



UNIVERSITÉ PARIS 1 – PANTHÉON-SORBONNE

MASTER ERASMUS MUNDUS STeDe

MEMOIRE DE MASTER en Développement Territorial Durable

MASTER THESIS in Sustainable Territorial Development

**Evaluating planning and development processes in Lebanon: the case of
the SDATL**

*Evaluation des processus de planification et de développement au Liban: le
cas du SDATL*

Présenté et soutenu par / Candidate : Michele Kahy

Directeur de mémoire / Supervisor : Thomas Delahais

Année académique 2021-22

L'Université Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne n'entend donner aucune approbation ni improbation aux opinions émises dans ce mémoire. Ces opinions doivent être considérées comme propres à leur auteur.




THESIS APPROVAL

[This document must be submitted by the student together with the thesis]

I, Thomas Delahais, as supervisor of the student
Michèle Kahy, hereby APPROVE the thesis entitled Evaluating planning and development processes in
Lebanon: the case of the SDATL

Place Paris, Date 6 sept 2022

Signature 

لبنان يا مدرسة علمتنا فنو الحياة، ودرستنا كيفو يكونو الأملو

نزار قباني

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude for my thesis supervisor Thomas Delahais for his time, his valuable feedback and for accompanying me throughout this journey.

Additionally, this work would not have been possible without the valuable contributions of Christina Abou Rouphael, Tala Alaeddine, Hassân Bitar, Wafa Charafeddine, Rita Chedid, Mona Harb, Sebastien Lamy-Willing and Serge Yazigi. I would like to sincerely thank each and every one of them for taking the time to discuss the matter with me, and to contribute to the following research.

I am also grateful for my STeDe family with whom I have shared this exceptional experience. Finally, a very warm and special thanks to my friends and family who have shaped me into the person I am today, and without whom none of this would have been possible: Samar Kahy, Nazih Kahy, Philippe Kahy, Elyas Arayess, Riad Salameh, and Maya Bou Malhab and many others.

Table of Content

Introduction	1
A. Research Statement	2
B. Methodology	2
C. Significance	3
Chapter I: Territories and Land-use Planning	4
A. Territories	4
B. Land-use planning	5
1. The Spread of Land-Use Planning	7
2. Land-use planning and power	8
3. Limits and setbacks of land-use planning	9
C. Research question	12
Chapter II: The Lebanese Territory	13
A. Historical overview	13
1. Ottoman empire: first planning efforts and new administrative divisions	14
2. French colonialism: setting future planning practices	14
3. Independence: the definition of the Lebanese identity	15
B. Instability: local and regional conflicts	15
1. Civil war	15
2. Post-War Lebanon (1991-2005)	16
3. Crisis 2019-2022	19
Chapter III: Planning in the Lebanese Context	21
A. History	21
B. Administrative Divisions	22
C. Legal and institutional framework	23
1. Main actors	23
a. Conseil Supérieur d'Urbanisme - CSU	23
b. Direction Générale d'Urbanisme - DGU	23
c. Municipalities	24
d. Council for Development and Reconstruction - CDR	24
D. Planning procedures and documents	26
1. National scale	26
2. Regional scale	28
3. Local scale	29
4. Results of planning procedures on the territory	30

Chapter IV: The SDATL	31
A. History	31
B. Content	33
C. The oversights of the SDATL	38
D. Implementation	39
E. Disparities between the SDATL and the territory	41
F. Evaluating the SDATL	43
Chapter V: Evaluating the SDATL	45
A. Expected impacts	45
B. Realised impacts	46
C. Methodology	49
D. Hypotheses	52
1. The setbacks of land-use planning	52
2. Limits of the operational framework of planning	56
3. A reigning lack of political will	59
4. A non adaptive strategy	62
Chapter VI: Discussion	66
A. Crossed analysis of the emitted hypotheses	66
B. Achievements of the SDATL	72
1. Land use classifications	72
2. Regional Strategic planning	73
C. Relevance of the evaluation process	74
D. Limits of the evaluation process	76
Conclusion	79
References	83

List of Figures

Figure 1: Administrative divisions of the Lebanese territory (Mouhafazat and caza).....	23
Figure 2: Decision making in the urban planning process.....	30
Figure 3: Population growth of the Lebanese territory between 1975 and 2020.....	55
Figure 4: Processes, actors and setbacks of the SDATL.....	66

Abstract

This research evaluates the efficiency and relevance of the national master plan of the Lebanese territory: the SDATL (Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement du Territoire Libanais). The plan was developed between 2001 and 2005, and is still, to this day, the only planning and development reference document on the national scale. The SDATL is a land-use planning master plan developed according to the law of urbanism of 1983, aimed at ensuring the cohesion of the Lebanese territory and its balanced development. However, a number of disparities can be observed between the orientations set by the plan and the reality of the Lebanese territory, suggesting that the plan failed to achieve its objectives.

Consequently, the following work reconsiders the concepts of territories and land-use planning and their associated literature, coupled with a thorough analysis of the Lebanese context: its history and socio-political setting, followed by an analysis of the operational and legislative framework of planning practices in Lebanon. Subsequently the content of the SDATL is studied and reviewed and crossed with the previous analysis. Finally, as part of the evaluation process the different impacts of the plan are identified and assessed, and hypotheses are emitted based on all the collected data and on a series of conducted interviews. The hypotheses aim at answering the research question i.e. why did the SDATL, a national master plan and development strategy, born out of a general consensus and aimed at ensuring the balanced development and the cohesion of the Lebanese territory, fail to achieve its objectives?

The evaluation of the SDATL may become crucial in light of recent developments and ongoing crises within the Lebanese territory in order to identify potential limitations and opportunities of any potential national strategy. In reality, the SDATL's evaluation serves as a benchmark for any national strategy given its national scale and the variety of actors and processes it engages. Thus the findings of its evaluation can be extrapolated to serve in overcoming the current crises. Understanding where the plan fell short might prevent setbacks at a time when urgency is the watchword since the plan is not isolated inside its context but rather a reflection of it.

Keywords: Lebanon, planning, SDATL, territories, land-use planning, territorial development

Résumé

Ces dernières années, la durabilité est devenue un objectif global fixé par les gouvernements du monde entier. Dans ce sens, la planification territoriale a été identifiée comme un moyen efficace pour la mise en œuvre des objectifs de durabilité. En effet, la planification a le potentiel de produire des politiques capables d'affecter un territoire donné à différents niveaux et échelles. Toutefois, compte tenu du contexte historique, politique et socio-économique d'un territoire donné, les pratiques de planification peuvent varier considérablement dans leurs cadres opérationnels et législatifs et, par conséquent, dans leur efficacité à mettre en œuvre des politiques durables.

Les territoires sont des entités mutables, même si les territoires en tant que concept ont rarement été remis en question dans la littérature, reconnaître leur multidimensionnalité et leur caractère conceptuel permet une compréhension plus complète et un processus de planification plus intégré. Le territoire libanais s'avère particulièrement sujet à des mutations et des changements brusques en raison de son histoire et de son cadre socio-politique régional et local qui en font un territoire extrêmement fragmenté. Cependant, les pratiques de planification en vigueur semblent incapables d'accompagner cette mutabilité car elles sont calquées sur des concepts datés de planification territoriale traditionnelle, et que les processus qui y sont associés ont atteint leur limite.

En effet, la planification territoriale traditionnelle présente une approche statique qui fut introduite dans un certain nombre de pays du Sud, comme le Liban, à l'époque coloniale. Bien que cette pratique ait atteint ses limites, elle fut continuellement instrumentalisée par les gouvernements locaux pour exercer leur pouvoir, car elle présente une approche centralisée et descendante de la planification. Le Liban présente une particularité dans ce contexte, étant donné que ses divisions administratives sont héritées de l'époque ottomane, et sa loi relative à la planification est basée sur les pratiques d'utilisation des sols. Cette dichotomie se traduit dans la mise en œuvre des documents de planification. Ces éléments ont conduit un certain nombre d'administrations, d'universitaires et de professionnels à exprimer, à la fin des années 1950, le besoin d'un plan national et d'une stratégie de développement pour le territoire libanais qui assurerait la cohésion du territoire et son développement équilibré. Cette entreprise a été progressivement retardée et bloquée par la classe politique au fil des ans, jusqu'en 2001 où

l'idée a été concrétisée par la SDATL : le schéma directeur d'aménagement du territoire libanais.

Ainsi, le premier chapitre de ce travail établit le cadre théorique et conceptuel relatif au concept de territoire et de planification territoriale traditionnelle. Ainsi les territoires sont définis en tant qu'entités présentant des caractéristiques tangibles et intangibles faisant preuve de leur mutabilité. Le but étant de comprendre quel rôle la planification peut jouer au sein de ces territoires et quels objectifs peut-elle accomplir. Ensuite, une compréhension approfondie de l'approche théorique de la planification territoriale traditionnelle et de son introduction dans les pays du Sud est établie pour comprendre quel rôle elle joue dans ces pays et à qui elle profite.

Le territoire libanais est un territoire particulièrement sujet à des mutations et instable et que les pratiques de planification actuelles, qui ont donné naissance au SDATL, sont héritées de la planification territoriale traditionnelle de l'époque coloniale, mais surtout que les divisions administratives du pays sont quant à elles dérivées de l'époque ottomane. Ainsi, une analyse historique et sociopolitique du territoire libanais est élaborée afin de montrer sa nature instable et mutable mais aussi de comprendre les dynamiques et les relations de pouvoir qui y entrent en jeu. Ensuite, une analyse approfondie des pratiques de planification a été présentée afin de comprendre la hiérarchie et le modus operandi de la planification au Liban, ce qui a été exactement hérité de l'époque coloniale (ottomane et française) et comment cela s'applique encore, qui sont les principaux acteurs et décideurs et comment ils interagissent. Mais surtout, une observation plus approfondie de la loi sur l'urbanisme aide à comprendre quels sont les principaux documents issus de la planification à différentes échelles, avec un besoin identifié d'un document de planification national de cohésion et de développement qui aiderait à orienter tous les efforts de planification. Ce document de planification national deviendra le SDATL, dont le contexte historique et politique, les acteurs et le contenu sont analysés en profondeur. Après avoir dressé un tableau du contenu du SDATL et de ses résultats attendus, une analyse des disparités entre le document et la réalité du territoire libanais d'aujourd'hui montre que les orientations émises par le SDATL ne correspondent pas à la réalité du territoire de nos jours, ce dernier ayant évolué en s'éloignant de ces orientations.

A ce stade, le processus d'évaluation commence à s'appuyer sur l'ensemble des données et analyses citées pour identifier d'abord les impacts attendus du SDATL, puis ses impacts réalisés indépendamment. Ensuite, le processus d'évaluation s'efforce de formuler des

hypothèses afin de comprendre pourquoi le SDATL a pris une autre tournure, c'est-à-dire pourquoi le plan n'a pas atteint ses objectifs initiaux et pourquoi il n'a jamais été mis en œuvre comme il était censé l'être, malgré le fait qu'il ait été adopté par décret ministériel.

Ces hypothèses s'appuient sur toutes les observations faites précédemment, sur le contexte théorique établi et sur une série d'entretiens réalisés avec des experts, des professionnels, des universitaires et des militants qui ont travaillé sur le SDATL directement ou dans le domaine de la planification au Liban. Il est essentiel de noter l'importance d'évaluer le SDATL en tant que politique publique au-delà du contenu du document en soi. En effet, le contenu du schéma directeur n'est pertinent que s'il peut être appliqué. Le SDATL, en tant que politique publique, met en jeu un certain nombre d'acteurs qui sont responsables de sa mise en œuvre. En ce sens, ces acteurs, leur capacité à mettre en œuvre un tel plan, leur coordination, les outils mis à leur disposition et l'ensemble du processus de mise en œuvre tel qu'il est dicté par la politique doivent être évalués car tous ces éléments sont primordiaux pour la mise en œuvre du schéma directeur.

Bien que le SDATL et les mécanismes qu'il enclenche aient montré leurs limites, 13 ans après avoir été acté par décret ministériel, le SDATL et les processus de planification qui lui sont liés n'ont jamais été évalués. En fait, ce schéma directeur est censé être révisé et remplacé en 2030, ainsi le présent travail de recherche et d'évaluation vise à évaluer ces mécanismes et processus liés au SDATL pour éviter des résultats similaires en 2030.

A la lumière des événements actuels et des crises en cours sur le territoire libanais, l'évaluation du SDATL peut devenir essentielle pour déterminer les limites et les opportunités potentielles de toute stratégie nationale visant à surmonter la situation actuelle. En effet, étant donné son échelle nationale et la pléthore d'acteurs et de processus qu'il engage, le SDATL constitue une référence pour toute stratégie nationale, et le résultat de son évaluation peut être projeté sur d'autres secteurs et plans nationaux. Le plan n'est pas isolé dans son contexte, mais il en est un produit. Ainsi, comprendre où il a échoué peut s'avérer utile pour éviter tout revers et contretemps à un moment où l'urgence est le mot d'ordre.

Introduction

In the past years, sustainability has become a global aim set by governments all over the world. In that sense, territorial planning has been identified as an effective vessel for the implementation of sustainability goals. In fact, planning has the potential to produce policies capable of affecting a given territory on different levels and scales. However, considering the historical background, political context and socio-economic setting of a given territory, planning practices may vary greatly in their operational and legislative frameworks and thus their efficiency to implement sustainable policies too.

Territories themselves are mutable entities, even though the concept of territories has rarely been questioned in literature, acknowledging their multidimensional nature and conceptual setting builds a more holistic understanding and allows for a more integrated planning process. The Lebanese territory proves itself to be particularly subject to mutations and sudden changes due to its history and its regional and local political setting which resulted in a highly fragmented territory. However, planning practices in effect seem to be unable to accompany its mutable nature as they are based on land-use planning. Land-use planning presents a static approach to planning that has been introduced to a number of countries in the Global South e.g. Lebanon, during colonial times. Although the practice has shown its limits, it has been continuously instrumentalized by local governments to exercise power, as it presents a centralised top-down approach to planning. Lebanon presents a particularity within this setting as its administrative divisions are inherited from Ottoman times, and its current planning law is based on land-use practices. This dichotomy is translated in the territorial implementation of planning documents. These elements have led a number of administrations, academics and professionals to express the need for a national plan and development strategy for the Lebanese territory, in the late 1950's that would ensure the cohesion of the territory and its balanced development. This endeavour has been progressively delayed and blocked by the reigning political class over the years, up until 2001 when the idea was concretised by the SDATL: a national master plan and development strategy for the Lebanese territory.

In fact, this research focuses on the Lebanese territory, it sets to evaluate its national territorial master plan: the SDATL, to assess the efficiency of available planning processes and their associated mechanisms. In fact, the SDATL is the only available national master plan that governs the Lebanese territory to this day. It was developed from 2001 up until 2005 and acted

by ministerial decree in 2009, making it a national reference for planning practices and for development projects. However, a number of disparities can be observed between the orientations set by the plan and the reality of the Lebanese territory today, making it clear that the plan did not achieve its objectives.

In recent years, Lebanon has been going through an unprecedented series of crises: political, economical, financial, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Beirut Port explosion. These events have put the livelihood of the country's inhabitants at risk, and threaten to worsen the current situation in the absence of a national strategy capable of providing immediate relief and security and ensuring a sustainable and adaptive development strategy for the future. This kind of national strategy would put in action the same mechanisms as the SDATL, by engaging administrations on different levels through planning and development projects. Thus, understanding why the SDATL has failed to accomplish its original objectives is fundamental as it can provide an insight into processes on different administrative levels and identify setbacks and shortcomings, especially knowing that no real assessment or evaluation of the plan has been conducted thus far, neither on the administrative level nor the academic one.

A. Research Statement

Consequently, in order to identify the setbacks and shortcoming of the SDATL and its associated actors and processes, the present research will consist of an evaluation of the SDATL, that aims at answering the following research question: **Why did the SDATL, a national master plan and development strategy, born out of a general consensus and aimed at ensuring the balanced development and the cohesion of the Lebanese territory, fail to achieve its objectives?**

B. Methodology

The present research consists of a methodological evaluation of the SDATL, as a basis to build a constructive assessment of the plan, pinpointing the blockages it had to face throughout its development and implementation phase. The evaluation process bases its arguments on a theoretical framework that defines major concepts of territories and land-use planning as a practice, on a comprehensive analysis of the Lebanese territory more specifically, on a holistic assessment of the operational and legislative framework of planning in Lebanon and on a series of conducted interviews with professionals, academics and activists within the public and private sector.

The interviews were conducted throughout the research process to accompany the thought process as it was defined and gather pertinent information on the subject. Considering the different backgrounds, experiences and views of the interviewees, their statements converge and diverge on a number of points. Consequently, a thorough analysis was conducted, and statements were classified into different categories and crossed with the theoretical framework, the analysis of the Lebanese territory, the operational and legislative framework of planning and the content of the SDATL. Thus, the expected impacts and predefined objectives of the national master plan are compared with its realised impacts, as a way to identify potentially unexpected impacts that might shed light on the relevance and efficacy of the SDATL. Subsequently, this thorough analysis resulted in four emitted hypotheses that constitute possible answers to the research question. The evaluation process proceeds in a discussion that puts forth arguments at charge and discharge for each hypothesis by crossing it with all the collected data and thus evaluating its pertinence and progressively answering the research question.

C. Significance

Although the SDATL and the mechanisms it interlocks have shown their limits, 13 years after it was acted by ministerial decree, the SDATL and its related planning processes have never been assessed or evaluated. In fact, the master plan is meant to be reviewed and replaced in 2030, thus the present research and evaluation work aims at assessing the present mechanisms and processes related to the SDATL to avoid similar results in 2030.

In light of the current events and ongoing crises within the Lebanese territory, the evaluation of the SDATL can become essential to determine potential limits and opportunities of any national strategy aimed at overcoming the present situation. In fact, given its national scale and the plethora of actors and processes that it engages, **the SDATL stands as a reference for any national strategy, and the result of its evaluation can be projected to other sectors and national plans. The plan is not isolated within its context, but rather a product of its context and a reflection of it, thus understanding where it fell short can help avoid setbacks at a time when urgency is the watchword.**

Chapter I: Territories and Land-use Planning

This chapter sets the stage for a better understanding of the main concepts and theories behind planning practices from the twentieth century onwards. The idea is to build a comprehensive map of reasoning, to understand and pinpoint the main actors of the planning exercise, to identify the elements and the different steps of planning, what it produces and who it impacts. Thus, understanding the bigger picture of the elaboration of master plans in the Global South, to set the ideological and methodological framework of the SDATL and feed the theoretical aspect of the evaluation process. The following also traces the relationship that exists between land-use planning and territories as a concept, as the Lebanese territory is highly fragmented and was the battleground for ideological and identity wars.

A. Territories

It is essential to determine and understand the unit of planning i.e. what is being planned. Literature on planning and planning theory, mention territories without questioning the term or the concept that lies behind it. In the context of the present research, it is crucial to define territories and to question the common understanding of the term in planning literature. Territories are at the basis understanding planning as a practice and evaluating its byproduct i.e. master plans. The following builds a definition for “territories” which will be considered for the rest of this research and aims at determining what binds planning to territories i.e. the reasons behind planning.

Territories are defined as “(an area of) land, or sometimes sea, that is considered as belonging to or connected with a particular country or person” (Cambridge dictionary). This definition takes into account the political and juridical dimension of territories as an area belonging and under the control of a rule of a state. However, beyond this general definition lies a certain ambiguity regarding the concept of territory. In a series of essays Cowen and Gilbert state that:

“Territory” is a term that is often used interchangeably with land or space, but it connotes something more precise. Territory is land or space that has had something done to it—it has been acted upon.” (Cowen and Gilbert, 2008).

In that sense, territory goes beyond the idea of borders and administrative limits, it is a concept bound to history, assigned meaning and significance. Painter (2010) suggests that a territory is not to be interpreted as a political or spatial cause of events but rather an effect or a result. Consequently, **territories are not bound to geographical limits but to historical and political ones.**

Additionally, these concepts shape a common understanding of territories, and thus are at the basis of understanding planning practices.

Stuart Elden in “Land, Terrain, Territory” reflects on the importance of thinking of territories as **political, economical, strategic, legal and technical (this includes the environmental, geological, topographical and natural dimensions) entities all together**, as these concepts cannot be isolated from one another when talking about territories. Henceforth, territories are the result or the effect of those entities and their interactions, they do not happen in a territory but they define it. Therefore, a territory is a set of interactions. Thus, it is not static as its constituents are by definition mutable and fluid. As a result, a territory is a concept bound to its historical and political context, mutable through time and space (Elden, 2010).

In that regard, planning has become a tool to act upon a territory, to understand it and to develop it according to given ideals and concepts. A territory is consequently a unit of the planning exercise, it is the extent in which planners have to restrain their policies.

In that sense, planning a territory involves a deep and holistic understanding of its dynamics. Therefore, **planning a territory is a multidimensional process** that needs to take into account the different components and layers that make up the territory i.e. its political, economical, social, legal, technical and strategic dimensions. Additionally, territories are mutable through time and space, consequently planning is a continuous and adaptive process that accompanies these mutations and tries to regulate them.

Finally, planning practices are correlated to a given understanding of territory as a concept, unless these practices have been imposed. In that sense, the concept of territory is a key element in understanding the theories and evolution of planning practices.

