

Solidere Beirut: A Good Practice Example of Urban Development for Other Post Conflict Cities to Follow?

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Abstract

“It is natural to want to replace something important lost to the destruction of war. Ideologies count on this desire among people, and thus make restoration (or the promise of it) their first principle of reconstruction. They believe that the phoenix can rise again from its own ashes” (Woods, 1997: 15)

Yet so many towns and cities have failed to achieve comprehensive regeneration in the aftermath of war. This paper explores the private sector led renewal model used in Beirut, commonly known as Solidere. A project which has been successful where so many others have failed. The approach used was unique and very controversial. This paper looks in particular at how the groundbreaking approach to land acquisition, impacted the development and the outcomes of this ambitious development programme.

This model is set to become Lebanon’s biggest export. Any urban practitioner involved in post conflict development should be asking whether this is a cause for celebration or concern.

Introduction

In 1994, the Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District s.a.l (Solidere) was launched on the Lebanese Stock Exchange, mandated by special legislation and supported by a pre-approved master plan (see Rowe & Sarkis, 1998). The private property development company had a clear objective to rebuild and develop the heart of post conflict Beirut. The scale of the development and range of challenges, which included infrastructure, archaeology, preservation, along with new commercial, residential and leisure developments in the historic centre of Beirut, was extensive and ambitious.

The use of this urban redevelopment model in this context represents a departure from more traditional models which have been prevalent in recent decades in aid eligible post conflict urban centres. Solidere is controversial for this reason. Its supporters claim that it has successfully restored central Beirut to its previous glory due to its international feel, upmarket shopping district and exclusive housing. Its opponents claim that it has not addressed the sectarian issues present in the post conflict city and that its profit driven activities have rather cemented the geographical manifestations of this sectarianism and permanently divided Beirut (see Marot and Yazigi, 2011).

The introduction of private sector led development in the field of post conflict urban development brings with it equally high risks and potential rewards. This is due to that fact that the legal and regulatory frameworks needed to safeguard the interests of the public are predominantly lacking in the immediate aftermath of war. Privatisation of urban development could, therefore, pose a risk to sustainable development if appropriate safeguards are not implemented. Equally, Public Private Partnership offers a mechanism which can both bolster the capacity gaps in post conflict environments and deftly manoeuvre the complex and often divided political backdrop to achieve real outcomes. Traditional international responses to post conflict development are aid and humanitarian based, and have so far failed to adequately recognise the growing need for action in the urban development field (see Barakat 2010). These new conflict environments tend to be more urbanised than what we think of as more traditional aid eligible post conflict environments and, therefore, require a new approach. It is true that “the challenge of rebuilding war-torn

societies is infinitely more complex than is generally recognised” (ibid: 10) making the need for a new approach more pertinent than is widely recognised.

Shifts in international power structures, and the growing popularity of neo-liberal market policies offer some indication that the private sector will act as the key driver for change in post conflict environments. Shifts both in the nature of post conflict cities and the prevailing political ideology which influences how and when rebuilding should take place and which actors should be involved mean that greater emphasis should be placed on supporting post conflict ¹governments addressing urban development challenges. The question that practitioners must ask is not whether the neo-liberal, consumerist model is going to be used in other post conflict cities or whether this the right path? But what can we learn from recent examples and how can this approach be improved?

This paper examines how the groundbreaking approach to land acquisition impacted the development and the outcomes of this ambitious programme. The approach pioneered by Solidere who controversially acquired prime real estate legally acquired in return for shares in the company charged with redevelopment.

¹ A post conflict state can be defined as a state that has emerged directly as a result violent conflict, has recently experienced long standing and severe conflict or short but deeply destructive conflict see
(<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/STRATEGIES/EXTLICUS/0,,contentMDK:22230573~pagePK:64171531~menuPK:4448982~piPK:64171507~theSitePK:511778,00.html>)

Background

“Throughout Lebanon’s turbulent series of civil wars, Beirut’s central district was both the epicentre of its fiercest violence and the focus of the most concerted reconstruction plans. While ongoing militia battles transformed Beirut’s streets, buildings and public markets into a scene from an apocalyptic nightmare, planners, architects and politicians debated visions of the city’s post-war recovery” Larkin, 2009: 5).

