

## Beirut 1830–1920, un ‘scalar fix’ en contextos cambiantes. Un estudio de caso explorando las teorías de re-escalamiento y urbanización extendida

Beirut 1830–1920, a ‘scalar fix’ on shifting grounds.

A case study exploring rescaling and extended urbanization theories

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### Resumen

Los estudios urbanos están experimentando un discurso renovado sobre la producción del espacio urbano. Se aborda de nuevo la “cuestión urbana”, visto que el discurso existente es incapaz de explicar la producción de los actuales paisajes socioespaciales. La teoría de la “urbanización planetaria” o de la “urbanización extendida” propone un paradigma pionero para el estudio de lo urbano. Centrándose en los procesos en vez de los asentamientos urbanos, dicha teoría postula que el fenómeno de urbanización es el resultado de dos momentos: concentración y extensión. A su vez, dicha teoría aboga por la necesidad de contemplar dichos procesos desde una perspectiva histórico-geográfica. Aplicando este enfoque a la ciudad de Beirut, este artículo pone a prueba las hipótesis de estos nuevos empeños teóricos. Al mismo tiempo, el análisis conecta con conceptualizaciones previas relacionadas con el territorio: las teorías del re-escalamiento y del sistema mundo. En efecto, la extensión y concentración cuestionan la implicación de la escala en la producción de estos dos momentos de urbanización. También el proceso de urbanización, entendido como un proceso histórico continuo, aborda inevitablemente aspectos de la teoría del sistema mundo, que son relevantes para enmarcar la teoría de urbanización en el periodo específico, 1830–1920, del caso de estudio.

### Palabras clave

Escala, re-escalamiento, urbanización, concentración, extensión, economía-mundo.

### Abstract

Urban studies are experiencing a renewed discourse on the production of the urban space. The “urban question” is addressed again, as the existing discourse is incapable of fully explaining the production of actual sociospatial landscapes. The theory of “planetary urbanization” or “extended urbanization” proposes a groundbreaking paradigm for the study of the urban. Focusing on urban processes rather than on settlements, this theory postulates that the urbanization is the result of two moments: concentration and extension. In turn, this theory contends the necessity of approaching such processes from a historical-geographical perspective. Applying this approach to the city of Beirut, this article serves as a testing ground for some of the hypothesis of these new theoretical endeavors. At the same time, this analysis connects with previous conceptualizations of territorial change: the rescaling and world-system theories. Indeed, the implication of scale in the production of the moments of urbanization, extension and concentration, is brought up. Also, the urbanization process understood as an ongoing historical process inevitably touches on aspects of the world system theory, particularly relevant to frame the urbanization theory within the specific period, 1830–1920, of the case study.

### Keywords

Scale, rescaling, urbanization, concentration, extension, world-economy.

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## 1. Preliminary statement

### Aim

This article explores, through a historical case study, how “rescaling” and “extended urbanization” theories add a fundamental spatial dimension for understanding and analyzing the urban. The essential contribution of these theories lies in connecting processes tackled so far in the fields of history, geography, and sociology to spatial processes and configurations constituting the major focus of urban studies. These processes, referred to as “urbanization processes”, are essential to understand the urban phenomena beyond its mere morphological attributes. A meta-discourse on urbanization is thus elaborated, as distinguished from the urban, because its spatial impact is not limited to bounded spatial entities, but encompasses a worldwide kaleidoscope of spaces and scalar configurations. The scope of these two complementary theories highlights the importance of urbanization both as a historical construct and an ongoing actual process. It therefore links urban dynamics to the concept of the *longue durée*, acknowledging the construction of long-term historical structures over fixed bounded spatialities. These structures imply that cyclical periods of relative materialistic stability and instability have an impact on urbanization processes and rescalings. These insights on the “urban question” help build a new narrative of the urban understood «as a structural product of social practices and political strategies, and no longer as their presupposition» (Brenner, 2013:27) widening our understanding of spatial configurations, their interaction and their ephemeral stability as they are subject to cyclical rescalings under each period of capitalist restructuring.

### Proposal

This work explores the implication of urbanization processes in the construction of particular spatial configurations in the case of the city of Beirut between 1830 and 1920. The city is of particular interest for testing the extended urbanization and rescaling theory for two reasons. First, because Beirut’s functional role successively changed since its integration in the world-economy in early 19th century. Thus, the study of urban restructuring processes related to these rescalings is essential for the understanding of its urbanization process. Second, because Beirut is considered a city in the periphery of the world-economy. This contextualizes the theoretical framework in the particular case of an ‘extended urbanization’ in the periphery, and in relation to processes of capital expansion. It also enables us to contemplate the implications of core-periphery relations in the urbanization process, and in turn highlight new aspects regarding the theoretical discourse. Beirut will reveal to be a challenging case study for investigating the complex core-periphery relations and rescaling operations, both entailing territorial reconfigurations at the origin of specific moments of the urbanization process.

### Methodology

As urban structures and processes evolve over time they require a context. Therefore, this study relies on the fields of history and geography as important “lenses” through which this urban analysis builds up its methodological framework. The historical approach is of particular relevance since we are analyzing the urbanization processes in 19th century Beirut on the premise of their historical construct. This approach is based on Wallerstein’s historical system concept, understood as a social system distinguished in the way the material basis of the society, or its mode of production, is organized during a period of time before being superseded by another. In turn, we refer to “world”-system when the modes of production of the historical system go beyond the local activities of its society. The world-system concept is particularly relevant for this study for its

relevance as «the world-system perspective looks at human institutions over long periods of time and employs the spatial scales that are required for comprehending these whole interactions systems» (Chase-Dunn, 2007:1060).

There are only two world-systems according to Wallerstein: the world-empire, and the world-economy (Taylor, 1994:5). While the mode of production of the world-empire is redistributive<sup>1</sup> the one of the world-economy is capitalist (Taylor, 1994:5–6)<sup>1</sup>. But, around 1900 the world-economy system is globalized becoming the only system in force until today. This induced a major globalization of capital that associated with major changes in the conception of space and time (Kern, 2003), constituted a real transformation of the spatial structures. During this process, major agglomerations have been the focus of processes of restructuring and rescaling corresponding to the requirements of the world-economy's mode of production, meaning by this according to the needs of capital and commodity circulation. This, in turn introduced a tripartition in the organization of the world-system which became composed of dominant core societies and dependent semi-peripheral and peripheral societies (Wallerstein, 1983). This tripartition favored a social division of labor and a spatial dichotomy:

This hierarchization of space in the structure of productive processes had led to an ever greater polarization between the core and peripheral zones of world-economy, not only in terms of distributive criteria (real income levels, quality of life) but even more importantly in the loci of the accumulation of capital. (Wallerstein, 2001:30)

The urbanization case of Beirut is particularly relevant between 1830 and 1920 for it straddles the two world-systems: the Ottoman world-empire and the globalized world-economy, which directly affects its urbanization process. At the same time, the geographical approach is essential because it locates the study in the particular context of the Mediterranean port-cities, considered as specific units of analysis (Keyder *et al.*, 1993). The ottoman *échelle du levant*, of which Beirut, are considered as «the doors through which European capitalism found its way into the Ottoman territories» (Hanna, 2005:91).

## Contribution

The main contribution of this study is confronting the theoretical discourse on extended urbanization and rescaling to a specific historical urban case. Indeed, Neil Brenner alluded to a possible urban research that tackles this *problématique* in a historical perspective: «How has the relation between concentrated and extended urbanization evolved during the history of capitalism? Since the first industrial revolution of the 19th century, the big agglomerations and metropolitan centers have long been the primary arenas of capitalist creative destruction [...]» (Brenner, 2013:26).

