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**Urbanisation and Economic Development in Lebanon**

**RELATORE:**

**CH.MO PROF. Roberto Ganau**

**LAUREANDO: Elias Macdissy**

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Firma dello studente



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## Abstract

This research delves into the intricate relationship between urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon by relying on a quantitative research method and employing original survey data.

The study explores the implications of urbanisation and its impact on economic development, addressing growth, infrastructure, government policies, and socio-economic factors. It investigates the extent to which urban planning is respected in Lebanon.

Demographic variables, including age, gender, education, and city of residence, shed light on their influence on perceptions of urbanisation and economic development. The findings reveal that urbanisation significantly affects Lebanon's economic development, influenced by government policies, foreign investments, and societal changes. The study suggests the importance of policy development, infrastructure, and public participation in urban planning.

This research provides a foundation for informed decision-making and policy development in Lebanon's journey toward sustainable urbanisation and economic growth, offering valuable insights for both research and management.

Keywords: urbanisation, economic development, urban planning, Lebanon

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## Introduction

In the heart of the Middle East, where history and modernity come together, lies Lebanon—a vibrant nation where age-old traditions blend seamlessly with a rapidly changing urban landscape. Our world has been transformed by urbanisation. Across the globe, cities have grown, becoming hubs of innovation, culture, and commerce. Lebanon, too, has witnessed this transformation, with its cities expanding, skylines changing, and communities adapting to a new urban reality.

At the core of this change is a fundamental question: How does urbanisation affect economic development in Lebanon? This thesis dives into a quantitative exploration of the complex relationship between urbanisation and economic progress in Lebanon.

The study of urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon is of great interest due to several compelling reasons. Firstly, Lebanon's urbanisation patterns have consistently exceeded regional and global averages, making it a unique case for analysis. Secondly, the country's rapid urban expansion is occurring alongside a severe economic crisis, raising vital questions about the sustainability and inclusivity of this growth. Understanding the dynamics between urbanisation and economic development is crucial for policymakers and urban planners in Lebanon, especially in the context of increasing disparities between urban and rural areas.

The main question of this research revolves around understanding how urbanisation and economic development interact. As Lebanon's cities grow, do they drive economic prosperity, or do they present challenges that hinder the nation's economic growth?

To tackle this question, I ask several crucial questions: What is the current state of urbanisation in Lebanon, and how has it evolved? What drives urbanisation in Lebanon, and how does it impact economic development? What challenges does urbanisation bring to Lebanon's economic growth, and are there opportunities within these challenges? And how does public policy influence the link between urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon?

The quest for answers is underpinned by a rigorous quantitative research methodology. By systematically collecting and carefully analysing data from a diverse group of Lebanese respondents, I aim to uncover hidden patterns, correlations, and trends that define the relationship between urbanisation and its impact on economic development in Lebanon.

Lebanon's experience offers valuable lessons for other nations facing similar challenges due to its unique combination of circumstances. The country's dynamic urbanisation patterns, alongside ongoing economic and political challenges, serve as a relevant case study. This juxtaposition of rapid urban expansion within a tough economic context raises critical questions about the sustainability and inclusivity of such growth, echoing concerns shared by many nations. Lebanon's experience contributes to the global conversation on sustainable urban development and economic growth by shedding light on the complex interplay of factors. Policymakers and urban planners worldwide can draw upon these insights to inform their strategies, particularly in addressing disparities between urban and rural areas. In this context, Lebanon's experience becomes a valuable source of guidance for nations navigating similar urbanisation challenges and seeking sustainable solutions.

This thesis unfolds across several chapters, each with a distinct focus on understanding the intricate relationship between urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon. In Chapter 1, I lay the groundwork by defining urbanisation, examining theoretical frameworks, providing a historical overview of urbanisation in Lebanon, and analysing current trends and patterns. Chapter 2 delves into the nation's economic and economic development situation. Chapter 3 clarifies the research methodology and analysis' strategies. Chapter 4 presents the main findings, untangling the complex dynamics linking urbanisation and economic development. Chapter 5 delves into the implications of our research for Lebanon's policymakers and offers recommendations for effective urbanisation strategies. Finally, Chapter 6 provides a concluding synthesis of the thesis, summarizing key insights and hinting at potential directions for future research endeavours.

# Chapter 1: Defining Urbanisation

## 1.1 Theoretical Framework

The rapid expansion of urban regions has emerged as a defining characteristic of developing nations in the post-World War II era. This phenomenon has rightfully garnered significant attention within academic circles over the years. Urbanisation, often referred to as a profound and ongoing revolution, follows in the footsteps of industrialization. It is a consequence of economic and technological advancements, signifying a transformative shift in societal structures.

In 1960, the global urban population represented 34% of the total population. However, by 2014, urban dwellers constituted 54% of the global populace, with this trend persisting (UNDESA, 2014). According to the United Nations, as of 2018, 55% of the world's inhabitants resided in urban areas, a figure projected to rise to 68% by 2050. This process of urbanisation encompasses the transition from rural to urban living, accompanied by shifts from agricultural pursuits to urban-centric activities like commerce, manufacturing, industry, and management. These changes correspond to shifts in behavioural patterns. Figure 1 illustrates the alterations in global rural and urban populations from 1950 to projected figures up to the year 2050.

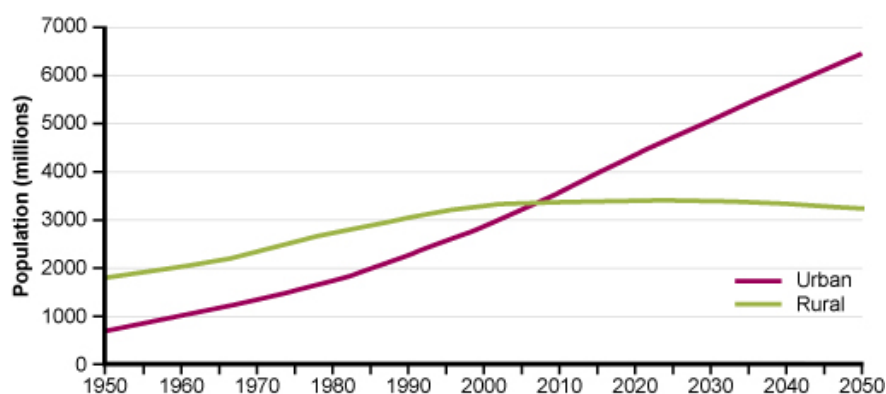


Figure 1 Urban and rural population of the world, 1950–2050. (UNDESA, 2014)

As per the United Nations' definition, urbanisation represents a population shift away from dispersed small rural communities, where agriculture serves as the primary economic activity. Instead, it involves a concentration of people into larger and denser urban areas characterized by industrial and service-oriented economic dominance (UN, 2018). The most prominent aspect of urbanisation revolves around the enlargement of towns and cities, consequently contributing to the expansion of urban populations. This process of urbanisation is often accompanied by factors such as population mobility, social segregation, and increased industrialization. In simpler terms, urbanisation can be summarized as the emergence and growth, or occasionally shrinkage, of cities (UN, 2018).

Sociologist Gideon Sjoberg (1965) outlines three essential prerequisites for city development: firstly, a favourable environment with access to fresh water and a pleasant climate; secondly, advanced technology capable of producing a surplus of food to support nonfarmers; and thirdly, a robust social organization ensuring social stability and a steady economy.

It is worth noting that the criteria for defining urban areas may vary from one country to another, making cross-national urbanisation comparisons complex. The core distinction between urban and rural areas lies in the fact that urban populations reside in larger, denser, and more diverse cities, whereas rural areas are characterized by smaller, sparser, and less diverse communities (Peng, 2018).

In European nations, urbanized areas are primarily identified based on urban-style land use, while countries like the United States consider both population size and population density in their definitions. In less developed countries, additional requirements, such as a significant proportion (typically 75%) of the population not engaged in agriculture and/or fishing, might be used (UN-Habitat, Lebanon Urban Profile). Consequently, urbanisation's dynamics depend not on a universal urban definition but on the aggregation of individuals (UN-Habitat, Lebanon Urban Profile).

In this study, the Degree of Urbanisation (DEGURBA) system, as proposed by Eurostat (2021), will be employed to describe urbanisation processes and migration. DEGURBA serves as a classification system designed to assess the level of urbanisation within a specific area, utilizing metrics like population density and other pertinent characteristics. Its primary purpose is to categorize regions for statistical purposes, and this classification hinges on several key criteria:

- Population density: This measures the number of residents per square kilometre in each area.
- Size of the cluster: It quantifies the number of contiguous grid cells with a population density exceeding 1,500 inhabitants per square kilometre.
- Share of the population living in urban clusters: This calculates the proportion of the total population residing within the identified clusters.

Based on these established criteria, areas can be categorized into three distinct groups:

- Cities: These are regions with a population density of at least 1,500 inhabitants per square kilometre and a minimum cluster size of 50,000 inhabitants.
- Towns and suburbs: This category encompasses areas with a population density of at least 1,500 inhabitants per square kilometre and a minimum cluster size of 5,000 inhabitants.
- Rural areas: This classification applies to regions with a population density of less than 1,500 inhabitants per square kilometre and no identified clusters containing 5,000 inhabitants or more.

The realm of urbanisation theories has a rich history, entwining with theories related to cities, industrialization, and, more recently, globalization. Within this paper, I aim to introduce and explore four such theories, offering insights from both earlier and contemporary perspectives on the causes and mechanisms driving urbanisation.

Firstly, there exists what can be termed the theory of self-generated or endogenous urbanisation. This theory posits that urbanisation hinges on two distinct prerequisites. The first involves the generation of surplus goods that can sustain non-agricultural pursuits (Childe, 1950; Harvey, 1973). The second prerequisite pertains to achieving a level of social development that renders large communities socially viable and stable (Lampard, 1965). From a historical standpoint, these transformative changes occurred simultaneously during the Neolithic period when the first cities emerged in the Middle East (Wheatley, 1971). In a demographic context, this theory centres on the rural-to-urban population shift as the cornerstone of urbanisation. It identifies industrialization as the primary driver behind the migration of rural populations to urban centres in pursuit of factory employment. Historical evidence strongly supports this perspective. Prior to the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain, no society could be classified as urban or urbanized. Consequently, all countries, primarily in the Western world, that experienced rapid industrialization following Great Britain's lead became highly urbanized by the mid-twentieth century. Subsequently, accelerated industrialization and urbanisation unfolded in other regions worldwide throughout the last century and into the present day. While this theory remains pertinent, especially considering the intricate relationship between industrialization and urbanisation, it does have limitations. Specifically, it narrowly focuses on the rural-to-urban migration within countries as the primary driver of urbanisation.

The second theory concerning urbanisation emerges from a broader theoretical framework known as modernization theory, which gained prominence and influence during the period spanning the 1950s to the 1970s. While sharing some common ground with the first theory in terms of development timing, modernization theory encompasses a broader set of assumptions and a wider scope of influence. Viewed through the lens of modernization theory, the current level of urbanisation in any given society is influenced by its initial state at the onset of modernization. Furthermore, technology holds a fundamentally more significant role than a

society's social organization in shaping the process of urbanisation. Lastly, modernization theory suggests that the trajectory and pattern of urbanisation, both within and between developed and developing countries, are likely to converge through cultural diffusion, despite giving rise to inevitable social imbalances (Kasarda and Crenshaw, 1991). The roots of the modernization perspective on urbanisation in developing countries can be traced back to an earlier theoretical framework known as human ecology. Developed primarily to describe the structure and evolution of American cities, notably Chicago in the 1920s-1930s by scholars like Robert Park and others, human ecology rests upon strong assumptions regarding the interactive role of population dynamics, market competition, material technology (e.g., transportation infrastructure), and the built environment in shaping and reshaping urban life (Hawley, 1981; Orum and Chen, 2003). These assumptions formed the predictive elements upon which modernization theory built its view of subsequent urbanisation in developing countries, driven by industrialization, technological advancement, information dissemination, and cultural diffusion. This optimistic perspective celebrated the positive outcomes of accelerated urbanisation in the developing world but was later challenged by the harsh realities of economic and spatial inequalities, as well as other social challenges stemming from urbanisation in impoverished nations (Smith, 1996).

However, as modernization theory struggled to account for the conditions and consequences of urbanisation in developing countries, it paved the way for an alternative theoretical perspective—the dependency/world-system view of urbanisation. Pioneered by Frank (1969) and Wallerstein (1979), among others like Goldfrank (1979), dependency/world-system theory establishes a connection between recent shifts in the roles and structures of economies in developing countries and the expansion of capitalism within the global capitalist world system. From this world-systemic standpoint, urbanisation can be viewed as an internal response to the global economy's dynamics. Dependency theorists first assume the existence of a distinct capitalist development pattern, contending that capitalism represents a unique form

of social organization. They posit that capitalism necessitates a specific social structure characterized by unequal trade, uneven development, individual social disparities, core-periphery hierarchies, and dominance structures. Furthermore, dependency theory models social organization, technology, and population dynamics as endogenous factors in development and urbanisation, constrained by exogenous forces (Timberlake, 1987).