Beirut’s period of significant growth began when it was declared a provincial capital under the Ottoman Empire. During the latter part of the Ottoman reign vast parts of the medieval city were demolished and a programme of modernisation started, including the extensive destruction of the medieval fabric of the City. This modernisation, however, was not completed by the Turks, and in 1922, following the end of the First World War (1914 -1918), Lebanon came under French Mandate. The French took on the programme of modernisation first initiated by the Ottomans. This period is seen as a positive stage in Lebanese history. The French undertook infrastructure improvements and created striking buildings of architectural significance such as Rue Foch and Allenby. However, their expansive plans for modernisation met with challenges of “corruption and political manipulation” despite the support the French Mandate enjoyed from the Lebanese (Rowe and Sarkis, 1998: 122).

By the time that independence was declared in 1946, extensive urban planning had been undertaken under the French Mandate, including the 1932 Danger Plan and the 1942 Ecochard Plan. However, the newly independent government institutions responsible for the implementation of these plans had no relevant experience. Furthermore, although “by this time, Lebanon had inherited some semblance of an administrative hierarchy” it was” largely without any framework or structure to set out guidelines or powers of control and inspection” (Ibid: 125).

The inadequacies of these institutions and the crutch that they could provide to the ruling elites became etched in Lebanon’s modern history. Rather than the implementation of the Master Plans prepared under French Mandate the institutions of planning became “instruments in the hands of the ruling bodies, answering their own desires rather than acting as a strong and reliable governmental framework

accountable and devoted to the services of the public, and as guardians of the interests of the state.” Rather than implement the master plans, development continued with only the use of the building code for guidance (Rowe and Sarkis, 1998: 125).

In 1954, due to the increasing pressure of urban growth, the independent government implemented an urban plan. Salam claims that this plan was little more than some infrastructural elements of the Echochard plan prepared under the French Mandate (Ibid: 123). Importantly, the plan was not strategic in its outlook, planning for current capacity and not for future growth, nor did it rectify previous positions on preservation of archaeological or architectural heritage.

However, with the next administration in 1958 came serious attempts at institutional reform and urban planning legislation. “Both the Higher Council of Planning and the General Directorate for Town Planning were established, and the first extensive survey of the country’s resources and development needs were carried out (IRFED Mission) resulting in the establishment of five-year sectoral plans to accomplish major public works” (Ibid: 12). But despite this decisive change in approach and solid foundations that could have enabled strong and efficient governance and urban planning, as the attempts under the French Mandate gave way to corruption and political manipulation so too did the attempts of the Shihabist administration fall foul to the underlying factions in Lebanese society. Salam highlights that institutional reform only touched the surface complexities and challenges in Lebanese political life. Although the Shihabist administration started out by trying to affect extensive reform, “soon the administration became politicized and reflected the same weaknesses which beleaguered the political system in the past. In particular, confessionalism and favoritism reduced the administration’s efficiency and credibility” (ibid: 126). Most significantly, this period saw the development of an approach that would later form the basis for the creation of private real estate companies as a solution to the extraordinarily high land values which inhibited the development of major urban development and public spaces. The solution was that private public real estate companies could be formed to carry out the development of the expropriated land. The government would be a major shareholder in the venture and property owners would be compensated for the expropriated land through the valuation taken after the project had been completed, the genius of which was that a major impediment to urban development had been addressed and everyone was a winner (interview GB 2012), (see Rowe and Sarkis , 1998: 126).

The onset of civil war and the weak and ineffectual public institutions, surprisingly, did not stop the urban planning process. In 1997, two years into civil war, the Sarkis regime created the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR). An agency endowed to efficiently provide assistance to other public institutions and circumvent them when necessary. The CDR got off to an auspicious start, operating effectively and avoiding the political manipulation that thwarted earlier attempts at institutional reform. However, it also eventually succumbed to the same pressures of factionalism. Importantly, under this structure the Beirut Central District Plan 1977 – 1986 was developed under the control of a specially convened government nominated committee. The Plan had five underlying objectives:

1. Maintain the urban tissue in its original condition whenever possible and maintain original property tenure,
2. Encourage the legal owners and occupants of the BCD to return to their previous activities,
3. Accelerate the return of the BCD to its traditional role as a unifying ground for Lebanon's multiconfessional communal structure,
4. Introduce infrastructural improvements to the BCD
5. Revitalise areas that had been badly damaged through the creation of real estate companies and other methods of intervention stipulated in town planning laws", (ibid: 129).