Furthermore, I argue that the application of the “extended urbanization” and rescaling theories, in the particular case of Beirut, cannot be totally understood without referring to its peripheral and even semi-peripheral position in the context of 19th century world-economy and globalization of capital. Thus, this study helps contemplate the urbanization theory from the perspective of the periphery.

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<sup>1</sup> Redistributive economy: System of economic organization in which a substantial share of the wealth flows into the control of a centralized administration before being redistributed to the population. Capitalist economy: Economy based on wage labor, and the distribution of goods in a free market.

While this study does not pretend to bring new historical information regarding Beirut, it reorganizes the urban narrative of the changes that occurred in the city, during a period of profound urban and economic transformations experienced locally and globally. In this process, theoretical aspects are confronted to particular geographic, historic and economic features, outlining the importance of case specific studies. Regarding the modest contribution to urban studies on Beirut, this research builds upon a more or less recent body of work concerned with a simultaneous reading of history, economy, politics, society, culture and urban transformation that occurred in the city (Kassir, 2005; Davie, 1996; Hourani, 1981; Hanssen, 2005; etc.). Until now these different topics have been studied profoundly but mostly separately by scholars and writers. In addition, the contextualization of the study in Ottoman Beirut, follows a flourishing discourse, since the 1970s (Quataert, 2009:413; Lafi & Freitag, 2011), regarding the Ottoman Empire heritage. In fact, many scholars are insisting on the importance of aspects of the empire as valuable objects of retrospective studies today. This trend also contests the west as the only reference for change (Hanna, 2005:101), allowing to study urbanization processes in a comparative perspective:

In a comparative perspective, the societies of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century experienced capitalist and colonial expansion differently from other peripheral regions in the world-economy. For one, the size of the empire meant that Ottoman territories became peripheralized at different times and in different places. Moreover, state bankruptcy in 1875 and the subsequent financial control by the European-controlled Public Debt Administration (PDA) neither turn the Ottoman Empire into a formal colony, nor integrated it into the ‘informal empire’ of one particular imperial power. (Hanssen, 2005:85)

## **2. The ‘rescaling’ and ‘extended urbanization’: a double framework for analyzing and understanding urban processes**

### **A brief introduction**

In the founding article of the “extended urbanization” theory Neil Brenner argues that: «[...] the urban character of any site, from the scale of the neighborhood to that of the entire world, can only be defined in substantive terms, with reference to the historically specific sociospatial processes that produce it» (Brenner, 2013:11).

Since the Chicago School, the “urban character” has been mainly studied in contrast to other sites considered as non-urban. Specific characteristics defining a settlement as urban have come to constitute a nominal essence common to all urban phenomena. But this description of the morphologies and attributes of urban spatialities is unable to inform us on the processes leading to existing sociospatial landscapes, be it cities or other territories. These processes are the “constitutive essence” of the urban and can be described as:

[...] the contradictory sociospatial relations of capitalism (commodification, capital circulation, capital accumulation and associated forms of political regulation/contestation) are at once territorialized (embedded within concrete contexts and thus fragmented) and generalized (extended across place, territory and scale and thus universalized). (Brenner, 2013:11)

For an investigation of this “constitutive essence” of the urbanization process, a hypothesis is proposed: «Urbanization contains two dialectically intertwined moments: concentration and extension» (Brenner, 2013:21). By “concentration” we allude to a specific settlement where population, urban services and infrastructures etc. form a distinguishable dense unit, an agglomeration, in the territory. By “extension”, we refer to specific infrastructures and networks involving the circulation of commodities, labor, raw materials etc. needed for the agglomeration and developing on extended territories outside its bounded space, but integrated to its operational

sphere. Brenner argues that while the concentration moment has been thoroughly studied, the “extended” processes that this concentration generates over a wide variety of territories have been under-studied. This groundbreaking urban postulate, not only proposes the study of urbanization processes instead of urban settlements attributes, but also a new theoretical framework based on the dialectic of concentration/extension to build spatial research upon. Inevitably, these two moments of concentration and extension allude to an ordering and structuring of the territory understood in this article through the “rescaling” theory. This theory tackled by a myriad of academics (Swyngedouw, 2004; Brenner, 2001; Cox, 1996) approaches the construction of scale through capital, state, and social aspects and acknowledges that a given scale is constantly subject to rescaling processes:

Although historically given before the emergence of capitalism, each of the scales is transformed by capitalist processes such that each is part of a systematic hierarchy that maintains and facilitates the different processes involved in the accumulation and circulation of capital in a fully integrated space economy. (Marston, 2000:229)

In turn, sociospatial landscapes are regarded as multiscale spatial configurations that constitute a “scalar fix” (Brenner, 1998; Jessop *et al.*, 2008), or a temporary stable structure. The latter is altered by constantly changing processes of production and accumulation that induce rescalings producing new territorial configurations. Indeed, «[...] multiscale configurations of territorial organization position geographical scales within determinate, hierarchical patterns of interdependence and thereby constitute a relatively fixed and immobile geographical infrastructure for each round of capital circulation» (Brenner, 1998:459). Scale, is therefore understood not only as geographic (spatial extent) or operational (hierarchical level) but also as a relation between sociospatial features: a “geographical organizer” (Brenner, 2000:362).

This article argues that the urbanization process includes rescalings in its *modus operandi*. Concentration is both premised upon and induces urban rescalings and restructurings operating from the scale of the agglomeration towards the territory. Whereas, extension takes place through regional and territorial rescalings, but eventually reverts to the scale of the agglomeration. Thus, “rescaling” processes transcend hierarchical spatial organizations and participate in the functional reordering of territories, through restructuring of processes of production and accumulation. Rescalings are part of the substantive essence of the urbanization phenomena, deployed through spatialities of concentration and extension.

### Shortcomings

The research on concentrated and extended urbanization is an incipient field that apart from a few key publications is still under construction (Brenner, 2013; Brenner & Schmid, 2012, 2013). While outlining new research paradigms the theory still includes “blind spots” to enlighten. For that matter, it lacks in defining the relations between the specific scales that are produced during the two moments of urbanization. It also still bears mainly on theoretical postulates while lacking of concrete case studies. This supposes the adoption of a methodological approach capable of generalizing and achieving a first study of this metaphenomena. Nevertheless, if we acknowledge the multiplicity of spaces where this dialectical urbanization process is deployed; such a generalizing theory is challenged by geographical and historical aspects of a particular context, as well as by specific configurations that escape the sharp dichotomy of concentration/extension. Furthermore, the relation of this worldwide urbanization phenomenon with world-system theories has not been quite explored. Nevertheless, the theory could benefit from an understanding of the relations

underpinning the structuring triad of core, semiperiphery and periphery<sup>2</sup>, postulated by the world-system theory to refine the discourse on the processes of concentration and extension.

### 3. Case study. Beirut 1830–1920

In the following section, the economic, political and spatial transformations that Beirut underwent between 1830 and 1920 are outlined. They are divided in four temporal subsections corresponding to specific periods in the formation of the city. Each one develops crucial restructurings and rescalings at the origin of particular urban and territorial configurations.