B. Land-use planning

One of the major planning theories behind most planning practices in the twentieth century was land-use planning. It defined planning practices throughout the world and continues to be at the basis of planning practices in a number of countries. Land-use planning produces master plans as a vehicle for policies and thus helps shape territories and the way

people inhabit them. This section lays out the principles of land-use planning and retraces the way and the reasons why it spread around the world and where its impact can be seen. But most importantly, the aim here is to analyse the different settings that allowed land-use planning to persist and the means with which planners and authorities have sustained it and defended it. Defining all these parameters will help orient the evaluation process, by understanding the theoretical background of land-use planning, its areas of impacts, its instrumentalization by different actors and finally its limits and setbacks as a planning practice.

Land-use planning is expressed and translated through a set of **guidelines and regulations on land property** (public or private) as a way to organise, monitor and control the spread, the intensity and the density of certain activities on a land unit e.g agriculture, energy production, housing, services, commerce, governmental institutions, etc. Land-use planning uses a set of regulatory instruments: zoning plans, exploitation ratios, set-backs, density factors, building ratios, building materials... These instruments are commonly expressed in master plans that are the main product of this planning process, and these master plans apply restrictions or permissions on land properties (Fawaz, 2017).

Land-use planning imposes to a given territory a certain structure, this is commonly done by assigning functions to the territory through master plans. These master plans are designed according to a set of data that relate the demographic, economic and social structure of a territory (Moderne, 1983). Master plans are therefore restrictive or permissive in their nature, they result in a set of direct or indirect restrictions or obligations with the aim of preserving, reinforcing, reducing or restricting a land use practice on the territory e.g. preserving agricultural lands, protecting natural landscapes, limiting industrial activities, encouraging the spread of housing... (Moderne, 1983).

Land-use planning therefore imposes regulations that must be followed through construction permits and other ordinances. In that sense, individuals and local authorities are required to comply with a set of regulations for the implementation of a new built project, the rehabilitation, restoration, transformation or animation of an existing one or for urban interventions. Master plans set a framework of activities to be reinforced, introduced, or halted on a given territory; this is typically done through zoning plans that would, for instance, define areas of commercial activities, public services, administrations, or housing perimeters and their density. Master plans also define protection zones that need to be preserved for environmental reasons or historical/archaeological reasons.

Consequently, land-use planning is **not a participatory process**, as the main work of analysis, consultation and production is done on an administrative/governmental level, within

specialised administrations. This process reinforces once more the political dimension of land-use planning and the way a given political vision has direct influence on the resulting master plans. **In fact, land-use planning is arbitrated by its operational framework, thus its results, its effectiveness and efficiency depend on the administrations that are responsible for the different processes.** Additionally, the content and the resulting policies that land-use plans issue are a direct result of a socio-political vision, by their permissive or restrictive nature they reflect an authority which in itself is defined by a political climate.

1. The Spread of Land-Use Planning

In the twentieth century land-use planning started to spread in different parts of the world, this spread was sustained by colonial powers who carried out different land-use planning operations throughout their colonies. These operations would translate into master plans devoid of any real consideration and deep knowledge for the underlying historical and political context of these territories (Watson, 2009).

As previously mentioned, territories are a direct result of their historical and political context. A territory is by essence deeply rooted in a variable set of context bound concepts, e.g. history, politics, economics, legal and technical settings. Therefore, understanding these variables and their interactions is the first step towards an effective and efficient planning effort. Consequently, master plans developed by colonial powers and imposed on territories that they would often define and limit, were based on a limited (or null) understanding of these territories and their making, rendering these master plans inefficient by nature. This raises questions about the pertinence of land-use planning as a practice in post-colonial countries today.

As Watson (2009) mentions it, **power relations were an essential vehicle for planning systems.** Additionally, land-use planning is closely linked to political domination and power affirmation (Verdeil, 2012). This is effectively done through the creation and valorisation of urban areas with planning as the main modernization vector. The belief that planning systems were synonymous with modernization remained and contributed to the persistence of land-use planning practices through the local political elites. This is the case in numerous African cities where master plans and planning legislations set by European colonial powers remain almost unchanged since the twentieth century (Njoh, 2003).

This is also the case in Indian cities where principles of planning were implemented into legislations and local governments by the English and are still the basis of the practice in India today. With more master plans and legislation being produced today using the same principles

that were criticised and reformed in the UK (Ansari, 2004). In other parts of the world, land-use planning became prominent due to an mutual exchange of practices and the expansion of European countries' spheres of intellectual influence, this is notably the case of Brazilian cities such as Brasilia. In fact, Brasilia was planned and designed by Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer who were heavily influenced by French planners and architects e.g. Le Corbusier (Watson, 2009).

Land-use planning is still at the bases of planning practices in different parts of the world, notably in post colonial territories e.g. Lebanon where the French mandate imposed the practice and later mutual exchanges reinforced land-use planning as a basis for planning practices. Even though the practice and its principles have been abandoned over the years, **land-use planning persists as a tool for political affirmation and power but also as a sign of modernization.**

2. Land-use planning and power

Arguably, one of the main driving forces behind the spread of land-use planning through colonial times was the associated expression and exertion of power. In fact, planning and land-use planning has been one of the main tools of power exertion in the twentieth century, it helped governments and colonial powers control lands through the dictation of laws that would organise and regulate private properties (Zeid and Thawaba, 2018).

In his book "Planning in the face of power" (1982) Forester argues that power is held by planners through the planning exercise, and that planning and its subsequent master plans and planning documents and their implementation are bound to political arbitration. Consequently, a political regime and its resulting power relations are a defining factor in planning, especially in colonial times when planning was a tool for power exertion. As Sandercock (2004) writes, what truly makes planning practices inclusive is not participatory practices but sovereignty. Participatory practices can themselves be a tool for segregation, as planners make decisions through the planning process, they can decide who gets to participate, who has access to information, and which information is being relayed (Forester, 1982). Which raises the importance and relevance of the political model in place and its associated power relations when it comes to analysing planning. This is even more crucial to understand given that current planning practices were developed and imposed during colonial times for a number of countries.

During colonial times, planning was used as a tool for gaining control over territory, planners used classical regulatory planning tools such as density, morphology, mobility, or materials to exclude, oppress and/or control populations e.g. create higher density zones for indigenous communities, excluding them spatially to remote and peripheral areas and limit mobility and public services in these areas (Zeid and Thawaba, 2018). This was notably the case during South African apartheid time, as planning served and legalized apartheid ideologies by excluding native populations and restricting their access to housing to the outskirts of urban areas, thus also excluding them from economic activities and limiting their opportunities (McCusker and Ramudzuli, 2007). As a result **planning can concretize ideologies onto the territory, it can actively translate power and social dynamics into regulations and laws and give them a spatial dimension.**

Thus, planners imprint the territory and can force its becoming. It is not only a tool to understand, regulate, accompany changes and develop territories but also a tool to bend them and impose a vision. Consequently, this opens the question of responsibility for planners and the political act that lies behind any planning exercise. In fact, planners play a political role through the planning exercise, from the elaboration and its associated processes until the implementation of planning documents. From the spread of land-use planning during colonial times up until more recent practices, planners played an essential role in translating political will and ideas onto territories, they also contributed to the development of urban areas, the distribution of populations, accessibility and mobility, and the architectural morphology of urban areas.

3. Limits and setbacks of land-use planning

European countries have gradually shifted away from land-use planning, as it has been gradually replaced by more participatory processes. This shift also reflects political changes, and an increased involvement from populations in political discourses. Some of the main limits and setbacks of land-use planning are listed below, as to understand why the practice has been abandoned but also how the same setbacks are being capitalised in some cases and why land-use planning persists as a practice in some parts of the world.

Watson (2009) highlights the **inequalities and marginalisation** that result from master planning. According to the author, the standards and regulations set by land use planning are unattainable for populations living in poverty. Thus excluding a number of people from urban areas, because of a costly and lengthy administrative process plus standards that require

additional costs and expertise to be achieved. Consequently, populations with a lower revenue are left out of the housing market, making it harder for them to invest in construction and thus harder for others to have access to acquisition. F. Moderne highlighted in 1983 the inequalities generated by land-use planning practices and their discriminatory nature, the author affirms that without taking into account the diversity and the ambiguity of goals and values in a given territory the process is bound to be dissociated from reality and inevitably generate inequalities. Land-use planning is also **geographically selective and restrictive**, master plans are often designed for one city with little to no mention of the relationships that exist outside the scope of the administrative limits of an urban area (Hocreitère, 1991). In fact land-use planning is a process that operates within the framework of a city rather than a network of cities. Cities are rarely autonomous, with constant and growing flows of goods, people, information, culture and environmental processes taking place between a given city and others on a national and international scale. In that sense, thinking of cities outside of these synergies renders the planning process incomplete. Hocreitère (1991) argues that one of the main limits of master plans is they are limited to a predefined administrative territory, and that this conceptual delimitation is in itself contradictory, as cities operate in relation to one another. According to the author, it is almost impossible to question or revise the master plan of a European agglomeration without questioning its role on the regional, european and international level. As these relationships have become a factor of development, of urban expansion, of demographic growth, of production, etc. Therefore, a master plan, as a tool, has by effect a limited reach on all the dynamics that are at play within an urban area. Master plans limit the extent of intervention and regulation through space and time.

In fact, as previously mentioned, territories are mutable through time and space. Thus highlighting another limit of land-use planning processes and master planning which is their **static nature**. In that sense, revising master plans is as essential as their conception (Hocreitère, 1991). Within a mutable environment it is crucial for planning documents to keep up and adapt their framework and orientations to the territory. This adaptation and flexibility is bound to the planning process and the tools it employs, but also with the administrative and structural framework in which they are set. Planning is bound to a whole set of juridical and administrative contexts, highlighting once more the importance of defining and understanding the concept of territory and its specific dynamics when talking about planning.

The above mentioned setbacks are both related to the theoretical dimension of land-use planning but also to its modus operandi. Land-use planning exists by essence and by definition within a certain setting of power relations. It is considered a top-down approach, as its tools

cannot be effectively activated without a certain authority. This is specifically what encouraged its spread during colonial times as it was a tool for power exertion. The conditions and circumstances that allowed and encouraged the spread of land-use planning are the same ones that ensure its perpetuity. Land-use planning and its associated top-down processes create by default an administrative loophole that perpetuates it in the absence of a participative and empowering process for citizens. Consequently, any evaluation efforts for a land-use master plan must be able to consider the socio-political background of this master plan and its context, but also the operational framework in which this master plan exists. As the cited works have proven, land-use planning has been instrumentalized as a political tool, mainly because it helps accomplish a desired impact. Through its tools and operational framework, the impact of land-use planning is most notably a political one.

Territories and land-use planning: concepts and observations

Thus far this chapter has shed light on two building blocks of the planning process in the Global South and more specifically in Lebanon: the concept of territories and land-use planning.

It has been established that territories are mutable concepts that go beyond the physical characteristics and administrative limits of land. They are by essence linked to their history, political context, social and economic settings and to the experience and perception of the people living in them. Thus any effective and impactful planning procedure should be able to take into account those characteristics.

On the other hand, land-use planning has been a colonial export throughout the Global South, it was introduced through a trial and error method. Although it has shown its limits across the world as a practice, it is still in effect in a number of countries, due to failed governance systems and its centralised nature that makes it easy to instrumentalise to redefine power relations on the territory. Land-use planning is a practice incapable of accompanying the mutations of territories and addressing their multidimensional nature.

C. Research question

As mentioned above, a number of countries in the Global South still rely on land-use planning. These countries are still producing master plans, based on land-use planning principles, inherited from colonial times. However it has become increasingly clear that the principles of land-use planning do not reflect the complexity of territories and cannot address their mutable nature, especially territories of the Global South as they often face an increasing number of challenges. Moreover, given that land-use planning is a top-down approach, it centralises and restricts the planning exercise to experts in selected governmental institutions, it also makes use of a restricted set of planning tools. Consequently, land-use planning permits the instrumentalization of planning to serve political interest and power exertion, but most importantly it is not adapted to the presented definition of territories.

Thus, the following research focuses on the Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement du Territoire Libanais (SDATL), a master plan that was developed in Lebanon based on land-use planning principles inherited from the French Mandate period. This plan was completed in 2004 and acted by ministerial decree in 2009, however a number of disparities can be identified between its emitted orientations and the reality of the territory today. The aim of this research is to conduct an evaluation of the SDATL to answer the following research question: **why did the SDATL, a master plan born out of a general consensus and aimed at ensuring the balanced development and the cohesion of the Lebanese territory, fail to achieve its objectives?**

To answer this research question, an evaluation process will be conducted on the SDATL as a public policy, taking into account the reason and identified need for it, the multilayered context of its creation, its operational and legislative framework, and its content. The evaluation process will then emit a series of hypotheses that propose different answers to the research question based on all the defined elements and on a series of interviews conducted with professionals, academics, and activists. These hypotheses will then be discussed at charge and discharge to reach conclusive results.

Chapter II: The Lebanese Territory

Having built a thorough theoretical understanding of territories as a concept and their mutable nature, the following chapter takes a closer look at the Lebanese territory. As the SDATL was developed as a national planning document, to ensure the cohesion and development of the national territory, a more refined analysis of the latter will be done to understand its particularities. The following will look into the identified characteristics of territories i.e. its history, its political, economical, strategic, legal and physical ones. As previously mentioned, when planning a territory these characteristics have to be imperatively taken into consideration, thus by pinpointing them the evaluation process will be able to determine what is expected of the SDATL to take into account into its planning and development strategy, and what kind of impact should it have on them.

Therefore, the following will start by building a historical overview of the Lebanese territory up until the independence of Lebanon and then by analysing the events of the last 50 years, as they had a tremendous impact on the current situation of the territory.

The first part, the historical overview, will determine the most pivotal eras in terms of planning and development i.e. the ones whose impact can still be seen today. The second part details the last 50 years in Lebanon's history as they are crucial to understand the state and the dynamics of Lebanese territory today, from the civil war up until the on-going economic crisis.

A. Historical overview

The history of the Lebanese territory stretches back 12,000 years with early settlements dating back to the Stone Age. In fact, even though the Lebanese Republic was born in the 1920's, the territory it occupies today has a rich and diverse history. In fact, throughout the years, the territory experienced major events that shaped its fabric and identity. This chapter will briefly go through the major historical periods that helped create and shape the Lebanese territory and identity.

The history of Lebanon stretches back to antiquity, passing through a series of populations and civilisations e.g. Hetites, Helenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Arab and Ottoman.

1. Ottoman empire: first planning efforts and new administrative divisions

The **Ottoman period heavily impacted the administrative division and organisation of the Lebanese territory**. To facilitate their rule over their territories, the Ottomans imposed new administrative divisions: the *wilaya*, governed by a *wali* (also known as a province); the *Sandjak* or *Moutassarrifiya*, governed by a *Moutassarif*; the *Caza* governed by a *Caïmacan* (also known as a district); and *Moudiriyeh*, governed by a Moudir (equivalent of a municipality) (Chedid, 2019). These administrative divisions remained after the end of Ottoman rule, and define to this day the organisation of the Lebanese territory and its associated administrations.

In the second half of the nineteenth century Beirut started gaining prominence as a city, resulting from an effort of decentralisation. At the time the city hosted the region's main port and international airport, many governmental institutions and administrations were relocated to what would become in 1943 the capital of Lebanon. In 1894, the construction of the railway between Beirut and Damascus reinforced the city's position as a pivotal trade hub for the region, as it helped strengthen and enhance connections between Europe and the Mediterranean, Mount Lebanon, and Syria (Yassin, 2012).

2. French colonialism: setting future planning practices

French colonialism started in 1918 after the agreement of Sykes-Picot and the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The Sykes-Picot agreement divided provinces of the Ottoman Empire between the British and the French following the end of World War I (Salibi, 1990). As a result Lebanon became under the authority of the French who established in 1926 the State of Greater Lebanon.

During their mandate the French set a number of urban planning strategies led by Michel Ecochard. This was translated through the expansion of the capital, Beirut, and its port, the construction of new railways, a tramway and a number of public administrations and facilities. This new planning strategy and its consequent plans were entirely based on occidental principles of land-use planning and guided by economic interest and military control (Verdeil, 2012). During that period Beirut witnessed an influx of migrants and the city started expanding, affirming its importance as a cosmopolitan metropolis in the region (Yassin, 2012). In 1939 the "**plan Ecochard**" was approved by the French authorities, it set a number of urban reforms that shaped major cities and their agglomerations until the civil war in 1975.

3. Independence: the definition of the Lebanese identity

Lebanon became an independent country in 1943, marking the start of what is commonly known as the “golden age” of Lebanon. Up until 1975 and the start of the civil war, Lebanon was recognized as a cultural and touristic hotspot that attracted influxes of people. Major migration waves happened during that time, with rural populations within the Lebanese Republic moving towards major urban areas but also from other countries in the region (Yassin, 2012). However, it is important to note that **the idea of creating an independent country within those defined limits was controversial and refuted by many** (Yazigi, 2022). Different political disputes happened at the time of the creation of the Lebanese state over the definition of the Lebanese identity, these disputes were based on communitarianism and sectarian discourses (Salibi, 1990).

The Lebanese territory: a contested reality

Lebanon’s history shows that the territory has been **highly contested** over the different millennia. This history had a colossal impact on the Lebanese territory, both tangible and intangible which are now an uncontested part of it.

B. Instability: local and regional conflicts

This second part, traces back the last 50 years of the Lebanese territory history, starting with the civil war up until current days. These last 50 years are crucial to understand the socio-political dynamics of the Lebanese territory and its structure. These years also include major events that heavily impacted the territory, its urban fabrics, its demography, its social divisions and its economy. Those events are fundamental to understand the context of the creation of the SDATL and its expected impacts, but also to cross with the most recent events to identify the realised impacts of the SDATL.

1. Civil war

The Lebanese civil war erupted in April 1975. The war produced great urban transformations throughout the country. In fact at the time the capital, Beirut, was divided into two parts: East Beirut and West Beirut, each marking the territory of a different sectarian group, and separated by a demarcation line delineating two enclaves. This shift happened

progressively, as a result little to no mixed neighbourhoods were present in the city of Beirut. A new spatial reality was imposed by militias and their regional alliances (Yassin, 2012). The social fragmentation of the population was further enforced by the mass movement of people with a **nation-wide fragmentation**, as populations started occupying and inhabiting regions according to their sectarian affiliation (Salibi, 1990). During the war urban areas were heavily impacted, cities were marked by heavy destructions, sites of commercial activities as well as different kinds of touristic facilities were heavily hit. During the years of conflict the Lebanese population saw a **social schism** being translated onto the territory, with clear divides that persist to this day and are further deepened by political discourses built on this sectarian divide.

The civil war officially ended in 1991, when a cease fire and an amnesty law was signed between the different parties: Al-Taef (Naeff, 2018). Spatial barriers were officially destroyed in the capital and populations could move back and forth between the enclaves created by the war (Naeff, 2018). However this did not dissolve the sectarian divides that can still be read in the territory on the city scale in Beirut and on the national scale. In fact, the amnesty law that was passed in 1991 allowed for all parties to be absolved of their crimes, unless they were committed against politicians or religious figures (Naeff, 2018). This meant that no one was held accountable for 15 years of perpetuated and escalating violence. This meant that the population had to live with an **unresolved conflict**, and with a power equilibrium that was built on the Taef amnesty law, as war lords would progressively become politicians and constitute a reigning political class that hold the same ideologies that were fought over during the civil war (Naeff, 2018).

2. Post-War Lebanon (1991-2005)

At the end of the civil war the country and its capital were deeply scared, even though physical barriers were taken down, there was a clear and deep social division. Given the nature and the content of the amnesty law of 1991, there was also a **political and judicial vacuum** that would not allow citizens to come to terms with the events of the war.

Given the fact that the civil war was fought over different historical visions and the affirmation of the Lebanese identity, the country had to face a great divide through the reconstruction process (Salibi, 1990). The socio-political schism of that period translated onto the territory in the years that followed.

a. Reconstruction efforts: neo-liberal real estate development

Considering the economic situation of the country the Parliament and the Council of Ministers resorted to the private sector, namely a private real estate holding company that would ensure the financing, development, implementation and management of the reconstruction of Beirut's city centre (Mango, 2004). This is when the Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of the Beirut Central District better known as Solidere (french acronym) was founded in 1992. During the years 1991 and 1992, the government passed several laws and decrees that would facilitate the creation of Solidere and that would allow it to operate freely in the city centre (Tyan & Rizk, 2020).

Solidere was designed as a joint-stock company, half of its shares would belong to property owners in Beirut's city centre, distributed according to the value of their property, the other half would be bought by investors. As a result the company now owned the entirety of the city centre i.e 191 hectares of land, 45.8 hectares of reclaimed land from the sea, and was responsible for its reconstruction (Yahya, 2004).

The peripheries of the area housed nearly 4,000 displaced individuals who were forced to leave after being given monetary compensation (Yahya, 2004). It was already clear at the time that any residential area will follow the Lebanese real estate market, which was out of reach for most Lebanese citizens, and that any commercial area will follow the neo-liberal model set by Solidere and the acting Lebanese government and their vision.

The result was a new city centre that prioritised economic gain and was destined to become solely an attractive global destination for international investors and capital (Ghandour & Fawaz, 2010). The city centre quickly became a separate entity from the rest of the city fabric, this happened not only on the spatial level but also on the socio-cultural one.

