban growth, economic changes, social and political transformation as well as regional distribution of resources and wealth. The application of decentralization helps to decrease the dominance of Greater Beirut as the main pole of decision. The creation of autonomous regional authorities can help in bridging the gap between peripheral rural areas and central urban poles since they can link primary cities to peripheral areas. This median level promotes the actions of intermediary political leaders, counterbalancing the central elites.

The coordination of actions between the regional authorities has to be made by a higher central authority, such as the CDR (or a Ministry of Planning?). It is essential that decision-making about regional development is done at least in its conceptual stage by a central authority. A master plan scheme orienting development actions in each region should be elaborated. This master plan should be flexible enough to allow for regional initiatives to be produced. It should set guidelines and a framework of action for the region, encouraging regional coordination and complementarity whenever possible.

An essential question to raise at this point concerns the role of State in the making of the national strategy and the development process. In the global context of retreat of the welfare State and the growing ideology of neo-liberalism and governance, what would be the role of the Lebanese State in the regional development process? State has to play a central role in decision-making and in the imple-

mentation stages of the national strategy of regional development. Balanced development cannot be achieved by civil society alone. Balanced development needs a strong State showing capacities of intervention and of willingness to execute a national strategy of development.

Having a strong central State does not exclude the reliance on the active participation of civil society components into the decision-making stages of the master plan. With the Lebanese war, multiple groups emerged or were reinforced as alternatives to the retreat of State from the provision of urban and social services: family, village and neighborhood associations, professional associations, social and welfare associations, advocacy groups (especially human rights, environmental, heritage and pro-democracy groups), women's groups, confessional and religious associations, as well as political parties. The inclusion of such dynamic elements into the decision-making and implementation stages of the master plan is essential to produce a national strategy responding to local and regional needs. To be able to maximize civil society participation, the issue of territorial belonging should be meditated. How are citizens expected to participate to the development of their territories if they do not elect the representatives of this territory? The law on elections stating that people vote in their region of origin renders half the Lebanese population unable to elect its representatives in their place of residence and work, i.e. in the place where they perform their social and economic activities (ANTOUN, SALEM and KRAYIM 1998: 507). This is definitely not an easy issue to resolve since it has multiple intricate political and sectarian stakes.

Partnerships between central and regional authorities and civil society components are easy to advocate for. How is it possible to implement such partnerships is a harder issue to discuss in this short report. Issues of partnerships are on the foreground of donor's agendas and international agencies. How to coincide scales of economic development and scales of urbanization with scales of management? The quality of exchange between local, regional and

national determines the efficiency of development and the quality of actions. This seems a major difficulty in Lebanon where no exchange tools or mechanisms (concertation) exist with the different components of civil society. On the other hand, in a country where sectarianism and clientelism structure the political system, to what extent public actors, private market, civil society organizations and community groups can become partners in the development process, and to what extent partnership should involve planning and decision-making?

## 2. Promoting public and private investments in productive sectors: priorities for high-tech and agricultural industries, tourism and leisure activities

IRFED mission had advocated in the early 1960s the promotion of agriculture as a basic sector of the Lebanese economy, encouraging industries, artisanat and tourism (Ministry of Planning 1960: 63). Today, in thinking about possible areas of public and private investments to promote regional development, we have to take into account international changes in economics and politics. In a world of globalization and dominant information technology and telecommunications, in the context of the peace process in the Middle-East, what would be the functions of Lebanon? Lebanon should capitalize on its human resources that have long given it an edge over the rest of the Arabic countries. It should also benefit from its educated youth of which a good number are specialized in advanced fields of knowledge and who are predominantly based outside Lebanon. The country has also to realize the important tourist potentials it is bestowed with: archeological wealth, climate and nature are assets that should be rationally developed in the frame of international ecological standards. Last but no least, financial markets are another remarkable wealth of the Lebanese economy that should still bear priority in development.

