

Reforming failed infrastructure, struggling for the state: lessons from Lebanon



Photo credit: The Beirut Report

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This talk considers infrastructure as a site for the examination of urban governance in Lebanon, in a context of failure of the state to provide basic public services such as electricity and waste. Public infrastructure is a site of political struggle and neoliberalism and sectarianism are not radically narrowing and marginalizing the state and its institutions, while the complex assemblage of more-or-less reformed infrastructural policy instruments produces strong social effects in terms of wealth distribution. The outcome is largely unintended, but these instruments that successive governments and their advisers—from the World Bank and other international organizations—have adopted accentuate Lebanese society's gaps and inequalities.

Eric Verdeil's research deals with the political ecology of urban infrastructure, which he studied in several Middle Eastern Cities with a particular focus on Beirut. Beyond many articles for international journals, he has coauthored *Atlas of Lebanon: the new challenges* (forthcoming) and written *Beirut and its planners: a city on blueprints* (2010).

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Monday, November 12, Library building, main hall (level 1) 17h30