Dependency theory also suggests that underdevelopment results from the exploitation and pillaging of peripheral economies by economic and political entities in core regions (Hette, 1990). Viewed from the dependency/world-system perspective, urbanisation in developing countries, in terms of its occurrence and speed, represents a significant spatial outcome of global capitalism and its unique spatial organization. This inherently uneven process results in geographical disparities between urban and rural areas and among cities, particularly when considering the unequal conditions at the outset of urbanisation. Empirical studies, whether explicitly adopting this theoretical perspective or not, have substantiated the adverse consequences of rapid urbanisation in developing countries, including rural-urban imbalances, skewed urban hierarchies, housing segregation, and income inequality both within and across nations (Chen and Parish, 1996).

In addition to directly challenging the fundamental assumptions and predictions of modernization theory regarding urbanisation, dependency/world-system theory significantly emphasizes the external and often adverse impact of the global capitalist economy on domestic urbanisation within developing nations. This profound insight, originating in the 1970s, laid the foundation for a more comprehensive global outlook on urbanisation, particularly focusing on the emergence of networked global cities in the 1990s and beyond.

The globalization of urbanisation theories continued to evolve. Sociologist Saskia Sassen made a pivotal contribution to the study of global cities with her book "The Global City: New York, London, and Tokyo" published in 1991. She provided a definitive perspective on global



cities through precise conceptualization and systematic comparison of three prominent examples. According to Sassen (1991), global cities serve as:

- Highly concentrated command centres in the organization of the world economy.
- Key hubs for finance and specialized services, supplanting manufacturing as leading industries.
- Innovative centres of production within these leading industries.
- Markets for the products and innovations generated by these industries.

According to Sassen (1991), a defining characteristic of a global city is the expansion and significance of its producer services, encompassing areas such as accounting, banking, financial services, legal services, insurance, real estate, computer, and information processing, among others. The global city perspective has enriched the discourse on urbanisation by shedding light on the historical and contemporary interplay between industrialization (and the current phenomenon of deindustrialization in the Western world), urbanisation, and globalization.

Individually, each of these four theories, though selective, provides a unique lens through which to examine urbanisation in different temporal contexts that were conducive to the development and evolution of each theory. To a considerable extent, each theory has extended its relevance beyond its original era, either by remaining applicable or by losing relevance in countries (cases) that have experienced urbanisation in distinct ways.

While the theory of self-generated or endogenous urbanisation has unveiled crucial general conditions, it falls short in explaining recent urbanisation trends in developing countries. Similarly, modernization theory, while sharing this limitation, does not primarily emphasize class relations or capitalism per se, but rather the inherent tensions arising from shifts in social organization driven by industrialization (Kasarda and Crenshaw, 1991).

Dependency/world-system theory offers a stronger suggestion of an association, albeit without definitive proof of a causal relationship between urbanisation and capitalist

development. One notable drawback of the global city perspective may lie in its reliance on theorizing and analysis primarily based on a limited number of dominant and extensively studied cities in Western industrialized nations (Orum and Chen, 2003).

Finally, to conduct comprehensive research into the significance and impact of urbanisation on Lebanon's economic development, it is imperative to identify the reasons behind migration, as this provides insights into the population's motivations. To achieve this, we will introduce the widely utilized "push and pull" theory, originally formulated by Ernst Ravenstein. In his seminal work, "Laws of Migration" Ravenstein (1885) expounded on the theory of step migration, wherein migration occurs incrementally and gradually across geographical stages. Subsequent scholars have incorporated this theory into their research to elucidate migration patterns, whether within one's homeland or to a foreign host nation.

This theory discerns migration as a result of both push and pull factors. Push factors encompass circumstances in one's current homeland that trigger dissatisfaction, including poverty, unemployment, rapid population growth, political oppression, lower wages, substandard living conditions, inadequate healthcare and education services, natural disasters, and civil conflict.

Conversely, pull factors are attributes that make migration enticing and include enhanced well-being, employment opportunities, political freedom, access to education, higher income prospects, and improved living standards.

Migration patterns are discerned by understanding these factors. The "push-pull" theory posits that population movement results from two contrasting forces – one that propels population flows and another that hinders them. Generally, the impetus to migrate (the "push" factor) tends to exert greater influence than the attraction of the destination (the "pull" factor).

Urbanisation is an established phenomenon in most cities globally, representing a contemporary reality. While urbanisation brings forth various challenges and issues, many

municipal administrations diligently strive to mitigate these problems and enhance the quality of life in their cities, making them more attractive and comfortable places to reside.

## 1.2 Historical Overview of Urbanisation in Lebanon

Lebanon, situated in the Middle East and bordering the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, boasts a total land area of 10,452 square kilometres. The country is administratively divided into eight Governorates, namely Beirut, Keserwan, Jbeil, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, South Lebanon, Nabatieh and Beqaa. Data from the National Survey of Household Living Conditions, conducted jointly by the Central Administration of Statistics, Ministry of Social Affairs, and UNDP in 2007, reveals the distribution of the Lebanese population across these Governorates, with Beirut and Mount Lebanon collectively accommodating approximately 50% of the population (Table 1).

<b>Place of Residence</b>	<b>Percentage (2007)</b>
Beirut	9.6
Mount Lebanon (including Beirut suburbs)	39.5
North	20.3
Beqaa	13
South	17.6
<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 1 Distribution of the Lebanese Population across Governorates in the Year 2007 (UNDP, 2007)*

Lebanon exhibits a notably urbanized demographic composition, with an estimated urban population of 89% (Statista, 2022). This equates to approximately 3,674,500 individuals residing in cities and urban zones, positioning Lebanon as one of the most urbanized nations in the Levantine Arab region. Within this urban population, it is approximated that 64% (approximately 2,703,000 people) reside in significant urban agglomerations, predominantly centered in Beirut, its environs, as well as in cities such as Tripoli, Saida, Tyr, and Zahle

(Statista, 2022). Beirut, a pivotal Levantine city, began its ascent in the mid-19th century. The city's growth has been influenced by a complex interplay of local and global factors and events. A period of robust expansion occurred from Lebanon's independence in 1943 until the onset of the civil war in 1975, during which the population burgeoned from approximately 400,000 to 1.1 million inhabitants.

Throughout its history, Lebanon's urbanisation process has been profoundly shaped by the intricate interplay of global and national factors, particularly in cities like Beirut and its surrounding towns, which assumed pivotal economic and political roles, thus becoming significant population centres. Over the past century, global dynamics have played a crucial role, with dramatic shifts in the global economic landscape, driven by changes in trade patterns and capital movements, promoting the development of a service-based regional economy. These global forces, coupled with national policies that emphasized cities as economic hubs, have lured populations away from rural areas within Lebanon and even beyond its borders.

Over the last five decades, Lebanon has undergone successive waves of rapid urbanisation, primarily driven by factors such as rural-to-urban migration, suburbanisation, the displacement caused by conflicts, and the arrival of refugees. Since the 1920s, alongside a substantial number of Lebanese rural migrants who settled in major cities, an equally significant influx of refugees, including Palestinians, Armenians, Iraqis, Kurds, and others, sought refuge in Lebanon, fleeing the devastating consequences of armed conflicts and political turmoil in their homelands. Many of these refugees initially settled in and around major urban areas, often in makeshift refugee camps that eventually evolved into informal settlements.

Historians, geographers, and urban planners have explored Lebanon's urban-rural divide, shedding light on disparities in development. Nevertheless, a comprehensive examination of key historical junctures, with a focus on migration patterns and economic systems, is essential to grasp the current complex and sometimes conflicted relationship between urban and rural territories in Lebanon.

In 1920, during the era of the French Mandate, Beirut and Mount Lebanon were merged to create Greater Lebanon. This period witnessed a significant acceleration in rural-to-urban migrations, which fuelled urbanisation and introduced sectarian enclaves to Beirut. Simultaneously, neighbouring villages transitioned from agriculture to service-based economies to meet the needs of the burgeoning urban population. Beirut's population experienced remarkable growth, reaching an estimated 120,000, a thirty-fold increase from the early nineteenth century (Traboulsi, 2007).

Designating Beirut as the capital city further attracted rural refugees, resulting in urban sprawl and rapid, unregulated expansion. Feudal landownership structures underwent changes, causing a decline in agricultural activities and a shift from an agrarian to a service-oriented economy in rural areas. This transformation aimed to cater to the affluent urban population, many of whom owned properties in both urban and rural locations. Beirut's proximity to Mount Lebanon, along with improved road networks and increased automobile usage, facilitated high mobility among the Lebanese population. This movement of people, goods, services, and ideas reshaped the rural landscape and quickly became a common practice among the middle and upper classes, extending urban services into Mount Lebanon and beyond (Kassir, 2011).

However, as rural-to-urban migration continued unabated, the French Mandate struggled to address the consequences of unplanned expansion, including the challenges of accommodating large numbers of rural immigrants. Insufficient infrastructure led to extreme poverty in Beirut's suburbs and within the city itself.

Following Lebanon's independence in 1943 and the Palestinian exodus in 1948, the city's growth accelerated even further. Unrestricted rural-to-urban migrations led to the overgrowth of the urban core and the urbanisation of surrounding rural villages. These years witnessed unprecedented economic prosperity, with rural areas gradually undergoing urbanisation.

By the 1950s, the city experienced a construction boom, largely unregulated due to the highly profitable laissez-faire economic system in place. This rapid development expanded the

city's area from 626 hectares in 1945 to 2,730 hectares in 1955. Urban planning efforts were largely disregarded as the strict regulations required for implementation conflicted with the lucrative unregulated development occurring nationwide during this period.

This trend had profound implications for national demographics. In 1950, approximately 67 percent of the Lebanese population resided in rural areas. However, by 1975, 70 percent of the population lived in cities, with Beirut accommodating 42 percent of the total urban population (Simitian, 2020). Beirut's banking sector, which earned Lebanon the nickname "Switzerland of the Middle East," established itself as the country's central industry and the hub for financial operations in the Middle East, particularly for the transfer of petrodollars between the Gulf and the West. This era of capitalism marked the decline of rural agrarian life. In a paper published in 1978, author and editor of MERIP Salim Nasr warned:<sup>1</sup>

*Under the impact of the increasing integration of the Lebanese economy into the world market, manifested in the hegemony of the financial and commercial sectors linked to Western capital, the Lebanese rural world has been entering a stage of decomposition and permanent crisis. The relative share of agriculture in the Lebanese economy decreased from 20 percent of the GDP in 1948 to 12 percent in 1964 to less than 9 percent in 1974. The share of active population working in agriculture has diminished noticeably from 48.9 percent in 1959 to 34 percent in 1964, to 18.9 percent in 1970 (Nasr 1978).*

The Lebanese Civil War erupted in 1975, primarily centered in Beirut. As the conflict unfolded, the urban population of East Beirut sought refuge in or returned to villages in Mount Lebanon, contributing to further urbanisation in these rural areas. Simultaneously, Lebanese individuals fleeing the violence in South Lebanon found refuge in West Beirut, a region that experienced rapid urban sprawl within a matter of months.

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<sup>1</sup> The Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) was established in 1971 to educate and inform the public about contemporary Middle East affairs (<https://merip.org/who-we-are/>).

During the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006, refugees, rural migrants, and urban residents displaced by the conflict settled in informal squatter settlements. These settlements expanded and developed in an unstructured and sporadic manner, occupying land, and giving rise to numerous small, low-quality dwellings on the outskirts of major cities like Beirut and Tripoli (Fawaz and Peillen, 2003). Beirut, as the country's primary urban centre, received the largest influx of residents escaping the ravages of war. Many of these individuals settled in the surrounding areas of Beirut, leading to the emergence of what is now known as the urban underserved areas or the "misery belt" of Beirut's suburbs.

Even in the post-war era, urbanisation has continued to expand in Lebanon.

### 1.3 Patterns of Urban Expansion in Lebanon

As a result of Lebanon's urbanisation tendencies consistently exceeding regional rates in the Arab world, it is higher than the global average. Second, and perhaps more significantly, Lebanon's urbanisation trend has significantly accelerated since the 1950s. In fact, the progressive migration of people from rural to urban regions has increased by almost threefold and is now at an astounding 88% (Nassereddine, 2020)— see Figure 2.