All this capital has to be comprehensively maximized in the frame of the national strategy for

regional development. There are several fields where public and private investments can be made. Within industry, production linked to agriculture seems to be a promising field; there are a number of private initiatives<sup>10</sup> going along this line that have proven to be economically successful. Other high-tech industries linked to information technology, computer engineering, telecommunications, chemical engineering, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, etc. have to be promoted since they attract the Lebanese emigrant youth to return and they encourage the residents to invest in their country. Moreover, the geographical implementation of such industries can help promote regional development by creating “*technopôles*”.

Another important field of investment that encourages regional development is tourism and leisure activities, alongside with elaborating a solid environmental policy. This sector, referred to as ecotourism, can produce important resources for the regions. All the *mohafazat* have rich tourist resources they can capitalize on for their development. As an example, the Qara’oun Lake in the Beqaa has enormous potential to become a leisure zone generating significant resources. All archeological sites in Lebanon are not exploited nor managed rationally enough to induce development in their regions. Leisure activities are not capitalized upon although Lebanon, by its climate and nature, is an attractive country in the region to propose several types of recreational and scientific parks.

But how feasible is regionally balanced development? When more than 40% of the Lebanese population is concentrated in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, how is the State to guarantee the profitability of public or private investments in the regions? Investments should take into account areas of concentration of manpower and employment. As these are mainly concentrated within Greater Beirut and the centers of *mohafazat* (Tripoli, Zahleh, and Saida), it makes it economically strenuous to invest at a further geographical distance.

<sup>10</sup> We are mainly referring to the dairy productions (Dahlia, Dairy Day) and the citrus productions of fruit juices, and fresh fruits and vegetables (Balkis, K-Sun).



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Apart from the positive consequences of administrative decentralization on increasing the possibilities of such investments in intermediary centers, thinking of incentive measures forms further motivation. Establishing administrative decentralization does not only promote intermediate levels of regional authorities but also forwards efficient taxation. Balanced development should not rely only on central state aids, regions should aim at becoming financially able to sustain important development actions on the scale of their territory. Hence, establishing regional taxes that produce such resources is necessary. These taxes should respond to the existing inequalities within the region and should redistribute wealth amongst rich and poor sub-regions. Also, to be able to establish such autonomous functioning, a drastic review of the actual binding administrative hierarchy between local and national authorities should be made.

Incentive measures advocating regional development could be related to tax reductions, modification of laws of construction (such as higher exploitation ratios), public real-estate interventions (land partition and regrouping), public-private partnerships (real-estate companies, public agencies), etc. One interesting system that can help promote financial

capacities of regions is “user fees” which can be imposed on infrastructures and urban services, allowing the regions to take long-term credits that are reimbursed from the sole users of the service itself, hence avoiding taxes (SALEM 1996: 326-327).

In conclusion, we would like to underscore that achieving a national strategy for regional development requires a strong State, willing to undertake administrative decentralization, to redefine the administrative and geographical map of Lebanon, to do public investments with long-term aims and to come up with incentive measures encouraging the private sector to invest in peripheral regions, advocating for the return and the stability of the Lebanese youth. Many researchers have pointed to the importance of having a geographical basis for the distribution of services, of employment opportunities, of economic activities and of equipments. However, it is also necessary to emphasize the significance of promoting political and cultural dimensions in this geographic distribution. The devolution of power to regional authorities helps in empowering people, in comforting their regional identities, thus creating new dynamics for economic and social development on the region’s level.

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# SUMMARY

## TOWARDS A REGIONALLY BALANCED DEVELOPMENT

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In our report, we discuss unequal regional development in Lebanon in three sections. The first looks back at the roots of this inequality and shows that since the creation of Lebanon in 1920, the country will endure from this handicap that will affect balanced socio-economic development and hence political stability. According to IRFED study in 1960, central Lebanon (mohafazat of Beirut and Mount-Lebanon, excluding Jbeil immediate hinterland) has the highest living conditions index (2.24). North Lebanon is next (2.13), followed by the South (1.53) and immediately by the Beqaa (1.47). The Delprat study of 1970 shows that the indicators of living conditions in Lebanon set by IRFED have progressed but the hierarchy of the regions has not changed. Central Lebanon is still leading the way (2.59), while other regions have rapidly progressed in the course of ten years: the North (2.52), the South (2.20) and Beqaa (2.00).

