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HOW COULD GOVERNANCE MOBILIZE RESOURCES TOWARD INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT?
Governance, resources, and instability in contemporary Lebanon

BY
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I hereby declare that I have composed the present thesis autonomously and without use of any other than the cited sources or means. I have indicated parts that were taken out of published or unpublished work correctly and in a verifiable manner through a quotation. I further assure that I have not presented this thesis to any other institute or university for evaluation and that it has not been published before.

12 June 2022

Antonina Albanese

بين ريتا و عيوني بندقية
و الذي يعرف ريتا
ينحني و يصلي
لإله في العيون العسلية

و أنا قبلت ريتا عندما كانت صغيرة
و أنا أذكر كيف التصقت بي
و غطت ساعدي أجمل ضفيرة
و انا أذكر ريتا مثلما
يذكر عصفور غديرها
أه ريتا
بيننا مليون عصفور و صورة
و مواعيد كثيرة
أطلقت نار عليها بندقية

بين ريتا و عيوني بندقية
و الذي يعرف ريتا
ينحني و يغني
لإله في العيون العسلية

اسم ريتا كان عيدا في فمي
جسم ريتا كان عرس في دمي
و أنا ضعت بريتا سنتين
و هي نامت فوق زندي سنتين
وتعاهدنا على أجمل كأس
و احترقنا و احترقنا و احترقنا و احترقنا
في نبيذ الشفتين
وولدنا مرتين
أه ريتا أه ريتا
أي شيء رد عن عينيك عيني
سوى إخفائتين و غيوم عسلية
قبل هذي البندقية

كان يا ما كان يا صمت العشية
قمري هاجر في الصبح بعيدا
في العيون العسلية
و المدينة كنست كل المغنين و ريتا

بين ريتا و عيوني بندقية بندقية أه بندقية

(Mahmoud Darwish - Rita)

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This thesis is to Beirut, crossroad of my adult life.

NOTES ON TRANSLITTERATION

ا – â

آ – â

ب – b

پ – p

ت – t

ث – s̲ (t̲ or th)

ج– j

چ– ch

ح – ḥ

خ – kh

د – d

ذ – z̲ (d̲)

ر – r

ز – z

ژ – zh

س – s

ص – ṣ

ض – ż (ḍ)

ط – ṭ

ظ – ẓ

ع – ‘

غ – gh

ف – f

ق – q

ک – k

گ – g

ل – l

م – m

ن – n

و– v, u, o, ow (w, û, u, aw)

ه– h, -a

ی– y, i, ey (î, ay)

ء– ’

ـيه – -îya

خو– khw

Notes on the transliteration of the Lebanese dialect
7 : h
8 : gh
5 : kh
3 : a
2 : q

ABSTRACT

This study will answer whether governance quality in Lebanon can be enhanced from the inside by a new political coalition leading to institutional stability or if foreign pressures can be the channels for stabilizing the country toward efficient use of resources for investment and sustainable governance and development. It will thus analyze the roots of the crises hitting Lebanon and provide a comprehensive index to assess state weakness and identify those systemic dysfunctions threatening the well-being of the community but also becoming a fertile breeding ground for corruption and illegal practices. It will then examine the map of resources in Lebanon, concluding that the political class profits from the public dysfunctions to gain political influence. The research will also investigate the role of capital outflows and brain drain, deducing that the country needs a strong investment strategy on human capital and a deeper reflection on the diaspora. Lastly, it will provide three scenarios to tackle the current crisis, involving public sector governance reforms, international standards, and a strategy to generate sustainability. Lebanon will remain in a free fall until it implements serious reforms nurturing transparency, fighting corruption, and attracting investment to reduce the brain drain. Once aligned with the international standards required to benefit from the IMF finance, it will, in turn, mobilize additional funding. Good governance will pave the way to a gradual return to credibility, hence market access.

PREFACE

This study is the product of three years of personal and academic exploration of Lebanon remotely and in person. My active participation in the Thawra in 2019 and the analysis that followed, investigating the morphology of the "Lebanese Revolution" allowed me to frame nowadays challenge within a broader context. This economic-oriented work represents the conclusion to my previous social and religious analysis.