The plan was developed because there was hope that the civil war may cease. The plan was partially implemented before the return to full blown conflict. The Taif Accord² marked the end of a sixteen year civil war and set forth a plan to tackle the religious division that had brought about war. With the end to conflict in 1990, for the first time in more than twenty years, the focus was on reconstructing Lebanese society and returning it to its former success. The government implemented new policies and created new institutions and functions to implement them.

The then billionaire Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, who had made his fortune in property development in Saudi Arabia during the civil war, took previous legislation regarding the role of private companies in developing the city to new heights. Hariri is largely seen as the architect of this scheme and credited with the legal adaptation that enabled the realisation of previously theoretical solutions to Beirut's urban

² The Taif Accord, signed in 1989 was the agreement that formally ended the civil war in Lebanon and founded the principles for the modern state (see <http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/lebanon/taif.htm>).

development challenges. Namely, the creation of a singular property development company in charge of the renewal of the CBD, rather than the multiple companies originally specified in legislation. Steps were taken to remove the company from government oversight - as a private company, activities would not be accountable to the government. Under the original plans the real estate companies were to be a tool of government overseen by the Lebanese Council of Reconstruction and Development (CDR) and answerable to the government. They were planned as a legitimate public private partnership, much like the London Docklands programme. Although we cannot be sure of Hariri's intentions in this regard, whether they were to remove the real estate company from scrutiny to avoid interference or to avoid debilitating political divisions which have prevented development elsewhere in the country, the plan was not implemented as conceived. "The CDR was supposed to write down the new urban plan and sub contract execution of it, and it turned out it was the other way round. ... The master plan or new urban designs, and they kind of imposed it" (interview GB 2012).

Finally, although the existing master plan was adapted for implementation, major objectives were bypassed. Namely, the objectives to:

- Encourage the legal owners and occupants of the BCD to return to their previous activities.
- Accelerate the return of the CBD to its traditional role as a unifying ground for Lebanon's multiconfessional communal structure.

The physical objectives of the master plan were maintained.

In 1994 the Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District (Solidere) was launched on the Lebanese Stock Exchange, mandated by special legislation from the government and a pre-approved master plan. The private property development company had a clear objective to redevelop the heart of post conflict Beirut, stating its aim "to make Beirut the finest city center in the region" (Beirut City Center: 29). The majority shareholder was Prime Minister Rafik Hariri himself.

Findings and Analysis

There can be no doubt that Solidere has achieved something unique and extremely valuable in post conflict planning which should not be obscured by the controversy surrounding the project. The downtown development is functional, visibly stunning and well managed. The challenge of achieving these factors in a post conflict environment cannot be overstated.

The psychology of the city was forward looking throughout the conflict, keeping minds focussed and ready to rebuild the moment that war ceased. At the time that the civil war finally ended, the development question had become as simple as, 'how do we acquire the land for development given the complex historical ownership patterns?' (interview GB 2012), **The fundamental issue that underpinned the development of the framework, and enabled this unique model, therefore, is the 'land issue'**. It was also the most controversial detail of project enablement and continues to be a major aspect of contention between those who support the project and those that feel that the project represents the hybrid dreams of a billionaire property developer Prime Minister. Land clearance and acquisition are always challenging aspects of development projects which can involve compulsory purchase. This was further complicated in this case by post conflict issues such as interethnic religious tension, displacement, extensive physical destruction of and the complex Lebanese property inheritance traditions..

The Property Problem

Hariri discovered the existing legislation "and said this could apply to the whole downtown area, so basically extended it to the area that had always been the central district. What the government then did was to set up these judicial committees led by important judges who actually were responsible for identifying all these existing owners, about 40,000 of them, and the tenants, assessing their asset value in the damaged state which is the normal way, I mean post second world war this was how it was done" (interview Solidere Representative, 2012).