#### Beirut a brief introduction

Beirut is located on the eastern part of the Mediterranean called the Levant, at the intersection of the European and Asian continent. Its geographical position is important, since it integrated the city to the network of maritime trade since the mid-19th century. Thus, Beirut became the junction between the caravan trade and pilgrimage routes of the hinterland and the flourishing Mediterranean commerce on the coast. The shift in the location of important cities from the hinterland to the coast became generalized in this period. The introduction of the steamboat, favoring sea trade over land routes, caused a concentration of rising port cities around the Mediterranean, and a decline of important cities in the interior. Also, at the beginning of the 19th century Beirut is one of the many cities constituting the vast Ottoman Empire. The latter was composed of different spatial, multi-ethnic and administrative divisions of which Bilad-Al Sham<sup>3</sup>, which constituted Beirut's immediate regional context.

Beirut is still a small and insignificant town at the end of the 18th century, with medieval city walls delimitating the rectangular shaped intramuros and surrounding agricultural fields. It hardly rivaled with Acre, Tripoli and Saïda, the port-cities that were dominating the commerce in the region during the 18th century (Kassir, 2005:97). This was soon to change. Settled on a small hill, it had a privileged geographical orientation for the localization of a new port. Also its particular topography positioned it at the feet of the surrounding mountain that was to play an important although controversial role in the history of its development. Not only did geographical and topographical assets favor Beirut. A series of economic conjectures and the undermining of commerce monopolies in Acre and Saïda (Hanssen, 2005:28) were to make it an attractive place for trade business. Its population hardly surpassed 8.000 inhabitants (Fawaz, 1983) and was mainly composed of artisans and merchants, but in the coming decades it would hardly fit inside its walls.

#### Periodizing scalar processes and urban transformations

1830–1840. The Egyptian interlude: Beirut's rise along the coast

In 1832, the Egyptian invasion of Bilad Al-Sham marked an unprecedented period where for the first and only time; this region was under a centralized administrative authority based in Damascus. Recently tested reforms in Egypt, with positive results, were soon to be employed in the region to develop its economic activity (Owen, 1993:77). The need to maintain a large army, public security and political control, to keep ottoman authority at distance, were the Egyptians' major concerns.

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<sup>2</sup> The structure of the world-system is composed of dominant core societies and dependent peripheral regions, with semi-periphery acting as a buffer between these two regions.

<sup>3</sup> Bilad Al-Sham included actual Lebanon, Syria and Palestine.

Thus, agricultural activity was promoted, while existent taxes were raised and new ones introduced to augment the state's revenues. The restructuring of the productive sector induced an extension of the land that was largely dedicated to the cultivation of mulberry trees (Owen, 1993:79). The nearby mountain, under princedom rule, was a radical case becoming dependent on external food resources. Outside Beirut's city walls mulberry fields multiplied.

Silk became the major export activity. In order to comply with this new role an adequate infrastructure was needed. The building of the new wharf in 1832 adapted Beirut's port to steamship transports, while the *quarantaine* made it the inevitable stop for the introduction of goods to Bilad Al Sham and the coal station the only port of call of the eastern Mediterranean (Kassir, 2005:129-130). The main facilities needed for trade: khans and warehouses were also renovated (Hanssen, 2005:32). The first urban restructuring adapting the city to its new functional role, involved the ordering of the intramuros. The latter, an intricate patchwork of residential and production units (Davie, 1996:19-37), was divided into eight districts with a police station in each.

The growing local and regional importance of the city and the assertion of its commercial role as the main port of Damascus brought with them political recognition. A local council was elected, consular presence consolidated, missionary interests arose, and European businessmen settled. The city's prosperity was undeniable: Egyptian policies increased agricultural output and trade exchanges integrating the region to the world-economy, especially after the Anglo-Ottoman free trade agreement of 1830–1838 (Issawi, 1977).

Nevertheless, in the mountain, the nearby extended territory for silk production, a growing discontent among cultivators striving under high taxes and the alienation of the landlords, will be decisive. The first rebellion in the mountain (1835–1838) will profoundly shake the Egyptian stability. Taking advantage of this turmoil, the city is brought back under Ottoman rule in 1840. A series of territorial restructurings and rescalings follow at once. The mountain princedom is dissolved and the mountain divided in two districts, under the government of feudal lords. In turn, the city is demarcated from its provisioning territory and "centralized" in its region becoming the capital of the province of Saïda. This temporal territorial structure, or "scalar fix", will in turn be affected by a second wave of reforms, the *tanzimat*, launched by the Ottomans in 1839.

#### 1840–1864. Beirut during the first decades of the Ottoman *tanzimat*

Proclaimed in 1839, the *tanzimat* inaugurated the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire and constituted a landmark in the history of the imperial provinces. These reforms were driven by the need for money to maintain military protection after the Napoleonic wars, the need for survey and knowledge of the land for a right extraction of surplus and distribution of resources, but also by the state conviction that supporting the productive units of the empire including agricultural households, traders and artisans strengthened the state (Owen, 1993:57; Mundy & Saumarez, 2007:41–42). The first aim of the *tanzimat* was to generate wealth. Thus the administration operated a restructuring of its main sources of revenue: cultivated land and taxes, which entailed a restructuring of its territorial and administrative structure. To achieve bigger revenues for the state, the land tax was the most eligible to be risen but also tax revenues from the provinces of the empire were to be directly controlled (Owen, 1993:59). This induced a reform of the administrative structure to create a unique central and direct system of tax administration. A direct tax exaction entailed a registration of all property which was impossible without unifying the customary laws regulating land. This will be resolved with the issuing of a new land code in 1858. But, the intention of centralizing the system by abolishing tax-farming and introducing a direct administration system

will not be achieved totally. First, because it was opposed by groups threatened of losing their privileges of tax collection (notables and landlords) and second, because local agents of the state administration in the provinces were manipulated by the local ruling elites (Hourani, 1981: 36–66).

But the *tanzimat* introduced a new concept that questioned the established social order and the notion of property. It proclaimed equality between all ottoman subjects regardless of their religion and a safeguarding of their property. This caused a «legitimacy crisis» (Deringil, 1998; in Makdissi, 2000:194) that reflected in a divergent understanding of the reforms by the elite and the society in a multiconfesional empire. In other words, a «subaltern understanding of the modernization of the empire» (Makdissi, 2000:182) will arise, reclaiming among others, the equal right to property. This led to upheavals in the mountain in 1858, which spread into a sectarian struggle to Damascus until 1861 with the abolishing of tax-farming and the declaring of the *mutasarrifiya*<sup>4</sup> in the mountain.

The “revolt of the mountain” was intricately related to the city (Hourani, 1981:170–178; Fawaz, 1984). It was greatly supported by merchants, investors and bankers in Beirut as their interest in the mountain, their silk supplier, were at stake. Indeed, since 1850, due to the silk disease *pebrine* affecting the French silk production, demand for Syrian silk rose. The lucrative business was led from Beirut which was the center of export to Lyon through the port of Marseilles. Nevertheless, the silk commodity chain was still incomplete, putting the export business at risk and in a constant instability of supply. In fact, the cultivation of silk in the mountain depended on mulberry cultivators who were tenants and had to pay taxes to the landlords. These taxes were paid on a crop sharing<sup>5</sup> basis, but as soon as the business flourished, land lords started demanding taxes in currency, and cash rents<sup>6</sup> extended (Owen, 1993:159), which sometimes obliged tenants to borrow money from merchants in Beirut to pay their taxes. In turn, creditors of the city had access to credit from foreign funds and could provide loans not only to cultivators, but to landlords who had to pay the *miri* tax<sup>7</sup>. Soon the landlords were starting to become an obstacle for traders in Beirut. The latter were annoyed by the arbitrary levy of fees on silk, were tired of negotiating with them to enforce contracts made with the cultivators for silk provision, and were not being repaid their loans (Owen, 1993:161). But above all, city traders wanted direct access to land as a commodity, as the new land code was gradually transforming usufructuary rights from cultivation into property rights (Mundy & Saumarez, 2007:48).