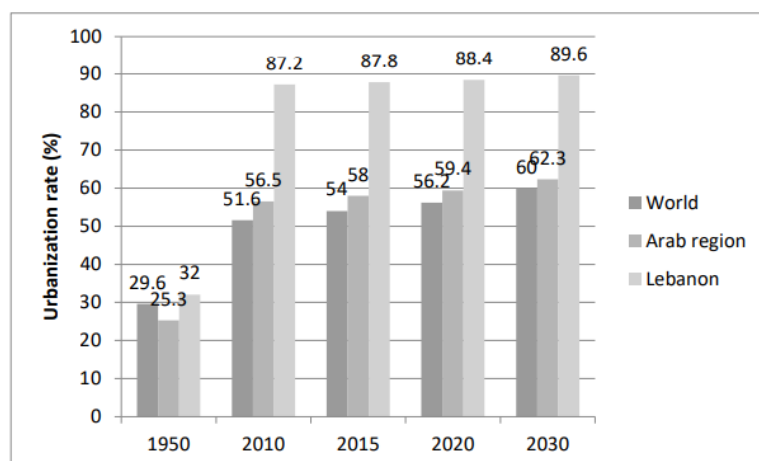


Figure 2 Urbanisation in the World, Arab region and Lebanon (ESCWA, 2017)

Urbanisation in Lebanon has continued its expansion during the post-war era, driven by a combination of factors outlined in a 2010 report by the Ministry of Environment and a 2005 study by CDR. These driving forces include limited land availability and high population density, the strong emphasis on private property rights enshrined in the Lebanese Constitution, the absence of comprehensive master planning, resulting in haphazard urban development, and income and lifestyle considerations. Many individuals can now afford secondary residences by renting or purchasing summer homes or chalets in major cities like Baalbek, Saida, and Tyr, with these secondary residences tending to cluster around urban areas rather than being concentrated in the city centres.

The available literature and research resources point to three primary urbanisation trends in Lebanon: urbanisation concentrated in and around major coastal cities, urbanisation occurring between secondary cities and towns, and urban expansion in the form of informal areas that developed around major cities since the civil war.

In Lebanon, the rapid urban expansion has primarily unfolded along the country's Mediterranean coast, spanning approximately 200 kilometres from the North to the South. It is particularly concentrated around major cities where the majority of industrial and commercial centres are situated. This coastal development encompasses various projects, including large-scale reclamation endeavours (both public and private leisure projects), the establishment of numerous marinas for leisure boats and fisheries, residential development initiatives, and wastewater treatment facilities (Ministry of Environment, 2010).

Unfortunately, many of these developments occur with limited consideration for their environmental impact, and there are also notable violations of the public maritime domain. The swift pace of urbanisation exerts significant pressure on critical infrastructure, educational institutions, healthcare services, access to clean water, proper waste disposal, and other essential amenities.



Urban expansion in Lebanon extends beyond major cities and their peri-urban regions, including places like Beirut, Tripoli, Saida, and Tyr. It also encompasses the spaces between secondary cities and towns, such as the corridor from Zahle to Chtoura or from Beirut to Bauchreyeh, Sin el Fil, Fanar, and Zalka (Ministry of Environment, 2010). Cities in Lebanon have experienced growth both vertically, characterized by the continuous construction of high-rise residential buildings and towers, and horizontally, as they expand into the surrounding lands and domains.

Furthermore, there is a distinct form of urban expansion represented by informal areas that have developed around major cities since the Lebanese civil war. These informal areas are inhabited by Lebanese individuals who were displaced from their original regions and by refugees, predominantly Palestinian refugees, as well as smaller refugee communities like the Kurdish. Refugee camps, including the 12 remaining ones that house Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, have witnessed not only vertical expansion but also horizontal expansion, resulting in the emergence of informal areas commonly referred to as "Adjacent Areas."

In the meanwhile, there are three types of horizontal urban expansion in Lebanon: circular, linear, and leapfrog. Major cities and villages like Beirut, Baalbeck, Zahle, and Marjayoun are all surrounded by circular (or concentric) expansion. When cities and villages grow along main roadways, long rows of residential dwelling units and commercial centres appear on both sides of the road. This process is known as linear expansion (or ribbon construction). The coastal route (from Beirut to Jounieh and from Beirut to Sarafand) and a few inland areas (from Tripoli to Halba and from Zaharni to Nabateyeh) are two notable instances. Leapfrog development is characterized by the construction of new residential areas at a considerable distance from established urban centres, often overlooking available vacant land parcels closer to the city. This phenomenon can be observed in developments like Mechref Village in Mechref, Pine Park in Roumieh, and Beit Misk in Bhersaf (UN-Habitat, 2011).

## 1.4 Urbanisation and Its Impact on Urban Planning in Lebanon

Lebanon has experienced a rapid and uncontrolled expansion of its urban areas for many decades. The absence of stringent planning regulations and their enforcement has allowed urban sprawl to cover increasingly vast territories, particularly in the coastal zone where a significant portion of the Lebanese population resides. This unregulated urban expansion has been accompanied by a widening disparity in urban development.

While some cities, notably Beirut, boast flourishing high-end districts, the urban divide and inequality have deepened. In the metropolitan area of Beirut alone, there were 24 slums or impoverished neighbourhoods before the current crisis, hosting 20% of the population (Fawaz and Peillen, 2003). According to UN-Habitat, in 2001, approximately 50% of the urban population in Lebanon lived in what could be classified as 'slum' conditions (UN-Habitat, 2010)—see Table 2.

Population	4.55 million	(2014) <sup>3</sup>
Urban Population	88%	(2014) <sup>4</sup>
Youth population (15-24)	17.04 %	(2015) <sup>5</sup>
Population Growth Rate	0.86%	(2015) <sup>6</sup>
Urbanization Growth Rate	3.18%	(2010-2015) <sup>7</sup>
Proportion of urban population living in slum areas	53.10%	(2005) <sup>8</sup>

*Table 2 Demographics statistics over the years (UN-Habitat, 2015)*

Considering that there is no official definition of slums or informal settlements in Lebanon, addressing this issue comprehensively presents challenges. Lebanon currently lacks an official national strategy for the management of informal settlements or affordable housing in general. This is the case despite the fact that many people reside in these slums, which often suffer from overcrowding, substandard living conditions, and structural instability.

The emergence of informal settlements in Lebanon can be attributed to several factors, including:

1. The absence of a robust central government that can enforce building regulations, oversee population growth, and formulate comprehensive urban development plans as part of a national urban policy (including housing policies). This environment has fostered the growth of an informal economy and an informal housing sector that seeks to address emerging needs.
2. Significant rural-to-urban migration during and after the civil war that spanned from 1975 to 1990.
3. The arrival of foreign migrant workers and refugees, particularly Palestinian and Syrian refugees.
4. An economic model that heavily relies on the real estate and services sectors.
5. The absence of a national transportation strategy that effectively connects various regions within the country.

The existing planning systems in Lebanon are somewhat ill-equipped to implement measures that would alleviate the urban disparities. The absence of effective local planning mechanisms poses a significant challenge in accommodating the growing urban population. Service systems, which have suffered from neglect and lack of systematic attention since the civil war, remain deficient. This issue is further compounded by a fragmented service delivery and planning structure.

Consequently, while approximately two-thirds of the population has access to sewerage networks, only 8% of wastewater is treated, and nearly 50% of water is lost within the networks. Furthermore, the national average for the availability of power supply is a mere 18.3 hours per day. The combination of inadequate services, deficient planning, and a heavy reliance on private

transportation—Lebanon boasts the world's second-highest person-to-car ratio—exerts a significantly adverse impact on both the environment and the health of urban residents.

## Chapter 2: Understanding Economic Development

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The classical theory, as outlined by 19th-century economist David Ricardo in his work "Principles of Political Economy and Taxation" (1817), held a pessimistic view regarding the potential for sustained economic growth. Ricardo's perspective, which assumed limited ongoing technological progress, posited that growth was constrained by land scarcity. In the late 18th century, Adam Smith, in his seminal work "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations" (1776), argued that in a competitive economy devoid of collusion or monopoly, individuals pursuing their self-interest inadvertently advanced the public good. According to Smith, in such a scenario where competition prevailed, an invisible hand seemed to guide capitalists, merchants, landlords, and workers toward maximizing economic growth. Smith advocated for laissez-faire policies and free trade, with the exception of markets where labor, capital, and products faced monopolistic conditions—a point that some contemporary followers of Smith may overlook.

The classical model also considered factors such as the use of paper money, the establishment of institutions to manage its supply, capital accumulation based on output surpassing wages, and the division of labor—largely constrained by market size (Nafziger, 2005).

Ricardo's doctrine prominently featured the law of diminishing returns, which described decreasing additional outputs resulting from adding an equal extra input to fixed land. He believed that diminishing returns, attributed to population growth and constant land availability, posed a threat to economic growth.

Ricardo contended that technological advancements or improved production techniques could only temporarily mitigate diminishing returns, emphasizing that increasing capital was the primary means to counter this long-term challenge. His reasoning followed this path: In the long run, the natural wage settles at subsistence—representing the cost of sustaining the labor

force (or population, which grows at the same rate). Although wages may fluctuate, they ultimately return to this natural subsistence rate. On one hand, if wages rise, food production surpasses what is necessary for sustaining the population, leading to population growth. The expanding population subsequently demands more food, causing the average wage to decline. Population growth continues to erode wages until they return to the subsistence level. On the other hand, wages below subsistence increase mortality rates, ultimately resulting in a labor shortage that drives wages higher. Once again, population decline raises wages back to the subsistence level. In both scenarios, the wage tends to revert to the natural subsistence rate.

According to the iron law of wages, total wages increase in proportion to the labor force. As the population grows, output also increases, but all else being equal, output per worker declines due to diminishing returns on fixed land. Consequently, the surplus value (output minus wages) per person decreases with a rising population. Concurrently, land rents per acre rise with population growth, driven by increasing land scarcity relative to other factors.

The primary means of counteracting diminishing returns is through the accumulation of greater capital per person. However, capitalists require minimum profits and interest payments to maintain or expand their capital stock. Nevertheless, as profits and interest per person decline while rents increase with population growth, the surplus (comprising profits, interest, and rent) available for capitalist accumulation diminishes.

Ricardo was concerned that this declining surplus would reduce the incentive to accumulate capital. The expansion of the labor force leads to a reduction in capital per worker or a decline in worker productivity and per capita income. Thus, Ricardo's model suggests eventual economic stagnation or decline, as he feared slow capital accumulation and diminishing returns due to population growth on fixed natural resources. However, he failed to foresee the possibility of sustained, rapid economic growth because his theory underestimated scientific discoveries and technological progress.

Contemporary neoclassical economists build upon classical principles, emphasizing savings, free trade, freedom from government restrictions, and adding a significant focus on technological change as a critical driver of economic growth. These concepts constitute key elements of neoclassical growth theory, which holds sway in contemporary discussions of economic growth.

To gain insight into the evolution of economies over time, one must consider Rostow's Stages of Economic Growth, which offers a valuable theoretical framework. Walter W. Rostow introduced this framework in "The Stages of Economic Growth" (1960), outlining five distinct stages that societies typically traverse as they progress toward economic development. It sheds light on the role of political elites and the emergence of supportive institutions.

Rostow's framework contends that for centuries, societies witnessed little alteration in their economic structures and conditions. However, significant transformative shifts have occurred in recent centuries. Rostow's framework serves as a roadmap for analysing the dynamics of economic growth and progress.

The Five Stages consist of:

- 1- Traditional Society:** This initial stage reflects the societal norms and technological practices predating the 18th century. Rostow attributes the genesis of change to scientific breakthroughs, particularly Isaac Newton's contributions. These innovations led people to believe that they could understand the world's laws and harness them for productive purposes.
- 2- Preconditions for Takeoff:** The second stage encompasses a series of radical changes in nonindustrial sectors, including increased investment in transportation, agricultural revolutions, and expanded imports. These changes necessitate the involvement of a political elite interested in economic development, often triggered by nationalist sentiments or aspirations for an improved standard of living.

- 3- **Takeoff:** The pivotal third stage, lasting roughly two to three decades, marks a decisive expansion that fundamentally transforms a nation's economy and society. During this phase, barriers to consistent growth are surmounted, and forces driving widespread economic progress predominate. This stage is akin to the Industrial Revolution in Britain, the growth of manufacturing in the United States, and similar transformative periods in other nations.
- 4- **Drive to Maturity:** Following takeoff, societies enter a stage characterized by regular, self-sustained growth. The workforce becomes predominantly urban, more skilled, and less individualistic. Additionally, there is an increasing dependence on the state for economic security, reflecting the maturation of institutions.
- 5- **Age of High Mass Consumption:** The final stage, exemplified by the United States in the 1920s and Western Europe in the 1950s, is marked by widespread consumerism. Symbols of this stage include automobiles, suburbanisation, and a proliferation of consumer goods. Other societies may opt for a welfare state or focus on international military and political influence.