Faced with such complex land ownership challenges many lesser projects would have stalled but Solidere, under the tutelage of Hariri, devised a way to tackle this

challenge without impeding development. The land acquisition process can be summarised as:

- “....Pre-requisite the full ownership by SOLIDERE of the land to allow execution of the infrastructure works and the whole reconstruction process. The extreme fragmentation of existing ownerships (for example one plot in the Souks area had more than 4,700 claimants) meant that no practical renewal process could have taken place based on the pre-existing ownership pattern.
- The Government of Lebanon drafted a special law for SOLIDERE which was voted by the Parliament allowing SOLIDERE to have legal acquisition of all land (representing around 1600 cadastral lots). Property owners had to give up their properties in exchange for shares in the company, and thus becoming the primary shareholders, for two thirds of the capital.
- SOLIDERE thus acquired full ownership to allow it to carry out all necessary projects efficiently.”

(Reconstruction of Beirut's City Center: Solidere's Experience, 2003: p1)

Lebanon holds an extremely complex pattern of land ownership, the origins of which date back to the Ottoman period. Solidere's representative illustrates the point with a case he used in a book, “one piece of land had 4700 owners, how are you going to get all those people to agree?I'm absolutely certain that no form or proper form of regeneration process could have ever taken place through the existing owners, it wouldn't have been possible, it would still be a disaster area in the middle of the city, so, I think it was a brilliant idea” (interview Solidere Representative, 2012). Indeed, this pattern could have resulted in protracted legal battles and held up development of the area indefinitely had it been dealt with in a less innovative way. Even those that feel the project has ultimately come to represent a gross abuse of power, agree that this mechanism designed to address the complex ownership patterns can be used as an exemplar for other projects in Lebanon and elsewhere. “You are talking about 300 year old ownership, where you have in this building 5000 people, who don't even know if each other, half of them, and the other half spread all over the world, so effectively the legal fitting or the legal approach was major. And this is where I say it was a success” (interview GB 2012), He is also quick to add that the

way in which the mechanism was ultimately implemented in his opinion, was not a success for the people of Beirut but was a success for Solidere.

An independent commission was established to assess the land values and negotiate compensation in the form of shares (interview Solidere Representative, 2012). However, the fact that “it’s a very ailing body, a very weak body who is not able to play its role properly in this checks and balances game.” (interview Ghada K, 2012) shed doubt on the likely independence of this committee. *There is was no recourse if you wanted to dispute the land values. The Shura³ was supposed to review disputed cases but has not yet deliberated (Interview RC, 2012).* Allegations of undervaluation and cronyism persist to this day and a number of high profile cases including the Saint Georges Hotel pictured below illustrate the anger of some of those affected, towards this process and the project itself. Opponents claim that the process lacked fairness and transparency:

Solidere asserts that the resentment felt by opponents is in part due to the expectation that values should have been based on the rehabilitated worth (as per the Beirut Central District Plan 1977 -1986), rather than the actual worth at the time. Furthermore, Solidere also suggests that original owners profited more from the subsequent sales of shares at the peak of share values. Solidere asserts that the commission was independent and that, moreover, it was successful in addressing the complex challenge they faced. “The real gripe for most of the owners was they thought they had something, they thought they were undervalued or should have had more shares than they were given. But all that was the process of sorting out splitting these assets between hundreds and hundreds of different owners so that was a factor...” (Interview, Solidere Representative, 2012). However, most disagree with this stance regardless of their overall position towards the project. The young civil society expert tells how “a lot of stories emerged about people that owned businesses, that owned homes in this area that is now known as Solidere, that were almost extorted. Their property was taken - they were convinced to give over their property for much less than it deserved and, of course, they realised this as time went on and a lot of pressure tactics were used to get people to sort of give over their property to this” (interview Ghada K, 2012).

³ A Shura is a Islamic tradition which refers to a consultative committee normally with legal powers or whose decision is to be observed by lawmakers.

Although Solidere claims that the process of land compensation was subject to due legal process, the implementation of the land acquisition mechanism differed greatly from that originally conceived. The original objective upon which the creation of multiple, rather than one real estate companies was created (interview GB 2012), was the exchange of property for shares in the real estate development company but, ultimately, the return of former residents and business owners to the redeveloped area (see previous chapter). *“Instead, around 135,000 Lebanese, including residents and right holders, were forced to leave the area and denied the right to return” (Information International, 2006: p41). This change represented one of the many changes from the planning to the implementation stage.* The former Governor explained, “the original plan wasn’t adhered to, it was constantly amended. Which is usually normal, it’s normal in the reconstruction process that it changes. The initial plan is never followed to the letter. But why would I change it, is the issue? On what grounds? It was changing permanently for the wrong reasons. (interview GB 2012).