The city engaged the mountain, in the flows of foreign funds and local investments of the world economy, and became its extended territory for capital investment. The resulting rapid extension of the silk industry, especially after the civil war in 1860, generated wealth and unfolded concentration processes in Beirut, which by now was the capital of the province of Saïda. This was embodied by the establishment of urban institutions operating at regional scale and testifying of the city’s new functional rescaling. The Ottoman bank, the first in the Arab provinces and the trade offices in Khan Antoun Bey, on the port, epitomized Beirut as the center of trade in the region. The Damascus-Beirut road (1858–1863) inaugurated regional transport ensuring the export of goods from the hinterland to the port.

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<sup>4</sup> *Mutasarrifiya* of Mount Lebanon: A special provincial government within the Ottoman Empire not submitted to tax-farming (the only one in the empire).

<sup>5</sup> Crop share: Proportion of the crop harvest to be paid by the tenant farmer.

<sup>6</sup> Cash rent: Payment in currency for the tenant farmer.

<sup>7</sup> Tax paid for land given in concession and belonging to the Ottoman state.

The rescaling of Beirut will also transform the city's urban fabric. The first laws regulating building alignments and street enlargement favored the easy circulation of goods in the city. But the accelerated process of extramural urbanization was the most notable transformation. Indeed, a consistent growth of the city's inhabitants, due to the 1860's war refugees and an ongoing immigration from the mountain, achieved a colonization of the city's extramuros, the gradual disappearance of the walls, mulberry fields and orchards. In turn, the new land code of 1858 provided security for ownership and transferability of title on urban land, while creating the awareness of holding a stake in the capital. Consequently, an urban property market developed. Also, Beirut successfully negotiated a return of 7% on property taxes from the state to be reinvested in the city's infrastructure.

But a downturn in Beirut's hierarchical position in the region, due to a new territorial rescaling, will slow the city's rapid transformation. The Ottoman Law of the provinces (1864–1871) affected the hierarchical ordering of the cities in the empire and induced a competition for "capitalization"<sup>8</sup> (Hanssen, 2005:26). "Capitalization" was fundamental in a time where an administrative upgrading gave the city direct accessibility to the empire's operational spheres. Beirut lost this battle in 1865 and was integrated, as a subdivision, to the province of Syria having Damascus for a capital. The loss of its capital status also entailed the loss of the revenues on property taxes, which will be strongly felt in the city plying under an outburst of cholera in the same year.

#### 1864–1888. A restructuring of urban grounds

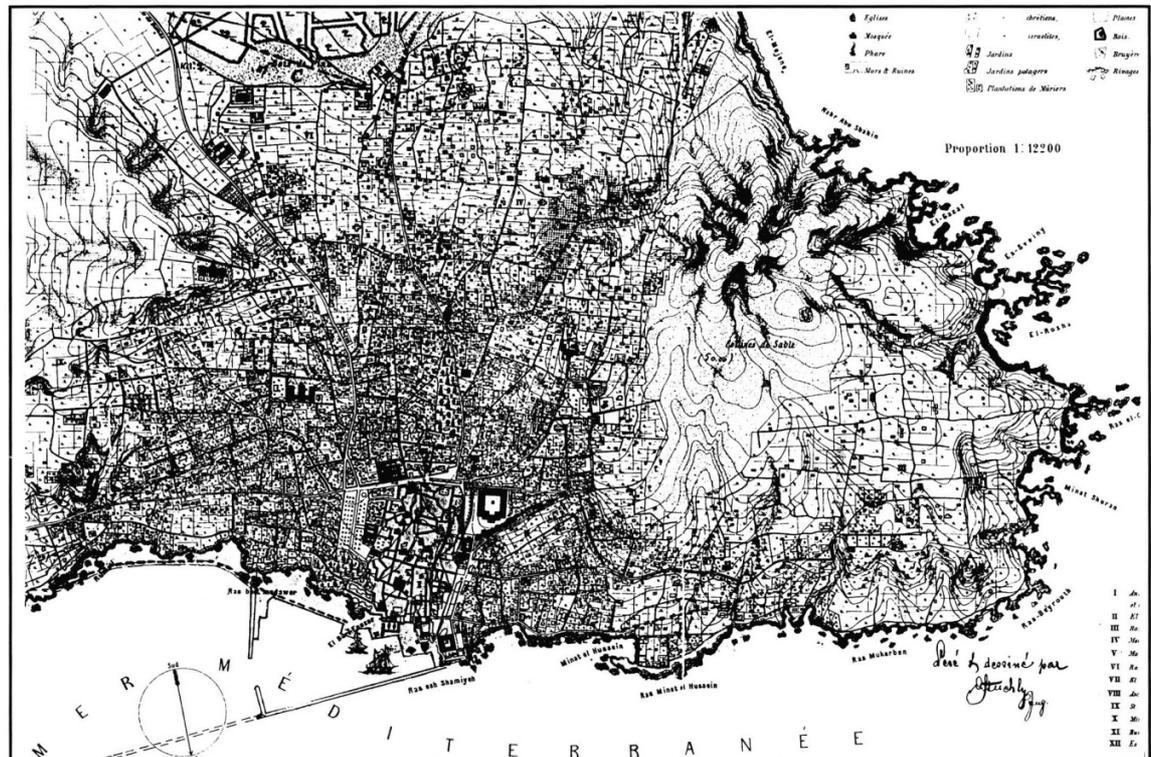
After the weakening of Beirut's position in the administrative hierarchy, the city reverted to its own urban grounds to strengthen its territorial competitiveness. The municipality's role will be decisive. Furthermore the city was faced by challenging events. A silk disease affecting local worm in 1870 and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, facilitating western imports of silk from Asia, required a quick solution. In addition, the 1873 world crisis combined with the official bankruptcy of the Ottoman state (1876) marked a turning point in European investments and thus local accessibility to foreign funds (Owen, 1993). In turn, the administration of the Ottoman Debt will generate an 'urbanization of the capital' redirecting investments towards infrastructure and construction works by granting concessions for public services to Europeans in a way of settling debts. The urban arena will be greatly affected.

At the same time, the provincial law (1864) further developed in 1877 detailed the role of the municipalities in all imperial provinces and Beirut's municipality was provided with institutionalized rights to intervene in the daily life and urban fabric of the city through «urban planning, market control, health, public morality, and public welfare» (Hanssen, 2005:116). Urban hygiene was the main focus under the pressure of a densely populated city and recurring epidemics putting trade at risk. Public health became a structuring device. Cemeteries, slaughterhouses and tanneries were removed from the nearby intramuros, ambulant merchant banned from public passages. Urban space experienced a legal and physical regulation, to upheaval the city to this new discourse of modernity adopted in all the empire's provinces. Two of the city's main squares became the center of attention of the municipality's restructuring work. In 1869, popular stores were torn down in El Sur square on the western part of the city to turn it into a park. On the vast square, El Burj,

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<sup>8</sup> «The term capitalization entered the English journalistic vocabulary [...]. Commenting on the urban effects of the transfer of Italy's imperial capital from Turin to Florence in 1864, the Pall Mall Gazette opined that "Florence is being summarily subjected to the advantages of capitalization" as "new networks emerged and winning a law court, a tax office, or a prefecture lifted a town's status and provided economic benefit".» (Hanssen, 2005:26)

bordering the city walls, the garden of the medieval palace once occupying the site, is fenced. Then the Petit Sérail (1884), accommodating the municipal and *mutasarrifiya* offices, is built and a central fountain placed on the square achieving a new centrality on the opposite side of the city's Quantari hill, topped with the ottoman governor's residence, the Grand Sérail, and the military hospital (Kassir, 2005; Davie, 1996).