This dissertation might be read as a policy brief that aims at orienting the policymakers toward the implementation of a path to sustainable governance. It includes, besides economic needs, a reform of sectarianism according to the provisions of the Lebanese Constitution and the introduction of measures targeting the youth and its instances.

Lebanon's force resides in its human capital, and the youngest should integrate into the decision-making process without delay to halt brain drain and orient governmental policies towards sustainability.

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INTRODUCTION

On March 9th, 2020 Lebanon defaulted on its international debt. Lebanon's crisis was primarily caused by an extensive and entrenched system of cronyism that has been in existence since the end of the country's civil war period (Tawilé, 2021). At the end of the conflict (1975 – 1990), warlords gathered in Ta'ëf, Saudi Arabia, under the influence of the King of Morocco His Royal Highness Hassan II, and the President of Algeria Chadli Benjedid, to sign the peace agreements. In 1990, the Lebanese Parliament changed the Constitution, establishing a new political order where confessions should be equally represented. Article 95, Part Six "Final and Temporary Provisions" states: "[…] A National Committee shall be formed […] leading political, intellectual, and social figures. The tasks of this Committee shall be to study and propose the means to ensure the abolition of confessionalism […]". Thus, Lebanese political forces expressed their willingness to restructure the system, but the weight of reconstruction, the need for capital inflows, and the confessional competition for the resources reduced the real impact of these expectations. Ta'ëf Accords allowed Lebanon to practically stop the armed fratricide conflict within its national boundaries but could not help restructuring governance. A mechanism often defined as a Ponzi scheme persisted until nowadays, worsened by the Port of Beirut explosion and Covid-19 crisis, alongside the social upheaval of the Thawra (October 2019).

As already witnessed by scholars, the pandemic crisis will have stiff repercussions even on the most solid economies, but the previsions for Lebanon are more than catastrophic. Hyperinflation, high corruption levels, social instability, and the lack of governance are a mix of factors generally leading to the failure of the State. Also, Lebanon does not comply with the data provision imperatives of international organizations and regulatory systems, such as the World Bank. Data are not reliable, but what is clear is that Lebanon has embarked on a downhill path leading to the collapse of the country. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia's Report, 82% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty. Since 2019 poverty has been increasing owing to a "decline in economic activity and widespread political instability" (ESCWA, 2021). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI),

providing data reflecting both the incidence of multidimensional deprivation and its intensity. It considers education, health, public utilities, housing, assets and property, and employment and income. Lebanon's worst indicators include health, public utilities, and employment: people are unable to obtain medicines, often they do not have access to electricity, the economic living conditions have exacerbated the brain drain of professionals and the inflation rate reached 240% in January 2022, according to Blominvest Bank (Baff, 2022). According to the Bank for International Settlements, in Lebanon "*private non-bank residents hold nearly $11.5 billion in offshore banking accounts, that is, six times more than their banking debts. Capital flight in Lebanon neatly sums up institutional weaknesses and deep mistrust vis à vis the local elites*" (BIS, 2022). In a nutshell, the lack of governance is leading the country towards failure on all fronts. To this, we should add the total dependence of Lebanon on foreign industries: according to the latest data (2018) from World Integrated Trade Solution, Lebanon imports 10 times more than it exports. The top five countries from which Lebanon imported goods are China, Greece, Italy, the United States, and Germany (WITS, 2022). Moreover, the current war in Ukraine could lead to a severe food crisis in the MENA Region, worsening the already unstable and problematic situation. Lebanon, Tunisia, and Egypt import over 60% of their wheat from Ukraine. The increased interdependence will impact food security once the supply chain will be interrupted due to the impossibility for Ukrainian farmers to cultivate and harvest wheat crops. If no redefinition of the role of the State will take place, alongside a restructuration of the economy toward a sustainable path, Lebanon won't rise out. On the contrary, if economic and social reforms to address financial and human capital-related malfunctions are implemented, Lebanon will develop a mid-term and long-term strategy to increase competitiveness, reduce brain drain, increase export and join the global market in the wake of the Sustainable Development Goals, calling on foreign investors and the diaspora to empower green transition and capitalize local potentials.