This **neoliberal vision became the norm throughout the Lebanese territory**, other projects with the same economic model as Solidere were proposed: Elyssar, that was meant as a development and reconstruction plan for the southern suburbs of Beirut and LINOR that was meant as a development and rehabilitation of the northern and eastern coastline of the capital (Nasr & Verdeil, 2008). Elyssar and LINOR were never implemented, due to a lack of sufficient funding and unresolved conflicts between the different actors of the projects and the residents (Nasr & Verdeil, 2008). The three projects have the same socio-economic vision as they are driven by a neo-liberal vision and constitute in their essence real estate projects.

These projects and their associated logic and dynamics would set the stage for all kinds of development projects to come. Another important recurring factor in these projects is their

political influence, in fact the political class will progressively find benefit in the real estate market and make it into an asset for its personal enrichment (Harb, 2022).

b. Fragmentation

During this period, there was virtually no global or holistic vision for the reconstruction of the Lebanese territory (Yazigi, 2022). Initiatives were punctual, and did not connect into a whole reconstruction and development strategy, leaving out patches of the territory undervalued (Yazigi, 2022). This fragmentation benefited the political class as it offered them leverage over the poorer regions. In fact, as the country had gone through massive destruction, a number of public services were unavailable, infrastructure and facilities were awaiting reconstruction, especially in poorer and more secluded areas (Yazigi, 2022). This presented an opportunity for clientelism, with politicians providing certain services for a restricted community, based on sectarian identities, to gather electoral power (Harb, 2022). Thus, **the fragmentation of the territory and its divide became a source of profit and power, thus there was an interest in prolonging this fragmentation and reinforcing it with political discourses based on communitarianism and sectarianism.**

At that time, the need for a global and holistic vision was once more identified by a number of professionals and officials, namely Rafiq Hariri who questioned the vocation of Lebanon after the war and its position within its region, thus the late prime minister encouraged the elaboration of a national planning document that would meet these demands and present a national development and planning strategy (Yazigi, 2022). This initiative was translated by the national master plan: the SDATL (Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement du Territoire Libanais). The plan was aimed at attenuating this fragmentation and promoting a more cohesive territory through a holistic planning and development strategy.

c. Local and regional instability

Following the assassination of the late prime minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005, the country and its region went through a period of political instability, with a series of assassinations, a war with Israel in 2006 and the Syrian war that put an immense pressure on the country. Throughout this period and up until this day, **Lebanon experienced a continuum of the civil war** with the same sectarian discourse held by the same sectarian leaders disguised as political exercise. The political parties have thus built their political discourse around the same ideologies that sustained the civil war, this would progressively be projected onto the different public administrations, with a capitalization of public services and their corruption. In fact,

public administrations on all scales have been instrumentalized to serve private interests of the political and economic elite over public interest, thus creating the basis for a clientelistic system (Sweid, 2021). This corruption was crystalized with the economic and financial crisis that started in 2019 and that is still ongoing.

3. Crisis 2019-2022

In October 2019, a series of protests took place all over the Lebanese territory due to deteriorating living conditions. The protests also shed a light on an anticipated economic and financial crisis that became apparent in 2020 with a crash of the banking sector. This was further accelerated by the unproductive economy and the lack of investment of the successive governments from the end of the civil war onwards, as a result the Lebanese market of goods is solemnly based on imports (The Economist, 2020). This triggered an **unprecedented inflation** with products of basic needs becoming unattainable for the general public, but also with a succession of shortages such as medication, fuel, and wheat. This economic fallout is still ongoing as of 2022, with little to no measures being taken to counter its course and its effects.

Furthermore, on the fourth of August 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and the financial crisis, 2,700 tons of ammonium nitrate stocked in the port of Beirut caused a devastating explosion in the capital (Vick, 2020). The explosion had an unprecedented and devastating impact on the city, causing more than 220 deaths, 7,000 injured and 300,000 displaced people (Vick, 2020). The explosion, its impact and the response to it, crystalised the incompetence of the Lebanese political class.

What becomes apparent is the **reigning political instability** within the Lebanese territory and its region. Since the creation of the Lebanese State, different political conflicts and periods of forced and extreme territorial mutations were constantly occurring. Furthermore, throughout the years, the territory had gone through a series of territorial and social fragmentations, lacking a holistic national vision and resulting in deepened conflicts. These fragmentations were further exploited by the political elite of the country who benefited from the inefficiency of public services, by building a clientelistic system. The historical overview and the more recent events clearly show that **the Lebanese territory is particularly subject to mutations due to its history, its regional context and its political reality**. All of these mutations have had considerable tangible and intangible effects on the

territory, thus as previously mentioned in the literature review, any planning strategy aimed at regulating this territory has to take into account its mutable nature and the different intricate layers that make up this territory.

A highly mutable and unstable territory

This section showcases the mutable nature of the Lebanese territory as it has been defined by periods of high instability. The territory is particularly subject to mutations due to its regional setting and local socio-political and historical context. These mutations had a tremendous impact on the tangible and intangible characteristics of the Lebanese territory in a relatively short period of time. Lebanon's history is therefore

In light of recent events, the country is facing an unprecedented crisis that puts the livelihood of all citizens at risk and presents an urgent need for action.

Chapter III: Planning in the Lebanese Context

Having set the reality of the Lebanese territory and its characteristics, the following takes a closer look at the available planning practices and their associated tools in Lebanon. Planning practices in Lebanon and their legislative framework have been introduced and developed in the twentieth century, starting with the french mandate and the introduction of land-use planning and its development through the years. As previously mentioned, land-use planning was introduced by colonial powers in the Global South, including Lebanon, where it would go on to be the main planning theory used in those countries. Though the case of Lebanon is particular, given its rich history, the country relies on Ottoman administrative territorial divisions with policies based on the French model and more recent practices that rely on strategic planning. The following will analyse how this combination became possible and what are its impacts, but also what are the different scales and levels of the planning practice in Lebanon, what documents are produced and who are the actors and stakeholders of this planning exercise. Most importantly, this chapter will try to build a clear picture of the functioning of planning in Lebanon to identify where does the SDATL fit in all of it, what kind of operational and legislative framework does it operate in, and how functional is this framework. This will also help understand how this framework responds to the Lebanese territory as it has been elaborated in the previous chapter.

A. History

During the French Mandate, colonies were an experimental playground for French urban planners (Verdeil, 2012). Michel Ecochard, was appointed to work on a planning strategy for Lebanon between 1941 and 1943 (Verdeil, 2012). The French Mandate's planning strategy was inscribed in a vision of modernization of their newly acquired colonies in the Middle East, by applying occidental principles of planning i.e. land-use planning driven by economic development and territorial control (Verdeil, 2012). These dynamics were implemented in planning practices of Lebanon, and compose to this day the basis of planning efforts.

To impose land-use planning legislations on the Lebanese territory, French administrations had to start a whole set of **reforms on land property by setting land registries** i.e. cadastre in the different regions and empowering the idea of private property (Verdeil, 2012). In fact, as previously mentioned, the policies produced by land-use planning are

implemented on land property. **Creating land registries and promoting private ownership** also helped creating and reinforcing a new economical sector: land speculation. Under Ottoman occupation these registries did not exist, as planning was only a political and military tool for the Ottomans in their colonies.

These reforms and divisions set the **basis of planning practices in Lebanon**. Moreover, throughout the years that followed the French mandate, public administrations would often design master plans with the close collaboration of public french institutions e.g. Atelier Parisien d’Urbanisme (APUR) and Institut d’Aménagement et d’Urbanisme de la Région Ile-de-France (IAURIF, now Institut Paris Région).

B. Administrative Divisions

Administrative divisions of the Lebanese territory inherited from Ottoman times, remained through the French Mandate, with the **Mouhafaza, the Caza and the municipality being its main constituents** as pictured in figure 1. These divisions are still the main in place, with the country counting 8 Mouhafaza, 25 Caza, 37 unions of municipalities and 944 Municipalities (Lamy, 2010). This territorial division is still very centralised in effect. In fact, the government, through the Ministry of Interior has direct influence on decision making through the Caimacan and the Mouhafez (Lamy, 2010).



Figure 1: Administrative divisions of the Lebanese territory (Mouhafazat and caza)

C. Legal and institutional framework

1. Main actors

In the beginning of the 1960's, the Lebanese government underwent a series of reforms in terms of planning that were institutionalised through the first version of the **law of urbanism on the 9th of September 1983** (Lamy, 2010). Advocated by the president Fouad Chehab, these reforms created a new institutional and legal framework for planning in Lebanon. The main actors in this new framework are the Conseil Supérieur d'Urbanisme (CSU), the Direction Générale d'Urbanisme (DGU), and the municipalities. This framework is still heavily influenced by the French Mandate, as it kept its divisions and practices.

a. Conseil Supérieur d'Urbanisme - CSU

The CSU plays a decision-making and arbitration role, it gives its opinion on proposed laws and decrees and can impose modifications to planning documents and to infrastructure projects. The CSU is considered as one of the most powerful actors of planning due to its prerogatives. Lamy affirms that the CSU spends most of its time and effort coordinating and managing municipal and individual requests, which keeps it from playing its role as planning actor.

b. Direction Générale d'Urbanisme - DGU

The DGU is responsible for urban planning in coordination with the CSU and both entities have the same director. The DGU depends on the Ministry of Public Work and Transportation, and is responsible for data collection, producing planning documents, and implementing them (Lamy, 2010). The DGU lacks the means to keep up with all its prerogatives, which led it to rely on private offices for the production of planning documents. Thus, the **DGU has progressively become marginalised due to a lack of human capacity and a lack of funding** (Lamy, 2010).

c. Municipalities

Municipalities are the smallest authority in the echelon, they were given planning prerogatives in 1977, they have become responsible for urban planning e.g. zoning plans, mobility and transportation planning, creating public spaces and managing them, lighting, water management and waste management. **However, there are technically no planning units in municipalities, those only have an “architect” as the sole architectural and planning authority** (Harb, 2022). It is important to note that municipalities are financially and administratively independent entities and that have a considerable executive power on the territory, given to them through Decree no. 118 of 1977 (law of Municipalities) (Chedid, 2019). Lebanon counts 1030 municipalities, with large disparities between them, as they differ greatly in size and resources (Harb, 2022). **As a result not all municipalities can answer to their supposed prerogatives in the same effective way.** Furthermore, the representative nature of municipalities have been repeatedly questioned, in fact residents of a municipality do not necessarily vote for its council. Voting right goes to the registered individuals from the last census of 1932 or those who have been “naturalised” through marriage, as Charbel Nahas states it “Municipalities represent the male bloodline of those who were there in 1932, as well as some naturalised persons. They are whom the municipalities represent. The overwhelming majority of them do not live there, but they vote there [...]” (Nahas, 2017). As a result, **the municipal council is not voted by inhabitants** of a given municipality but by citizens who may or may not live there, given the massive displacements that happened during the civil war, this schism was particularly accentuated.

Thus, municipal councils are voted based on political affiliation driven once again by sectarianism and communitarianism. Finally, municipalities are also subject to clientelistic dynamics as they constitute the smallest administration with executive power.

d. Council for Development and Reconstruction - CDR

Another major actor in planning in Lebanon is the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR). The CDR was created in 1977, to replace the Ministry of General Planning. The council was given the responsibility to **develop, design, supervise and fund a national reconstruction and development strategy for the country** to be implemented at the end of the civil war. It also took over the main responsibility of the Ministry of General Planning i.e. developing a national master plan for the Lebanese territory that would include a

decentralised development strategy and ensure the cohesion of the Lebanese territory (Lamy, 2010).

Unable to fulfil its original task, the CDR became responsible for all infrastructure projects in Lebanon: proposing, designing, funding and implementing projects (Lamy, 2010).

Perhaps the most important aspect of the CDR is its legal and operational framework. In fact the CDR was conceived as an independent entity that can **overcome lengthy administrative procedures and bureaucratic loopholes to facilitate its missions** (Sweid, 2021). However, the CDR has been repeatedly accused of perpetuating the same dynamics of other institutions i.e. clientelism, corruption, and serving the private interest of the political and economic elite (Sweid, 2021). From the reconstruction project of Solidere to all the different infrastructure projects, the CDR led neo-liberal policies and became instrumentalized to serve private interests (Sweid, 2021). Sweid (2010) analyzes the affiliations and positions of the different presidents and members of the CDR, her research finds that from 1991 up until 2022 all presidents and board members of the CDR have been affiliated to sectarian political parties. This kind of division goes against the original aim of the CDR, which was to overcome the sectarian political system and its administrations. Moreover, a study led by Mahmalat in 2021 as part of the LCPS, revealed the CDR has become “a state within a state”. The council is also immune to any kind of control or inspection from the Central Inspection Board and from the Court of Accounts, the CDR has total operational and legislative freedom, as the only authority it is subject to is the Prime Minister (Mahmalat, 2021).

For its infrastructure projects, the CDR organises tenders for projects funded by international actors e.g. the World Bank, the European Union, international governments, etc. Sweid’s research has shown that 10 major companies have monopolised the execution of the vast majority of projects organised by the CDR. Consequently, the CDR, through its modus operandi, has become a profit generator for the political and economic elite of the country. **Therefore, the CDR’s independence has been exploited by the political elite to serve private interests**, it only reproduced the same dynamics it was meant to avoid, thus deviating it from accomplishing its original objective i.e. developing a national master plan and development strategy to ensure the cohesion of the Lebanese territory and its reconstruction.

The CDR would later conduct its original mission, to develop a national master plan for the Lebanese territory i.e. the SDATL. Even though parliamentary sessions in the late 1990’s questioned the role and legitimacy of the CDR, and proposed to recreate the Ministry of General Planning to take on its original task, the CDR maintained and coordinated the project between 2001 and 2005 then up until its resulting decree in 2009 (Yazigi, 2022).

Actors of the planning exercise in Lebanon and their legal and institutional framework:

Planning practices in Lebanon are carried through by a number of actors who hold prerogatives on different territorial levels, some of which overlap. These public actors are subject to the same dynamics of all public institutions i.e. corruption, clientelism and sectarianism. The CDR holds a particular *modus operandi* as it can overcome administrative procedures and does not respond to any authority other than the Prime Minister.

D. Planning procedures and documents

As previously mentioned, planning practices in Lebanon are inherited from the French mandate and are based on land-use planning models. These **procedures are meant to produce planning documents on three scales: the national scale, the regional scale and the local scale** according to the law of urbanism of 1983.

1. National scale

Ever since the late 1950's and later on in the 1980's, with the approval of the law of urbanism, a dire need for a national and unified vision for the Lebanese territory was identified i.e. a national master plan. The development of this plan was included in the law of urbanism and became the responsibility of the Ministry of General Planning (Yazigi, 2022). This plan was meant to treat the disparities and fragmentations of the Lebanese territory by ensuring the development and growth of regions all over the territory, by defining their role and vocations, but also the plan was meant to define a national strategy for the Lebanese territory and position Lebanon within its regional and international context (Yazigi, 2022). In other words, to set a national cohesive and holistic framework for the development of the territory through planning. Between 1959 and 1964 the first studies for a national master plan were conducted by the Ministry of General Planning through the IRFED mission, however they did not result in a master plan, due to the absence of political consensus over the content of the plan and its objectives (Public Works Studio, 2022). After the war, the CDR took on the responsibilities of the Ministry of General Planning and failed once again to produce a national master plan in 1990, due to a lack of funding and the priority that was given to reconstruction efforts (Charafeddine, 2022).

In the late 1990's, the CDR organised a tender for the completion of a national master plan. The winning team included the IAURIF and Dar al Handasah (a private architecture, planning and engineering firm) who started to work in collaboration with a number of private and public actors on a national master plan for the Lebanese territory: the **SDATL** (Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et de Développement du Territoire Libanais) in 2001. The plan was completed in 2004 and acted through **Decree No. 2366 on the 20th of June 2009** (Lamy, 2010).

Lamy (2010) highlights the inconsistency in the design of the plan, as the task was given to the CDR, even though it is legally within the prerogatives of the DGU to elaborate national/territorial master plans. Yazigi on the other hand highlights the deviations of the released document from the original objectives of the project.

This national plan is the centre piece from which all planning initiatives and documents arise from, it is **de facto a reference** for all planning agencies (public and private) (Harb, 2022). It sets priorities and a desired tendencies for each region and for the main urban agglomerations, it also positions Lebanon within its regional and international context, making it a highly political plan, and given the Lebanese context, quite possibly a highly controversial one. This plan is thus crucial for understanding planning practices in Lebanon and their evolution, it also presents a key element within its objectives: the cohesion of the territory, knowing that Lebanon suffered, since its creation from a deep fragmentation of the territory and its social structure that has crystallised through the different periods and episodes of conflict and instability on the national and regional level. However, as this research will successively show, these objectives were not completely met by the plan, a gap is even present between its original objectives and the developed plan (Chedid, 2022). These disparities will be further analysed in the next chapter as the present work will go into detail in the content of the SDATL and cross analyse it with its expected objectives.

As previously mentioned, the following research aims at evaluating the SDATL and its impacts on the Lebanese territory. In fact, as mentioned above, this plan is a reference document for all planning agencies and public institutions, it sets planning and development orientations on the national scale, thus evaluating it will help create a meaningful assessment of planning practices and the overall development strategy of the country and its outcomes. Given that the SDATL is the only available national plan that puts forth a strategy for the development of the country and that constitutes a reference framework for all planning practices. In fact, administrations on all subsequent scales must follow and apply the

orientations of the SDATL within their policies and planning documents. This process will be further detailed in the following sections and chapters.

2. Regional scale

According to the SDATL, the national master plan has to be followed by regional master plans, and detailed local master plans. However, since administrative divisions are inherited from Ottoman times, the **regional scale is not clearly defined** within the Lebanese territory. In fact, the regional scale is meant to be defined by a interministerial coordination body, that was never created, thus the mission is to be lead by localities e.g. municipalities or by the DGU for planning purposes (Charafeddine, 2022). In other words, municipalities are meant to group themselves under a union of municipalities for instance in order to develop a common regional plan or the DGU has the power to propose to a number of municipalities a union in order to propose them a regional plan. This association has to follow a given territorial logic such as the presence of a common natural resource e.g. towns and cities along a river bed, or a common geographical identity e.g. towns and cities along a mountain range or along a coastline, etc. (Charafeddine, 2022). However, there is virtually no law or policy that sets these conditions, leaving the process entirely to local actors and the DGU, as a result the process became solemnly based on communitarianism rather than territorial interest (Chedid, 2022). It is common along the territory that municipalities of the same sectarian and/or political identity create a Union of Municipalities and leave out a municipality due to its affiliation to a different political party or due to a different sectarian majority (Yazigi, 2022) (Chedid, 2022). Even though the Mouhafaza or the Caza could be defined as "regions" it is not the case, as these divisions were based on territorial dynamics and military interests of the Ottoman rule, most of which do not correspond to the current reality of the Lebanese territory.

Therefore, there is a **legislative gap concerning the regional scale** of the Lebanese territory, as it is required and reglementary in planning policies and national planning documents, even though it is not clearly defined. In fact, as administrative divisions are based on Ottoman divisions, and planning practices are based on French land-use planning laws, creating disparities between produced planning documents and the administrative divisions of the Lebanese territory.

3. Local scale

On the local scale, the national master plan has to be followed by regional master plans that will be then followed by detailed local master plans on the municipal level. The elaboration of a detailed master plan remains optional under the law of urbanism, but obligatory for any Mouhafaza or Caza with classified sites. However, a study by Public Works Studio shows that **“85% of the Lebanese territory is unplanned ”** (Public Works Studio, 2018), this number refers to administrative areas that have no master plan or that are partially covered by a master plan. Master plans (regional or local ones) are usually issued at the request of the DGU or the initiative of municipalities or unions of municipalities, it is then developed by the DGU as it falls within its prerogatives, or by a private consultancy firm which is more often the case, given the limited resources of the DGU (Public Works Studio, 2018). The plan is then presented to the CSU or to the governor, the caimacam, or the municipal councils concerned. Once the CSU has given its approval on the plan (within a month), the latter is presented to the council of ministers who review it, and issue a decree upon its approval. This process can be pictured by the following diagram developed by Public Works Studio:

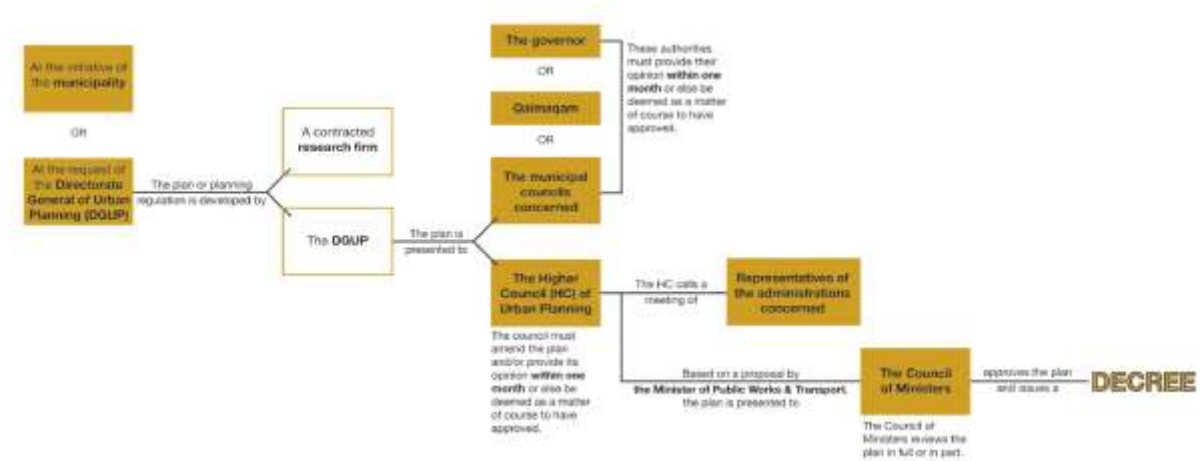


Figure 2 : “Decision making in the urban planning process” (Public Works Studio, 2017)

The Lebanese context is particularly given its complex history and the way institutions have been hijacked to serve private interest over public interest. Planning operations are subject to the same conflict of interests and corrupted administrations. Planning documents have progressively been issued by public administrations, however there is a great disparity between issued planning documents and their formulations and the administrative division of the Lebanese territory. These disparities are expected to have an impact on the implementation phase of planning documents; this impact will be evaluated as part of the evaluation process of

the SDATL. As a national planning document that is meant to result in regional planning documents and local ones, the SDATL, from its development to its implementation encompasses the entirety of planning procedures, thus by evaluating the SDATL, a clear assessment of this operational framework has to be detailed which can prove itself useful for future practices as well.