**Figure 1.** Beirut: Consolidation of urban grounds (1876). (Source: Davie, 1996: Annex).

Not only did the intramuros submit to the municipality's modern discourse but also the "territory" of the expanding extramuros was also starting to be structured by new infrastructures and leisure spaces connecting it to the city's center. The lighthouse promenade on the western shore parted from the port. The promenade leading to the southern Forêt des Pins originated in El Burj square. The extramuros was consolidated not only by ensuring transport to the newly constituted suburbs but also to new public spaces complying to the "city beautiful" standards of modernity.

While the city was expanding extramuros, the intramuros precinct was under the pressure of commercial houses, eager to occupy it entirely, and newly enforced moral and security regulations. While residential activity declined, due to more attractive extramuros landscapes, the rise of rents and expropriations for alignments works, the old town transformed in the business center of the agglomeration (Fishfish, 2011; Hanssen, 2005; Davie, 1996).

For this new functional role, infrastructural needs were becoming crucial. Especially, plans to enlarge the port and to introduce modern urban transportation (train and tramway) as the city was trying to find a new way out of the declining silk economy, towards a service economy. But until now the maneuvering of the local merchants, landowners and elites to develop large infrastructural project, had failed due to their high cost and reticent foreign shareholders to invest in Beirut since it

didn't offer the political guarantee of a provincial capital. The loss of the Balkan territories in 1878, redirected Ottomans' attention to the Arab provinces with urgency for economic, territorial and political restructuring. Thus in 1888, the municipality along with the Ottoman administration will spearhead the urban restructuring in a rescaled Beirut, now capital and province.

#### 1888–1920. Beirut province and capital

The need for a better management of the Arab provinces, the will to halt the influence of European agents and a growing urban tension will be decisive. Indeed, civilian petitions and political campaigns demanded the upgrading of Beirut in the administrative hierarchy and thrived for regional autonomy from Damascus. Finally, in 1888, the city is granted the provincial status of which it will be the capital. Beirut's territory extended over 20,000 kilometers, from Lattaquié in the North to Yafa in the south, and excluded Mount Lebanon (Davie, 1996:33). This administrative rescaling of Beirut will mark a new era in the urban restructuring of the city as it will allow a direct access to the central authorities of the empire, which was essential for the realization of urban projects.

Indeed, the provincial status inaugurated a long period of urban works concessions. A concession for the enlargement of the port is granted in 1889, another for the Damascus-Beirut railway line in 1891 as interests shifted to the wheat districts of the hinterland, with the rise in demands for the export of this commodity. In the city, gas lighting and tramway lines will successively operate in 1889 and 1909.

Provincial Beirut inevitably became the scenery for imperial representation as the Ottomans were thriving to create a common national identity in all the empire. Thus, newly built landmarks in the city were to demonstrate unity through homogeneity of style. The clock tower (1908) was inaugurated as the tallest building in Beirut and the complex around the School of Arts and Crafts (1908) urbanized the western side of town, transmitting a new imperial image adopting secular time and promoting modern education.

The city was definitely beginning to comply with modernity standards and new buildings boasted the regional importance it was acquiring. The Orosdi department store (1900), the first of its kind in the Middle East selling western luxury products, and the Ottoman College (1889) attracting students from the whole Arab world, revealed that Beirut was becoming a cosmopolite and cultural center. But urban modernization also generated polemic works in the city. The piercing of two aligned streets in the intramuros (1892–94), the first north-south connecting the port to the bazaar, the second east-west connecting both parts of the city, induced a first wave of massive expropriations (Hanssen, 2005:215). The approval of the expropriation law (1879) facilitated local elites' and ottoman representatives' appropriation of the center for embellishment and speculation. In 1905, destructions in the old town as part of a piercing and expropriation campaign in the Syrian provinces, will leave the city rip open until the end of World War I.

But the city's investments into its "capitalization" will soon lead the municipality into economic difficulties. Indeed, the loss of the city's right over its main resources: water, gas, telegraph, railway, to the foreign companies (Hanssen, 2005:216; Davie, 1996:39–70) generated a momentarily municipal economic crisis and incapacity to go on with urban works. A redefinition of the relation with the central ottoman state was needed to palliate the urging urban matters. The Beirut reform committee, created in 1912, demanded among other things, financial autonomy, freedom of decision-making and distribution of the public resources and urban investments (Hanssen, 2005:78). The committee emitted a "comprehensive decentralist manifesto" demanding autonomy

from the Ottoman Empire. But, this autonomy was not conceived outside the sense of belonging to the ottoman territory, only relations affecting territory, administration and economy were renegotiated. This was first delayed by World War I, and then became obsolete with the merging of Beirut into the territory of Great Lebanon in 1920.

#### 4. Tracing rescalings, concentrations and extensions

In this section, I argue that the urbanization moments of extension and concentration are simultaneous in the case of Beirut between 1830 and 1920. Indeed, the city reveals to be an ambivalent staging of two processes as it was undergoing rescalings and restructurings within two systems: the world-empire and the world-economy. This entailed simultaneously its consolidation as an agglomeration and its integration to the periphery, as an extension. The development of this argument is based on an understanding of scale, place and territory as they «[...] interact in specific historical-geographical contexts to produce distinctive orderings and reorderings of the sociospatial landscape, including new geographies of accumulation, state power and hegemony» (Jessop, Brenner & Jones, 2008:395). The following two sections reveal the construction of these sociospatial landscapes of extension and concentration within each of the two systems of world-economy and world-empire.

##### Beirut in the world-economy (Table 1)

The beginning of the 19th century is marked by a major event, the English industrial revolution that will have a great impact on the Middle East, especially on the economic and geopolitical level (Owen, 1993:57). The English booming industrial production was in need for new markets to dispatch excess production. This was favored by the adoption of free-trade that heralded the end of old commercial monopolies. In Beirut, Damascene merchants already installing in the city and trading with British merchants at the beginning of the 19th century had broken the monopoly that other port-cities had in the region. The English found trading easier in Beirut, because it was immune to old trade agreements regulated by the capitulations<sup>9</sup> and to the monopoly exercised by the Marseille and Levant Company in the Mediterranean (Hanssen, 2005:28; Özevern, 1993:472). At the same time, the Egyptian scheme to link the ports of Syria, Alexandria and Beirut with Europe, officially projected the city in the network of world-economy (Özevern, 1993:471). This integration in the commercial network was possible due to the exclusion of other rival port-cities, but also of hinterland cities as the flourishing maritime trade routes superseded interior caravan trade (Owen, 1993:48). Beirut became the main free port for the export of merchandise (silk, wheat, etc.) and the receiving end of British imports to Syria, later distributed to inner regions (Issawi, 1977). Trade was thus essential for the “spatial fix” in Beirut to occur:

It is important to underscore that the liberalization of trade practices was strongly interconnected with the aspirations to modify the urban hierarchy. The shift from one set of commercial practices to another coincided with a spatial relocation of economic functions from Aleppo to Beirut. [...] The age of “free trade”, which the British so eagerly introduced to the Levant [...] brought with it the hierarchical reorganization of cities. (Özevern, 1993:473)

Furthermore, the city achieved a first autonomy, provided with a local council, under the Egyptians as it was detached from the joint jurisdiction of mountain and plain. The rescaling, in 1842, of Beirut as capital of the province of Sidon, under Ottoman rule, a geopolitical decision after

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<sup>9</sup> Arrangements between the Ottoman and foreign states conferring rights and privileges to foreign residents or traders.

the eviction of the Egyptians and the conflict in the mountain in 1841, consolidated Beirut's rising political and administrative role. The new hierarchical level of the city will in turn formalize trade between Ottoman subjects and Europeans, who will insist on establishing commercial tribunals and administrative reform in order to bypass the obstacles remaining in the way of their optimized exercise of free trade<sup>10</sup>. In 1850, the Ottoman commercial code ending ottoman monopoly over trading regulations and facilitating the flow of cheap western products to the imperial territory will achieve this goal.