In fact, we can point to earlier changes which illustrate how quickly and extensively the master plan and the supporting process agreed by parliament, changed upon implementation. Solidere’s representative, who was involved in the master planning process which preceded the flotation of Solidere, was keen to point out that the client for the master plan was the CDR, but ruefully admitted that they were not actively engaged in the process. The lack of accountability which resulted from these structural changes, handling of the land compensation and subsequent changes to the objectives of the development resulted in declining public trust and increasing politicisation of a project designed to bypass the deep-seated political divisions. *“They have continued to make changes to the plans through new decrees. Decrees to planning laws are deemed unconstitutional” (interview RC, 2012), (see also Charlesworth, 2009: 185).*

Physical reconstruction comes with its own set of challenges and the reinstatement of just property laws are seen as an essential function “to the restoration of social rights and the rule of law” (Barakat, 2010: 167). Theorists point to the re-application of iniquitous practices such as planning and property laws (ibid, 2010) as a critical factor in undermining the contribution of post –conflict reconstruction activities related to the built environment which is a valid and important point. However, it also remains to be said that it is often the unwritten rules and the re-introduction of informal rather than formal (legislative) iniquitous processes in these areas that were in part

responsible for conflicts past and limit the contribution of projects such as Solidere to lasting peace and sustainable development.

Stakeholders vs Shareholders

Salam wrote as early as 1998, “it is not hard to imagine the consequences of this on the formulation of the urban plan. The eviction of the existing population will quite simply eliminate the social fabric, while the dissolution of the medieval patterns of property within the city will decimate the physical fabric. (Rowe & Sarkis, 1998: 132). Thus with the exclusion of the original inhabitants and landowners there are no stakeholders, only shareholders and there is no “evolution of stakeholders’ balances of power in a context of fragile democracy and wanting urban regulation.”(Marot and Yazigi, 2011).

Furthermore, there is still no requirement for public enquiry process, no public participation or environmental impact assessment, all these things don't exist (interview Solidere Representative, 2012). Solidere claims that while wide ranging consultation with Beirut's residents was not part of the plan, this was compensated by the “very vocal and interested professional and academic audience here “ (ibid, 2012).

“The custodian of the original master plan, Dhar-Al-Handasa, set in motion a process of travelling around the country and speaking to professional groups and mayors in all cities, so there was a whole programme of consultation” (ibid, 2012). The Solidere representative suggests that the modifications made to the master plan as a result of this communication are evidence of a functioning consultation process. The examples used to illustrate this case include the drastic modifications made to the main arterial layout of roads and the revised approach to the development of the Corniche. However, this process engaged highly influential professionals and not the average Beiruti who was a critical part of the long-term sustainability of the project.

No Consultation! We're in the Middle East

The lack of history of formal consultation is often used as the basis for its continued avoidance. However, the unprecedented outcry against governments in the region is evidence of the need for change. On the subject of the existing protocols of consulting the ruling elites rather than the general public in development projects, leading expert Professor Barakat said of the Lebanese and Iraq wars, “.they fought

for their individual freedoms and a lot of people fought for them because they felt they were treated unjustly by the government or other groups or they were dominated by a minority group and this is why the wars were so violent. But now to look back and say well we actually deserve what we had and don't think we should involve them" (interview Professor Barakat, 2012). Others agree that there is certainly a desire to be consulted but that the lack of history means that more effort may be required to organise broader consultation activities (interview Ghada K, 2012).

However, the approach used by Solidere in avoiding constructive consultation and the approach to land acquisition has had interesting consequences for the implementation and development of the project thus far, including the extensive displacement of local people with a connection to and history with the area. This, in turn, has had interesting consequences for the design, accessibility and sustainability of the project, which, in turn, impact on the long-term business success of the model.

"Beautiful Walls, but no soul in them"

The land acquisition process which forced property owners to become shareholders and evicted them from the area meant that Solidere was developed as a commercial project, excluding community consultation and ultimately failing to consider the recreation of culture. That intangible human element is the essence of what makes cities great. Furthermore, lack of engagement with stakeholder and residents of the area resulted in a design process that looked to recreate ancient history in its design and erase recent history, rather than incorporate any form of cultural identity reflective of its surroundings.