However, Rostow's theory does have several weaknesses. These include insufficient empirical evidence concerning the conditions needed for take-off, imprecise definitions, the absence of a theoretical foundation for a society's movement from one stage to another, and the mistaken assumption that economic development in less developed countries (LDCs) will parallel the early stages of development in developed countries (DCs).

The transition from Rostow's linear development model to Dependency Theory in the 1960s marked a shift from a universal growth path to a more nuanced understanding. Dependency Theory emphasized the structural ties between developed and underdeveloped nations, highlighting external influences on development and power imbalances in global economic relations.



Economists such as Celso Furtado and Andre Gunder Frank emphasized in their Dependency Theory that underdevelopment in less developed countries (LDCs) is a consequence of their subjugation to colonial and imperial domination by powerful nations. According to Furtado, global shifts in demand led to a new international division of labor, with LDCs specializing in primary products controlled by foreign interests while importing advanced consumer goods (Furtado, C. (1964). *Development and underdevelopment*. University of California Press).

Andre Gunder Frank further contends that underdevelopment is the result of modern capitalism infiltrating archaic economic structures in the third world, causing deindustrialization and disruption (Frank, A. G. (1967). *Capitalism and underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical studies of Chile and Brazil*. Monthly Review Press). Frank's theory underscores how the economic development of rich countries often contributes to the underdevelopment of poorer nations. LDCs are seen as economic satellites of highly developed regions like North America and Western Europe within the international capitalist system. Frank suggests that the most rapid economic growth in satellite countries occurs when they are less dependent on the world capitalist system, citing examples like Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Chile during times of weak ties to major capitalist nations. Frank challenges the notion that indiscriminate capital, institution, and value transfers from developed countries stimulate development in LDCs. Instead, he argues that activities such as replacing indigenous enterprises, forming unskilled labor forces, recruiting educated youth for junior colonial posts, urban migration, and opening economies to foreign trade and investment have contributed to underdevelopment. Frank posits that true development in the third world can only occur through withdrawal from the world capitalist system, even if it entails reduced trade, aid, investment, and technology from developed nations.

However, dependency theory's circular definition of dependence lacks explanatory power, fails to distinguish between degrees of dependence, and overlooks the economic

interdependence of many developed countries. Despite this, many economic historians would agree with Frank that colonies paid dearly for economic dependency under foreign rule. They grant that development was not self-directed. Production was directed toward external rather than domestic needs; economic policies inhibited local industrial activity and led to uneven ethnic and regional economic progress; an elite oriented to foreign interests arose. However, these costs were offset, at least in part, by the development of schools, roads, railroads, and administrative services under the colonial powers.

In contrast, the neoclassical theory of growth, introduced in 1956 by Nobel laureate Robert Solow from MIT, emphasizes the significance of savings and capital formation for economic development. Solow's model considers variables such as wage and interest rate changes, labor-capital substitutions, flexible factor proportions, and factor price adjustments. It reveals that economic growth can remain stable, with wages adjusting relative to the interest rate as labor outgrows capital or vice versa.

A new theory emerged in the late 20th century, challenging the neoclassical theory put forth by economists like Robert Lucas and Paul Romer. This theory, known as the New (Endogenous) Growth Theory, challenges the conventional neoclassical models by addressing issues related to international wage differences and migration patterns. According to proponents of this theory, neoclassical models struggle to explain why skilled individuals from less developed countries (LDCs) migrate to developed countries (DCs) despite the global availability of technology. Additionally, neoclassical models predict significant capital movements from DCs to LDCs, which does not align with the actual capital flow patterns observed in the real world.

New growth theorists, such as Romer, argue that by considering endogenous technology and the role of innovation in driving growth, we can gain a better understanding of the growth disparities between DCs and LDCs. They emphasize that technological advancements result from government policies and industrial research within LDCs, challenging the neoclassical

assumption of global public goods in technology. Furthermore, new growth economists highlight the importance of external economies in capital accumulation and productivity growth, diverging from neoclassical theories that primarily focus on capital formation.

Both neoclassical theory and endogenous growth theory models yield plausible results and are consistent with differences in income per capita among nations, often showing little or no convergence. However, critics argue that endogenous growth theory represents more of an expansion of neoclassical theory rather than a comprehensive framework for explaining real-world growth dynamics. Moreover, these models do not fully account for the influence of changing incentives or institutions on economic growth. The relationship between technological progress, often measured through research and development (R&D) investment, and actual growth is not always straightforward. Some R&D efforts may not lead to significant productivity gains, and some countries can enhance productivity without substantial R&D investments. Thus, precisely attributing technological innovations to economic growth remains a challenge for econometric models.

## 2.2 Historical Overview of Economic Development in Lebanon

Lebanon, established in 1920 under French mandatory rule, has been characterized as an economic miracle with its inhabitants often seen as natural-born merchants possessing exceptional financial capabilities. On one hand, scholars and observers have depicted Lebanon as a weak and decentralized state unable or unwilling to assert its sovereignty. On the other hand, it has been portrayed as a nation whose economic vitality constitutes its primary strength. Lebanese people have embraced their identity as merchants and entrepreneurs, considering it an integral part of their national character. In the 1950s and 1960s, Lebanon gained widespread recognition as the "Switzerland of the Middle East." Researchers labelled it the "Republic of Merchants" and lauded its free-market economy, enabling it to thrive as a bridge between the East and West, particularly in the realm of financial services (Kaufman, 2021).

Lebanon, and Beirut in particular, enjoyed a regional advantage due to its unique ability to serve as a financial mediator, a role no other Middle Eastern country could fulfil. While occasional critics lamented the neglect of domestic production industries, which restricted the benefits of the merchant republic to a select few, Lebanon was generally viewed as an oasis of stability, economic prosperity, and vibrant culture in a region characterized as "dark and impoverished."

Between 1950 and 1956, Lebanon witnessed a period of substantial economic growth, marked by a remarkable increase in national income, which surged by more than 50%. This growth was evident in all sectors of the Lebanese economy, even as imports simultaneously rose by 75%. Remarkably, Lebanon maintained a favourable balance of payments, illustrated by its appreciating currency and steadily expanding gold reserves.

However, a significant turning point occurred in March 1950 when the Lebanese Syrian customs union was dissolved, raising concerns about Lebanon's economic prospects. Gloomy predictions abounded, with scenarios ranging from economic collapse to Lebanon being coerced into re-joining the customs union with Syria under unfavourable conditions. These apprehensions were rooted in a blend of political and economic factors.

From an economic standpoint, Lebanon had long grappled with an unfavourable trade balance, characterized by imports significantly outweighing exports, with a stark five-to-one margin. This trade deficit had persisted even within the Syro-Lebanese customs union in previous years. Furthermore, Syria, as an independent entity, relied heavily on its exports, which posed challenging implications for Lebanon's balance of payments, potentially leading to capital depletion, currency devaluation, and other economic hurdles.

In this context, Lebanese leaders confronted a formidable gamble when they decisively terminated the customs union. They were acutely aware that the economic destiny of Lebanon hung in the balance, with potential repercussions for its political autonomy. Many feared that Lebanon was taking a political risk that could lead to its own downfall, playing into the hands

of those seeking Syrian dominance over the nation. Even in the most optimistic scenario, re-joining the customs union after an economic collapse would likely entail more stringent terms and constraints on Lebanon's economic sovereignty than those rejected in March 1950.

In the early 1950s, Lebanon confronted a dilemma involving high tariffs and the influential merchant class, which sought to enhance its commercial presence not only in Lebanon but also across the wider Middle East. These merchants championed the vision of Lebanon as the "Switzerland of the Middle East" in commercial terms, envisioning the nation as a politically neutral hub that could serve the region's commercial, financial, and other requirements. They advocated for low tariffs and minimal government intervention, emphasizing the government's role in ensuring political stability, monetary stability, and infrastructure development, including the construction of roads and airports.

The merchants were eager to position Lebanon as a pivotal link between the Western and Eastern Arab worlds, enticing both Arab and non-Arab foreign businesses to utilize Lebanon as a central meeting point and supply hub for the Middle East. This vision entailed significant enhancements in transportation infrastructure, both domestically and internationally, as well as the development of housing, hotels, and entertainment facilities. Their overarching objective was to create a more inviting environment for foreigners and ensure competitive pricing for global manufactured goods. This strategic approach aimed to establish Beirut as the ultimate destination for organizations seeking to establish supply bases and marketing services in the region.

The merchants were steadfast in their belief that Lebanon could tackle its trade imbalance by fostering non-commodity service exports, supported by a politically stable state with a freely convertible and stable currency. This stood in stark contrast to a region characterized by political and social instability, currency controls, and capital flight.

Additionally, in 1950, Lebanon possessed a multitude of strengths within its economic landscape. Its strategic location along the eastern Mediterranean coast, home to the only

significant Arab port in the region since the French cession of Alexandretta to Turkey in 1938 and the closure of Haifa to Arab goods in 1948, solidified Beirut's status as the natural trading epicenter for countries such as Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and, to some extent, Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf, and Iran.

Another invaluable asset was Lebanon's mountain ranges, which soared to heights of over 10,000 feet and received substantial winter rainfall, averaging between thirty to forty inches. This natural endowment presented opportunities for the development of skiing areas, drawing tourists from across the Middle East. Furthermore, these mountains provided a cool and verdant escape from the scorching summer months, greatly contributing to Lebanon's potential as a premier year-round tourist destination. While these mountains limited the amount of arable land available, they permitted intensive utilization, rendering Lebanon an appealing tourist hub throughout the year.

Moreover, Lebanon possessed historical and cultural advantages. Its population had maintained closer ties with Europe through commerce and religion than many other Middle Eastern nations. This connection, coupled with a predominantly Christian outlook, made Lebanon less encumbered by centuries of cultural inertia. The population also boasted a higher literacy rate than most Arab states, with an illiteracy rate as low as 20% according to the 1957 report from the United States Operation Mission in Lebanon. Lebanese society had a long history of expertise in providing services to the region, dating back centuries, establishing itself as an intellectual and entrepreneurial center for much of the Arab world since the eighteenth century. A skilled commercial class with adaptable horizons further positioned Lebanon to embrace Western economic concepts.

Lebanon was once seen as a regional success story in terms of social and economic development until 1975 when a brutal civil war erupted, lasting 15 years and causing widespread destruction to both infrastructure and the economy. While post-war efforts at reconstruction and recovery in the 1990s showed some promise, they didn't quite meet

expectations and actually worsened the political and economic landscape. The government's expansionary spending policies led to a rapid increase in public debt and deficits.

To tackle these economic challenges, various governments and international organizations like the World Bank Group came to Lebanon's aid, offering substantial financial support during the Paris I, Paris II, and Paris III conferences in 2001, 2002, and 2007, respectively. However, the desired results of these reconstruction programs were hindered by political disruptions and mismanagement of reforms.

Lebanon's most pressing financial issue has been its enormous public debt, which soared to 180% of its GDP in 2006, ranking among the highest in the world. At that time, Lebanese banks held about 80% of this debt. Subsequently, the banks became more resilient to local economic shocks, partially due to increased capital inflows from Gulf countries driven by high oil prices. These inflows translated into a surge of new loans to the domestic private sector, contributing to 70% of GDP growth from 2007 to 2010.

However, after enjoying several years of robust economic growth, Lebanon's economy began to decline in 2011. This decline was influenced by domestic political instability and regional turmoil. Economic growth dropped significantly, from about 8% in the 2007-2010 period to just 1.6% in 2011 and 1.5% in 2012. The economic downturn was evident in reduced demand for exports, decreased tourism, and a slowdown in real estate activities, which, in turn, led to lower demand for credit and declining lending rates (Lebanon economic monitor, 2014).

Despite having liberal legislation that treats domestic and foreign investors equally, Lebanon's business environment has been marred by bureaucratic hurdles and outdated regulations in need of modernization. The country's economy heavily relies on the services sector, particularly financial services, trade, and tourism, making it susceptible to both internal and external shocks. The global economic downturn, along with national and regional events, adversely impacted Lebanon's economic growth during 2011-2012, resulting in reduced demand for exports, tourism, and real estate activities.

## 2.3 Economic Development in Lebanon

Lebanon has been grappling with an unprecedented and multi-faceted crisis for nearly three years, starting with the economic and financial turmoil that began in October 2019. This already dire situation was further exacerbated by two significant events: the economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the catastrophic explosion at the Port of Beirut in August 2020. In early 2020, Lebanon underwent a significant political transition following extensive protests, which marked one of the largest waves of demonstrations since the civil war. Subsequently, a more profound socio-economic crisis emerged, leading to renewed protests during the summer of the same year. These demonstrations intensified after the tragic Beirut explosion, ultimately resulting in the resignation of the newly formed government. The primary demands of the protesters across the country centered on improved governance, increased accountability, and greater citizen participation in policymaking. Consequently, there is immense pressure on the country's leadership to urgently implement reforms that tackle critical governance issues, most notably corruption, and promote a culture of transparency in government operations.