#### World economy/extension process

These conjectures underpinned the extended urbanization process that the city undergone. First, the need for raw material, such as silk, in core European centers and the relocation of core activities in the periphery as «[...] economic functions previously concentrated in Marseilles, such as silk reeling were peripheralized to Beirut [...]» (Özevern 1993:477), will gradually transform the landscape of the extramuros grounds of the city and the nearby mountain into mulberry fields.

Second, the need for great infrastructures for the export of this commodity entailed a restructuring of urban facilities related to the commercial activity. After a first enlargement of the port's warehouses, the idea of the enlargement of the port arose in 1860, driven by the ambitious scheme of the local agent in Beirut of *Messageries Maritimes*, to link it to the recently achieved Beirut-Damascus road (Hanssen, 2005:87). This enterprise, achieving a perfect circulation of commodities, was put on hold due to financial obstacles and the loss of Beirut's capital status when annexed to Damascus in 1865. With the rescaling of Beirut as province and capital in 1888, work on the port started again in 1890. This urban infrastructure will act as an extended territory within the geography of the world-economy. Indeed, the port company managed by French agents will control all commercial accesses to the port, turning it into «extraterritorial property over which the city authorities had no say» (Hanssen, 2005:92).

But the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, redirecting commerce flows, slowed Beirut's function as a free port. Also, the now possible access to cheap silk in Asia announced the decline of the silk economy. In turn, the worldwide crisis of 1870 generated the need to find new investments.

Thus, in this second phase of capitalist expansion, Beirut will serve as an extension for foreign capital investment as western companies were eager to find new financial opportunities in the periphery, while local agents, merchants and a rising bourgeoisie, were trying to attract capital towards their city. Mulberry fields gave way to investments in finance, construction and infrastructures. Modern regional transports, such as the railway line Beirut-Damascus (1895) will acquire a double importance as they provided an opportunity for capital investment and an improved connectivity with the hinterland keeping commodity's transportation cost low. Similar foreign investments in public services will occur with the gas lighting, tramway and water company achieved due to the joined interests of the ottoman state and intermediary local agents facilitating transactions for foreign investors. Indeed «as the relative status of economic activities yielded to the pressure of a world economy, Beirut's "port-city" function, increasingly gave way to its "central place" function» (Özevern, 1993:482). Thus, the city's new functional role as a center, will focus on the service sector and the rising importance of urban provisions.

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<sup>10</sup> Among others: Ottoman monopoly over sale and export of a variety of Middle Eastern products and internal duties on the movements of goods in the region (Owen 1981:91).

### World economy/concentration process

Parallel to the extension processes producing operational landscapes for the circulation of capital and commodity, a tendency towards concentration was also manifest. The flourishing silk economy didn't only underpin the process of extended urbanization, as city and mountain functioned as provisioning territories for European economies. It also enabled the city to have an unfettered access over the means of production in the mountain, providing loans and investments, while draining all the profit to urban grounds, favoring a concentration process.

Transport infrastructures placed Beirut on the unrivalled end of transit trade, reinforcing its central location. In turn, the economic stakes in Beirut favored consular presence and established the city as the center for foreign political representation in the region. The first upgrading of the city in the administrative and territorial structure, in 1842, was marked by the establishment of the Ottoman imperial Bank (1856) and arrival of a foreign commission to control expenditures and loans of the Ottoman state (Owen, 1993). The city was clearly acknowledged not only as an "extension" for core western centers, but also as a concentration, a fix, acquiring a political dimension on the global level: «Beirut remade itself so as to create its "region" for which it could serve as a "central place"» (Özevern, 1993:482).

Rescalings and restructurings of the political, functional, and territorial level underpinned the city's extensive development into an emerging agglomeration: the intramuros was saturated leading to a progressive occupation of the extramuros. The concentration of capital in the city strengthened the rising urban bourgeoisie that soon maximized urban space for its growth purposes, sustaining the concentration process. First, because businessmen were faced with the rapid urbanization of the city and sought to improve its urban structure in order to ensure the circulation of commodities. Second, they aspired to adapt it to the needs of a growing cosmopolite society, by now accustomed to modern facilities (Abu-Hodeib, 2011:487). Thus the «transformation of the "structure of everyday life" and the infrastructure itself became a more profitable source of foreign and indigenous investment» (Özevern, 1993:479). This transformation will be handled by the municipality. Indeed, in the Levantine port cities, a particular form of municipal participatory institutions was generated as notables of the city joined for the administration of the urban space (Özevern, 1993:482; Lafi, 2005). In Beirut, the official municipality of 1864 will be no exception and will operate as a «platform through which the merchant class could pursue social objectives» through the shaping of the built environment (Özevern, 1993:482). New urban structures contributed to a gentrification of the space and a cultural shaping of the city's image. Public spaces related to leisure consumption and modern living trends emerged. The Orosdi Department store, near the port's railway station and the new aligned souks provided luxury goods changing the urban practice of old city spaces. In turn, regional tramway lines operating in 1909 delineated the limits of the city while connecting to new extramuros public spaces: the maritime promenade on the west and the pine forests promenade on the south.

The concentration process induced a restructuring of the intramuros space manifesting in a spatial specialization and social segregation which was absent so far in the old fabric. It transformed into a business center, as residences moved to the extramuros space. The new bourgeois residential neighborhoods emerged in the vicinity of the intramuros and occupied the spacious plots along the coast or on the little urban hills. The newly arrived immigrants, especially

after the civil war (1860), colonized the southern part of the city, providing the labor for construction and infrastructure work.

| BEIRUT                               | EXTENDED   |   | CONCENTRATED  |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
|                                      | TERRITORY  | OPERATIONAL LANDSCAPES  | TERRITORY   | PLACE/CITY/ AGGLOMERATION  |
| 'ORIGINAL' SCALE                     | 18 <sup>th</sup> century: Insignificant coastal not fully integrated to the network of the <i>échelles du levant</i> .   | Coastal bastion for the protection of the Mountain principedom.   | Medieval coastal city.  | Intramuros city.   |
| RESCALING<br>●<br>RESTRUCTURING<br>● | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ Early 19<sup>th</sup> century: Integration to world-economy.</li> <li>_ Upgrading of Beirut to form part of the main port cities in the periphery of the world economy superseding traditional cities such as Tripoli, Saïda and Acre.</li> <li>_ 1888 Beirut Capital and economic centre in the region.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ Mulberry plantations in the extramuros city and Mountain (extended agriculture for European industry).</li> <li>_ New market after the enforcement of the free trade agreement with British and French powers.</li> <li>_ Port area, transport infrastructures for commodity circulation.</li> <li>_ Public services and urban infrastructures for capital investement.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ Beirut as a 'centre' controls the silk production in the mountain.</li> <li>_ Center of foreign consular presence in the region.</li> <li>_ 1888 'Capitalization of Beirut' by the municipal council.</li> <li>_ Centre in the Semi-periphery.</li> <li>_ Incorporation of core-processes: Financial economy.</li> <li>_ Beirut dominates its expanding agglomeration and provincial territory.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ New infrastructures for local transport and circulation of commodity and labour.</li> <li>_ City's intramuros transforms into the centre of trade. Creation of enclaves for the 'accumulation of foreign and local capital'.</li> <li>_ New spaces for leisure and western good consumption consumption for the urban elite.</li> </ul> |

Table 1: City & World-economy. (Source: Author).