4. Results of planning procedures on the territory

When assessing the presented planning system, there seems to be gaps within the planning setting of Lebanon as 85% of the Lebanese territory remains unplanned as it has been proven by Public Works Studio. The centrepiece of this planning process is the SDATL, as it defines planning tendencies and orientations for the entirety of the territory and most importantly because it remains to this day the only national planning document of this scale (Chedid, 2022). However the set historical and technical overview of planning practices in Lebanon, raises questions about the SDATL as to its impacts on the territory given the high percentage of unplanned areas. In other words, if the SDATL is meant to be translated into regional and local master plans according to the depicted planning procedures, why is 85% of the territory still unplanned? In that sense, this takes the present thought process back to the research question: why did the SDATL fail to achieve its objectives?

The next session will try to look further into this plan to build a better understanding of the context of its design, its content, its political vision and its operational and legal framework and thus delve into the evaluation process to determine the reasons why this national master plan has seemingly not found its way into territorial implementation.

Chapter IV: The SDATL

The following section sheds a light on the SDATL, from its creation up until its implementation. The context and history of the creation and development of the plan are explicitly analysed as well as the different actors that were involved, their roles and their responsibilities. Then, the present work will take a closer look at the content of the plan to assess whether it fits with the planned objectives and needs that were identified, but also to see if the content of the SDATL corresponds to the understanding of territories that was previously elaborated. Subsequently, the oversights of the SDATL will be analysed, the main territorial characteristics that were overlooked by the plan, and consequent particularities of the Lebanese territory that were not taken into account. A closer look will also be accorded to the implementation strategy of the SDATL: its planned implementation and the one that was actually carried out. Given the assessment and detailed analysis of the Lebanese territory that was previously done, a run down of the disparities that exist between the plan's orientations and the reality of the Lebanese territory will follow as a first assessment of the impacts of the SDATL on the national territory. Finally, the importance and relevance of evaluating the plan will follow as the last part of this chapter, after drawing a clear picture of the content of the plan, its operational and legislative framework, its context and theoretical background, the evaluation process can rely on a set of data to assess the impact of the plan and to evaluate it in a comprehensible and holistic way. In other words, the aim of the present chapter is to build a better understanding of this planning document, to draw a clear picture of its history, its actors, its content and its implementation from its creation up until today. Consequently, to better assess and evaluate its impacts on the Lebanese territory.

A. History

1. The need of a national master plan

The creation of a national master plan for the Lebanese territory has been identified as **a need in the 1950's** according to Wafa Charafeddine and Public Works Studio. Thus the development of this plan was **included in the law of urbanism** and was within the prerogatives of the Ministry of General Planning at the time, as mentioned in Decree No. 6393 issued on September 16, 1954, that allowed for the creation of the ministry and set its responsibilities.

The Ministry of General Planning conducted studies between 1959 and 1964 for the creation of this national master plan. However, these studies did not result in a national master plan at the time, Serge Yazigi suggests that this tentative was blocked politically. Yazigi and Tala Alaeddine both highlight the need at the time for a national master plan, that would secure **two objectives**:

1. The equal development of territories especially outside the capital
2. The spatial cohesion of the territory.

These two objectives have been identified as urgent needs from the 1960's, following the first tentative and the start of the civil war in 1975 the mission was given to the CDR, created in 1977. It is important to note that this was one of the main purposes of the CDR at the time, later on the CDR was given different roles and missions including conducting tenders for infrastructure projects.

In the 1990's, following the end of the civil war, the only priority on the national level was to set a reconstruction strategy to overcome the 15 years long civil war and that setting a national master plan was not considered a top priority (Charafeddine, 2022). At the end of the 1990's the need for such a plan was renewed and the mission was given once again to the CDR, knowing that throughout the 1990's there were parliamentary debates questioning the role of the CDR and whether the Ministry of General Planning should be recreated to ensure this mission (Yazigi, 2022). Yazigi also highlights the efforts that were done by the late prime minister Rafiq Hariri for that end, Yazigi stresses the fact that a national and cohesive vision for the Lebanese territory was rarely supported politically, thus through his position as prime minister, Hariri was able to defend this idea.

2. The creation of the SDATL

Data collection started in 1998 for the SDATL and was done by the CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique), with the project kicking off in 2001 and lasting up until 2004, between 2004 and 2005 the document was reviewed for editing and translated to english, french and arabic. It was later approved by ministerial decree in 2009. Between 2005 and 2009 a ministerial council was created to follow up, review and write its resulting decree. Charafeddine confirms that during these years the CDR and the team that worked on the SDATL had to negotiate and defend the orientations of the SDATL and follow up the project with the ministerial council until the decree was voted.

Timeline of the SDATL

1998-2001: data collection (CNRS)

2001-2004: elaboration of the plan (CDR, DAR, IAURIF, and other public and private actors)

2004-2005: reviewing, editing and translation

2005-2009: ministerial negotiations

2009: approved and acted by ministerial decree

B. Content

The SDATL is a document divided into six parts:

1. Uncontested physical features
2. Challenges of the future
3. Basic choices
4. The Perspectives of the National Physical Master Plan
5. Principles of Land Use
6. The First Implementation Phase of the SDATL

Each part will be briefly analysed and discussed in light of the different interviews that were conducted as part of this research.

1. Chapter 1: Uncontested physical features

This part briefly traces back the history of the Lebanese territory, it also includes a description of its regional context including its relationship with its neighbouring countries notably Syria and Israel, its wider regional context as an Arab state and its international standing. This part also gives the general directions about Lebanon's vocation as a state at the regional and international level.

This section of the document also describes the physical features of the different regions of the Lebanese territory including topography, soil quality and typology, geological information, and climate. Thus, based on this data the writers also identify major agricultural areas and their potential extensions, natural reserves and their protection zones, coastal areas are delimited,

Vulnerabilities based on scientific data are also identified and mapped, risk of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, drought and other natural hazards are listed. It is important to note here that even though the document does not explicitly take into account sustainability and climate change, it does however consider the effects of climate change on the territory and in the following section it even develops recommendations to counter them in a sustainable manner without necessarily using the associated terms.

2. Chapter 2: Challenges of the future

In this section the document identifies a few challenges that will be faced in the future according to the writers, these challenges include: economic development, social cohesion, demographic challenges, housing, infrastructure (transport, water, wastes, education, health), urban expansion, environmental challenge and political instability in the region.

These challenges are relative to the post-war era and from its associated impacts on the territory and on the population. In this chapter each challenge is evaluated and a number of questions are formulated as a way to deal with its possible outcomes. Action levers are identified and assessed for possible exploitation. The idea of a balanced territorial development is also mentioned as a way to counter sectarian and social fragmentation. For demographic challenges the writers set scenarios for possible demographic evolutions for the year 2030. This scenario is dependent on a number of variables including international agreements and the possible displacement of Palestinian refugees, however given the actual evolution of regional conflicts e.g. the war in Syria and internal crises, these expectations will not be matched as confirmed by Rita Chedid and Wafa Charafeddine. In this context it is important to note that other sections of the document, that set recommendations and orientations e.g. possible urban expansion, are based on these projections. Thus in a table for the projected population growth the SDATL projects a population of almost 5 million by 2030, however this number has been surpassed as of 2010 according to the World Bank, with Lebanon counting 6.8 million inhabitants by the year 2022. On the other hand environmental challenges are considered on the local level, leaving out climate change and its possible impacts. Environmental challenges include waste management, water quality, quarries, marine pollution and deterioration of natural areas. Finally, challenges related to political instability take into account regional instability and its potential threats, however potential impacts on the Lebanese territory are not cited, on the national level the document does not explicitly take into account the threat of political instability and conflict.

3. Chapter 3: Basic choices

In this section the writers take back every cited challenge from the previous section and offer a corresponding response translated by recommendations and orientations for the economic development, the management of natural resources, urban sprawl, and potential hazards. **Recommendations are given with three objectives in mind : unity, balance and rationalisation of the Lebanese territory.** Effectively what is proposed here is a land-use management strategy that would translate these objectives into **land use management guidelines**. In this section the plan promotes the development of regions outside the capital, to ensure a cohesive territory and a balanced economy, The section also promotes a homogeneous servitude in terms of infrastructure to all regions providing them all with the same services and facilities. Management of natural resources is also being tackled in this section with the writers highlighting the importance of the rational use of resources (water, natural areas including the coast, valleys, forests, mountains, but also agricultural lands and built heritage which are also cited as an economic resource through touristic activity). The section stresses the importance of water as a scarce natural resource, and the importance of its sustainable management.

4. Chapter 4: The Orientations of the SDATL

The section breaks down the major guidelines and recommendations set by the SDATL, the structuring ideas and fundamental choices that it offers. All of these guidelines are based on the previous chapters of the document, and build on this data to offer a plan of action presented in **8 major guidelines**:

- “1. Structure of the territory around the major urban centres
2. Associate all regions to the National economic development
3. Distribute the major public facilities in an effective and integrated manner
4. Unite the territory with an efficient and developed transportation network
5. Insure and urban development of good quality respecting the characteristics of each region
6. Highlight and benefit from the natural wealth of the country
7. Exploit water resources in a sustainable way
8. Resolve efficiently the problems of quarries, wastewater and solid wastes”

In this chapter the document identifies major agglomerations outside the capital and their potential development, with the goal of stabilising the population between major urban centres and rural areas. The document also plans to integrate all regions into the national

economy through thematic sectors of activity. The idea being to assign a role to each region depending on the physical data collected in the first chapter. This economic development would be accompanied and reinforced with infrastructure work and the development of a number of public services and facilities. The plan also proposes a number of policy projects to reinforce different sectors e.g. agriculture, education, tourism, etc.

Orientations related to transportation treat international transit of freight and people through the airport, a railway network and the different ports, but also on the local level with a review of the road network, defining its hierarchy and its possible extensions, a railway connection along the coast and a bus network. Transportation projections are once again based on the demographic data projected in the first chapter.

The writers highlight the importance of providing all regions with basic services and with convenient access to facilities (healthcare, education, administration). In this chapter the plan offers recommendations and orientations for the development of the education sector and the distribution of public schools and branches of the Lebanese University along the territory. The chapter also tackles the distribution of healthcare facilities, and electrical power supply with a projection of the country's needs in 2030 and new ways to produce electric power through new power plants and the extensions or reconversion of existing ones.

This chapter also recommends regulatory policies for urban sprawl and recommendations to ensure an adequate urban quality but also to protect natural and agricultural areas. **Four dominant land uses are identified: agricultural areas, rural areas, natural areas and urban areas.** Large urban agglomerations are also identified and mapped: Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, Zahle, Baalbek, Nabatiyeh, and Tyr.

The chapter also sets recommendations for the protection of natural resources and proposes orientations to ensure ecological continuity. This part also identifies coastal zones and natural areas to preserve and rehabilitate through the creation of natural reserves and parks. A number of dams projects are also proposed along the territory as a way to better exploit water resources.

The last part of this chapter aims at offering effective solutions to the problems of quarries, wastewater and solid waste, knowing that these three problems have been ongoing for years (starting before the Civil war of 1975 up until this present day). Illegal quarries have spread all over mountain ranges, causing unprecedented and irreversible environmental damage on natural areas, wastewater and solid waste have also not been treated in a sustainable and effective way for years. Thus the writers present a number of recommendations to effectively act against these problems.

5. Chapter 5: Principles of Land Use

This chapter details the principles of land use as they were previously defined, it focuses on the four main categorised land uses: urban areas, mixed rural areas, agricultural areas and natural areas. The chapter breaks down each land use and presents its main characteristics and associated orientations, its constraints and assets. Land uses are defined as soil vocations, with the classification being based on the data collected and presented in the first chapter i.e. based on the physical characteristics of the territory. A soil vocation is thus assigned to every agglomeration, city, town and village, then constraints and assets associated with every locality are defined. Depending on these constraints and assets a number of recommendations are given to every land unit. Thus, recommendations aim at regulating urbanisation, density, height of construction, quarries, and industries, they also define acceptable and recommended large scale projects for every land use.

6. Chapter 6: The First Implementation Phase of the SDATL

This chapter identifies the main concerned actors for the implementation of the SDATL; public administrations such as ministries and other public establishments are listed by sector: transportation, tourism, industry, agriculture, education, investments, environment, power supply, water And wastewater management, solid waste, health, administrative sector and local governance, finances, urban planning, and central support for land management. For each of these sectors, **priority projects** are identified and a **provisional budget** is calculated. **Recommendations and guidelines to achieve the cited orientations** are given for the concerned actors, different actors are called to coordinate efforts and to set policies and/or develop projects in given locations or on the national scale. Therefore, this chapter sets the **first steps necessary to complete the 8 main orientations defined in chapter 4** of the document.

Therefore, the SDATL sets a general picture of the Lebanese territory and builds upon a set of data orientations and recommendations for different regions. It also introduces four land use classifications for the whole territory and builds on these classifications to offer specific and more detailed orientations. It is important to note that the scale of these **orientations and of the resulting maps is not on the parcel, master plans and maps are mainly produced on the national scale and regional maps are rather schematic.**

C. The oversights of the SDATL

A number of points remain untreated in the SDATL. Given the regional context of the Lebanese territory and the constant instability that has reigned over the years, it is impossible to construct a development strategy within a physical master plan without taking into account the possible repercussions that this instability might have on Lebanon. **Regional instability** can have a great impact on the development of a country and on the demographic data as it already had e.g. the war in Syria and the 2006 July war. Furthermore, as Lebanon considers Israel as an enemy state, the SDATL does not treat the areas of conflict that concern natural resource management for instance between the two entities, namely water and more recently oil extraction from the Mediterranean. As this conflict presents a great threat for Lebanon, its natural resources, its development and its sovereignty, it cannot be left untreated by a national master plan that proposes orientations in relation to resource management, national cohesion and development. Additionally, positioning Lebanon within its regional context by proposing **possible synergies** can present opportunities e.g. economic agreements, energy production, commerce, etc. with non adversary neighbouring countries.

Another crucial point that is left out of chapter 2 (Challenges) is the **social fragmentation** of the Lebanese territory. As previously mentioned, the Civil War had an unprecedented and devastating impact on the country, it reinforced communitarianism and nurtured a growing fear between communities based on sectarian identities. In a post-war era, this presents a major challenge to be addressed by a national master plan, but it remains untreated in the document. **Demographic data** and related orientations also **leave out refugees**, in 2003 Palestinian refugees counted 391 000 inhabitants in 2003 according to UNRWA, living in dire conditions in refugee camps in the center of urban areas such as Beirut, Tripoli, Tyr, Sidon, and Baalbek. The SDATL mentions these numbers, and briefly states that refugee camps present dire living conditions in chapter 2 related to challenges of the territory without any further mention.

Following the civil war there was indeed a political choice to isolate this population. However, at no point does the SDATL offer an alternative to refugee camps even when mapping schematic orientation maps for the same agglomerations. **This leaves out 391 000 people living on the Lebanese territory out of its national master plan and development strategy.**

D. Implementation

The SDATL is the main and only regulatory planning and territorial development document available to this date in Lebanon. In fact, article 1 of decree N.2366 (2009) states that the SDATL constitutes the general framework for urban planning and land use planning in Lebanon. Furthermore, the SDATL is **not opposable to individuals**, as written in article 2 of the decree, **but to ministries, administrations, public institutions, municipalities, and unions of municipalities**, who are bound to adopt the document and its orientations and to implement them in territorial projects. Article 3 on the hand specifies that in case detailed plans were not developed in certain localities, older ones preceding the SDATL would still be applicable (if any).

1. Planned implementation

Technically, for the orientations of the SDATL to become opposable to individuals and thus for it to be implemented on the territory it needs to be followed by regional master plans and then by detailed local master plans. Regional master plans translate the above mentioned orientations and recommendations onto a defined region, and proposes specific policies and more detailed orientations and recommendations to local administrations i.e. municipalities. Whereas detailed local master plans are developed on the municipal level, and translate orientations and guidelines into master plans on the parcel level, that are thus opposable to individuals. Therefore these two levels of actions are mandatory for the implementation of the SDATL. Furthermore, a number of policies and projects have to be developed by concerned ministries and public agencies to fulfil the recommendations of the SDATL on given sectors.

The implementation strategy of the SDATL proposes the creation of a ministerial body capable of ensuring the interministerial coordination for the creation of regions on the Lebanese territory. However, this coordination body has never been put in place, consequently in its absence, **the regional scale is to be defined by the DGU and unions of municipalities** that wish to coordinate efforts for common projects (Charafeddine, 2022). In other words, either the DGU proposes to a number of municipalities to develop a regional master plan, or municipalities present themselves as a union and ask for the development of this plan. In fact, municipalities and unions of municipalities do not have planning units. Thus, they have to delegate planning to private consultancy firms or to the DGU.

This organic division of regional units lacks coordination and territorial logic according to Serge Yazigi. In fact, unions of municipalities are driven by communitarianism and

sectarianism, as it has been confirmed by all interviewees, coordination efforts on the territorial level do not follow a geographical or territorial logic, with unions of municipalities leaving out one town within their drawn regional unit because it votes for an opposite political party or because its inhabitants are from a different religion.

2. Realised implementation

Moreover, in the absence of a state initiative to coordinate regions, international institutions have taken over the mission e.g. UN Habitat, UNDP, European Union, NGOs and International Embassies (Yazigi, 2022). These institutions have put into action multiple tools as an attempt for territorial development. Yazigi and Harb both stated the incoherence of these tools and actions as international institutions put forth planning tools that are not regulated in the Lebanese law, for instance most of these institutions develop **strategic planning documents** that are **not regulatory tools** in Lebanon, thus not opposable to individuals. Furthermore, given the multiplicity of actors and their lack of coordination, these efforts have superposed more than once: Yazigi has personally been involved in two strategic planning projects in the Bekaa valley, the first one initiated by the UNDP in 2018 under the name: “Sustainable Land Management for Qaroun Land Area, a region that groups together the agglomerations of Zahle, Rachaya and villages and town of the West Bekaa; two years later another project was proposed by UN Habitat for the agglomeration of Zahle. With absolutely no coordination between UNDP and UN Habitat, the two projects superpose each other, Yazigi highlights the incoherence and **lack of coordination** and communication between these entities, resulting in a number of comparable cases all over the territory. In fact, it can be observed all over the Lebanese territory, a multiplicity of actors develop, finance, and execute development and planning projects: UN Habitat, UNDP, USAID, the European Union, the World Bank, International Embassies including the dutch, swedish, italian, polish, spanish, french, and english to name a few. With the absence of the state and its incapacity or unwillingness to act, **international agencies have presented alternatives that are not regulatory and thus cannot truly be substituary** (Yazigi, 2022).

The SDATL is a roadmap of actions that is meant to activate and facilitate more detailed and refined projects on different territorial levels. Even though the implementation process of the SDATL is structured, there seems to be a **gap in its implementation phase**. As a result the orientations of the SDATL have not been implemented on the territory, and a number of disparities can be observed. These disparities will be explicitly treated in the next part.

E. Disparities between the SDATL and the territory

When assessing the impacts of the SDATL, it is clear through the different interviews, the different readings and through personal observations of the Lebanese territory that **the expected outcomes of the SDATL do not match with the reality of the Lebanese territory**. The following will lay down some of these disparities, based on collected data and interviews conducted with professionals, academics and public authorities.

Agricultural areas

In its land use master plan, the SDATL places the biggest agricultural areas in the Bekaa valley due to its soil characteristics, its particular climate, its topography and its historical role as an agricultural hotspot for Lebanon. The SDATL also projects a protection and evolution of these agricultural areas and the modernization of the agricultural sector. However, Serge Yazigi, who has worked on different strategic plans in the Bekaa valley in the past 10 years, conducted a number of comparative data analysis, overlaying land use plans, recent satellite imagery and data collected on ground. Yazigi states that this comparative data has proven that the Bekaa has lost in some parts 15 to 20% of its agricultural areas, clearly showing a setback and a gap between the orientation of the SDATL and the evolution of agricultural areas in the Bekaa valley. In fact, agricultural areas have dropped considerably in land area according to Yazigi.