The compounded crises—comprising the financial crisis, the impact of COVID-19, and the Port of Beirut explosion—have had varying and staggered effects on Lebanon's economic output. The financial and economic crisis in Lebanon is expected to rank among the most severe global crises since the mid-nineteenth century, possibly even within the top three.

According to the Spring 2021 Lebanon Economic Monitor (LEM), nominal GDP plummeted dramatically, dropping from nearly US\$52 billion in 2019 to an estimated US\$23.1 billion in 2022 (Figure 3). In 2020, real GDP experienced a staggering contraction of -20.3% (Figure 4). This prolonged economic downturn has significantly reduced disposable income, resulting in a striking 36.5% decline in GDP per capita between 2019 and 2021. Notably, Lebanon was reclassified by the World Bank, shifting from an upper middle-income country to a lower-middle income country as of July 2022. Such a severe economic contraction is typically associated with conflicts or wars, highlighting the gravity of the situation in Lebanon.



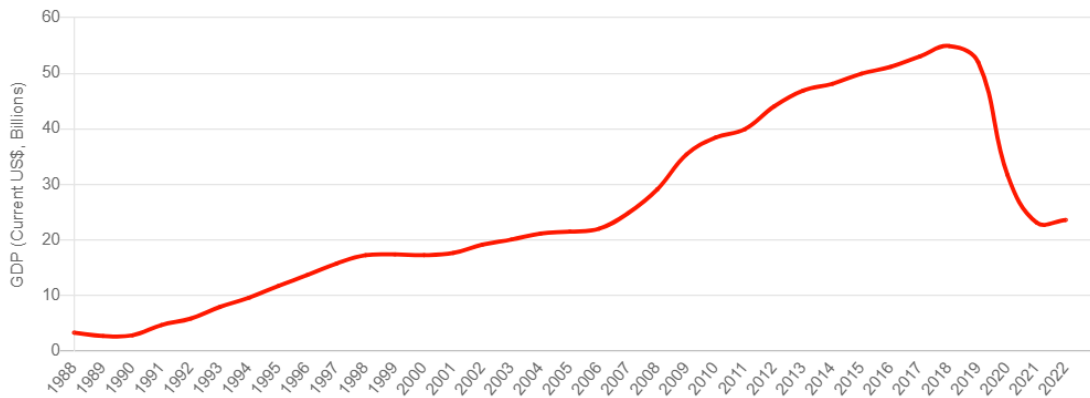


Figure 3. Current GDP (US\$): Lebanon. Source: World Bank, 2022

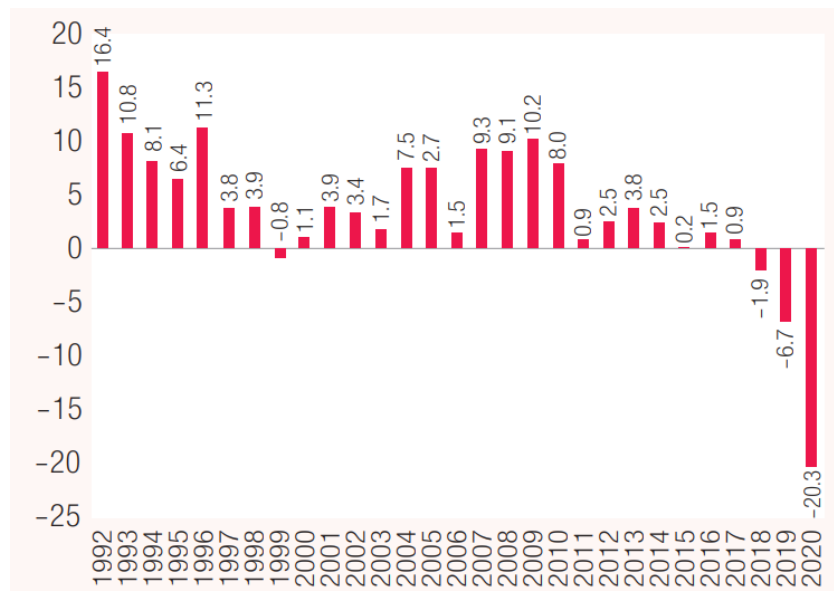


Figure 4. Real GDP Growth (%). Source: Lebanon Economic Monitor, World Bank Group, 2021

The banking sector in Lebanon has undergone significant changes, particularly in adopting informal capital controls. This sector has essentially ceased its lending activities and is no longer an attractive destination for deposits. Instead, it operates within a segmented payment system that distinguishes between older US Dollar deposits made before October 2019 and new inflows of "fresh dollars." Older deposits face substantial deleveraging through a de

facto process colloquially referred to as "lirafication" and may also incur "haircuts," with reductions in their value reaching as high as 85% on dollar deposits. The burden of this ongoing adjustment and deleveraging falls disproportionately on smaller depositors and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), making it a highly regressive process.

The overall decline in average income, coupled with the onset of triple-digit inflation (Figure 5), along with severe depreciation of the currency, has severely eroded purchasing power. Inflationary pressures have especially regressive effects, disproportionately impacting the poorer segments of society and the middle class.

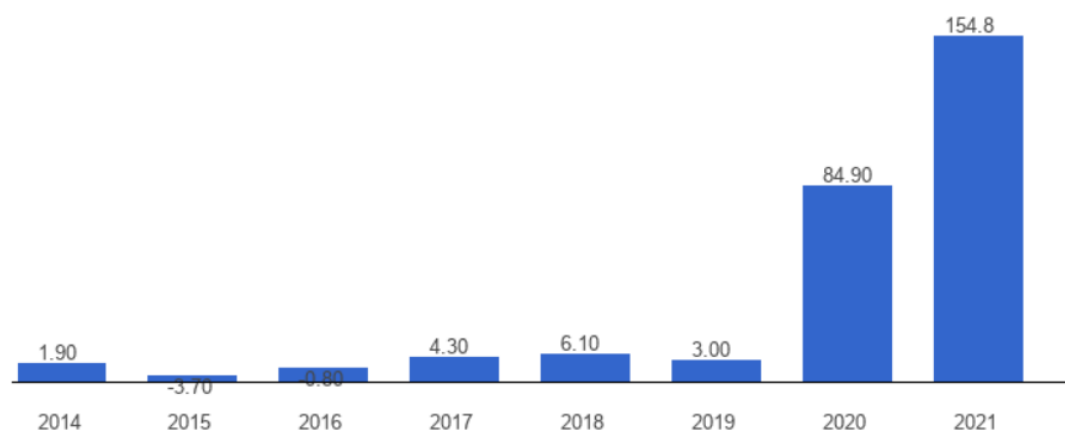


Figure 5. Inflation in Lebanon: Percentage change in the Consumer Price Index. Source: The World Bank, 2021

The social impact of the crisis in Lebanon is already dire and could potentially become catastrophic. An estimated 80% of the Lebanese population lives in poverty, with 36% living below the extreme poverty line. Additionally, 90% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon are unable to cover their basic needs (DG NEAR, 2023). Unemployment has risen significantly, from 11.4% in 2018-19 to 29.6% in 2022. A striking statistic reveals that four out of ten households in Lebanon earn less than \$100 a month, based on a sample size of 1209 households. This economic hardship is widespread, with median incomes ranging from \$78 per month in Beqaa to \$157 in Mount Lebanon (Table 3). These low incomes, coupled with triple-digit inflation,

have left many people unable to afford essential goods and services. Over 70% of households reported struggling to keep up with basic expenses or facing difficulties in making ends meet.

<b>Mohafazat</b>	<b>Median monthly income (USD)</b>	<b>95% confidence interval</b>
Beirut	\$112	(\$91 - 173)
Beqaa	\$78	(\$78 - 86)
Mount Lebanon	\$157	(\$147 - 182)
North Lebanon	\$110	(\$86 - 130)
South Lebanon	\$120	(\$105 - 147)
<b>Total Lebanon</b>	<b>\$122</b>	<b>(\$105 - 147)</b>

*Table 3. Monthly Household Income, November 2021 - January 2022. Source: Human Rights Watch Survey, 2022*

Lebanon has experienced a dramatic collapse in basic services, largely driven by the depletion of foreign exchange (FX) reserves as the compounded crisis unfolded. Severe shortages of fuel have resulted in more than eight rolling blackouts, with the national electric grid providing only one to two hours of power per day. Fuel shortages have also hindered access to healthcare and clean water, while supply chains for food, transport services, and telecommunications have faced severe disruptions.

Lebanon has additionally grappled with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, implementing intermittent lockdowns and other measures to mitigate the virus's impact on both the population and the already fragile healthcare system. A vaccination campaign was launched in February 2021 with initial financing from the World Bank, aiming to vaccinate 70% of the total population, including citizens and non-citizens, in a multi-phase rollout by the end of 2022.

Beyond the immediate human tragedy, the Port of Beirut explosion had national-level implications, despite its localized impact. These additional challenges compounded Lebanon's existing long-term structural vulnerabilities, which include subpar infrastructure, especially in the electricity sector, water supply shortages, inadequate solid waste and wastewater

management, weak public financial management, significant macroeconomic imbalances, and deteriorating social indicators.

Shortly after the explosion, the World Bank Group, in collaboration with the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), initiated a Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA) to assess the impact on residents, physical assets, infrastructure, and service delivery. The RDNA adopted a comprehensive approach engaging public authorities, institutions, and civil society organizations. The assessment determined that the damage's estimated value ranged from US\$3.8 to US\$4.6 billion, with losses to financial flows ranging from US\$2.9 to US\$3.5 billion. The impact was particularly severe in critical sectors essential for growth, including finance, housing, tourism, and commerce. The anticipated costs of recovery and reconstruction were expected to reach US\$1.8 to US\$2.2 billion through the end of 2021.

Building upon the RDNA's findings, the World Bank Group, EU, and UN launched the Reform, Recovery, and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) in December 2020. This framework outlines a costed and prioritized set of actions designed to address Lebanon's immediate and short-term needs. It aims to "build back better" by adopting an integrated approach focused on people-centered recovery, preparing for medium-term reconstruction, and initiating key structural reforms grounded in principles of transparency, inclusion, and accountability. The Lebanon Financing Facility (LFF) was officially established on December 18, 2020, with the primary goal of initiating immediate socio-economic recovery efforts targeting vulnerable populations and businesses impacted by the Beirut explosion. Additionally, it aims to assist the Government of Lebanon in catalyzing essential reforms and preparing for medium-term recovery and reconstruction. The LFF serves as a vital mechanism for aggregating grant resources and enhancing the coherence and coordination of financial support, aligning with the priorities outlined in the 3RF. It employs adaptable implementation methods while maintaining robust fiduciary oversight and monitoring.

Realizing a brighter future for Lebanon necessitates prompt and resolute action, especially in the realm of reform. In the short term, Lebanon must adopt and execute a credible, all-encompassing, and well-coordinated strategy for macro-financial stability, operating within a medium-term macro-fiscal framework. This strategy should include several key elements:

- 1- A debt restructuring program aimed at achieving debt sustainability over the medium term.
- 2- A comprehensive restructuring of the financial sector to restore solvency to the banking sector.
- 3- The establishment of a new monetary policy framework focused on rebuilding trust in the exchange rate and its stability.
- 4- A phased fiscal adjustment program geared towards restoring confidence in fiscal policy.
- 5- Implementing reforms that promote economic growth.
- 6- Strengthening social protection measures.

Presently, Lebanon heavily relies on international aid, which increasingly targets local development through various actors, channels, and categories of intervention, including decentralized cooperation, development aid, and emergency aid. Nevertheless, effective macroeconomic stabilization, foreign aid, and investment initiatives are less likely to yield successful economic development outcomes when the country's institutions, both economic and political, remain underdeveloped. To incentivize investment, particularly in low-income and vulnerable nations like Lebanon, attention must be directed toward building robust legal systems, monetary and fiscal institutions, functioning markets, a dependable statistical system, and an independent civil society.

Regrettably, Lebanon has struggled to achieve this objective thus far. In the realm of economic development, the quality of institutions holds immense significance. Institution-

building is an evolutionary process influenced by local conditions and historical legacies. A country's GDP per capita is closely linked to the development of its institutions, encompassing factors such as the quality of governance, levels of corruption, political rights, public sector efficiency, and regulatory burdens.

Two critical aspects that significantly correlate with a nation's income per capita are the protection of property rights and the limitation of executive powers. Consequently, Lebanon must prioritize the establishment of improved institutions, effective governance, and a more favorable business environment alongside physical reconstruction efforts. However, given Lebanon's state of insolvency, both sovereign and within the banking system, coupled with its inadequate foreign exchange reserves, international aid and private investments will be indispensable for its recovery. The speed and extent of aid and investments mobilization hinge on the government and the Lebanese Parliament's ability to swiftly enact the necessary fiscal, financial, social, and governance reforms. These reforms are imperative for sustainable recovery and reconstruction; without them, the socio-economic situation will continue to deteriorate.