Table 1 resumes the processes relating to the integration of Beirut to the world-economy and lists the rescaling and urban restructuring processes relating to the moments of extended and concentrated urbanization.

### Beirut in the world-empire (Table 2)

At the beginning of the 19th century the Ottoman Empire, much weakened by Western powers launched in 1839 a reform program: the *tanzimat*. The reforms are a delicate subject, seen both as the result of a growing foreign pressure directing them to suit its aims of capitalist expansion, but also as a modern ottoman revolution that transformed the economic, social and cultural life in the empire. But, the most important feature of the *tanzimat* regarding this study will be the impact of these reforms on the relation between the empire's political center in Istanbul and its peripheral provinces, and the spatial restructuring it entailed. Indeed, the main aim of the reforms was «to establish a uniform and centralized administration» (Hourani, 1981:51). To achieve it, Ottomans needed a new territorial and administrative structure. In this study the reforms are understood as a way in which the Empire was trying to resist the pressure of western powers by organizing the imperial territory.

Until the 1830s, Beirut was an insignificant city of Bilad El Sham, under the rule of the nearby mountain principedom. Nevertheless, its importance was reconsidered after the Egyptians transformed it into the center of silk trade. After revolts in the mountain (1840), a first administrative rescaling of the city consolidated Beirut's political position as capital of the province of Saïda (1842). But the city's economic grip on the silk provisioning hinterland was not complete.

Nevertheless, Ottoman administrative and land reforms will soon achieve this aim and position Beirut at the center of its region.

#### World-empire/concentration process

The application of the land code (1858) implied a restructuring of land and property which entailed the abolition of the feudal and tax-farming system. This allowed Beirut to have a great economic influence on the mountain as it became its main “creditor”, investor and exporter in the silk industry. The mountain became the extended territory of the city although it was an independent political and territorial entity but deprived from the coast. In turn, the city became the unavoidable economic center of the mountain. In the city, the land code application provided security of ownership transforming urban grounds in a valuable transactable property; which hastened Beirut’s urban concentration process on which the city further consolidated. Thus, land reforms underpinned a functional rescaling of the city, parallel to the successive territorial and administrative rescalings. Both positioned the city as a political and economic center in relation to its region, confirming an important spatial aspect of Middle Eastern cities which is their «place at the center of the agricultural life of their region. With the exception of Istanbul, all the major cities of Anatolia, Syria, Egypt and Iraq lay at the edge of districts of rich, cultivable land for which they served as a market, a source of credit and a center of government» (Owen, 1993:45).

The centralization process induced by the ottoman reforms will also reflect in the mode of governance. Indeed, while the Provinces’ law (1868) induced a reordering of the hierarchy of territorial units, the law of the municipalities (1877) introduced a restructuring of the administrative institutions of the state (Mundy & Saumarez, 2007:50). The municipality of Beirut was the first one in the Arab provinces. It constituted «locality power in relation to supralocal institutions» (Hanssen, 2005:140) and played a decisive role in the rescaling of Beirut as a provincial capital. First, during Beirut’s annexation to Damascus (1865), the municipality managed to obtain a larger degree of fiscal independence from the damascene central authorities. Then, it will lead the fight for the capitalization of Beirut over Damascus achieving the ascendancy of the city to the level of province and capital in 1888. This will give it a central political but also fiscal power over all the sub-provinces under its rule. This privileged place in the administrative hierarchy will be the definitive assertion of its role as a political and economic center and will in turn contribute to a particular shaping of the city.

Reforms also implied the strengthening of the imperial presence and image in the provinces. Especially after 1888, Beirut will serve as the stage for imperial representation, as ottomans were seeking provincial support. Singular architectural buildings and public spaces will serve this aim. Already in 1853, the imperial presence was embodied by the first extramural imperial barracks inaugurating the western “imperial hill of Qantari” overlooking the intramuros, followed by the military hospital (1861) and completed by the clock tower (1898). Extramuros squares will also bear the imperial seal. The Petit Sérail building, seat of the provincial governor, occupied El Burj square and adorned it with a central fountain, while El Sur square boasted the same imperial fountain and the new commercial *halles*. Furthermore, all inaugurations of new infrastructural work (tramway, etc.) were to coincide with the annual commemoration of the sultan. This “ritualizing” of the public space centered Beirut as the preferred province for imperial representation in the region.

In this period where Beirut was drawn in an “Ottomanization process”<sup>11</sup>, the municipality did not only help consolidate imperial representation through the reforms but also the elite’s aspiration to mold a “capital” as «The principal of self-rule, as learnt in the municipal experience when notables of the city joined together to help administer the urban space, provided a first step in the direction of supporting the “central place function” with a “capital city” function» (Özevern, 1993:482).

Indeed, the municipal council, constituted by the urban bourgeoisie and the city’s notables, understood that to act in the city it needed the support of the Ottoman reform discourse. A clear indication of this adaptation was the adoption of the hygienist approach, as public health became the «normative concern of urban planning in Beirut and the proactive task of its municipality» (Hanssen, 2005:128). The *cordon sanitaire* and *quarantaine* strategies made the city immune to epidemics before other towns because of its provincial status and the economic stakes which favored imperial attention and funding.

In turn, the application of the new building code edited by the municipality in 1883 enforced standardized construction laws and mixed order, geometry, beauty, public health and morality aspects to build the legal framework for urban intervention and large scale expropriations. This in turn consolidated the concentration process as land transactions and speculation were favoring the fixing of capital in the city. The destructions and large expropriations involved in alignment operations (1892, 1915), were also strategically drawn to eliminate conflictive urban sites. The busy intramuros souk el Fashka, a threat to order, moral and beauty vanished in the linear east-west axis cutting through the old town. Regulations and hygiene converged in shaping the city in the most profitable trend. The municipal and provincial council members, often open to reformist discourses (Hanssen, 2005:159; Fawaz, 1983), were “locally and imperially” positioned to imprint the city with their particular idea of “civilization” and “modernity”.

#### World-empire/extension process

Imperial reforms were ambivalent. Although they were at the basis of a “concentration” process that lead Beirut to its “capital city” function, they nevertheless supported, in many aspects, its role as an extension for the imperial central power in Istanbul. Indeed, the administrative restructuring not only granted the provincial council and the municipality with local and regional power, it also made possible «an extension of the civil bureaucracy at the center» (Hanssen, 2005:39–40), down to the last levels of ottoman territorial subdivisions. This hierarchical positioning, served as a framework for the exercise of power from the center to the periphery. This will be particularly noted as equilibrium broke with the arrival of the CUP<sup>12</sup> to power, followed by the decentralist manifesto issued by Beirut’s reform committee (1913). But the formation of a political self-consciousness; strengthened by the declaration of political participation as a civil right (1908) did not suppose a demarcation from the imperial discourse. On the contrary, the demands of the reform committee were framed within the Ottoman community of provinces and rooted in the empire’s extended geography.