This study will answer the question whether governance quality in Lebanon can be enhanced from the inside by a new political coalition leading to institutional stability or if foreign pressures can be the channels for stabilizing the country toward efficient use of resources for investment and sustainable governance and development.

The first chapter will firstly analyze the roots of the crises hitting Lebanon during the last two decades, underlining the role of sectarianism and civil war in the shaping of the political system. It will then conceptualize the definition of weak and failed states, considering the literature on the subject and fulfilling the gaps related to the peculiar sectarian system in place in Lebanon. It will also compute the mainstream indicators in order to provide a functional categorization for the country. In conclusion, it will describe the systemic dysfunctions of this consociational democracy by underlining the role of state-owned companies, external influences on local policy-making, and the lack of accountability in the social-judicial system in order to define the mafia-alike systems that stop the country from recovering.

The second chapter will focus on governance. It will first consider the inner competition for resources and namely the effects of the temporal power of religions. It will then discuss the lack of governance and the consequent capital outflows. In the third part of this chapter, the attention will be on the Youth. This theme is strictly connected both to the brain drain and the role of the diaspora. Lebanese practically live outside national borders: according to the World Bank, Lebanese nationals *in loco* amount to 6 billion – including some Syrian refugees obtaining a residence permit – while the Lebanese diaspora numbers amount to 16 billion. This analysis considers also the fraught with political implication concerning those data. Affecting the sectarian structure, hence, sect-based power-sharing arrangements (De Bel-Ari, 2017), the political sensitivities of the country preclude efforts to collect reliable data on the number of emigrants (Chiniara, 2018).

The last chapter of the study aims at identifying mid and long-term strategies to improve governance performances in Lebanon. To do so, the research will primarily focus on the hypothesis of reforming public sector governance, considering the current establishment weight on political decision-making and envisaging inner strategies to confront political degradation. Secondly, it will analyze the scenario of alignment with international standards, including the possibility of benefitting from international aid and debt restructuring but also understanding the role of foreign direct investments in the country and their relationship with the increase of political accountability and reliability. Lastly, the analysis will think through the possibility of including the country in the circuit of sustainability considering also the scenario of a raised fair competitiveness on the

global market. The financial data collected, since the mismanagement of data in Lebanon, will also introduce the role of global financial institutions, namely the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In conclusion, this study will answer the question whether an improvement of governance in Lebanon should come from the inner stakeholders or should consider international institutions and actors, providing two possible scenarios unfolding from the mid and long-term strategies identified in the previous chapter.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following chapter will review the key areas of debate in the literature about the broader concept of governance. Owing to the peculiar nature of this study, which configures as the final chapter of a longer period of research on Lebanon, this section will mainly focus on governance and its implications in the country. Along with this major theme, it will also consider the status of art in the recent literature produced on Lebanon's crises, underling the gaps and the potential of this research within the frame of doctrine. As previously stated, this dissertation aims to pave the ground for a broader report to practical advocate for sustainable and inclusive development in Lebanon. It ideally will constitute an information pool to produce several policy briefs targeting the single issues that are here discussed together, encouraging Lebanese political forces to undertake a positive path toward recovery, and underlining the need for inclusiveness and transparency.

Governance is a key issue in our contemporary world. Following the recent pandemic crisis and the consequent great falls of economics, scholars felt the urge to reframe the discussion on good governance and inclusive development. The restrictions that citizens have experienced during the lockdowns have opened the floor to a broader discussion on the limitation of state power and its responsibility in the maintenance of the wellbeing of society. Although the apparent innovation in governance literature, some developing countries, such as Lebanon, have been experiencing freedom restrictions and wellbeing limitations for a long time. Middle eastern countries are suffering from bad governance consequences, but they are also impacted by a western categorization of governance, which often results in an orientalist practice. This research aims to be considered also as a starting point for the establishment of a renewed governance index that escapes the strict western-oriented categorization and understands the peculiarities of the Middle-East and North Africa region.

