



POLITECNICO  
DI TORINO

# Honors thesis

---

Master's degree

In Architecture for the Sustainability Design

*Abstract*

**Post War:**

**Architecture of Peace and Reconciliation**

*Tutor*

*Prof. Daniela Ciaffi*

*Prof. Mario Artuso*

*by*

*Karim Chaitani*

February 2019

*“First step in solving any problem is recognizing there is one”*<sup>1</sup>, adding a second step, it would be to define it.

Many countries in the Arab region are going through tremendous socio-economic as well as political transformations, some of which have been extremely violent. The scale of violence, its duration and impact in countries like Syria, Iraq, Libya or Yemen is unprecedented since the second World War. These conflicts have destroyed entire cities which for centuries were models of peaceful co-existence among different ethnicities, religions, ideologies and nationalities. They were also models for culture, trade and centres for learning. War has destroyed all this and much more, including social cohesion. Mosul, Aleppo, Homs and other cities have been reduced to rubble and their inhabitants uprooted or displaced.

All wars come to an end, Syria, its cities will have to be rebuilt. The social fabric must be repaired through a legitimate, all-inclusive reconciliation process which must be coupled with equitable sustainable development. It is only in this manner that peace can be lasting, and conflict relapse can be prevented.

For the purpose of recovery and reconstruction of Syrian cities, it would be useful to examine the reconstruction of Beirut and learn from its short comings and successes. Did Beirut succeed in enhancing peaceful co-existence among its different socio-economic groups as well as communities? How can this inform the reconstruction of a Syrian city, like for example Aleppo? Or the Damascus suburb of Ghouta?

As architects and urban planners, we are responsible of designing people's lives and with it enhance peaceful co-existence and reconciliation. Urban planners, for example, drawing the cities, will design roads in order for the citizens to use them, they will design housing blocks to be inhabited after by citizens. Every design will have a great impact on someone's personality and behaviour as well as society in general. For example, people living in rural areas, have different behaviour than someone living in urban areas. The same example can be applied for citizens living in the centre of the city and others in the peripheral areas. Nowadays, we should start designing and transforming cities where citizens, urban or rural, of different cultures and religions can interact and co-exist peacefully. This must and should be encouraged particularly in a country of diverse cultures. As such this must be taken into account in the early stages of a designing process.

Among the most important aspects in this regard are public spaces, often overlooked in the haste of reconstruction. Public spaces will have to be developed to encourage diversity and not a clustering of people of the same colour in neighbourhood or areas that conform only to the same colour. Can Public spaces really participate in mixing people from different backgrounds and enhance interaction? or can it be transformed into a place where conflicts can be translated?

Another important aspect is the public participation into the reconstruction of the city. Public participation gives a voice for the people to participate in changes that can occur to their city. However, the city composition changes during the war. Some people left, some people came, some stayed, some planning to come back after the war and some not considering this option. This leads to ask important questions: Who will be considered in the public participation? Who is the local community?

1: Jeff Daniels, starring Will McAvoy in the “Newsroom” (2012-2014)

Through all these considerations, the architect of today needs to be a designer of peace and reconciliation.

---

For further information please contact:  
Karim Chaitani, [kmchaitani@gmail.com](mailto:kmchaitani@gmail.com)