## 2.4 The Role of Urban Planning in Economic Development in Lebanon

The rapid urbanisation occurred along Lebanon's coastline during the last six decades has been marked by high intensity and the absence of comprehensive planning. This urbanisation surge has been driven mainly by factors such as population growth, internal migration, and the arrival of refugees. The aftermath of military conflicts has also necessitated extensive urban reconstruction. In the Beirut and Mount of Lebanon governorates, encompassing 28 municipalities, urbanisation has essentially used up available land resources. This transformation is evident in the increase in land occupation from 56.9% in 1962 to a staggering 83.5% by 2020. Urban areas continue to expand, absorbing existing infrastructure and buildings. Notably, these urban areas have extremely high population density, particularly in

Beirut municipality, where nearly 98% of the land is now developed, leaving minimal green spaces. Moreover, this urban sprawl extends into hills and mountain slopes, impacting traditional agricultural landscapes (Hassoun, 2022).

This urbanisation process has various direct and indirect consequences. Notable impacts include the loss of fertile coastal soils and reduced cereal production, hydrological imbalances due to soil sealing and hillside urbanisation, and degradation of the urban microclimate due to dense urban development and the lack of green spaces. These changes represent hidden costs of the local urbanisation model, with significant environmental and economic implications. The loss of fertile land and agricultural productivity affects local food production and increases dependence on food imports. Hydrological imbalances and soil sealing raise the risk of environmental disasters and water-related issues. Furthermore, the deterioration of the urban microclimate can affect the well-being of residents and lead to increased energy consumption for climate control.

Lebanon is currently experiencing rapid, unsystematic urbanisation across its entire landscape. This growth, driven by economic expansion and employment opportunities, has resulted in significant population growth as people migrate to urban centers. However, this urbanisation has occurred without comprehensive planning, leading to the development of slums with inadequate social, health, environmental, and safety services, as well as strained infrastructure. While only 12% of Lebanon's territory is designated as buildable, this limited area, primarily concentrated around major cities, has seen excessive expansion in circular and linear forms.

Traditional macro development plans led by public authorities, whether centralized (government) or decentralized (municipalities), have failed to provide a strategic framework for regional urban development. Public authorities have struggled to manage and support socio-economic forces in peripheral areas. The civil war has given rise to locally rooted forces with shared interests, opposing an alternative territorial force/governance that promotes local

economic development through urbanisation. These territories are essentially suburban or "rur-urban," characterized by urban sprawl and random construction expansion facilitated by lenient Lebanese construction regulations.

The prevailing hypothesis in Lebanese urbanism is the "state-of-anarchy," involving the entire socio-political system. According to Nagi Sfeir (2018), private actors play a significant role in urban development in Lebanon, and the government has launched initiatives to address urban poverty and social cohesion. However, public authorities have limited influence, and the state is considered more as a meeting place for alliances, conflicts, and negotiations than a unified actor. Weak public authorities have led local actors to take charge of local economic and social priorities.

Sfeir identified three major urban phenomena of privatization in regional Lebanon, led by different private stakeholder profiles: "Zaïmisation" by local leaders, "Customisation" by businessmen, and "Sacralisation" by the Maronite Church. These local actors are autonomous and rational, playing roles in local planning and development.

One example of the "Customisation" phenomenon is the introduction of the clubbing industry in the historic coastal city of Batroun, resulting in the transformation of the local economy into a leisure and clubbing service-based economy. This shift led to residential sprawl in nearby hills, impacting natural lands and raising land prices.

Religious tourism projects, such as the Saints Route, have led to urbanisation of natural forested and agricultural areas, causing ecological damage and social and economic transformations. In this context, local governments need to assume responsibility for coordinating policies and ensuring spatial equity to prevent territorial disparities and address economic, social, and political challenges. They should implement a regional strategy since informal strategies may lack long-term effectiveness, especially in the context of Lebanon's complex urban landscape. Municipalities need to position themselves as local, egalitarian, and non-hierarchical actors in Lebanon's urban context.



## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the conceptual framework, research approach, ethical considerations, quality assessment, data collection tools, and information pertaining to the selection and composition of the research focus group.

### 3.1 Conceptual Framework

The research's conceptual framework is based on theories discussed in the previous chapters, focusing on the significant influence of urbanisation on economic development in Lebanon. Previous chapters extensively explored the relationship between urbanisation and economic development, highlighting various socio-economic patterns and shifts in urban areas, as well as their impact on infrastructure, job creation, and resource access. Additionally, these chapters emphasized how these factors contribute to the development of economic opportunities.

The implications of urbanisation on economic development extend to aspects such as improved living standards, enhanced access to education and healthcare, and increased market potential. This study seeks to explore the multifaceted nature of this relationship and identify the key drivers and challenges that shape the urbanisation-economic development nexus in Lebanon.

The framework also recognizes the role of urban planning in this context, emphasizing its potential to steer urbanisation toward sustainable and inclusive economic development. Urban planning decisions, including infrastructure development, zoning regulations, and land-use policies, are integral to shaping the urban landscape and influencing economic growth.

This conceptual framework guides the research by providing a comprehensive theoretical foundation and a roadmap for investigating the dynamic relationship between urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon. It ensures that the study is grounded in existing knowledge and aligns with the theoretical frameworks discussed throughout the thesis.

### 3.2. Research approach

In the study of urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon, a quantitative research approach is favoured for its objectivity, statistical prowess, and capacity for large-scale investigations. This methodology excels at precise measurement and comparative analysis, making it ideal for unravelling the intricate relationship between these two factors. It provides credible and rigorous findings, and its versatility is well-suited for the multifaceted nature of the inquiry.

### 3.3 Data Collection Method

To collect data for this research, surveys were distributed through a network of participants that extended to various regions in Lebanon. The approach involved sharing the survey with friends and family, who, in turn, were asked to pass it on to their relatives and friends across the country. Additionally, online communication platforms, including Lebanese WhatsApp groups and Instagram, were utilized to reach a diverse and geographically dispersed sample. This method was chosen to effectively collect structured, quantifiable data and is particularly suitable for conducting the quantitative analysis necessary to investigate the relationship between urbanisation and economic development. It also takes advantage of the widespread use of social media in Lebanon, ensuring accessibility to a wide range of respondents.

This approach facilitates a level of anonymity for participants, encourages open and honest responses, and ensures geographic inclusivity by reaching both urban and rural areas of Lebanon. Leveraging social networks and online platforms enhances community-based engagement and fosters trust among participants, potentially leading to a higher response rate and more comprehensive insights.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

This section outlines the methodologies utilized to analyse the survey data, offering a snapshot of the critical aspects explored during the study.

The analysis commenced by scrutinizing respondents' demographics, covering age, gender, education level, occupation, and geographic location. These demographic insights formed the foundational understanding of the survey group. Subsequently, the study probed into respondents' perspectives on urbanisation in Lebanon and its impacts. It also dissected their viewpoints on economic development, its challenges, and contributing factors.

To uncover latent associations within the data, statistical techniques were applied. The chi-square analysis, for instance, examined the connection between age and familiarity with urban planning, yielding essential insights for future urban planning initiatives that cater to all age groups. Cross-tabulation analysis was another valuable tool, systematically exploring relationships between variables. For instance, it analysed the potential link between respondents' occupations and their perceptions of economic development. Furthermore, the chi-square analysis explored the relationship between perceptions of economic development and urban planning, emphasizing the need for comprehensive policies and initiatives.

Additionally, the study investigated the factors contributing to economic development, the challenges it faces, and recommendations for enhancing urbanisation. The survey results highlighted the significance of tourism and foreign investments, while key challenges encompassed political instability, environmental concerns, and overcrowding issues.

In summary, the applied data analysis techniques, including cross-tabulations and chi-square tests, unveiled critical insights about urbanisation, economic development, and urban planning in Lebanon. These insights set the stage for the subsequent chapters, where implications and recommendations are explored in detail.

The demographics of the 113 participants in this study paint a diverse and multifaceted picture of the population under investigation. These demographic characteristics form an

essential backdrop to the research, helping to contextualize the findings and understand how different backgrounds and experiences might influence individuals' perspectives on urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon.

**Occupation** The various occupational statuses of the participants reflect the broad spectrum of experiences and roles within the Lebanese society. With the 53.1% of respondents being "employed" (Table 4) it indicates that a significant proportion of the respondents are actively part of the workforce, each with their unique insights and experiences related to the economic landscape and urbanisation. The presence of "self-employed" and "unemployed" individuals underscores the diversity in economic circumstances, offering valuable perspectives on economic development. Furthermore, the inclusion of "students" and "retired" individuals widens the scope of generational perspectives and life stages, bringing a rich array of viewpoints to the study.

## Frequencies

Frequencies of Occupation

Occupation	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Employed	60	53.1 %	53.1 %
Self-employed	18	15.9 %	69.0 %
Unemployed	7	6.2 %	75.2 %
Student	24	21.2 %	96.5 %
Retired	4	3.5 %	100.0 %

*Table 4. The frequencies of participants' occupations*

**City of Residence** The participants' geographical distribution across Lebanon signifies a comprehensive representation of various regions within the country. Beirut, as the capital, naturally has the highest number of respondents, with 40.7% (Table 5) of respondents residing

there. However, the presence of individuals from other cities such as Byblos, Sidon, Tripoli, Tyre, and other cities highlights that the study encompasses a wide geographical area. This geographic diversity ensures that the findings and opinions gathered are not limited to one specific locality but encompass a broad cross-section of urban contexts.

## Frequencies

Frequencies of City of residence

City of residence	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Akkar	1	0.9%	0.9%
Baabda	2	1.8%	2.7%
Batroun	1	0.9%	3.5%
Beirut	46	40.7%	44.2%
Bekaa	4	3.5%	47.8%
Byblos	10	8.8%	56.6%
Faraya	1	0.9%	57.5%
Hadath	1	0.9%	58.4%
Jnoub	1	0.9%	59.3%
Jounieh	2	1.8%	61.1%
Kaslik	1	0.9%	61.9%
Keserwan	5	4.4%	66.4%
Koura	1	0.9%	67.3%
Nabatiye	1	0.9%	68.1%
Sidon	14	12.4%	80.5%
Tripoli	11	9.7%	90.3%
Tyre	8	7.1%	97.3%
Zouk Mikhael	1	0.9%	98.2%
Zouk Mosbeh	2	1.8%	100.0%

Table 5. The frequencies of participants' cities of residence

**Age** The age distribution of the participants illustrates a well-rounded range of generational perspectives. The prevalence of the "25-34" age group suggests that individuals in their prime working years are well-represented (Table 6), likely contributing a wealth of experiences related to economic activities and urbanisation. The inclusion of older age groups, such as "45-54" and "55+," brings the wisdom of experience into the mix, while the younger age groups, "18-24" and "35-44," offer the fresh viewpoints of emerging adults and middle-aged individuals. This age diversity enriches the research by capturing insights from varying stages of life and career development.

## Frequencies

Frequencies of Age

Age	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
18-24	16	14.2%	14.2%
25-34	42	37.2%	51.3%
35-44	23	20.4%	71.7%
45-54	16	14.2%	85.8%
55+	16	14.2%	100.0%

*Table 6. The frequencies of participants' age*

**Gender** Gender diversity is a notable aspect of the study, with nearly equal representation of male and female respondents (Table 7), along with individuals identifying as "non-binary/other." The inclusion of diverse gender identities is not just a matter of representation but acknowledges that the topics of urbanisation and economic development concern all members of society. It ensures that the research accounts for the distinct perspectives that different genders may bring to these complex issues.

## Frequencies

Frequencies of Gender

Gender	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Female	53	46.9%	46.9%
Male	54	47.8%	94.7%
Non-binary/Other	6	5.3%	100.0%

*Table 7. The frequencies of participants' gender*

In summary, the demographics of the surveyed participants provide an important context for the subsequent analysis. They reflect the heterogeneity of the Lebanese population and the multiplicity of factors that shape individual perspectives. The forthcoming sections delve into how these demographic dimensions intersect with the participants' viewpoints, revealing the intricate interplay between demographics and perceptions of urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon.

These demographic elements serve as a pivotal cornerstone, recognizing that age, occupation, city of residence, and gender are instrumental in molding perspectives and opinions. In the subsequent analysis, we will explore the intricate interplay between these demographics and the intricate topics of urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon.

## Chapter 4: Empirical Analysis

In this chapter, I will present the results of the empirical analysis, which examined the relationships between various factors and perceptions. The chi-square tests and contingency tables conducted in Jamovi provide valuable insights into these associations and opinions.