The discussion on governance, and mainly on the role of the institutions in democratic states, had a fertile momentum in the '10s of our century. Following the Great Financial Crisis, scholars had to update their theorization on weak states. The crisis of 2008-2009 had modified the perception of risk and its extension to the countries of the South of the European Union had alarmed over a possible broadening in traditionally

stable areas. Following this wave, Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) formulated a theory of good governance based on the analysis of the inclusiveness of the institutions. A country with broad citizen participation in the decision-making process is more likely to remain stable over time, while extractive institutions threaten not only economic solidity but also social peace. The case of Lebanon mirrors the findings of this research and clearly shows a path leading to failure when the executive, and broadly the system, is based on restricted participation and sectarian elites' rule. A few years before, Rice and Patrick (2008) had developed a set of indicators aiming at defining the weakness of states. Although the importance of this reflection, their results do not consider the most recent development of capitalized globalization and therefore result in a limited frame to discuss the contemporary crisis. Nowadays, good governance cannot only imply a discussion on institutions but should also include Amartya Sen's theory of capabilities. Except for the case of the Indian economist, literature on governance seems sadly limited to developed countries' experience and there is a clear lack of comprehensive indexes widening the analysis of governance to social and religious possible clashes. The Arab Spring gave a rise to this reflection, but the result of this wave of studies is often poisoned with Eurocentric paradigms. This research thus aims to fulfill this gap by combining a deep country study and the mainstream conceptualization of governance. Also, sustainable and inclusive development theories do suffer from this single vision, it is thus unrealistic to classify developing states still fighting for survival in the frame of green economy's advancements and pro-planet measures.

On the other side, useful tools to analyze governance in non-western developed countries can be found in international organizations and multilateral institutions' reports. This practice, mainly axed at the understanding of financial and overall country risk, has widened its areas of interest and can be counted among primary importance tools to understand governance. The limits of this procedure are to be found in the lack of cross-sectoral and long-term analyses. If the data used often refers to time series to investigate the present, there are few references to historical peculiarities of countries and comprehensive solutions to critical issues. The works published by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, rating agencies, and the Bank for International Settlements represent a fundamental tool in the understanding of country risk and governance, but they should be combined with a historical perspective considering also religion, society,

and human capital. Therefore, this research's purpose is to present an all-inclusive wide-ranging analysis that spaces from economy to religion, through long-term studies for long-term solutions to contemporary crises.

Concerning Lebanon, the academic literature suffers the predominance of civil war and sectarian studies. There are very few examples of organic works targeting Lebanon's governance as a whole. Most of the literature is related to single issues, such as sectarianism, consociational power-sharing system, the memory of the war, and Hezbollah's influence on decision-making. The country's unicity has often limited the research owing to the difficulties in assessing governance and granting at the same time a politically-correct approach. Lebanon is nonetheless an incubator of transformative action, concerning both political action, democratization practices, and non-sectarian regime change. It can therefore later be universally applied to various situations across the globe if studied comprehensively. Sadly, the academic literature on the subject remains partial and partisan, often fueling divergences and conflicts. The major limit to the analysis of the Lebanese case is its non-resonance to pre-ordered categorizations. The uniqueness of the country must lead to a systematic and holistic study of its components to deliver a fair assessment, restricted or narrow-minded studies cannot return its complexity and so remain mere flags of partisanship. This research strives to ensure the development of a trend of a holistic approach to Lebanon, advocating for the inconsistency of monocular research and wishing for a transnational research team to start reflecting together on possible strategies to halt the free fall of the country.

METHODOLOGY

The study on Lebanese governance is the conclusive step of a three-year personal research project on the country. Thus, it is limiting to describe it as the mere result of the qualitative analysis of works published on Lebanon during the last decade, as one can witness by the description of the status of art in the first chapter and the analytical discussion of the second. This research is a ground study for a policy brief to inform Lebanese political institutions on viable recovery strategies that consider the specific religious composition and the in-place sectarian ruling method.

After more than two years of engagement in the Lebanese creative institutional process, which started in 2019 and now heading to the participation of revolutionary forces in the decision-making process, the author felt the urge to deepen the analysis of the financial and economic path that paves the way for sustainability. This need directly stems from the ground and it is the result of a close follow-up after the declared default on public debt in March 2020. If the previous studies were mainly axed at understanding the composite social and political frame, this research practically aims at understanding the worthwhile paths to recovery, including both external and internal stakeholders.