Urban areas

Furthermore, the SDATL also puts forth a number of recommendations in the second paragraph of the fifth orientation of chapter 4: “Promote urban quality ”. Which includes a number of recommendations regarding quality of life in urban areas and their future development e.g. creating, preserving and improving public spaces including gardens, parks, sea fronts and beaches. However, it can clearly be seen in urban agglomerations such as Beirut that these recommendations are far from being implemented. In fact Beirut counts today 0.8m² of public space per capita whereas the WHO recommendation is 9m² per capita, setting Beirut way behind compared to other cities e.g. Berlin counts 26m² of public green spaces per capita (UN Habitat, 2021). Furthermore, the capital’s seafront has long been threatened of privatisation, in fact one of the oldest and most popular coastal public spaces i.e. Dalieh was

threatened by a private development project in 2013 (Abir Saksouk-Sasso, 2015). The works of Saksouk-Sasso (2015) have shown that the vast majority of the land parcels in Dalieh were bought by three real estate companies all owned by the late prime minister Rafiq Hariri. At the same time of their acquisition, a number of laws allowed for these lands to be privately exploited with exceptional exploitation ratios (Abir Saksouk-Sasso, 2015). In 2013, users of Dalieh were evicted (fishermen, street vendors, daily users), and a private development project was proposed to the municipality of Beirut, who is meant to apply the recommendations of the SDATL. The project consists of a hotel, a shopping mall and a private marina, thus privatisation and capitalising on what is meant to be a public space. The project was highly controversial and was contested by a number of activists and inhabitants, who successfully put an end to this project. However, Dalieh is still privately owned, knowing that in 2018, a private development project was built on one of the last remaining sand beaches in Beirut i.e. Ramlet el Bayda. The project was also highly controversial and goes against the recommendations and orientations of the SDATL. However, it was approved by the Municipality of Beirut and the Mouhafez (regional authority), knowing that both actors are the ones meant to implement and adopt the orientations of the document.

Bisri valley dam

The last example, on the other hand, shows a controversy around the development of a dam project proposed in the SDATL. In article 7.2 of chapter 4, the SDATL calls for the construction of a number of dams on a selected number of water bodies, in order to better exploit water resources, avoid losses and meet the projected demands of domestic water supply. Thus, the SDATL presents a table of proposed dams by the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW) which proposes the construction of a dam in the valley of Bisri, in the Chouf Caza, the table states that the project is under “detailed study” (as of 2002). In the same article the SDATL argues that the table proposed by the Ministry should be evaluated by a priority factor and thus puts Bisri under medium priority. However, Bisri is identified in article 4 of chapter 1 as a major and distinguished landscape meant to be protected. Further on in chapter 4, the SDATL calls for Bisri to be included in a regional natural park. Within the same chapter, in article 7.2 the plan calls for the potential construction of a dam in the historical valley of Bisri. Despite this paradox, in 2012 the Bisri dam project was approved as part of the National Water Sector Strategy (NWSS), with the construction of a 73m high dam (Nassour, 2020). The project proposal was followed by an Environmental Impact Assessment that shows how the project

will alter the valley, resulting in the destruction of natural habitats, archaeological sites and agricultural plains. Most importantly the project presents seismic risks as the dam project and its reservoir are set over an active seismic fault (Nassour, 2020). Activists created a campaign to counter the dam construction, and succeeded in putting a stop to the project in September 2020 as announced by the World Bank who cut all funding to the project after the campaign (World Bank, 2020).

The presented examples showcase how the orientations of the SDATL were in fact not applied to the Lebanese territory and how some of them are **disconnected from the reality** of the Lebanese territory. Most importantly, they show a **lack of adaptability** from the plan and the **incapacity of its concerned actors** to put forth its implementation in a sensed and critical manner. However, there are still a number of unanswered questions, despite these failed examples the present research asks how and where exactly did the SDATL fail its implementation? Knowing that a national master plan tackling a multitude of subjects and sectors and set for a 20 years period could possibly have disparities over the years, is the plan in itself, through its approach to the territory, defective? Or is the operational framework of its implementation unsuccessful? Was there no political will from governmental institutions to implement it? Did the plan not offer the right tools for its implementation? A lot of questions arise from the analysis of the plan's content and from the numerous interviews and readings done within the context of this research. These questions are set to aliment the evaluation process as a way to determine why and how exactly did the implementation of the SDATL fail.

F. Evaluating the SDATL

The SDATL presents orientations and land use classifications that deviate from its original purpose as a national master plan. However, it is still the only regulatory territorial strategy and national planning document valid within the Lebanese territory and thirteen years after it was acted by ministerial decree the orientations set by the SDATL are yet to be implemented. Disparities can be found in all sectors of the plan, interviewees all agreed that these orientations were not completely implemented, and that a clear gap exists between the document and the reality of the Lebanese territory today. However, to clearly identify why the SDATL could not or would not be implemented, an evaluation process will be conducted to determine the underlying reasons behind its lack of implementation, the goal being to clearly process and identify the different elements that did not allow it. This will determine whether

any other planning document on the national level is also bound to fail during its implementation phase. The ultimate goal of this research is to go from the SDATL to assess territorial planning and development strategies in Lebanon and to understand whether the SDATL or another national development and planning document could ever be implemented and if so, what processes should it follow?

Chapter V: Evaluating the SDATL

After setting the theoretical framework, the historical context of the SDATL, and having analysed its content, it was established that this national master plan has failed to be implemented and that its orientations are now far from the reality of the Lebanese territory. However, knowing that it is the first and only national planning document that sets a development strategy for Lebanon, it is crucial to understand why this document has failed to be implemented. Understanding the shortcomings of the SDATL, its context, its framework, its actors and its theoretical approach can help overcome these shortcomings and define a better implementation strategy for the SDATL or any other national planning document and development strategy.

Through the research process, a number of interviews were conducted with professionals, academics and activists who have worked on the SDATL or within the planning and development fields in Lebanon. The different interviewees presented a panel of information that will aliment the following argumentation, each of them presenting and defending a certain point of view depending on their position, their experience, and their beliefs.

The following evaluation lays out a series of hypotheses that aim at answering the research question, and thus to understand where did the implementation of the SDATL fail exactly.

A. Expected impacts

The SDATL is born out of a **need** that was **identified in the 1950's**. Thus the idea of a national planning document was implemented in the law of urbanism of 1983. This need comes from the contested nature of the Lebanese territory that was never resolved i.e. the fragmentation of the territory. As the historical overview of the Lebanese territory has shown, the very creation of this territory was contested, even the Lebanese identity was contested, which led to years of internal conflict. **This fragmentation and contestation benefits the political and economic elite of the country**, as it creates a **governance vacuum** where corruption and clientelism reigns free. Having identified this situation, some professionals and officials decided to introduce a national planning document that would help achieve two main objectives: the first one is a balanced development of the territory with a focus on the economic development of regions outside the capital to counter the economic disparities of the territory

and create a balance of complementary economic development throughout the territory, the second is a cohesive planning strategy for the territory that would define, regulate and set standards for any kind of development on the regional and local scale, building on spatiality to achieve a cohesive and holistic planning document that would be implemented on different levels.

The SDATL is meant to resolve a fault, to project a consensual image of the territory, and to be a reference for all planning agencies but also for administrations of all sectors combined. The document is also supposed to define the vocation of the Lebanese territory within its regional and international context, but also to define the role of each region in the national context to achieve a balanced development. These objectives are meant to build on territorial data, physical, historical, political, social, economic and sensed data. As it was mentioned in the literature review, territories are in constant mutations, they are to be defined in layers of activity and data. Moreover the Lebanese territory is particularly subject to mutations and sudden changes which is clear through the presentation of the historical overview of the Lebanese territory. Consequently, a national planning document having these set objectives is meant to take into account these mutations and accommodate them as they have become part of the territory's identity. This is especially relevant after a 15 year long civil war that involved all kinds of local, regional and international actors. Which stresses the need to take into account the regional and international geographical and political forces of the Lebanese territory, as they have a direct impact on the country's resources management and development strategy.

Consequently, the SDATL is meant to be a **holistic planning document** capable of **accompanying the Lebanese territory through its changes and mutations** and of presenting a **development and planning strategy** for the entirety of the territory. The final aim being to ensure the **cohesion** of the Lebanese territory and to strengthen the country's **regional and international role**.

B. Realised impacts

The project of the SDATL is certainly ambitious given the elaborated historical and political overview of the Lebanese territory. In fact, as explained in the preceding paragraph, there is a clear political reticence of having a cohesive and balanced territory. However, the SDATL was published and acted by a decree. Even though the process took four years, the

CDR followed up on it and defended the project until the decree was voted on by members of parliament (Charafeddine, 2022).

The need for a national master plan in Lebanon, that was evoked in the 1950's with the Ministry of General Planning, came from the realisation that the Lebanese territory is highly fragmented and that there was no common vision. This national master plan was supposed to bring **cohesion into the territory and to set a balanced development strategy**, focusing on the economic development and growth of regions outside the capital. After 40 years, the SDATL was meant to meet these needs, to offer a cohesive master plan for the Lebanese territory and define the country's role on the regional and international scale, and to offer a development strategy that could help regions outside Beirut develop and to find a specific role and vocation for each regions and for major urban agglomerations.

When looking more carefully at the content of the plan, the SDATL does indeed propose some orientations that answer the cited needs e.g. orientation 2 and 5: "Associate all regions to the National economic development" and "Insure and urban development of good quality respecting the characteristics of each region". However, the SDATL does not truly detail or set or define the vocation of each region, instead it offers a land-use master plan based on physical data of the territory. Thus, the proposed master plan is a general land use classification one, roles and vocations of each region are defined by their assets and physical characteristics, those are suggested and articulated in a very general way in the document. Major urban agglomerations are perhaps the only areas subject to schematic plans that translate territorial orientations..

According to Wafa Charafeddine, **the document achieved a legal milestone for planning practices in Lebanon as it redefined our reading of the territory through land use classifications**. In fact, as previously mentioned, in the works of Lamy the Lebanese territory is regulated by the parcel into two categories: planned territories and unplanned territories, the SDATL (chapter 5) imposed a new classification into four new categories: urban areas, agricultural areas, rural areas and natural areas. A set of guidelines are associated with each classification, as a way to orient urban growth, preserve agricultural areas and develop them, activate rural areas and protect natural areas. Charafeddine affirms that classifying natural areas is the first step toward protecting them, and that by associating protection guidelines, the SDATL allowed for public administrations and activists alike to defend these areas against threatening project proposals.

However it is crucial at this stage to point that this was not the objective or expected impact of the national master plan. As Yazigi affirms, the plan's expected outcomes and

impacts were not met. Furthermore, all interviewees stated that this classification system has been **repeatedly deviated by individuals and administrations alike through an exemption system set by the DGU**. Yazigi explains the process as such: an individual whose land has been classified as agricultural can request an exemption from the DGU to this classification and thus turn it into a built parcel to benefit from it either by directly building on it or through land speculation.

Beyond its implementation strategy and the competences of public administrations to free themselves of clientelistic and corruption dynamics, the SDATL achieved a number of reforms in terms of planning and territorial development. In fact, the SDATL introduced four land use classifications to the Lebanese territory and made them reglementary e.g. urban areas, agricultural areas, rural areas and natural areas. Noting that these classifications did not exist prior to the publication of the document and its subsequent decree. A number of orientations are associated with these classifications as it is stated in chapter 4 and 5 of the SDATL. These classifications pave the way for the preservation of natural areas, the improvement of urban areas and their controlled sprawl, the development and preservation of agricultural areas and the enhancement and development of rural areas. Even though the orientations were not specifically accomplished as it has been proven in the previous chapter, the SDATL set an **essential legislative setting** for the potential implementation of these orientations. Charafeddine affirms that classifying these areas is the first step towards implementing any kind of measures. Perhaps this was not the original objective of the SDATL but it was a **long due and awaited policy change** for planning practices in Lebanon. Without these classifications the creation of national reserves and biosphere and their associated protection zones could not be entirely possible for instance (Charafeddine, 2022). The example of the Bisri valley dam is once again particularly interesting because both sides: the CDR, MoEW, the World Bank and the activists who fought against the project, all relied on the SDATL to defend their positions. As previously said, the SDATL presents the Bisri valley as an exceptional natural area to be protected but it also includes and supports the MoEW dam project on the same area. After the project was abandoned by the World Bank, activists still hope to include the Bisri valley in the list of protected natural sites, based on the classifications of the SDATL (Nassour, 2020).

The SDATL has been **instrumentalized** over the years, by experts and administrations to justify controversial projects, to obtain funds for them and to implement them. On the other hand, the plan has been instrumentalized by activists to fight back against these projects, it was

also instrumentalized by administrations, ministries and environmentalist groups to implement protection zones and to fund their protection e.g. the Shouf Biosphere Reserve. In a highly corrupted state, the effectiveness of any public policy is limited, but the SDATL had a certain impact, it changed the legal setting of planning even if it did not go through with its planned implementation. In other words the SDATL achieved something that is out of its original objectives, it also achieved it incompletely.

Moreover, the question remains the same: what were the reasons that did not allow the SDATL to achieve its original objectives and the ones that could not allow its planned implementation i.e. the creation of regional and local master plans that translate, detail and impose its orientations.

C. Methodology

As to answer the research question, the first chapter of the present research has built an understanding of **territories** and of their mutable nature as to understand what role can planning play within these territories and what objectives can it accomplish. Then, a thorough understanding of the theoretical approach of **land-use planning** and of its introduction into the Global South was depicted to understand what role does it play in these countries and whom does it benefit. Given that the Lebanese territory is highly mutable and unstable and that current planning practices, that gave birth to the SDATL, are inherited from land use planning during colonial times but most importantly that administrative divisions are inherited from Ottoman times. Then, a **historical and socio-political analysis of the Lebanese territory** was elaborated as to show its unstable and mutable nature but also to understand its dynamics and power relations. Further on a closer look at **planning practices** was presented as to understand the hierarchy and **modus operandi** of planning in Lebanon, what exactly was inherited from colonial times (Ottoman and French) and how it still applies, who are the main actors and decision makers and how do they interact. But most importantly a closer look at the **law of urbanism** helps understanding what are the main planning documents to be produced on different levels, with an identified need for a national cohesive and holistic planning document that would help orient all planning efforts. This national planning document would become the **SDATL**, whose historical and political background, actors and content were thoroughly analysed. After having painted a picture of the content of the SDATL and of its expected outcomes, an analysis of the disparities between the document and the reality of the Lebanese

territory today shows that the orientations emitted by the SDATL do not match with the territory as the latter has evolved away from these orientations.

At that stage the evaluation process starts to build up on all the cited data and analysis to first identify the **expected impacts** of the SDATL and then its **realised impacts** independently. Then the evaluation process works at setting **hypotheses** as to understand why the SDATL took a different turn i.e. why did the plan not achieve its original objectives and why was it never implemented as it was meant to be even though it was acted by ministerial decree.

These hypotheses draw on all the observations that were previously done, on the set theoretical background and on a series of **interviews** done with experts, professionals, academics, and activists who have worked on the SDATL directly or within the planning field in Lebanon. It is essential to note the importance of evaluating the SDATL as a public policy beyond the content of the document per se. The content of the master plan is only successful if it can be applied. The SDATL, as a public policy, puts at play a number of actors that are responsible for its implementation, in that sense these actors, their capacity at implementing such a plan, their coordination, and the available tools and the whole process of implementation as it is dictated by the policy should be evaluated as all these elements are primordial for the implementation of the master plan.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted throughout the research process. In the beginning, to understand the scene, and have a first assessment of the SDATL and its relevance, but also to test the relevance of the research question and to identify its potential. Subsequently, other interviews were conducted to accompany the research process and to build on the evaluation process from different points of view. In fact, the different interviewees have expressed a number of conflicting opinions on the subject depending on their personal views and experiences but also their respective positions. The interviews constitute an **essential part of the evaluation process**. In fact, a number of recurring statements can be identified in the interviews, these **statements were grouped in different categories**, which constituted the hypotheses that will follow. Interviewees had a number of convergences as to the reasons why the SDATL was not implemented, with each one of them defending one hypothesis more than another based on communicated data, professional experience or academic work. A critical assessment will be progressively elaborated by crossing these statements with the previous chapters of the present research. Consequently hypotheses are progressively emitted to answer

the research question and to paint a clearer and holistic picture of the pathway of the SDATL from its idea up until its implementation.

Name	Profession	Institution(s)	Date of interview
Dr. Hassân Bitar	Landscape architect, urban planner, professor and researcher	Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA), University of Adelaide, City of Adelaide	29th of April 2022
Dr. Mona Harb	Professor, researcher, and activist	American University of Beirut (AUB)	6th of June 2022
Tala Alaeddine	Architect, urban planner, researcher and activist	Public Works Studio	24th of June 2022
Christina Bou Raphael	Architect, urban planner, researcher and activist	Public Works Studio	24th of June 2022
Dr. Rita Chedid	Sociologist, urban planner, professor and researcher	Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA), Université Paris-Est, Ecole d'Urbanisme de Paris	15th of July 2022
Dr. Wafa Charafeddine	Director of the funding department at the Council for Development and Reconstruction	Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR)	3rd of August 2022
Dr. Serge Yazigi	Urban planner, professor and researcher	Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA), Université Saint Esprit Kaslik (USEK), Lebanese American University (LAU), Université de Lyon	10th of August 2022
Dr. Sébastien Lamy-Willing	Researcher, professor, jurist	Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA), Wargny-Katz, ICH Ouest - Cnam	5th of September 2022

Table 1: Conducted interviews

D. Hypotheses

The following presents the different hypotheses that have resulted from the research process. Each hypothesis is argued in charge and in discharge, based on the different interviews and the data collected. These hypotheses aim at weighting the causes and effects of a number of factors. Hypotheses are built on the theoretical background, the analysis of the operational framework of planning, the historical and socio-political context, the different interviews and on the different interviews that were conducted. These four hypotheses are developed in a critical manner to challenge every point of view and argue it to test the extent of its effects.

The aim of this is to weigh on each hypothesis and thus each factor to assess its impact, in other words to know if it can answer the research question. **This work is meant to identify the most crucial and critical area of improvement for the potential of having a national planning and development strategy that can achieve the objectives that were identified as urgent needs since the 1950's**, and eventually to help the country get through its current crises. In fact, any national development strategy or emergency plan is going to fall short on its implementation phase should it follow the same pathway as the SDATL.

Considering the current situation of Lebanon, an emergency national development and economic strategy is going to be crucial to save the country from its current crises. Consequently, and taking into consideration the urgency of the situation as it affects the livelihood of the entirety of the population in an unprecedented way, this emergency strategy cannot allow itself to have the same delays and the same rendering as the SDATL. Thus, pinpointing the reasons and dynamics that led to the disparities between the orientations of the SDATL and the reality of the Lebanese territory is paramount.

1. The setbacks of land-use planning

The first hypothesis is based on the **inefficiency associated with land-use planning** and its setbacks and limits as a contemporary practice. In fact, the first section has built a thorough understanding of the theoretical framework behind the SDATL as a land-use master plan based on practices inherited from colonial times. As previously mentioned, planning legislation in Lebanon has been inherited and drafted from the French mandate. The theoretical framework that drives planning practices and that constitutes the foundation of its future reforms, is by essence a colonial one.

Thus the legislative framework of planning is only designed to produce land-use master plans. Moreover, it is important to note the numerous collaborations that followed the French

Mandate, between Lebanese and French institutions for the making of master plans and strategies. Moreover, the limits and set-backs of land-use planning, mentioned in the first section, have shown that it is a practice **incapable of accompanying mutations in a territory**. In a territory of extreme mutations, unexpected changes and stress e.g. the Lebanese territory, this static approach is even more obsolete. The historical overview and recent events that occurred in Lebanon and its regional context have created a climate of extreme instability and thus activated a number of sudden mutations on the territory e.g. the war in Syria and the resulting refugee crisis, the protests of 2019, the ongoing financial and economic crisis, the 4th of August explosion, etc. In a highly unstable territory, a strategy that takes years to be developed and then years to be acted by a decree will, by essence, be obsolete by the time it is acted and implemented.

Furthermore, the data used by the SDATL as it is defined in its first chapter is purely physical. As a land-use planning document, the **SDATL bases its orientations solemnly on physical characteristics of the territory** e.g. topography, soil quality, demographic data, altitude, etc. As Yazigi states it, this choice restricts the reading of the territory and thus the choices made by the SDATL. As previously mentioned, the SDATL has a number of **oversights**, crucial data entries that are not included in its initial settings, but that turned out to have tremendous impacts on the Lebanese territory. Moreover, all the initial data of the SDATL is static, although the theoretical framework of the present work has clearly shown the importance of considering territories as mutable entities, and taking into account their tangible and intangible characteristics as they are essential constituents and factors of extreme changes. Thus not considering the historical, political, economical, strategic, legal and technical characteristics of a territory all together and their eventual interactions within it, renders the consequent reading of a given territory as lacking and even obsolete. This can explain the **incompatibility of the orientations** of the SDATL with the tendencies and mutabilities of the territory, and thus their lack of implementation.

All projections done by the SDATL do not take into account sudden changes or events, even though demographic data was heavily subject to unexpected and sudden changes e.g. the 2006 July war, the war in Syria, the ongoing economic crisis, all of these events had a tremendous impact on the population dynamics of Lebanon. As it can be seen in figure 3, the civil war (1975-1991) shows a plateau in the number of inhabitants, the same goes for 2006 marking the effects of the July war, and a visible drop starting 2019 due to the ongoing economic crisis, whereas two periods of important growth can be seen in the post war era and

starting 2010-2011 which corresponds to the beginning of the war in Syria as consequent number of Syrians took refuge in the Lebanese territory.