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<sup>11</sup> «The term “Ottomanization” attempts to capture the historical process by which the evolving modernization around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century drew the city even closer into the orbit of Ottoman State power.» (Hanssen, 1998:43)

<sup>12</sup> CUP: Committee of Union and Progress. The leaders of CUP led the *coup d’état* against Sultan Abdulhamid II in 1908 during the Young Turk Revolution.

Also, while using its provinces as centers, the imperial power had still a peripheral approach towards them. First, because provinces were still a source of revenue. Reforms maximized efficient land use and augmented revenues thanks to taxes and dues paid in relation to agricultural, urban property and land while new taxes helped finance further reforms such as the education tax (1884), based on increased taxation of agricultural production. Second, the reforms were occurring concurrently with a progressive indebtedness of the empire, aggravated by its bankruptcy in 1876. It is the periphery that provided the operational landscape for the settling of debts with Europeans by granting them most of the concessions for public and infrastructural work over the locals. Indeed the rescaling of Beirut to a capital status assured foreign investors that their stakes were well preserved. Therefore, even the capitalization/concentration process induced a simultaneous extension process. Only with the rise of urban tensions, and the need for local imperial support did the empire grant concessions to locals. These concessions will in turn transform in a ‘financial capital’ in the periphery when locals started selling them at higher prices to foreigners and vice versa. When financial difficulties undermined the profits of these public concessions, they were absorbed by the Imperial Ottoman bank (managed by foreign capital) “peripheralizing” once again the city.

| BEIRUT                               | EXTENDED  |   | CONCENTRATED  |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                                      | TERRITORY   | OPERATIONAL LANDSCAPES  | TERRITORY   | PLACE/CITY/ AGGLOMERATION   |
| ‘ORIGINAL’ SCALE                     | Coastal City in the periphery of the empire and under the rule of the Mountain Princedom.   | Imperial taxes and duties on products and commerce.   | Medieval coastal city.  | Intramuros city.  |
| RESCALING<br>●<br>RESTRUCTURING<br>● | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ Law of the provinces (1864) and law of the municipalities (1877). Hierarchical bureaucracy operating from the centre to reach and control all the imperial territory.</li> <li>_ 1888 Imperial province Upgraded territorial status (secured capital investments)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ Imperial territory: Access to resources and extraction of taxes and resources.</li> <li>_ Land reforms: Land code (1858) taxation on property (urban and rural). Land speculation and expropriation.</li> <li>_ Concessions for foreigners and the Ottoman Imperial Bank as a mechanism for complying with European debt.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ 1842 Beirut capital of the province of Saida, strategic centre for the supervision of the mountain.</li> <li>_ 1868 Government is assumed by the municipality and provincial council, legitimizing local power in the city.</li> <li>_ 1888 Capital of the same province. ‘Ottomanization’ and Capitalization of Beirut.</li> <li>The land code consolidated and secured urban grounds.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ Land code (1858) transformed Urban property into a stake fixing capital in the city.</li> <li>_ Centre for imperial commemoration. Ideology replaces daily practice and image of the city.</li> <li>_ Modern discourse of the reforms: Public hygiene and regulations allow expropriations and destructions to modernize the old city. Gentrification and speculation.</li> <li>_ Education and culture consolidate the city in the region.</li> </ul> |

Table 2. City & World-empire. (Source: Author).

Table 2 resumes the processes relating to the relation of Beirut with the imperial center in Istanbul and lists the rescaling and urban restructuring processes relating to the moments of extended and concentrated urbanization.

## 5. Conclusions

## Scale and rescaling

This study reveals the importance of understanding scales, not as two dimensional hierarchical spatial configurations, but as dynamic processes of “re”configuration referred to as “rescalings”. These processes are manifold and relate to the productive basis of a society in relation to a historical mode of production. They also include political struggles over power, and sociocultural aspects. Finally, these processes underpin the construction of the urban and the production of new sociospatial relations. Thus, scale is understood as a powerful tool for organizing and producing particular territorial configurations through processes of rescalings. The latter, reorder territorial organizations to adapt them in time to the spatial requirements of new modes of production. But, even if different functional rescalings (port-city, capital etc.) are distinguished at different territorial levels (imperial, regional and local), scale does not necessarily operate through a hierarchic framework. Indeed the articulations established between capitalist modes of production, territorial and administrative levels, produce in turn an intricate horizontal mesh of sociospatial organizations that are able to contest these imposed spatial articulations or “jump scales”<sup>13</sup>. Beirut’s municipality is a clear example, first with the fight for provincial status and later with the demands of the decentralist manifesto.

## World-system theory

Understanding rescaling and restructuring processes from the perspective of the world-system theory is also fundamental. Indeed alluding to the territorial requirements of capitalism, in relation to commodity chains, Wallerstein notes that «[...] their points of origin have been manifold, but their points of destination have tended to converge in a few areas. [...] they have tended to move from the peripheries of the capitalist world-economy to the centers or cores» (Wallerstein, 2011:30). Also, the understanding of “core” and “periphery” is not reduced to a geographic localization (western centers of economy versus the world periphery). Instead, it addresses two different processes of production. Although, the concentration of one of these processes in a place would create a “core” or “peripheral” geography, the dissociation of these processes from a strictly assigned geographical localization is important to surpass spatial limitations. Beirut is a clear indication. Indeed, the concomitant localization of core and periphery processes (financial and cultural capital, export of raw material and industrial specialization) enables us to define it, at this particular historical moment, as a semi-periphery, «[...] an arbiter between the contradictory processes of core and periphery» (Özevern, 1993:476). What in turn entailed a simultaneous concentrated and extended urbanization.

## Urbanization theory: concentration and extension processes

This case study has underlined that rescaling and restructuring processes are, at the same time, the outcome and the origin of specific patterns of urbanization defined as concentration and extension. In turn, these patterns are related to specific conditions underpinning core-periphery relations. Indeed, it can be noted that it is in the act of “peripheralizing” that extended urbanization occurs, while “centralizing” core processes generate concentrated urbanization. In the particular geopolitical context of *fin de siècle* Beirut, where hegemonic powers competed for geographical dominance these urbanization processes are ambivalent. Indeed, the “capitalization” of Beirut relied on both: its integration in the world-economy, and its centralization through the Ottomanization process. The first enabled the city to operate as a center for western economic

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<sup>13</sup> Possibilities for social groups to create their own “politics of scale” in order to resist capital-centered scale constructions (Smith,1992).

stakes. The second granted it a «regional leadership [...] within the context of centralizing the regime» (Mundy & Saumarez, 2007:44). Both favored the concentration process. While, Beirut as a site of extended urbanization was shaped, on the one hand by Ottoman reforms through an extended territorial and administrative control of the imperial periphery. On the other hand, the city was “peripheralized” by the world-economy’s capitalist extension: the city successively functioned as an agricultural extended periphery, a market for western products, and finally as an extended territory for financial capital investment.

These processes of extended and concentrated urbanization took place simultaneously, at the same time inducing and complying with the rescaling of the city’s relation with the world and its region. Expanding worldwide flows of capital and imperial reforms centralized Beirut in the periphery of the world-empire and the world-economy.

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