This conclusive comprehensive study on Lebanon is the result of a first-year qualitative bibliographical research, followed by one year of participative observation, and thus a complete reflection on future scenarios thanks to a deeper investigation of the economic status of the country. To this extent, the methodology used in this dissertation cannot be encompassed into a single strategy but is a multi-step bibliographic and qualitative research, combined with previous ethnographic research. This study has therefore analyzed recent academic and non-academic literature produced on the country, mainly referring to its economic and financial framework. It also saw extensive use of the press, both in English, French, and Arabic, because of the fundamental day-by-day follow-up on the subject. The analysis of reports and policy briefs produced by international organizations and university think-tanks, and governmental sources about the future outcomes of the reforms are one of the pillars of the research.

Thanks then to the submission of a survey to the young Lebanese population, both residing in the country and abroad, following a close network and later a snow-ball effect, an analysis of the perceptions of the youngest took place, giving the author the possibility

to remotely touch the ground of the most vital component of the society. Along with this non-linear methodology, a vital step in the completion of this analysis is represented by continuous informal talks with local actors, and remote participation in the political campaign for the May 2022 elections.

Although the outlined methodology could appear aleatory and non-scientific, the results of the study align with the scholars' forethoughts on Lebanon and are reflected in the daily press. Deep comprehension of a country's dynamics does not call for a specific methodology to be implemented but forces the researchers to avoid biases and prejudices on the subject. To this extent, the positioning has been problematic because of the attachment to the country, the will to assist soon to its renaissance, and the personal linkages with some sections of the population. Nonetheless, thanks to the access point on finance and economy, biases have been avoided owing to the objectivity of data and the profound understanding of rating mechanisms, and international financial institutions.

In conclusion, this study is a comprehensive operation that combines various methodologies in a cross-sectoral understanding of the country's main features. The aim of the research, namely the active participation in the renovation of the decision-making process in the country, deeply influenced the language used, which can sometimes sound too oriented through the practical implementation of the suggested reforms. In a nutshell, this study represents the conclusions of a three-year analysis and therefore is the result of an organic methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative studies, along ethnographic research and participative observation.

CHAPTER 1

1.1.The roots of the crises

"*Whereas the economic collapse began officially in 2019, the roots of the crisis extend further back in time, encapsulating Lebanon's foundational political order*" (Tawilé, 2021). Despite the effectiveness of this opening statement, it is not appropriate to refer to a crisis in the singular when analyzing the origin of Lebanese current situation. There are at least three factors to identify when talking about Lebanon: society, religion, and external influences. Lebanon is weighed down by the burden of modern corruption since 1990 triggering a Ponzi scheme to be brought into being and encouraging maladministration and negligence to preserve power-sharing. The clientele network in Lebanon is deep-rooted and difficult to eradicate. The sectarian system has always profited from a feudal use of decision-making. Political parties, alias former militias, have their lifeblood in a capillary subdivision of privileges and resources; it is thanks to this order that they can survive as political forces.

Far from being archaic, confessionalism was the ransom of modernity. He adapted to it so well that he managed to phagocyte a seemingly more modern form of mobilization, that of nationalism (Kassir, 2012). Those words are part of the singular "History of Beirut" of the assassinated Lebanese writer Samir Kassir. Since its Independence from France, on November 22nd, 1943, Lebanon built a consociational democracy (Lijphart, 1977), institutionalizing this particular power-sharing model to prevent sectarian conflicts. As a matter of fact, Lebanese history is dotted with religious conflicts outbroken since the establishment of the *Moutassarifat* of Mount Lebanon after the Ottoman Empire's territorial subdivision between Christians and Muslims following the *Tanzimat* reform. The decline of the Ottoman grip in the region produced the first conflict in 1840 that ended up turning into a civil war in the following twenty years. French colons benefitted from this fragmented religious situation, also using the role of emigration since 1885 to exercise what Foucault would have later identified as *biopouvoir*. The systemic over-representation of Christians in the official census (latest dates 1932) has been the key instrument of French policy in the region. French rulers' manipulation of the census and the strategic use of demography advantaged them