### 4.1 Urbanisation and Economic Development in Lebanon

The initial objective of the empirical analysis was to identify the link or specific pattern between certain variables such as the occupation of respondents and their perception of economic development, gender, and perceived impact of urbanisation on quality of life, city of residence, and perceived impact of social and cultural changes due to urbanisation. All of the mentioned variables were part of the survey conducted online.

The first chi-square test (Table 8) studying the relationship between participants' age and their familiarity with urban planning yields important results. While the test indicates that there might not be a statistically significant association ( $p = 0.474$ ) between age and familiarity with urban planning, the insights derived from this analysis remain valuable. Even without a significant statistical relationship, this examination of age and familiarity with urban planning can inform strategies for educational programs, policies, and resource allocation. It underscores the importance of addressing urban planning familiarity across all age groups. By considering this insight, policymakers and urban planners can develop inclusive initiatives and educational campaigns that cater to individuals of all ages, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to engage with and understand urban planning. This inclusive approach can lead to more informed and engaged communities, ultimately benefiting urban development efforts in Lebanon.



### Contingency Tables

Age	Familiarity with urban planning			Total
	No	Yes	Somewhat familiar	
18-24	3	7	6	16
25-34	3	20	19	42
35-44	1	11	11	23
45-54	0	6	10	16
55+	1	10	5	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>113</b>

### $\chi^2$ Tests

	Value	df	p
$\chi^2$	7.60	8	0.474
N	113		

Table 8. Contingency table and chi-square test showing the relationship between age of respondents and their familiarity with urban planning.

The second chi-square analysis (Table 9) was designed to investigate the potential link between the occupation of the survey respondents and their perceptions of economic development in Lebanon. This analysis aimed to determine if a person's occupation had a significant impact on how they viewed economic development in the country. However, the results revealed no statistically significant association between these variables, with a p-value of 0.235. These findings emphasize that occupational status alone may not be a decisive factor in shaping an individual's opinion on economic development. While the analysis did not establish a clear connection between occupation and economic perceptions, it's essential to acknowledge that numerous factors influence one's viewpoint on economic development. These

factors can include education, income level, personal experiences, and cultural background, among others.

However, 75 respondents out of 113 (66.3%) described the conditions of economic development as regressing and declining, and more than half of these people represent the “Employed” category. The second most common answer was “unstable and fluctuating”, which was chosen by 23.7% of the survey participants.

Contingency Tables

occupation	perception of economic development					Total
	Regressing and declining	Slow and stagnant	Strong and vibrant	Unstable and fluctuating	Unsure	
Employed	47	1	2	9	1	60
Retired	1	1	0	2	0	4
Self-employed	8	1	1	8	0	18
Student	16	2	0	6	0	24
Unemployed	3	1	0	3	0	7
Total	75	6	3	28	1	113

$\chi^2$  Tests

	Value	df	p
$\chi^2$	19.7	16	0.235
N	113		

Table 9. Contingency table and chi-square test showing the perception of economic development and respondents' occupation in Lebanon.

Turning to urban implementation in Lebanon, the answer “not implemented or respected at all” was chosen by 51.3% of the respondents which was followed by 41.5% voting “not well implemented and respected”. Thus, that makes the total number of participants, who view the current urban implementation situation as negative, 105. However, this opinion is not linked to the place of residency of the participants, as proved by the result of the chi-square,  $p = 0.977$  (Table 10).

City of residence	Urban planning implementation in Lebanon				Total
	Fully implemented and respected	Not implemented or respected at all	Not well implemented and respected	Partially implemented and respected	
Akkar	0	1	0	0	1
Baabda	0	0	2	0	2
Batroun	0	0	1	0	1
Beirut	3	27	12	4	46
Bekaa	0	1	3	0	4
Byblos	0	5	5	0	10
Faraya	0	1	0	0	1
Hadath	0	0	1	0	1
Jnoub	0	1	0	0	1
Jounieh	0	2	0	0	2
Kaslik	0	1	0	0	1
Keserwan	0	2	3	0	5
Koura	0	1	0	0	1
Nabatiye	0	1	0	0	1
Sidon	0	3	11	0	14
Tripoli	0	6	4	1	11
Tyre	0	4	4	0	8
Zouk Mikhael	0	1	0	0	1
Zouk Mosbeh	0	1	1	0	2
Total	3	58	47	5	113

$\chi^2$ Tests			
	Value	df	p
$\chi^2$	35.3	54	0.977
N	113		

Table 10. Contingency table and chi-square test showing the degree of urban planning implementation and respondents' residency in Lebanon.

As the next step in my research, I analyzed the relationship between the opinion on economic development and the view on urban planning in Lebanon (Table 11). Unlike the previous results of chi-square tests, what sets this analysis apart is the significant relationship uncovered between these two variables, as indicated by a p-value of less than 0.001. This statistical finding implies a strong association between respondents who hold a negative opinion regarding economic development and their corresponding views on urban planning in Lebanon. In simpler terms, those who express concerns about the state of economic development within the country are likely to harbor similar concerns when it comes to urban planning. This connection highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to address both economic development and urban planning issues in Lebanon. It suggests that improving one aspect may

have a ripple effect on the other, underscoring the importance of integrated policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing the overall well-being and prosperity of the nation.

Lastly more than 95% of the respondents mentioned the significance of urban planning, identifying it as “very important” (66 out of 113 respondents) and “important” (42 out of 113 respondents).

Economic development in Lebanon	Urban planning in Lebanon				Total
	Fully implemented and respected	Partially implemented and respected	Not well implemented and respected	Not implemented or respected at all	
Strong and vibrant	1	1	1	0	3
Slow and stagnant	1	1	2	2	6
Unstable and fluctuating	1	1	16	10	28
Regressing and declining	0	2	27	46	75
Unsure	0	0	1	0	1
Total	3	5	47	58	113

$\chi^2$ Tests			
	Value	df	p
$\chi^2$	33.9	12	<.001
N	113		

Table 11. Contingency table and chi-square test showing the degree of urban planning implementation and economic development in Lebanon.

Despite the overwhelmingly shared view on the importance of urban planning, the chi-square test results (Table 12) indicated an interesting finding regarding the participants' city of residence. The statistical analysis did not disclose any discernible association between the respondents' geographic location and their perception of urban planning's significance. This is reflected in the p-value of 0.996, implying that the respondents' views on urban planning are consistent across different cities of residence. This outcome suggests that the importance attributed to urban planning transcends regional boundaries and is a widely shared sentiment among the diverse population of Lebanon.

Contingency Tables

City of residence	Importance of urban planning				Total
	Very important	Important	Not so important	Unsure	
Akkar	0	1	0	0	1
Baabda	1	1	0	0	2
Batroun	1	0	0	0	1
Beirut	32	12	1	1	46
Bekaa	2	2	0	0	4
Byblos	4	6	0	0	10
Faraya	1	0	0	0	1
Hadath	1	0	0	0	1
Jnoub	1	0	0	0	1
Jounieh	2	0	0	0	2
Kaslik	1	0	0	0	1
Keserwan	3	2	0	0	5
Koura	1	0	0	0	1
Nabatiye	1	0	0	0	1
Sidon	5	9	0	0	14
Tripoli	4	5	0	2	11
Tyre	4	3	0	1	8
Zouk Mikhael	1	0	0	0	1
Zouk Mosbeh	1	1	0	0	2
Total	66	42	1	4	113

$\chi^2$  Tests

	Value	df	p
$\chi^2$	30.4	54	0.996
N	113		

Table 12. Contingency table and chi-square test showing the importance of urban planning and the respondents' city of residence.

## 4.2 Factors Affecting Urbanisation and Economic Development in Lebanon

Throughout the paper, I have been analyzing factors that affect urbanisation and economic development, therefore a part of the questions in the survey was dedicated to this matter and the perception of these factors by the Lebanese population.

A contingency table of variables “age” and “the main factors contributing to the economic development” shows the percentage of people who have chosen one of the options from the multiple-answer question, it is important to mention, that a maximum of three options was allowed (Table 13). Based on the results, it is clear that the leading factor among the answers is “tourism and hospitality” with 65,5% of the votes, in fact, it is the most popular answer in all five age groups. The second leading answer, however, is “foreign investments and aid”, which illustrates the belief of the population in heavy reliability of the external investment from abroad along with the financial aid. Conversely, “innovation and entrepreneurship” only got 8,8% of all the answers and received no recognition from the age groups “45-54” and “55+”.

Nevertheless, the “other factors” option suggested by the respondents, was chosen by 8,8% of the total number of participants, which is equal to the percentage of people who voted “innovation and entrepreneurship”. The following are the answers provided by the participants, when they were asked to specify the “other factors” in the survey:

- *“No apparent economic development at the time being. The country is barely holding on through this constant economic decline as there is no export activities or clear programs by the government to improve the situation.”*
- *“No economic development”*
- *“No clear factors”*
- *“None of the above”*
- *“None”*
- *“Economy currently deteriorating, no development.”*

The pessimistic view is supported by the percentage of participants who chose “government policies and reforms” as one of the main factors contributing to the economic development (5.3%), in contrast to foreign investments and aid (41.6%).

Age	Total number of respondents	Export-oriented industries	Tourism and hospitality	Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Foreign investments and aid	Government policies and reforms	Other factors
		% within age group	% within age group	% within age group	% within age group	% within age group	% within age group
18 - 24	16	25%	68,75%	6,2%	50%	6,2%	
25 - 34	42	21,4%	69%	16,6%	33,3%	7,1%	9,5%
35 - 44	23	13%	56,5%	8,7%	52,1%		8,7%
45 - 54	16	12,5%	56,3%		31,3%		12,5%
55+	16	25%	75%		50%	12,5%	12,5%
<b>Total</b>							
% of total	<b>113</b>	<b>19,4%</b>	<b>65,5%</b>	<b>8,8%</b>	<b>41,6%</b>	<b>5,3%</b>	<b>8,8%</b>

Table 13. Contingency table showing the main factors contributing to economic development in Lebanon and respondents' age in percentages, based on the contingency table conducted in Jamovi (Appendix 2)

As part of the research, I was aiming to understand the perspective of the population on the question of urbanisation and economic development and by the end of the survey, the participants were asked to choose up to three options from the provided list of recommendations on how to improve urbanisation in Lebanon. The contingency table provided below illustrates the recommendations chosen by the participants and their level of education (Table 14). The most common answer among the respondents turned out to be “Invest in urban infrastructure and public services”, gathering 49.5% of all the participants. The option for “provide training for urban planning professionals” scored among the top choices in all levels of education having more than 40% of votes per level of education, except the category of “master’s degree” and “doctorate or higher”. Another finding reveals that people with a high school level of education or lower chose “increase funding for urban planning initiatives” (45.5%) over “increase public

participation in the urban planning process” (18.2%), unlike the results of the respondents with a bachelor’s degree, who gave preference to the possible public participation (45.8%) over increased funding (33.3%).

Level of education	Total number of respondents	Increase public participation in the urban planning process	Enhance enforcement of existing urban planning regulations and laws	Invest in urban infrastructure and public services	Promote sustainable and inclusive urban development practices	Increase funding for urban planning initiatives	Provide training for urban planning professionals
High school or lower	11	18,2%	36,7%	36,7%	18,2%	45,5%	54,5%
Some college or vocational training	25	32%	48%	48%	32%	40%	44%
Bachelor's degree	48	45,8%	45,8%	47,9%	35,4%	33,3%	45,8%
Master's degree	27	44,4%	55,5%	55,5%	37%	37%	37%
Doctorate or higher	2		50%	100%	50%	100%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>						
% of total		<b>38,9%</b>	<b>47,8%</b>	<b>49,5%</b>	<b>33,6%</b>	<b>38,1%</b>	<b>43,4%</b>

Table 14. Contingency table showing recommendations to improve urban planning and level of education of respondents, based on the contingency table conducted in Jamovi (Appendix 3)

### 4.3 Challenges for Urbanisation and Economic Development in Lebanon

Lastly, the findings of the survey helped to reveal results in the population’s opinion on the challenges that the economy of the country is currently facing, and what challenges have been brought by urbanisation.

Starting from the later question, as can be expected, the biggest challenge for the participants from all of the 8 governorates of Lebanon resulted in “overcrowding and congestion”, this opinion is supported by the historical overview of this matter in the previous chapters. Over 80% of all the participants chose this answer as one of the three (maximum amount allowed) main challenges (Table 15). The garbage crisis in the country has left its



evident mark, and as a result, the second most common answer is “increased pollution and environmental degradation” (68.1% of all the participants). “Housing affordability and availability” appears to be the least concern from most of the respondents, as it gathered only 10.6%, however, the biggest amount of people chosen this answer are residing in Beirut (9 out of 12).