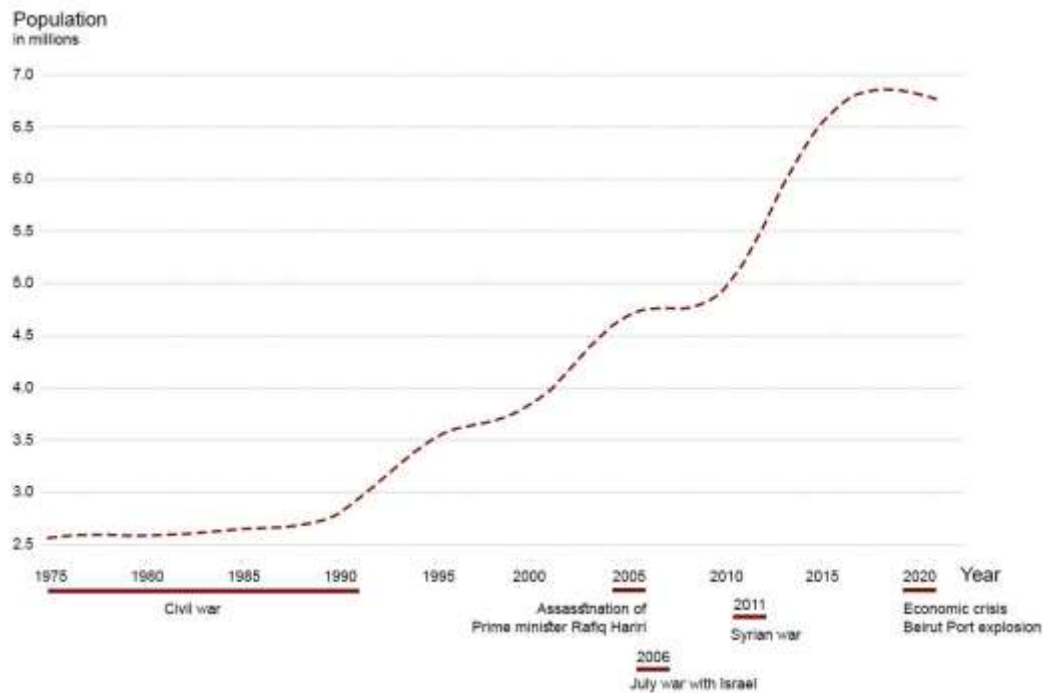


Figure 3: Population growth of the Lebanese territory between 1975 and 2020 (data extracted from the World Bank)

As a measure of comparison, the SDATL projected a population of 5,230,000 in 2030, whereas this number was reached in 2012 according to the World Bank. This shows two main setbacks in the land-use approach of the SDATL: (1) that it only considers static data in its analysis and context setting, (2) that it is incapable of adapting this set data in view of unexpected changes, rendering the resulting orientation as detached from the reality and incomplete.

For a highly mutable territory accelerated by a post-war climate and a series of internal and regional conflicts and unprecedented crisis, this approach compromises the relevance of the orientations of the master plan. Chedid affirms that the plan was “obsolete by birth”, as the data used to develop its orientations is incomplete and outdated by default.

Moreover, according to Dr. Serge Yazigi, Dr. Rita Chedid and Public Works Studio the SDATL followed a top-down approach, it set orientations for the territory in a centralised manner, and did not involve the general public through participatory processes or consultation sessions. The

lack of participatory processes and public involvement deepens the gap between the orientations of the master plan and the needs of the territory and its inhabitants.

Furthermore, the plan uses territorial divisions for its implementation strategy that do not exist on the Lebanese territory. As Najem (2016) explains it, the concept of regionalisation was imported onto the territory but was never reglemented. Regionalisation was later sustained by international institutions through different initiatives, none of which fits within the legislative framework of planning in Lebanon.

Consequently, this hypothesis states that land-use planning, as a practice, cannot produce efficient master plans, especially in highly mutable territories like Lebanon. As a result, the SDATL, a master plan resulting from a centralised decision making process, could never be implemented given the fact that it cannot follow-up with the mutations of the territory and that its orientations do not resonate with the reality of the Lebanese territory. This is not due to the SDATL per se, but due to land-use planning as a practice, as it is not designed to take mutations into account in its methodology. The SDATL followed this methodology as it is the only reglemented one in Lebanon.

As previously mentioned, territories are quintessentially defined by a set of mutable variables, projected identities, the people that occupy them and their perception and experience of the space. **A master plan aimed at ensuring the cohesion of the territory and at setting a strategy for its development should be able to respond to these mutable variables and have a more flexible and adaptive approach.**

However, Wafa Charafeddine who has worked first hand on the SDATL as part of the CDR and as project coordinator, affirmed that the SDATL is a general roadmap meant to set general development and planning guidelines. Given that the plan is not opposable to individuals but only opposable to governmental institutions, a public participatory process is not necessary to set these orientations. Furthermore, Wafa Charafeddine affirmed that during the last phase of elaboration a lengthy consultation process was conducted with unions of municipalities, different governmental institutions, the Mouhafez of different regions, academics and other representatives. Considering that these institutions represent the general public, it cannot be said that there was no public consultation. Though the **representative nature of these institutions has been contested** as previously mentioned.

As the SDATL is meant to be translated and detailed by regional master plans and detailed master plans that are opposable to individuals, even at that stage land-use planning does not include a **participatory process**, in fact within the legal framework of planning in Lebanon planners are bound to **secrecy** when developing master plans. In other words even

though the SDATL is not opposable to individuals, its resulting master plans are, and within a land use framework no participatory process is set to happen (Public Works Studio, 2022) (Yazigi, 2022) (Bitar, 2022). In fact, the SDATL is to be evaluated as a whole, considering its consequent and resulting master plans.

This raises questions as to which extent is the theoretical approach of the SDATL responsible for its lack of implementation. **Land-use planning leaves little to no room for a holistic and participatory approach.** But most importantly it produces a static set of orientations translated by a non adaptive master plan that requires years of elaborations. Given the fact that the Lebanese territory is particularly subject to sudden mutations and constant new challenges and stresses, a land-use approach is residitory. In other words, this hypothesis may not fully explain the fact that the SDATL was not implemented but it proves that **the master plan and its possible resulting regional and local master plans do not constitute a viable strategy for a territory like the Lebanese territory.**

2. Limits of the operational framework of planning

The following hypothesis states that **the operational and legislative planning framework in Lebanon does not allow for any kind of planning effort to be implemented.** Based on the thorough analysis of planning practices, their operational and legislative framework, the actors of this framework and their coordination and available means, this hypothesis builds on this analysis to suggest that the SDATL could not be implemented within this framework.

When analysing the operational framework of planning in Lebanon, and discussing it during the different interviews, it is clear that responsibilities and competences overlap among the different actors.

Lack of a regional scale

As previously mentioned, the SDATL gives general guidelines that are meant to be detailed in regional master plans and local master plans. According to the regulatory framework of the SDATL, regional master plans are either elaborated by an initiative of the DGU or by a number of municipalities grouped by a union of municipalities or through a common agreement. In fact, the **regional scale of territory does not exist** administratively in Lebanon, with its present divisions as they are inherited from Ottoman times. This raises numerous questions about the implementation of the SDATL: how is it supposed to be declined into

regional master plans if the regional scale does not exist? How can it be expected from municipalities to build a common agreement and constitute a “region” in a country where **geographies are based on communitarianism and sectarian identities?**

There seems to be a blocus within the framework of the SDATL, as the regional scale of planning does not exist, and the **requirements for its creation are not clearly defined**. In fact, in decree 2366 of 2009 relative to the SDATL, the creation of a coordination body is proposed to ensure the implementation of the regional scale and the development of regional master plans. This interministerial body was never created, resulting in a **vacuum on the regional level**, as it is reglemented and regulated but does not exist.

Furthermore, in the absence of this institution, the DGU and municipalities are the actors responsible for the creation of regions. However, both of them lack the means -financial and human- to take on this task. Therefore, the SDATL was blocked because it required the production of regional master plans whereas the regional scale does not exist, and the actors responsible for its creation have no means to create it. In this context, international institutions have stepped in and tried to propose a substitute, only as previously mentioned, this alternative cannot substitute the work of the State as it proposes non-reglementary tools that cannot be implemented (Yazigi, 2022).

Top-down planning processes

Moreover, in case regional master plans and detailed master plans were to be developed, their set operational framework is yet to prove its effectiveness in translating the orientations of the SDATL and to reflect the needs and desires of their respective inhabitants. In fact, Public Works Studio, through their numerous work and in their interview, that there is no legal obligation for planning agencies (public or private) to seek public participation/opinion, in fact the contracts signed between the DGU and private consultation firms for the production of planning documents prohibits them from diffusing any kind of information and from discussing the plan with inhabitants. Planning documents are regulated within administrations i.e. **decision-making is restricted to the DGU, the municipality and major landowners**. Furthermore **municipal councils are not representative of their population** i.e. the inhabitants of the locality. Effectively, inhabitants of a circumscription are not necessarily represented in municipal councils. In other words municipalities do not represent their inhabitants, consequently municipal councils have become driven by lobbying and political pressure from landowners. In other words, administrations responsible for producing local

detailed master plans that would translate the orientations of the SDATL are not representative of the inhabitants and thus of their needs in their territory.

Lack of resources

On the other hand, there was a general consensus during the interviews about the **lack of resources, both financial and human, available for municipalities and the DGU**, and the heterogeneity of these resources among municipalities. This was accentuated by the fragmentation of the territory, on the economical, social and political level, coupled with communitarianism this system translated in a highly unequal territory and a lack of coordination across the different administrations.

Lack of coordination

As the SDATL is meant to be further elaborated and declined into several plans, it requires a common political vision and a certain level of coordination and continuous collaboration between the different actors on the different scales of the territory.

In fact, Rita Chedid highlights the lack of coordination between the different institutions responsible for planning, she affirms that none of them has the responsibility to coordinate actors, resulting in a general lack of coordination and inefficiency of administrations. It is important to note that coordination was one of the main tasks of the Ministry of Planning before it was replaced by the CDR, and that the CDR did not take over that task (Chedid, 2022). Even though implementing a national master plan is a complex operation that involves actors on different territorial scales, **not a single organism or institution is responsible for coordinating efforts and for auditing the process**. Charafeddine also confirmed that **there is no real assessment of the SDATL** to this day. Moreover, international actors who have become progressively actors of planning in Lebanon e.g. UN Habitat, UNDP, the World Bank, the European Union and a number of embassies. These actors have tried to substitute and accelerate the traditional operational framework by developing projects and tools for localities and created regions. However as previously mentioned, these actors also lack coordination as their projects tend to superpose each other. Thus with this multiplicity of actors, coordination is primordial to ensure that efforts and funding are not wasted. In reality, international actors are designing non reglementary tools, by developing strategic master plans for example that cannot be opposable to institutions or individuals and thus cannot be fully implemented.

In a framework where **local administrations are not representative** of the inhabitants of their territorial unit, where **responsibilities and prerogatives overlap** and intersect among different actors and where there is a **clear lack of coordination** and a **lack of common vision** in a territory that is already divided, it comes as no surprise that a plan requiring topmost coordination fails to be implemented. On the other hand the SDATL requires that regional master plans be created without clearly defining the regional scale, while relying on the DGU and municipalities, two entities that lack the financial and human means, to do it. In this context the SDATL, by its conception, fell into an **administrative and operational loophole**. This hypothesis suggests that the SDATL was bound to fail within this framework, in that sense reforms to the planning framework and to the concerned administrations are pivotal before the development of any national master plan.

3. A reigning lack of political will

This hypothesis suggests that there was **no political will to implement the orientations of the SDATL, as it does not serve the private interest of the political elite that have become oligarchs in power**. In fact, there seems to be a general consensus amongst activists in the field of urban planning about the lack of political will from the political class to implement any project or strategy that serves the public good.

Private property over public interest

Harb confirmed in an interview that a strategy like the SDATL can **threaten the status quo** created by the political elite over the years. She explains that the SDATL, through its orientations, serves public interest and thus its implementation would compromise one of the most valuable assets of the political and economic elite i.e. **private property**. Even though the plan was born out of a political consensus, its implementation was not envisioned as it **puts neo-liberal private interests at risk**. Land properties have become a money of exchange like any other, it has become a capitalised asset subject to corruption and speculation and used for the private interest of a minority. It is a source of revenue, through speculation and capitalisation, one of the major examples of this phenomenon is the privatisation of the city centre of Beirut by Solidere and the privatisation of the country's coastline. Saksouk-Sasso (2015) explains how public spaces were exploited for private interest by real estate developers in the years that followed the civil war. As previously mentioned, following the civil war, Solidere i.e. a private real estate company, became the sole owner of the entirety of Beirut's

city centre. This was possible through a constructed legal framework that allowed Solidere to operate freely, the same legal framework also allowed other real estate companies and private operators to exploit the coastline and to block public access to the public domain (Saksouk-Sasso, 2015). In fact, by 1997, 80% of the coastline from Jounieh to Beirut was exploited by private operators (Saksouk-Sasso, 2015). This shows a general **trend in favorising private interest over public interest, even if it is at the cost of the public domain**. Authorities have used legal and regulatory frameworks to their advantage, consequently it comes as no surprise that the SDATL would be blocked in its implementation phase given that it puts private neo-liberal interests at risk. Tala Alaeddine and Christina Bou Raphael also confirmed that there is **no political will to serve the public interest**, especially when it compromises private land properties and its ensuing economic value for the political and economic elite. This system that runs on a fragmented territory, devoid of public services and related infrastructure, reinforces dependency through clientelism and thus gives legitimacy to the political class. Chedid gives the example of the development of a local master plan in a municipality in the south of Lebanon, in the master plan a non aedificandi zone was imposed on a natural area due to a accentuated slope, the master plan was approved by the different administrations until its final stage in the Council of Ministers where it got refused. In fact a deputy owned a land parcel in this zone and actively lobbied for the rejection of the plan to conserve the economic value of his parcel. The different interviewees affirmed that this is not an isolated example, and that this dynamic is recurrent all over the territory. This case exemplifies how **private interest can overrule public interest through planning**, but also how **landowners have become active actors of planning in Lebanon** and how political pressure has become a tool for these actors to overrule public interest.

Territory fragmentation

Moreover, as Yazigi expressed it, having a **fragmented territory with regions of extreme poverty benefits the clientelistic system** set by politicians as it helps them maintain their positions as oligarchs. In other words, having a balanced and developed territory does not benefit decision makers. Consequently a plan that puts this beneficial system at risk will be sabotaged to preserve private interest.

Political consensus

The master plan took almost four years to be acted by a decree, according to Wafa Charafeddine, during these four years the SDATL was openly discussed with a specialised ministerial council that was especially created for that end. For four years the CDR and the associated team of experts that worked on the SDATL had to negotiate with the ministerial council for setting a ministerial decree. Different stakeholders from academic circles, union of municipalities and local authorities and representatives from different political parties e.g. parliamentary committees, as well as representatives from the syndicate for engineers and architects and representatives of the civil society also participated in these negotiations and debates. This raises an essential question as to why the SDATL was acted by a decree if the same actors who signed its decree would compromise its implementation. According to Harb and Public Works Studio this was a way for the political elite to build legitimacy through a national project. In other words, the SDATL was elaborated and acted by a decree with no real intention of implementation.

This hypothesis can be debated considering the content of the plan and its legislation. In fact, the SDATL is a roadmap with general intentions rather than a prescriptive master plan per se. It gives general orientations for the development of major urban agglomerations and rural areas. But most importantly, the most essential and crucial part of the SDATL is its redefinition of land use divisions. As previously mentioned, the SDATL introduced 4 land classifications on the territory, knowing that before the document was issued and acted the territory was solely divided into two categories: planned and unplanned. The SDATL imposed divisions based on geographical data and land specifications. Simply by being acted in a decree these divisions became legally binding. However, this system of classification has yet to be fully implemented, as the DGU grants exemptions from these classifications upon the demand of individuals, as previously mentioned this system of exemptions is arbitrated by corruption and bribery.

Furthermore, the SDATL does give general orientations to protect public domain and grant access to the general public, most notably for the coastline. Therefore, there is a **clear conflict of interest between the orientations of the SDATL and the practices of the political and economic elite** on the coastline as these orientations would compromise present private exploitations and their future extensions. Consequently, the present hypothesis does present relevant elements that justify the inaction of authorities regarding the implementation of the SDATL. However, given the redundancy of the political landscape in Lebanon, it seems paradoxical that the same authorities that participated and financed the elaboration of the

SDATL and who voted for it in a decree are the ones that have no interest in implementing it. This hypothesis leaves a number of questions unanswered, but it does highlight how the **private interests of the political and economic elite have come at the expense of public interest and how planning has been instrumentalized to maintain this status quo.**

4. A non adaptive strategy

The fourth and last hypothesis suggests that **the SDATL, as a public policy, did not adapt to the existing operational framework nor did it offer the right tools that would ensure its implementation.** In other words, the SDATL did not fit into the set framework and context. This hypothesis sheds light on the tools and means given to the different stakeholders responsible for implementing the SDATL, and on its feasibility as a public policy. The main actors responsible for the implementation of the SDATL are the DGU and the municipalities, as they are meant to produce the consequent planning documents i.e. regional master plans and detailed master plans.

As previously mentioned the SDATL is meant to be declined into regional master plans. However, the regional scale of planning remains undefined in Lebanon. But meant to be defined either by municipalities through a common need by creating a union of municipalities or simply by deciding to develop a regional master plan, or by the DGU. However Harb notes that there are **no planning agencies on the regional or municipal scale**, meaning that the actors responsible of implementing a national master plan and of translating it into more detailed planning documents do not have the skills to do it. A recurring statement in the different interviews was the lack of available funds in the different municipalities, with the exception of the municipality of Beirut, to put in place the orientations of the SDATL. Consequently, the SDATL requires planning documents at a scale that does not exist and from actors that do not have the means -financial or human- to produce them. Moreover, as Rita Chedid affirms, unions of municipalities tend to be driven by political interest and communitarianism more than territorial advantage. In other words, municipalities that gather the same sectarian identity are more likely to create unions, and to facilitate projects that benefit their territory.

On the other hand, there is a clear **lack of adaptability** with the master plan. The SDATL fails to put in place an adaptive strategy. As the previous sections have shown the Lebanese territory is extremely mutable, even though there has been debates about the validity of the data used for setting the orientations of the SDATL, and for defining land use classifications, the plan

still fails to actively update and revise these classifications and their limits. Wafa Charafeddine affirms that numerous changes can be noticed between the master plan and recent satellite images especially on the limits between urban areas and agricultural areas. Moreover, Serge Yazigi affirmed through his work that the Bekaa valley has lost an estimated 15 to 20% of its agricultural lands.

Furthermore, ever since the work on the SDATL has started, numerous changes accelerated by political instability locally and regionally have had tremendous impact on the Lebanese territory. Once again the plan has failed to take into account these changes and adapt its orientations to them e.g. mass movement of people due to the July war in 2006 and the refugee crisis following the Syrian civil war both of which implied great changes to the country's demographic and its subsequent distribution on the territory. Over the years, as Public Works and Charafeddine both affirmed, the DGU has given an important number of exemptions from the original classifications of the SDATL, these exemptions allow for instance a land owner to construct on a land parcel originally classified as agricultural or natural area. Once again, there was no real census on these exemptions, as no one was responsible for keeping track and monitoring them and their impacts. These changes are expected in a territory such as the Lebanese one, and according to Wafa Charafeddine it is inevitable that a master plan set for such a long timeline ends up having discrepancies. However, not tracking and not adapting to changes and mutations as they happen enlarges the gap between the territory and the plan making it even harder to implement. Governmental institutions and administrations for whom the plan is opposable, will thus have to take into account these discrepancies and double their efforts to update on the local or regional level the data before setting any regional or local master plan. Given that the same administrations lack planning units and the financial and human means to put in place master plans, it cannot be expected from them to do additional work that requires specific expertise. In other words, a legally binding master plan requires administrations subject to corruption, political pressure, and a lack of financial and human means not only to translate its orientations on an administrative level that is yet to be defined but also to take into account mutations that happened over the years and adapt to them.

The SDATL has thus not adapted its framework to the state of these administrations, their capacities, and their capabilities. This lack of adaptability has resulted in a legally binding planning document that cannot be implemented because it **does not offer the tools** to that end. Beyond the relevance of the data being used, the theory behind it, political will, the general corruption of public administrations and the administrative procedures, the SDATL requires something that is **technically almost impossible to achieve** at the regional and local level.

Another proof of this lack of adaptability is the fact that ever since it was acted by ministerial decree the SDATL was never reviewed when the concerned parties realised that its implementation strategy is not viable. This could have been done by defining on the national level the regional scale, Harb and Charafeddine state that there has been a tentative for doing so by UN Habitat, the initiative aimed at creating Regional Technical Offices (RTO). The project dates back to 2007, with both Harb and Charafeddine affirming that the initiative did not lead to any concrete impact on the territory. The project has produced a number of publications that set the organisational, technical and operational framework for RTOs as manuals, but there is seemingly no real territorial impact. As Yazigi confirmed it, all of these initiatives taken by international organisations and institutions lack coordination and most of the time, cannot be reglementary.