allowing the establishment of strong cooperation with Maronites, and specifically the urbanized ones, avoiding Muslims to participate in the public life of marginalizing them in underrepresentation. According to Lijphart, cooperative and coalescent elite behavior can turn a potentially unstable political system into a stable one, ensuring the agreement of all political parties in the decision-making process (Assi, 2016). Lijphart consociational model has four main components: good coalition, high degree of autonomy for each ethnic group to run its own internal affairs, proportionality as the principle standard of political representation, and the mutual veto of ethnic communities. The Lebanese political arena since the end of the civil war has surely seen a cooperation among *élites* to defend the unstable power balance and it has also legislated according to majority rules, but the representation of the population has never been based on real proportions and the segments of societies cannot be identified as relatively autonomous. Since 1932, no census of population has taken place because the delicate and imaginary balance based on the assumption of equality (at least in numbers) of Christians and Muslims would have collapsed. Since the birth of the State of Israel, Palestinian sought refuge in Lebanon ending by altering population composition on a religious basis. After the Jordanian "Black September" in 1970 – following the 1967 war and therefore a second wave of emigration from Palestine – the South of Lebanon became the operational base of the Organization for the Liberation of Palestine, increasing a strong Muslim presence in the country. Twenty years later, also the Syrian crisis, and then the outbreak of civil wars in the region (Yemen and Syria), following the Arab Spring, caused a massive brand-new population shift, affecting both the economy and the demography of the Land of Cedars.

The civil war erupted in Lebanon on April 13th, 1975, in *Ain-El-Rammaneh*. This controversial episode leads to the formulation of several theories related to the causes of the conflict, it is nonetheless undeniable that the presence of seventeen religions in Lebanon has been, is, and will always be a key element. Hudson (1976), for instance, blames the consociational model for the eruption of the civil war in Lebanon. He argues that the consociational system in Lebanon was not able to cope with the changes in the demographic sizes of the sectarian communities and with the regional conflicts that impacted upon the Lebanese political system, especially the Arab–Israeli conflict. Therefore, he concludes that the consociational model "is inappropriate to the Lebanese

situation because of its static characteristic it was unlikely to bring real stability, political normality, and above all political legitimacy back to the Lebanese political system".

Institutionalizing this reality in 1990, in hindsight, was not only short-sighted but it also constituted one of the main factors contributing to the institutional dysfunction (Dalla, 2015). "Rather than laying the basis for an inter-communal *modus operandi* for the Lebanese regime in 1943, the Pact has to be seen as an endorsement of the *status quo* at the time because it further legitimized a particular view regarding the distribution of power in Lebanon (Maktabi, 1999). The National Pact of 1943, following an oligarchic pattern, did not bring about intra-social change. The only conquest was the formal disjunction practiced in the governance of the French Mandate, to which Lebanon nevertheless remained faithful in economic and diplomatic terms.

The outbreak of civil war, in 1975, whose triggers are also outside the national borders, is the result of thirty years of unequal and *ad hoc* policies. The creation of a pole of prosperity in the heart of Beirut has not represented a pushing factor for an improvement of living conditions in the rest of the country. The Sunni and Maronite *élites* built empires, exploiting their inter-linkages with the Gulf States, Europe, and the Americas, whereas the middle and low classes worked hard for a living wage. The civil war in Lebanon should be considered in its initial phase a class war rather than a confessional one. Commenced by the revolt of Sai'da fishermen against the monopolization of trade by fine transnational *élites*, it headed the cities with a devastating impact. The roots of the Lebanese civil war and thus of nowadays bad governance are to be found in several fields: in what Kamal Joumblatt defines as "*colonisés de l'intérieur*", but also in the impossibility of a defense of the pan-Arab cause explained by the massive Christian presence in the aftermath of 1967. The war is above all interclass, it becomes confessional from regional engagements and it remains so until 1989.

"Nothing resembled mythical thought more than political ideology" (Lévi-Strauss, 1960). Contemporary societies seem having replaced myth with ideology and Lebanon has made the mythical thought of confessionalism the base of its common life. Confessionalism is therefore "institutionalized in a corporate consociation power-sharing system prone to immobilism and overlapping domestic and external context" (Salloukh et al., 2015). This confessional system thus favorizes clientelism. Political and religious forces offer employment, education access, and public roles by buying votes. Still today,

in 2022, Lebanon ranks 154 out of 180 in the Corruption Perception Index and 68% of the population think corruption increased in the previous 12 months. Global Corruption Barometer exists since 2003 and it surveys the experiences of everyday people confronting corruption around the world. Corruption is "a behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding pecuniary or status gains or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influences" (Nye, 1967).