It is easy for those of us who have not lived with the horror of war to say that it should be recognised as part of history and reflected in the design of post conflict cities, to lecture on the need to face this history and the usefulness of the redevelopment process to address some of the deep-seated societal divisions. But it is a common and understandable feature of post conflict development to return to a period in history when things seemed auspicious. However, commonality does not automatically mean that it is the most constructive approach.

"The attempt to restore the fabric of old cities to their former conditions is, therefore, a folly that not only denies postwar conditions, but impedes the emergence of an urban fabric and way of life based upon them. Wherever the restoration of war-

devastated urban fabric has occurred in the form of replacing what has been damaged or destroyed, it ends as parody, worthy only of the admiration of tourists.”
(Woods, 1997)

“This massive project that was just sort of dumped here without any regard for its impact on people and also the image of Lebanon...It could have been Milan or France or Italy so to me there was a loss of the Lebanese identity. that’s one element where stakeholder involvement would have benefited and, of course, also looking at the rights and the fairness on how the properties were acquired that was a critical piece that nobody paid attention to until after the fact” (interview Ghada K, 2012).

The importance of history and defining a new identity beyond that created as a marketing strategy has yet to fully emerge in post war Beirut. “It talks about the past, and it talks about the future but it completely bypasses the present” (interview, Bernard Khoury, 2012). The challenge of living in the present seems of particular relevance to this environment. “Taking up Khalaf’s suggestion, one approach would be to make the postwar period more reflective of its social circumstances, countering tendencies toward collective amnesia and the perpetual mardi-gras syndrome of the boom period” (Rowe & Sarkis 1998: 137). A tendency to the creation of a playful distraction in the immediate aftermath of war seems a common response which masks the knowledge that a more radical and involved solution would be the only sustainable route to lasting peace and sustainable development.

Conclusion

Perhaps the only other point of unanimous agreement identified in the course of this research is that the framework created by Solidere in respect of property rights was a stroke of genius. Where the factions once again reveal themselves is in how the mechanism was implemented. The Solidere representative highlighted that this rather ruthless approach to land appropriation was driven by the dire need for development after conflict, that under normal circumstances it would not have been a justifiable solution. “I think also that it is true to say that there was a period after the end of the war, probably when it looked like a period of four to five years maximum, something like this could have been done, later it would have been politically unacceptable” (interview Solidere Representative, 2012).

The model used to redevelop the central business district of post war Beirut is a model with numerous benefits. It provides vision, leadership, implementation capacity and investment that is often lacking in the post war environment. Therefore, although Solidere has succeeded in achieving major progress and delivering a commercially successful project, a point on which all sides agree, it has come at a high cost.

This examination of Solidere has only served to reinforce my belief that the international community is failing in its reconstruction obligations by not acknowledging the role that urban development now plays in post conflict reconstruction. The nature and therefore the requirements of post conflict states have changed significantly in the last decade. Although poverty reduction and crisis management remain sadly significant, for countries such as Libya and Iraq the order of priority is somewhat different. Economic pressures and current wisdoms based on free market values will see many newly formed governments seek to replicate major urban development models in the absence of well developed governance structures and with a complete absence of widespread local expertise. The international community should be asking what steps need to be taken to address this gap in capacity?

The suitability of the private sector led urban development model in any circumstance, post conflict or industrial decline, is very much dependent on the policy framework which guides its implementation and provides the framework against which its performance is monitored. The ability of the state to monitor and ultimately

enforce adherence to the policy framework is also a logical pre-requisite for the successful use of the private sector led development model of the kind represented by Solidere.

Solidere clearly shows the potential of a joint venture to address gaps and bring to bear an astonishing array of international expertise to develop an outstanding development. However, without the appropriate checks and balances this can result in a development that does not meet the needs of the local community and provide sustainable development in social, economic or physical terms. The findings of this research support the supposition that the advantages of private sector led urban development in post conflict environments outweigh the risks.

The development of private public partnership models in post conflict cities should be welcomed. The ability to bring together international expertise, leadership and drive to communities that have suffered loss and destruction is infinitely positive. However, more thought must be given to the circumstances that enable these partnerships to be mutually beneficial for the private sector and the people of the countries in which they are developed. Lack of attention to this changing dynamic will simply allow this model that holds so much potential for positive development to be used as a tool by corrupt governments to capitalise on their people's hopes while stealing their futures.

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