Therefore, **the SDATL is a public policy that fails to ensure the right tools and means for its main stakeholders to ensure its implementation.** Firstly it requires regional master plans when the regional scale of planning does not exist, and when the main stakeholders responsible for setting this scale do not have the means to do it. Secondly it fails to put in place a monitoring and adaptive strategy whereas the Lebanese territory is subject to constant and extreme mutations, making it inevitable that the plan becomes obsolete within its set timeline. Third, it disregards the political climate of the country and its associated practices i.e. corruption, sectarian pressure and clientelism, all of which has been a handicap for any public policy, this is the result of years of failed governance system according to Chedid. The problem is that **the SDATL, in return, did not adapt to this status quo, it simply faded in it.**

The following figure, presents the processes, actors and setbacks faced by the SDATL:

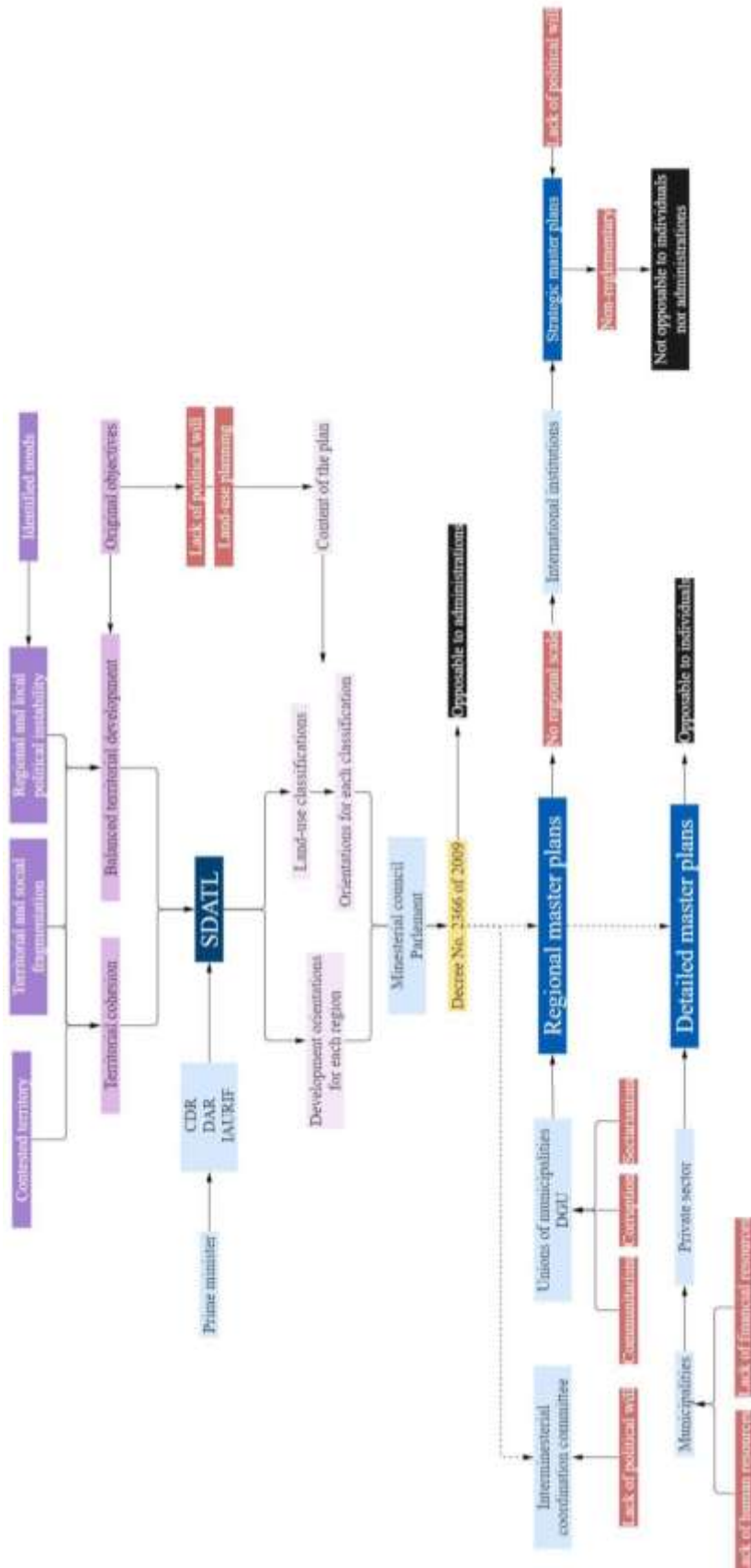


Figure 4 : Processes, actors and setbacks of the SDATL

Chapter VI: Discussion

The present work has shed light on a number of elements that explain to some extent the shortcomings of the SDATL and the possible reasons behind the failure of its implementation phase. This qualitative analysis was done by breaking down the different readings, arguments, critics, work and statements that were gathered through interviews and readings into four thematic statements. These statements turned into the aforementioned hypotheses that aim at pinpointing the reasons and dynamics that did not allow for a much needed national plan to achieve its objectives.

The following section builds on the presented hypotheses to argue and challenge them, as a way to identify the most plausible one i.e. the one that encompasses the most relevant elements explaining the shortcomings of the SDATL. This section will also challenge the research question and statement by building on the realised impacts of the SDATL in the previous sections. Subsequently, the relevance of this evaluation work will be mentioned, followed by the limits of the chosen evaluation process.

A. Crossed analysis of the emitted hypotheses

The aforementioned hypotheses have proven that the discrepancies of the SDATL with the territory could be explained by (1) its theoretical framework, (2) the operational framework of planning, (3) a lack of political will to implement it and (4) its lack of adaptability. Each hypothesis presents relevant arguments, built on expertise, research, professional experiences, and academic work. However, when tested against each other in the following section, the analysis results might show which hypothesis holds the most relevant arguments.

The setbacks of land-use planning

The first hypothesis suggests that the theoretical framework of the SDATL i.e. land-use planning has clear limits, especially in a highly mutable territory like Lebanon. However, as the research has shown thus far, there was an urgent need that was identified from the 1950's to develop such a plan i.e. a national master plan capable of ensuring the cohesion of the territory and its balanced development through adequate planning and development policies. This was done based on the law of urbanism of 1983, that only allows the implementation of land-use planning through its legislative framework. Thus, given the urgency that was

amplified by the post-war period of the 1990's, authorities and the team decided to rely on the available law of urbanism and the methods it offers and allows. If the SDATL were to follow any other planning procedure or theory it would not be reglementary, thus it would have never been approved by a decree, in fact it would have the same fate as all strategic plans that were consequently produced by international institutions. On the other hand, if the concerned actors were to start a project of rectifying or changing the law of urbanism, delays would have been imposed and extended. In fact, as it has become clear throughout the present work, administration processes in Lebanon are subject to lengthy procedures and possible loopholes due to a complex power structure and its associated corruption. In which case, the release of a national master plan, that was much needed at that time, would have been extended indefinitely. This extension would have had important consequences on the territory as well, as it would have given even more delays to the reglementation of land-use classifications. Thus, the recognised and aforementioned impacts of the SDATL, no matter if they correspond to its original objectives or not, would not have been delayed or simply not accomplished. This would entail that the identified loss of agricultural and natural areas would have been even more consequent along the territory.

Therefore, the SDATL was developed with the available means and tools, because it could not afford to change legislation at the time, especially given the internal political climate and the reality of administrative procedures. In other words, there was no other choice in that particular time but to develop a land-use planning document.

Limits of the operational framework of planning

The second hypothesis suggests that the operational framework of planning did not allow for the implementation of the SDATL. This relies on the discrepancies between the implementation strategy and the actual divisions of the territory i.e. the inexistence of the regional scale. In fact, the implementation strategy of the SDATL faces a blocus on the regional scale, as the latter is not defined and the conditions of its creation are blurry. The SDATL relied on an operational framework that does not allow for its implementation. It could be argued that the SDATL could have imposed a regional division within the published document, only it is not within its objectives nor its prerogatives. The national master plan cannot impose new territorial divisions, this was unanimous among the different interviewees, within the legislative framework the only entity capable of imposing that kind of division is the State through the modification of administrative divisions in Decree 116 of 1959, this decree was

rectified in 2003 and 2017 with decree 522/2003 and decree 52/2017, these two modifications brought changes to the number of Mouhafaza. Therefore, ever since 1959 there was no tangible and consequent change to these administrative divisions. Yazigi and Chedid both affirm that this kind of initiative was always blocked by two major forces: communitarianism and sectarianism. In fact, the current administrative divisions constitute a political status quo, imposing regions based on territorial logic might be faced with refusal given how anchored these dynamics are. A proof of this is the dynamics that push municipalities to create unions, and the intentional omission of a given municipality based on its political affiliation or religious majority that was explicitly explained in the previous sections. Thus, as long as the territory and the Lebanese society are driven by sectarian and communitarian interest, a new administrative division might spark conflict by challenging a status quo. These dynamics have been implemented during the civil war, when there was a growing fear that was created by the events of the war between the different communities and sectarian groups. As the territory was fragmented by sectarian groups, it left deep scars within the social fabric. As previously explained, political parties relied on this fragmentation ever since the civil war to justify their legitimacy. Thus challenging territorial divisions challenges the status quo and consequently the basis of political power, which explains why the law relative to administrative divisions was never rectified by the same people who profit off of it, but also why new administrative divisions i.e. regions, were never created based on territorial logic. Finally, when the initiative was done by international institutions e.g. UN Habitat, it did not lead to any concrete reglementary project.

The SDATL, as a national master plan cannot impose new territorial divisions, but it can suggest their creation, which it did. In fact, international initiatives that went in that direction, did so according to the recommendations of the SDATL. The SDATL suggested a change without truly imposing it, for the sake of its political acceptance. Noting that Yazigi called this an admission of impotence, as the SDATL is meant to challenge the status quo even though it cannot single handedly change it.

A reigning lack of political will

The third hypothesis points at a lack of political will to implement the SDATL. Although this hypothesis was relatively unanimous amongst academics and activists, it was argued in different ways, it can also be challenged by a number of factors and events.

In fact, this hypothesis relies on two statements: (1) the private interest of a political and economic elite overcomes public interest, thus the SDATL which is a plan that defends public interest was not implemented due to political pressure, (2) the SDATL is meant to be developed as a national master plan promoting the balanced development and cohesion of the territory, both of which do not profit the political and economic elite of the country thus its original objectives were abandoned and the resulting plan is a land-use classification document.

This hypothesis does indeed answer some parts of the research question, it does explain why the original objectives of the plan were not met i.e. the balanced development and cohesion of the territory. Despite its unexpected content or objectives, the plan was still not implemented into regional master plans and local ones. This could indeed be explained by the first point i.e. the lack of political will to implement any orientations that threaten private property. However, it is crucial to establish that the SDATL does not threaten private property per se, it threatens the *laissez-faire* that reigned over the planning sector. The plan includes orientations that call for the protection of public property, the access to public domain, and the preservation and development of public spaces, whereas throughout the years despite these orientations public spaces have become enclosed, restricted, privatised and capitalised mostly through political pressure by the political elite, as it was the case for the coastline of the country and the city centre of Beirut.

Looking through the history of the country, it is clear that political instability and fragmentation are constant, but also that they benefit the political class. Thus, deviating the SDATL from its original objectives i.e. territorial cohesion and balanced development, seems to fall within the interest of the political class. Nonetheless, the SDATL as it has been published and acted by ministerial decree also threatens the *laissez-faire* that was present, by imposing new land-use classifications the document makes it harder to exploit some lands. As confirmed by Wafa Charafeddine, the whole project was financed by the Lebanese government exclusively, it was defended by public institutions and approved by parliament. In other words, this hypothesis faces a paradox: the same political class that supposedly sabotaged the project, financed it and approved it. When faced with this question, experts who defended this hypothesis suggested that this initiative was carried through because it legitimises the political class, and that given the operational framework it was evident that the project would not succeed. Yazigi affirmed that there was a clear lack of political will to go through with the implementation phase of the SDATL, stating that the operational framework and its consequent tools and divisions could be rectified and adapted, but they would require a strong political will but most importantly a common political vision.

Therefore, this lack of political will and common vision could explain a number of shortcomings in the content of the SDATL and in its implementation. This situation comes as no surprise considering the timeline of the elaboration of the plan, as it was elaborated in a post-war era, considering the events of the war and the ideologies that were being defended but most importantly the armistice law of Al-Taef, the country was facing a clear political and social divide that was perpetuated, a master plan that requires unity and defends it does not fit within this narrative. In other words, the political setback of the SDATL goes beyond the will of the ruling class, as it was elaborated within an unfavourable context for its supposed objectives and thus deviated from them to seek acceptance.

A non adaptive strategy

The fourth hypothesis takes a wider look at the SDATL as a public policy, stating that the legislative framework imposes land-use planning, the operational framework does not include the regional scale, and the political climate of the country hardly allows for the objectives to be attained, thus the SDATL would state these obstacles as a database and work through them instead of falling short on each one. Instead the SDATL came through with propositions that could not be sustained, which facilitated its political blocus. In other words, the SDATL did not adapt to its context. This is clear in the second chapter of the national master plan, where challenges are enumerated, in fact throughout the chapter the most challenging elements of the territory are not mentioned e.g. the lack of means of public institutions, the social divide of the country, territorial fragmentation, latent corruption, local and regional political instability, etc. By not acknowledging these challenges, the SDATL ended up fading in this loophole. The plan did not provide the right tool to either avoid falling short on its implementation phase due to a limited operational framework, or to overcome political divides and work through international institutions to regulate strategic planning.

In fact, all planning efforts that were done by international institutions could have provided an alternative to a number of identified setbacks. Instead these initiatives were not properly oriented nor coordinated, thus they provided non-reglementary tools as a substitute for a non-functional operational framework. Following this hypothesis, where the SDATL falls short is on its lack of adaptability, as Charafeddine affirmed it no real assessment of the plan nor its impact (direct and indirect) was ever done nor by the authorities nor by an independent organism, simply because it was never planned.

The SDATL also did not accommodate its implementation to the concerned actors and their available means. It is important to mention once more the post-war context of the time, meaning that all public institutions were recovering from the effects of the civil war, in addition to the corrupted practices of the political class. As mentioned previously, the SDATL demanded the impossible from these institutions. The DGU and municipalities who are the main concerned actors of the implementation process both lack the necessary human and financial means to carry through the implementation process. The fact that these administrations are undervalued and underfinanced has also been blamed on a political choice to limit territorial development.

However, the SDATL is a planning document resulting from an expressed need in the law of urbanism, it must to some extent follow a given roadmap and some administrative formalities. Municipalities are the most pivotal actor on the local level in terms of planning, although they do not have planning agencies, they are the only available authority capable - legislatively- of carrying the orientations of the SDATL onto the territory. The SDATL is not a novelty plan, it is a reglemented document included in the law of urbanism of 1983, thus its liberty of action is limited and regulated. In other words, it cannot be expected from a national master plan to achieve what is not within its prerogatives. However, the SDATL did not even achieve its original objectives, it fell short on its original objectives and turned into a land-use classification plan. Thus, it could not accomplish what it was meant to accomplish, perhaps due to the present political climate or because it has foreseen the possible limits of its implementation.

These hypotheses can all explain the shortcomings of the SDATL even though they present limits within their thought process. When crossing these hypotheses through one another, connections can be made that explain some paradoxes and answer a number of questions. Revealing a complex set of circumstances and processes that lead to the resulting situation, all of which explain certain blockages of the SDATL. Only what this crossed analysis has shown is that these processes are not isolated, they are anchored and systematic.

B. Achievements of the SDATL

First plan of its nature, the original need was mentioned in the 50's and numerous trials have failed, this at least went through and was approved, despite its shortcomings which come as a price of its approval.

1. Land use classifications

The SDATL introduced land use classifications that did not exist before. It provided new directories and associated guidelines for each land use classification. As previously mentioned these four classifications were meant to restrict and control urban sprawl and preserve agricultural and natural areas, only in reality these guidelines were rarely respected with the DGU providing developers and landowners with the possibility to ask for exemptions in case their land parcel is classified as agricultural or natural and thus allow new constructions on them. These exemptions were driven by political pressure and clientelistic dynamics as confirmed by Public Works Studio, Rita Chedid and Serge Yazigi. However, these classifications were in fact an achievement for the SDATL, given that land classifications were restricted to two categories before that i.e. planned and unplanned. The SDATL created a new legal setting for the protection of natural areas and agricultural lands by classifying them; this classification is the first step towards implementing protection measures. According to Wafa Charafeddine this is perhaps the most crucial (and only) achievement of the SDATL, as it was impossible from a legislative point of view to impose any kind of protection without these classifications. In other words, even though the SDATL was not implemented into regional master plans and local detailed ones, it did constitute a turning point in terms of legislation. However, as confirmed by all interviewees, given that the DGU spent a considerable amount of time and effort giving exemptions to these classifications rather than working on regional master plans, these classifications have not been truly respected. The DGU through this exemption system desacralised the achievements of the SDATL, even though it is one of the main actors responsible for its implementation. In other words, the SDATL did achieve a milestone legislatively by introducing new land classifications, but administrations failed to preserve and apply guidelines associated with them. In that sense, unless administrations take necessary measures to enforce these classifications and apply their associated guidelines, the SDATL's achievement will remain an almost purely theoretical and legislative one with no real application. These classifications are the first step toward a consequent and impactful

achievement but not an achievement per se, especially given that the DGU grants more exemptions to them than it creates regional plans to reinforce them.

Despite this achievement, it is essential to remember the original goal and use of the SDATL. The SDATL was meant to meet two essential needs for the territory: a balanced development strategy for the territory and a cohesive plan. More specifically, to define a development strategy by defining roles and vocations for every region of the territory as a way to ensure their individual growth in a cohesive and balanced way throughout the territory, and to define and position Lebanon within its regional context and ensure its growth in relation to that. Given the complexity of the Lebanese context, the approach of the SDATL remains static and limited. In reality the document could not be implemented, regional plans were not developed because the regional scale does not exist and the actors responsible for its creation do not have the means to conduct a big territorial operation defining regions, on the other hand those same actors have fallen complicit to communitarianism and clientelistic discourses that have reigned over public administrations for years.

The fact remains, that the SDATL achieved something and reached a milestone that no other policy of plan had reached before it. This achievement is perhaps not what was expected of it nor did go through entirely, but it opens new doors and possibilities for a more sensed planning practice. The SDATL is the first plan of its kind in Lebanon, the aim of this research is to evaluate i.e. to question and challenge this plan, as to find areas of improvement.

2. Regional Strategic planning

The following section takes a closer look at an unexpected impact of the SDATL i.e. strategic planning documents that were developed by international institutions and that include the orientations set by the SDATL. As previously explained, these plans are not reglementary and therefore inapplicable as they are not opposable to individuals. Plus, they lack coordination and complementarity given that international institutions have proliferated on the Lebanese territory and have progressively become planning actors.

The regional scale does not exist within the Lebanese territory, after the SDATL was acted in 2009, the need for regional master plans became apparent for its implementation. Najem's (2016) work also shows that the UE has been trying to legitimise the regional scale since 2002. In 2009, the UE funded the ADELNORD project which was considered as a first concrete effort to implement the SDATL by the CDR who was an active actor in the project. ADELNORD proposes the creation of a region in the northern part of Lebanon; the project

resulted in a Strategic Sustainable Regional Development Plan led by the CDR and published in 2011 and a number of development plans for different areas of the region (Najem, 2016). The project was finalised in 2014, but it failed to mobilise enough funds and did not get the necessary political and community endorsement. The UE conducted similar projects e.g. ARLA and CIUDAD on the Lebanese territory which resulted all together in 27 regional plans, these projects were funded by the UE and comprised years of work and combined expertise though none of them accomplished its objectives.

However, these initiatives constitute a pivotal element when evaluating the implementation strategy of the SDATL, as they are the only concrete attempt at translating its orientations. Although these plans are non reglementary, non opposable i.e. legally binding and not applicable they exist for a number of created regions. They are initiated and financed by international institutions e.g. UN Habitat, UNDP, AFD, the European Union, the World Bank, International Embassies, these institutions have progressively become planning actors in the absence of a constructive initiative by the State. These institutions lack coordination as they produce overlapping strategic regional plans, but perhaps their most important setback is their non-reglementary nature. The tools they offer are non adaptive as they result from a set model of methodology that does not coincide with the Lebanese context and its complexities.

This experience shows that international institutions can overcome a number of setbacks when it comes to the planning exercise e.g. funding and human resources. However, they cannot substitute the Lebanese State nor its running operational framework, they would have to work through it using reglementary tools. As long as alternative tools cannot obtain political endorsement, it seems residatory to propose them and consequently waste a considerable amount of funds and effort in developing strategic regional plans that cannot go through. These strategic regional plans remain the only concrete translation of the orientations of the SDATL that have yet to be implemented, thus they present a unique opportunity.

C. Relevance of the evaluation process

This work shows the significance of evaluating the SDATL as a national policy, considering the intrinsic particularities of its context, its actors on the different territorial scales, its content and its theoretical approach, its operational and legislative framework and its expected, unexpected and realised impacts. All of these elements turned out to be paramount for the evaluation process as they are the main constituents of the potential success of the national master plan. In fact, given its national scale, **the SDATL engages a plethora of actors**

and mechanisms on different scales, whose efficiency and available means can either ensure the success or the failure of the national master plan. A holistic evaluation of the national planning process has not been done, the SDATL itself has not been assessed after 13 years of its approval. Even though the plan and its associated mechanisms have shown their limit, the plan is set to be reviewed in 2030. The aim of this evaluation is to avoid the same scenario in 2030 by pinpointing the shortcomings of the SDATL and its associated mechanisms.