Governorate of residence	Total number of respondents	Overcrowding and congestion	Increased pollution and environmental degradation	Housing affordability and availability	Pressure on infrastructure and public services	Social and cultural changes
		% within governorate	% within governorate	% within governorate	% within governorate	% within governorate
Akkar Governorate	1	100%			100%	100%
Beirut Governorate	46	73,9%	65,2%	19,5%	54,3%	28,2%
Beqaa Governorate	4	100%	75%		50%	25%
Keserwan-Jbeil Governorate	20	90%	65%	5%	70%	30%
Mount Lebanon Governorate	3	100%	100%		33,3%	33,3%
Nabatieh Governorate	1	100%			100%	
North Governorate	13	69.2%	69,2%	7,7%	30,7%	23%
South Governorate	23	82,6%	85%	5%	60%	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>					
% of total		<b>80,5%</b>	<b>68,1%</b>	<b>10,6%</b>	<b>53,9%</b>	<b>27,4%</b>

Table 15. Contingency table showing main challenges that urbanisation has brought to Lebanon and respondents' city of residence.

As for the main challenges of economic development of Lebanon, the absolute leading answer among the options is “political instability and corruption”, which gathered votes of 86.7% of total respondents, surpassing the second most common answer “high unemployment and poverty” by 38.9% (Table 16). This question in the survey has caused the respondents to suggest their own challenges for the economic development, that they specified in the section “other factors”. Some of these included:

- “Money laundering”

- “Bad political decisions”
- “Incompetent politicians”
- “Foreign countries interfere”
- “Pressure from internal political groups, the thing that affects natural and healthy urban growth”

Occupation	Total number of respondents	Economic inequality	High unemployment and poverty	Infrastructural deficiencies	Lack of foreign investment	Political instability and corruption	Other Factors
		% within occupation	% within occupation	% within occupation	% within occupation	% within occupation	% within occupation
Employed	60	28,3%	50%	38,3%	21,7%	88,3%	6,7%
Self-employed	18	33,3%	55,5%	27,8%	11,1%	83,3%	
Unemployed	7	28,6%	71,4%	14,3%	14,3%	100%	
Student	24	37,5%	29,2%	33,3%	12,5%	87,5%	4,2%
Retired	4	50%	50%	75%	50%	50%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>						
% of total		<b>31,9%</b>	<b>47,8%</b>	<b>35,4%</b>	<b>18,9%</b>	<b>86,7%</b>	<b>4,4%</b>

Table 16. Contingency table showing main challenges to economic development and respondents' occupation in Lebanon, based on the contingency table conducted in Jamovi (Appendix 4)

## Chapter 5: Implications and Recommendations

### 5.1 Research-Oriented Implications

The study offers profound insights into urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon:

1- **Inclusive Urban Planning:** Recognizing that age might not be statistically associated with urban planning familiarity, the research underscores the importance of inclusive strategies. Policymakers and urban planners should create initiatives and educational campaigns that cater to individuals of all ages. This inclusivity ensures comprehensive urban planning engagement, leading to more informed and engaged communities.

2- **Integrated Approach:** The strong statistical association between negative perceptions of economic development and concerns about urban planning highlights the necessity of integrated policies. Policymakers should focus on holistic approaches, addressing both urbanisation and economic development, to improve the overall well-being and prosperity of Lebanon.

### 5.2 Managerial-Oriented Implications and Recommendations

The study provides actionable guidance for policymakers, urban planners, and organizations:

- **Inclusive Urban Planning Initiatives:** Initiatives, policies, and educational campaigns should be designed with inclusivity in mind. They should cater to individuals of all ages, ensuring that everyone can engage with and understand urban planning. This approach promotes a more informed and engaged community, ultimately benefiting urban development in Lebanon.
- **Holistic Economic Development:** While occupation alone may not be a decisive factor in shaping an individual's opinion on economic development, other determinants such as education, income, and cultural background should be examined in more detail. Policymakers

should consider a comprehensive range of factors when crafting economic development strategies for Lebanon.

- **Integrated Policies:** Recognizing the strong statistical association between negative perceptions of economic development and concerns about urban planning, policymakers should adopt integrated policies. These policies should simultaneously address economic development and urban planning, leveraging the evident link between the two. An integrated approach can lead to more cohesive and effective strategies for addressing Lebanon's complex challenges.

In conclusion, embracing these implications and recommendations will assist policymakers and stakeholders in addressing Lebanon's urbanisation and economic development challenges comprehensively. This approach can contribute to the nation's sustainable well-being, fostering informed and engaged communities and promoting integrated, holistic development policies.

## Chapter 6: Limitations

This study, while contributing valuable insights into perceptions of urbanisation, economic development, and urban planning in Lebanon, is accompanied by several inherent limitations that necessitate consideration for a more nuanced interpretation of the findings.

The foremost limitation pertains to the sample size. The relatively small cohort of 113 participants employed in this research raises questions about the study's representativeness concerning Lebanon's entire population. The limited sample size restricts the broader generalizability of the results and warrants caution when extending the findings to the diverse Lebanese population.

Additionally, the utilization of a convenience sampling method in the survey introduces an element of self-selection bias. As participants voluntarily opted to engage with the survey, their perspectives may differ from those who abstained. This self-selection bias underscores the need to acknowledge that survey respondents may not perfectly mirror the broader population's diversity of opinions.

Moreover, it is important to note that the survey was conducted in English, while the official language of Lebanon is Arabic. This language preference may have inadvertently excluded certain segments of the population, potentially leading to linguistic and cultural biases in the responses.

Geographically, the research has a limited scope as it concentrates on specific regions within Lebanon. This geographic restriction may not adequately encapsulate the full spectrum of urbanisation challenges experienced across the entire nation. Consequently, the findings may not comprehensively represent the experiences and viewpoints of individuals from all Lebanese regions.

The subjective nature of the responses is another aspect that merits consideration. The study heavily relies on self-reported answers from participants. Such subjective perceptions and

beliefs can be influenced by personal biases, potentially impacting the objectivity and neutrality of the data collected.

Social desirability bias constitutes an additional concern. Participants may have been inclined to provide answers that align with social norms or expectations rather than expressing their true beliefs. This bias could have implications for the precision and authenticity of the findings, especially in surveys addressing sensitive topics.

Furthermore, the research grapples with the challenge of non-response bias. The lack of control over individuals who chose not to partake in the survey means that their perspectives and experiences remain unaccounted for. This absence of data from non-respondents leaves potential gaps in the overall understanding of the issues under investigation.

In conclusion, this research serves as a valuable starting point for comprehending perceptions of urbanisation, economic development, and urban planning in Lebanon. Nevertheless, the study's outcomes should be interpreted within the context of these limitations. Future research endeavors, encompassing larger and more diverse samples, as well as the utilization of mixed-methods approaches, are recommended to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of these intricate subjects.

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# APPENDIX 1

## Survey

1. How old are you?

- a) 18-24
- b) 25-34
- c) 35-44
- d) 45-54
- e) 55+

2. What is your gender?

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) Non-binary/Other

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- a) High school or lower
- b) Some college or vocational training
- c) Bachelor's degree
- d) Master's degree
- e) Doctorate or higher

4. What is your occupation?

- a) Employed
- b) Self-employed
- c) Unemployed
- d) Student
- e) Retired
- f) Other, please specify

5. What is your current town/city of residence in Lebanon?

- a) Beirut
- b) Tripoli
- c) Sidon
- d) Tyre
- e) Byblos
- f) Other, please specify

6. Can you describe urbanisation in Lebanon? Select up to 3 answers.

- a) Rapid growth of urban areas and cities
- b) Increased migration from rural to urban areas
- c) Expansion of infrastructure and development in urban areas
- d) Other, please specify

7. Do you believe that urbanisation has had a positive or negative impact on your quality of life?

- a) Positive
- b) Negative
- c) No impact
- d) Unsure

8. What are the main challenges that urbanisation has brought to Lebanon in your opinion?

Select up to 3 answers

- a) Overcrowding and congestion
- b) Increased pollution and environmental degradation
- c) Housing affordability and availability
- d) Pressure on infrastructure and public services
- e) Social and cultural changes
- f) Other, please specify

9. What, in your opinion, are the main reasons for urbanisation in Lebanon? Select up to 2 answers

- a) Economic opportunities in urban areas
- b) Population growth and migration patterns
- c) Government policies and incentives
- d) Technological advancements
- e) Other, please specify

10. How would you describe the economic development in Lebanon?

- a) Strong and vibrant
- b) Slow and stagnant
- c) Unstable and fluctuating
- d) Regressing and declining
- e) Unsure

11. In your opinion, what are the main challenges to economic development in Lebanon? Select up to 3 answers

- a) Political instability and corruption
- b) High unemployment and poverty
- c) Economic inequality
- d) Lack of foreign investment
- e) Infrastructural deficiencies
- f) Other, please specify

12. What do you believe are the main factors contributing to economic development in Lebanon? Select up to 3 answers

- a) Export-oriented industries
- b) Tourism and hospitality
- c) Innovation and entrepreneurship
- d) Foreign investments and aid
- e) Government policies and reforms
- f) Other, please specify

13. Are you familiar with urban planning?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Somewhat familiar

14. How important do you believe urban planning is in Lebanon?

- a) Very important
- b) Important
- c) Not so important
- d) Not important at all
- e) Unsure

15. In your opinion, to what extent is urban planning being properly implemented and respected in Lebanon?

- a) Fully implemented and respected
- b) Partially implemented and respected
- c) Not well implemented and respected
- d) Not implemented or respected at all

16. Do you believe that urban planning can positively impact urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon?

- a) Yes, urban planning can positively impact urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon
- b) No, urban planning has no significant impact on urbanisation and economic development in Lebanon
- c) Unsure

17. What recommendations would you make to improve urban planning in Lebanon? Select up to 3 answers

- a) Increase public participation in the urban planning process
- b) Enhance enforcement of existing urban planning regulations and laws
- c) Invest in urban infrastructure and public services
- d) Promote sustainable and inclusive urban development practices
- f) Increase funding for urban planning initiatives
- g) Provide training and capacity-building for urban planning professionals
- h) Other (please specify)

## APPENDIX 2

Descriptive analysis conducted in Jamovi showing raw data of variables “age” and question 12 “What do you believe are the main factors contributing to economic development?”

### Descriptives

Descriptives

	Age	Export-oriented industries	Tourism and hospitality	Innovation and entrepreneurship	Foreign investments and aid	Government policies and reforms	Other factors
Sum	18-24	4	11	1	8	1	0
	25-34	9	29	7	14	3	4
	35-44	3	13	2	12	0	2
	45-54	2	9	0	5	0	2
	55+	4	12	0	8	2	2

## APPENDIX 3

Descriptive analysis conducted in Jamovi showing raw data of variables “education” and question 17 “What recommendations would you make to improve urban planning in Lebanon?”

### Descriptives

Descriptives

	Education	Increase public participation in the urban planning process	Enhance enforcement of existing urban planning regulations and laws	Invest in urban infrastructure and public services	Promote sustainable and inclusive urban development practices	Increase funding for urban planning initiatives	Provide training for urban planning professionals	Other recommendations
Sum	High school or lower	2	4	4	2	5	6	0
	Some college or vocational training	8	12	12	8	10	11	0
	Bachelor's degree	22	22	23	17	16	22	0
	Master's degree	12	15	15	10	10	10	0
	Doctorate or higher	0	1	2	1	2	0	0



## APPENDIX 4

Descriptive analysis conducted in Jamovi showing raw data of variables “city of residence” and question 8 “What are the main challenges that urbanisation has brought to Lebanon in your opinion?”

### Descriptives

	City of residence	overcrowding and congestion	increased pollution and environmental degradation	housing affordability and availability	pressure on infrastructure and public services	social and cultural changes	other challenges
Sum	Akkar	1	0	0	1	1	0
	Baabda	2	2	0	0	1	0
	Batroun	1	0	0	1	1	0
	Beirut	34	30	9	25	13	0
	Bekaa	4	3	0	2	1	0
	Byblos	8	5	0	6	3	0
	Faraya	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Hadath	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Jnoub	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Jounieh	2	2	0	1	0	0
	Kaslik	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Keserwan	5	3	1	3	3	0
	Koura	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Nabatiye	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Sidon	12	11	1	6	4	0
	Tripoli	7	8	1	3	2	0
	Tyre	6	5	0	5	2	0
	Zouk						
	Mikhael	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Zouk Mosbeh	2	2	0	2	0	0

## APPENDIX 5

Descriptive analysis conducted in Jamovi showing raw data of variables “occupation” and question 11 “In your opinion, what are the main challenges to economic development in Lebanon?”

### Descriptives

Descriptives

	Occupation	Economic inequality	High unemployment and poverty	Infrastructural deficiencies	Lack of foreign investment	Political instability and corruption	Other challenges
Sum	Employed	17	30	23	13	53	4
	Self-employed	6	10	5	2	15	0
	Unemployed	2	5	1	1	7	0
	Student	9	7	8	3	21	1
	Retired	2	2	3	2	2	0