The second section examines the changes incurred on this imbalance by the sixteen years of the Lebanese war. We have compiled a set of demographic, social, economic and urban indicators from the post-war period that inform on the actual situation of regional development. Following that, we have compared a set of indicators with pre-war or war figures, trying to inspect changing configurations of regional development. The Lebanese war has ameliorated the situation in some regions (Mount Lebanon, the South, the Beqaa) and has impaired development in others (the North). Mount Lebanon has most of its qada's enjoying good levels of living conditions and low rates of poor population (all above the national average set by the Ministry of Social Affairs).

Compared to the North and the Beqaa, the South is well ahead in a number of indicators. It has the highest schooling rate (93.3%), the lowest rate of deprived population (36.9%), the lowest rate of unemployment (9.1%) and the lowest infant mortality rate (27.2). It is also the region with best connection to the water network (79%). However, its aver-

age income rate lags at 756\$/month, the lowest amongst the regions, its connection to the sewage network lingers (42.1%) and its educational system endures, since it still relies on the suffering public system (45.7%), while illiteracy rates amount to 14.4%.

For the Beqaa, urban and social upgrading was not as important as the ones found in the South. Although, Beqaa has the lowest rates of illiteracy (13.5%), a high schooling rate (93.3%) and the lowest number of students in public schools (41.9%). It also has the highest income rates (842\$/month) and a high figure of car ownership (58.7%). Nevertheless, the South precedes it in major indicators. The Beqaa has a large percentage of deprived population (40.6%) with peaks in Hermel (65.9%), Baalbak (49.2%) and Rachaya (39.5%), the highest unemployment rate (10.7%), a high infant mortality rate denoting a poor health system (39.8), and very poor connections to the water (70.8%) and sewage systems (41.1%).

The North is the region that has the most suffered from the war since it lost its leading position amongst the regions and is now at the bottom of the hierarchy. It incorporates the poorest areas of Lebanon: Akkar (63.3% of deprived population), Minieh (54.2%) and Batroun (34.2%). Even Tripoli and Bsharreh are below the national average with high numbers of deprived population (34.9%). The North has the highest illiteracy rates of Lebanon (16.7%), the highest rates of young population (45.5% are below 20 y.o.) for the lowest schooling rates (90%). It is also the poorest region with 43.8% of households having low Living Conditions Index, although its average income rates place it above the South (823\$/month). Services wise, its health system endures the highest infant mortality rate (48.1), while its students rely predominantly on the poor public system of education (47.3%); households have the lowest average of access to the water network (67.6%) but the highest for sewage connection (53.5%).

## SUMMARY

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Hence the war changed the hierarchy of regions in unequal development, since the South and the Beqaa have progressed on the expense of the North, whereas Beirut and Mount Lebanon increased their social, economic, political, urban and cultural dominance. In 1997, Beirut and Mount Lebanon have the highest revenue per capita (442,300 LBP/month), while the South is in second position (276,500 LBP/month), the Beqaa in third (228,700 LBP/month) and the North at the bottom of the scale (252,800 LBP/month). Moreover, the priorities of the policies of post-war reconstruction corroborate the macrocephaly of Central Lebanon by concentrating the majority of their projects on its coast.

In the third section, we attempt to come up with a few recommendations aiming at balanced regional development. Achieving a national strategy for regional development requires a strong State, will-

ing to undertake development actions which outcomes may not be perceptible on the short term. Administrative decentralization and the creation of regional authorities on the levels of qada are an essential pre-requisite to any balanced development master plan. Capitalizing on the Lebanese human resources and the specialized educated youth, the fields of public and private investments that are important to promote, besides financial markets, are various types of high-tech and agricultural industries (telecommunications, health engineering and information technologies) as well as tourism and leisure activities, in the frame of a comprehensive environmental policy. A careful study of the sites of geographical establishment of such poles, alongside with inventive incentive measures (such as “user fees”) promoted by regional authorities, should comfort balanced regional development.

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