Considering the current events and state of the Lebanese territory, implementing the SDATL is certainly not a priority nor for the government nor for the inhabitants. The country is facing an unprecedented crisis that affects all residents of the Lebanese territory, and has put the country in a state of emergency. However, the evaluation of the SDATL sheds light on a number of essential elements. In fact, given the ongoing state of emergency, numerous international agencies and institutions in collaboration with some public entities have been strategizing the implementation of a nation-wide emergency plan e.g. the UN has set an “Emergency Response Plan” in collaboration with local NGOs to accompany the most vulnerable residents, the plan amounted to US\$378.5 million (UN, 2021). Other plans like this one have been announced, with international institutions trying to act as a substitute for the Lebanese State, which runs the same risks associated with the creation of strategic plans in the case of the SDATL. In fact, following the Beirut port explosion on August 4th, 2020, a considerable number of international governments, institutions and NGOs have offered immediate humanitarian aid and relief for the population. However, these efforts showed a lack of coordination between the different actors, both local and international with households receiving exceeding ratios of food per day for instance (Fawaz & Harb, 2020). Financial aids were unevenly distributed, with people in dire need not receiving any help (Fawaz & Harb, 2020). Even though NGOs and international institutions ensured immediate relief to those in need alongside the considerable number of volunteers who played a crucial role at the time, their initiatives lacked once again coordination and organisation.

This proves that **a number of elements resulting from the evaluation of the SDATL can be projected to other areas and fields in Lebanon. The experience of the SDATL is not isolated in the Lebanese context, its associated mechanisms and their subsequent failure can be seen for a number of policies and endeavours.** Therefore, even if the implementation of a national master plan for the planning and development of the Lebanese territory is not a top most priority, identifying and understanding its shortcomings is crucial to be able to implement any development and/or planning strategy.

Planning regulates territories, it can help understanding, governing and developing them, it holds a considerable impact on the different levels of the territory both tangible and intangible. Thus having a viable and reliable planning strategy is paramount for the development of any territory. Even though planning is not perceived as a priority today in Lebanon, the presented work tackles the different levels, actors and mechanisms of planning on the entirety of the national scale, which has not been done yet. This lack of assessment has led to uncoordinated and unreliable practices that have become a waste of effort and funds.

The Lebanese context has a structured framework, even though this framework includes mechanisms that have been rigged by corruption and the sectarian power structure over the years, it is **the only one that can get through reglementary policies**. Evaluating the SDATL helps understanding this framework and its limits but most importantly its opportunities, for instance the particular structure of the CDR offers opportunities to bypass administrative loopholes although it has yet to be exploited efficiently. This framework can be used to implement policies should the concerned actors rely on it rather than non reglementary substitutes.

The SDATL, for instance, challenged this structure from within, even if the content of the plan deviated from its original objectives, it is the first plan of its kind, and **the first successful attempt of a national master plan almost 50 years** after it was identified as an urgent need. The SDATL carried through the available framework and challenged it to propose a set of territorial orientations on the national scale and for different sectors. Although the plan did not go through its implementation phase, it is de facto a reference for all planning agencies, it had unexpected outcomes and impacts but it achieved a milestone in territorial planning in the country for instance by implementing four land-use classifications that set the stage for a number of protection, development and conservation policies.

Thus, the aim of the evaluation process is to be able to build on the experience of the SDATL to have a more successful attempt in the future. This is not a value judgement of the SDATL, but an evaluation of the plan and its whole setting, that builds hope at setting the stage for more sensed and more effective practices in the future.

D. Limits of the evaluation process

This evaluation process has tried to extensively take into account all the possible factors and elements that help evaluate the SDATL. From the methods it uses, the validity of the data, the content, the context, the operational framework, the different actors, the expected and

realised impacts and the political setting. All of these elements have brought some light into the research question, showcasing the complexities of this national master plan. The evaluation resulted in a series of hypotheses that were tested at charge and discharge and argued against each other.

However this methodology leaves out a number of elements that do not fall within the scope of this research. The most relevant one being the **lack of available data and assessments** done within governmental institutions. As previously mentioned, no real assessment or documentation has been conducted on the exemptions that have been given by the DGU thus far for land-use classifications as defined by the SDATL. Although this kind of data would have been indicative of the efficiency of the SDATL, it has not been collected or assessed neither by the DGU nor any other administration. Furthermore, land-use data and other geographical information system (GIS) databases are not publicly accessible in Lebanon, making any quantitative assessment of the areas that were lost or gained in each land classification challenging. Additionally, a team responsible for assessing and following up the implementation of the SDATL was formed within the CDR, only this team never completed its mission. Although the reasons remain blurry, this leaves out some valuable data that could have been exploited by the present research.

Another limit is the **lack of a deep and intricate analysis of the political climate** and scene in Lebanon. In fact, this would involve delving deeper in the third hypothesis by analysing the political play of power that happens between the different parties and their representative nature. Effectively, different parties have particular interests and agendas that may or may not fit with the objectives and orientations of the SDATL. This is more evident on the local scale, it can be observed by identifying the municipalities who have conducted studies to develop local master plans and those who have not, on the other hand those who receive more funds because of their political affiliations versus those who do not. This kind of analysis may bring new light into some elements of the political setting. However it was all summarised by the general dynamics and mechanisms that reign of the Lebanese political exercise i.e. corruption, clientelism, and communitarianism. Since the entirety of political parties hold the same ideologies that were fought over the civil war with most of them actually being derivatives from the armed militias that conducted the civil war, it comes as no surprise that territorial fragmentation provides legitimacy for those parties.

The present research also **failed to interview enough people from the political class and from governmental institutions**, to understand what their point of view would be, especially regarding the third hypothesis. Effectively, politicians themselves are rarely

attainable and unwilling to contribute to academic works, other governmental institutions such as the DGU or municipalities are hardly reachable. Additionally, due to power relations a number of people working within administrations are not willing to disclose information that may be sensitive or that may put them at risk. This leaves a number of elements out of scope, even though most interviewees have worked closely within the field of planning with governmental institutions and have enough insights.

The research process shows a number of limits, some areas were not explicitly explained as to not lose track of the aim of the research and draw in interminable explanations of the political setting. The other significant limit is the unreachable nature of some administrations, especially given the geographical distance. Although these limits do not truly affect the results of the research, **these missing elements could help fine-tune the thought process and data that was presented**, which could help understand in more intrinsic details the phenomena that lead to the presented results.

Conclusion

This research presents an evaluation of the SDATL, the **first and only national master plan** of the Lebanese territory. In the first chapter a **theoretical background** of the main concepts that sustain the research are laid out: **territoriality and land-use planning**. The concept of territories was discussed, and their mutable and multidimensional nature was established as an essential element to the planning exercise. Then land-use planning was discussed as a colonial import into the Global South where it remained and defined planning practices in numerous countries. Its instrumentalisation as a tool of power exertion was also discussed, especially due to its centralised decision-making process, subsequently the limits and setback of the practice were laid out by crossing the concept of territory with the characteristics of land-use planning. The second chapter dives into the specificities of the **Lebanese territory**, by presenting its **complex history and recent periods of regional and local instability** that have had a tremendous impact on the territory. Lebanon's regional and local socio-political context undeniably governs its development prospects, with the discourses of the civil war being recycled into the local political scene and regional tensions having a considerable impact on the country. The most crucial element of this chapter is the instability that reigns over the Lebanese territory, making it particularly subject to unexpected mutations and sudden changes. The third chapter takes a closer look at the **operational and legislative framework of planning practices in Lebanon**, it sheds light on the inheritance of land-use planning through the French Mandate and the administrative divisions that were partly inherited from the Ottomans and how these two colonial structures interact and make up the basis of planning in Lebanon. Then the main planning actors are enumerated and assessed, they make up a complex set of actors who have overlapping prerogatives. Further on the different levels of planning are broken down as to better position the SDATL within this operational framework and all the resulting documents that derive from it on the smaller scales. Subsequently in chapter IV, the **SDATL, its history, its actors, and its content** are analysed and assessed. This chapter also lays out the oversights of the document by crossing its content with the analysis that was done of the Lebanese territory and the conceptual framework. Disparities between the orientations that were given by the plan and the territory are also identified, which reveals that the SDATL was not properly implemented. Chapter V takes on the previous acknowledgement and presents an **evaluation of the plan**, starting with the expected impacts that were identified as urgent needs as early as in the 1950's. Then the realised

impacts were identified, in fact the evaluation process shows that the SDATL had unexpected impacts and that it achieved that were beyond its original objectives. Following the impact analysis a rundown of the methodology that constitutes the basis of the work done thus far and the evaluation that follows is detailed and sustained by a number of **interviews** done with professionals, academics and activists. This chapter goes on to present different **hypotheses** that explain the shortcomings of the SDATL and its lack of implementation, with each hypothesis sustaining its argumentation based on the conducted interviews, the theories and concepts presented, the analysis of the Lebanese territory and its socio-political context, on the operational framework of planning practices in Lebanon and on the content of the master plan. Given the multiplicity of experiences, background and opinions of the interviewees each hypothesis presents enough substance to sustain the claim that one element or the other is responsible for the failed implementation strategy of the SDATL. However, in chapter VI all of the previously presented **hypotheses are argued at charge and discharge** and cross tested against each other as to test and assess the thought process that went into defending them. Subsequently, the main impacts and unexpected implementations of the SDATL are presented to challenge the research process and shed light on the potential of the master plan. Finally the relevance of this evaluation is stated in accordance with the current situation and most recent events in Lebanon, the limits of the process and evaluation conducted thus far are also stated, even though they do not impact the overall results but explain some ramifications in the thought process and evaluation.

The Lebanese territory presented an urgent need from the 1950's to implement a national master plan capable of ensuring the cohesion and balanced development of the territory through planning policies. This plan was released in the early 2000's however it failed to translate these objectives and then failed to go through its implementation strategy. The SDATL is the only plan of its kind in Lebanon, legislatively it is still the only reference document that governs all planning practices and territorial orientations. Knowing that the lack of a cohesive, productive and sustainable development strategy is part of the reason why Lebanon is in its current state, evaluating this document seems essential to pinpoint its weak points and shortcomings and to avoid a similar scenario.

The research has clearly shown that Lebanon has been a contested territory since its creation, and that the political class feeds on this narrative and profits off of the fragmented nature of the territory. In that sense, a national master that ensures the cohesion and the development of this territory threatens this status quo, thus the SDATL was deviated from its original objectives and was blocked on different levels, **part of this blocus is intentional**

whereas another part is institutional and content-related. However, without a clear assessment and evaluation of this plan, any following efforts e.g. national master plans, emergency strategic plans, economic relief national strategies, etc. are bound to repeat the same dynamics, follow the same rigged mechanisms and fail.

Furthermore, the efforts that were invested in deviating the plan from its original objectives and the efforts that were invested in sabotaging its implementation strategy by the current political class is a clear witness of the relevance and importance of this plan as it calls for a unified territorial vision.

Another major conclusion of this research is that **the introduction of tools by international institutions into the Global South** e.g. sustainable development, strategic planning, collaborative governance, etc. cannot be effective if they do not fit within the legislative framework of the concerned territory. This was clearly the case with strategic plans that were developed by international institutions but that could not be implemented because they are not reglementary in Lebanon. These strategies, although innovative and sustainable, do not have real value if they cannot be implemented within the given context. Additionally, international institutions cannot replace a reglementary state led action, this was clear through the attempts that were done to create new regional divisions on the Lebanese territory. These tools ended up wasting funds and time for all concerned actors by proposing non reglementary alternatives. Complex territorial settings require adaptive strategies that fit within this complexity, sustainable development strategies and strategic plans require a solid and cohesive unified political vision, which is not the case in Lebanon nor in other countries of the Global South. Failing to recognise this complexity and the challenges it represents will result in responses that are out of context and non effective.

Finally, the SDATL is the first plan of its kind, it answers a territorial need that could not be met for over 50 years. The plan and its team had to face a particular set of events from its elaboration up until its approval by ministerial decree: it was born in a post-war era, in a deeply fragmented territory, it had to face the assassination of the late prime minister Rafiq Hariri and the subsequent wave of political instability that followed with internal conflicts and the 2006 July war. These circumstances have had tremendous impact on the plan, an impact that could not necessarily be avoided, thus **the experience of the SDATL is to be built upon**, the plan is not a finality per se but a vehicle for the potential development of the Lebanese territory. In fact, the SDATL sheds light on a number of institutional and operational drawbacks that would not have been explicitly identified otherwise. **The plan has to go through an arborescence of procedures to be implemented, following this arborescence helps identify**

drawbacks at different levels in an effective way. The SDATL could be seen as a trial and error step to be built upon and as a **stepping stone for more adaptive policies.** It achieved results that no other policy had been able to do, some undesired or unexpected and yet interesting. Most importantly, **the SDATL challenged the status quo,** which is undeniably a desired outcome in the Lebanese context, and it is the responsibility of professionals, activists, the civil society, and academics to push through these ideas within the given framework even if they are rudimentary, as they can still achieve meaningful results.

Last but not least, today **planning and sustainable development are far from being a priority in Lebanon.** The country has been in a constant state of emergency for more than two years, the population had to face a succession of destructive and traumatic events coupled with an unprecedented financial and economic crisis. In this climate, where basic needs and bare necessities are not accessible, planning and sustainability are not a priority per se but the concepts and tools they offer can find themselves useful. **This crisis crystallises years of failed governance and fragmentation** that halted and sabotaged projects and policies such as the SDATL that were meant to provide the tools to avoid this kind of situation. **Today any efforts, national or international, will have to face the same challenges as the SDATL,** thus understanding what kind of complications and blocus the latter has faced can help ensure a better success rate for any emergency strategy. This research is an evaluation aimed at providing a basis for building better planning practices and at developing more effective development policies.

References

Ansari, J. (2004). Time for a new approach in India. *Habitat Debate*.

Beirut City Profile | UN-Habitat. (2021). Retrieved August 22, 2022, from <https://unhabitat.org/beirut-city-profile>

Cancellation of Water Supply Augmentation Project (Bisri Dam Project). (2020). World Bank. Retrieved August 22, 2022, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/statement/2020/09/04/cancellation-of-water-supply-augmentation-project-bisri-dam-project>

Chedid, R. (2019). *La Planification Spatiale Stratégique: Outil de développement territorial équilibré et de décongestion de l'aire métropolitaine de Beyrouth* [Thèse de doctorat, Paris Est]. <https://www.theses.fr/2019PESC2067>

Conseil du Développement et de la Reconstruction, Dar al-Handasah, Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région Ile-de-France, (2005). «Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement du Territoire Libanais». Beirut, Liban.

Cowen, D., & Gilbert, E. (Eds.). (2007). *War, Citizenship, Territory*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203938126>

Davie, M. (2013). Beyrouth et ses faubourgs: Une intégration inachevée. In *Beyrouth et ses faubourgs: Une intégration inachevée*. Presses de l'Ifpo. <http://books.openedition.org/ifpo/3299>

Decree-law on administrative divisions No. 116 of 1959

Decree-law on municipalities No. 118 of 1977

Decree-law on the law of urbanism No.69 of 1983

Decree-law on administrative divisions No. 522 of 2003

Decree-law on the SDATL No. 2366 of 2009

Decree-law on administrative divisions No. 52 of 2017

Delmotte, F., Hubert, M., & Tulkens, F. (2009). Les schémas directeurs, et après ? Brussels Studies. La revue scientifique pour les recherches sur Bruxelles / Het wetenschappelijk tijdschrift voor onderzoek over Brussel / The Journal of Research on Brussels. <https://doi.org/10.4000/brussels.698>

Elden, S. (2010). Land, terrain, territory. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34(6), 799–817. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132510362603>

Fawaz, M. (2017). Planning and the making of a propertied landscape. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 18(3), 365–384. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2016.1180423>

Forester, J. (1982). Planning in the Face of Power. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 48(1), 67–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944368208976167>

Ghandour, M., & Fawaz, M. (2010). Spatial Erasure: Reconstruction Projects in Beirut. *ArtEast Quarterly*. https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/arch_pubs/48

Hitti, P. K. (1965). *Short History of Lebanon*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Hocreitère, P. (1991). Problèmes actuels des schémas directeurs. Conférence de Patrick Hocreitère du 20 mars 1991. *Droit et ville*, 32(1), 131–142. <https://doi.org/10.3406/drevi.1991.1315>

Human Rights Watch. Lebanon: Huge Cost of Inaction in Trash Crisis. (2020, October 28). Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/09/lebanon-huge-cost-inaction-trash-crisis>

Lamy, S. (2010). *Le droit de l'urbanisme au Liban*. Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA).

Mahmalat, M., Atallah, S., & Maktabi, W. (2021). Public infrastructure procurement in post-conflict power-sharing arrangements: Evidence from Lebanon's Council for Development and Reconstruction. 27.

Mango, T. (2004). *Solidere: The battle for Beirut's Central District* [Thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology]. <https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/30107>

McCusker, B., & Ramudzuli, M. (2007). Apartheid spatial engineering and land use change in Mankweng, South Africa: 1963–2001. *The Geographical Journal*, 173(1), 56–74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4959.2007.00222.x>

Moderne, F. (1983). L'avenir des schémas directeurs et des plans d'occupation des sols: Les conséquences sur la planification urbaine. *Droit et ville*, 16(1), 27–68. <https://doi.org/10.3406/drevi.1983.1109>

Naeff, J. (2018). *Beirut's Suspended Now*. In J. Naeff (Ed.). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65933-6_2

Najem, Y. E. (2016). *International donors and urban planning policy and practice: The European Union in Lebanon* - [Thesis]. <http://scholarworks.aub.edu.lb/handle/10938/11175>

Nahas, C. (2017). *Order of Engineers and Architects (Beirut)*. September 25, 2017.

Nasr, J., & Verdeil, É. (2008). *The reconstructions of Beirut*. 1116. <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004162402.i-1500.299>

Nassour, R. (2020). *Environmental Contestation, Planning and Political Change: The Save Bisri Campaign in Lebanon* [Thesis]. <http://scholarworks.aub.edu.lb/handle/10938/21887>

Njoh, A. J. (2003). *Planning in contemporary Africa: The state, town planning, and society in Cameroon*. Ashgate.

Painter, J. (2010). Rethinking Territory. *Antipode*, 42(5), 1090–1118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2010.00795.x>

Public Works Studio (2018). المديرية العامة للتنظيم المدني: عبثية الممارسة ما بين الخطة الشاملة والتصاميم. التوجيهية والاستثناءات والقرارات /عبثي. *Legal Agenda*. <https://legal-agenda.com/>

Public Works Studio. (2017, December 19). الإطار التشريعي للتنظيم المدني: منعرف التاجر شو بده، البنك! شو بده، البلدية شو بدها، بس ولا مرة حدا سأل الناس شو بدها /التشريعي-للتنظيم-المدني-منع. *Legal Agenda*. <https://legal-agenda.com/>

Sader, H. (1998). Ancient Beirut: Urban growth in the light of recent excavations. In P. Rowe & H. Sarkis (1998), *Projecting Beirut: Episodes in the construction and reconstruction of a modern city*. Munich and NY: Prestel.

Saksouk-Sasso, A. (2015). Making Spaces for Communal Sovereignty: The Story of Beirut's Dalieh. *The Arab Studies Journal*, 23(1), 296–318.

Salibi, K. (1990). *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*. University of California Press.

Salti, N., & Chaaban, J. (2010). The role of sectarianism in the allocation of public expenditure in postwar Lebanon. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 42(4), 637-655.

Sandercock, L. (2004). Commentary: Indigenous planning and the burden of colonialism. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5(1), 118–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464935042000204240>

Sweid, K. (2021). The Political Economy of Patronage in Lebanon—The Case of the Council of Development and Reconstruction. *Lebanese American University (LAU)*. <https://laur.lau.edu.lb:8443/xmlui/handle/10725/12898>

The Economist (November, 2020). Deconstructing the Lebanese central bank's Ponzi scheme. *The Economist*, The Final Unravelling. Retrieved December 5, 2020, from

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2020/11/05/deconstructing-the-lebanese-central-banks-ponzi-scheme>

Tyan, M. & Rizk, N. (November, 2020). Le cadre juridique qui régit les biens immobiliers dans les régions endommagées par l'explosion du 4 Août 2020 . IUA, Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts, Beirut

UN, (2021). UN and NGOs launch \$378.5M Emergency Response Plan to support the most vulnerable people in Lebanon | United Nations in Lebanon. (August 6, 2021).

Urban Planning Law, (1983).

Verdeil, É. (2012). Beyrouth et ses urbanistes: Une ville en plans (1946-1975). Presses de l'Ifpo. <http://books.openedition.org/ifpo/2104>

Vick, K. (2020). 'This Is Our Last Chance.' A Photographer Captures the Energy for Change in Beirut After the Explosion . Time.

Watson, V. (2009). 'The planned city sweeps the poor away...': Urban planning and 21st century urbanisation. *Progress in Planning*, 72(3), 151–193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.progress.2009.06.002>

Yahya, M. (2004). Let the dead be dead: Memory and the post-civil war reconstruction in Beirut. Symposium Urban Traumas, The City and Disasters, Barcelona Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona.

Yassin, N. (2012). Beirut. *Cities*, 29(1), 64–73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2011.02.001>

Zeid, M., & Thawaba, S. (2018). Planning under a colonial regime in Palestine: Counter planning/decolonizing the West Bank. *Land Use Policy*, 71, 11–23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2017.11.048>