Nor Syria's military withdrawal, the Doha Agreement or the influx of funds from the diaspora managed to overthrow the clientelist characteristic of Lebanon's economy. Moreover, from the Agreements of peace following the Syrian withdrawal to the beginning of turmoil in the Middle-East North-Africa (MENA) region in 2011, Lebanon experienced a positive balance of payments (BoP) because of the influx of funds from abroad and a "*long-standing votes-for-jobs economy, which individuals traded electoral votes or other forms of loyalty to political leaders in exchange for public sector jobs and key services, such as education and healthcare*" (Tawilé, 2021). Despite the absence of a clear Arab Spring-related movement in 2011, Lebanon saw an increase in social disorders, which lead to the waking of an antagonistic political force. Nonetheless, during the upheavals of 2015 ("You Stink") and 2019 (ثورة /"Thawra"), we have not observed a creative push toward systemic change but just a growing number of young and educated opponents. A game-changer can be identified in the Port of Beirut explosion of the 4th August 2020 alongside with the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, but no overthrow of the establishment has been observed until today.

The roots of the actual economic and social crises in Lebanon are not the result of a specific event but they are to be found in thirty years of mismanagement of land, resources, human capital, and governance. Upheavals, explosions or pandemics are just contingent occurrences that have a role in amplifying deeper conflictual ties and intensifying in place dysfunctional dynamics. The world-known "exogenous shock" of COVID-19 impacted Lebanon in a different way: the healthcare system was thus already collapsing, an economic crisis was hitting the low and middle classes, and the unpreparedness of the State to cope with emergencies had already been identified.

In conclusion, to understand Lebanon's present weakness the reader and the researcher cannot ignore the paths of its contemporary history.

1.2.From a weak state to a failed state

There are several indicators to categorize state fragility, weakness or failure, often combining social, financial, and commercial perspectives providing complex and holistic indexes. Unlike pre-Westphalian modern history, contemporary history is characterized by the predominance of the economy over the military force. It is therefore more frequent that observers witness sudden changes in the status of a country, considering the interconnections among States and societies deriving from the imposition of capitalized globalization. Due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, for example, Tunisia has worsened its indicators, and the Middle East region will surely see a degradation in its incomes and status. To put it briefly, there is no long-term definition applicable to the status (financial, social, political) of a country, because no country is exempted from stresses and challenges coming from outside.

The World Bank Group releases annually a list of fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS) mainly as a tool to shape its policy actions but also to monitor and evaluate ongoing partnerships and cooperation. According to this study, countries with institutional and social fragility include countries facing institutional crises, having poor government accountability and institutional capacity. Fragile countries are defined as countries having:

1. The weakest institutional and policy environment based on Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) score for International Development Association (IDA) countries below 3;
2. The presence of a United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operation;
3. Flights across borders who are internationally regarded as refugees in need of international protection.

The Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) consists of sixteen criteria, grouped in: economic management, structural policies, policies for social inclusion and equity, and public sector management and institutions. The score is calculated on a scale of low (1) to high (6).

According to the FCS list of 2022, Lebanon is a state with *high institutional and social fragility*, along with the Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Kosovo, Papua Nuova Guinea, Sudan, Venezuela, West Bank and Gaza, and Zimbabwe. Since

Resolution 425 (1978) and Resolution 426 (1978) of the United Nations Security Council, Lebanon hosts a UN peacekeeping operation, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The first mandate was aimed at confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the South, restoring peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return to its effective authority in the area. Resolution 1701 (2006) then added more tasks for the UN force: monitoring the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon, support the Lebanese armed forces as they deploy throughout the South, help ensure humanitarian access to civilians, assist the Government of Lebanon, as its request, in securing its borders. Other Resolutions (1773 in 2007, 2373 in 2017, 2433 in 2018, and 2485 in 2019) help the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Force (LAF) in UNIFIL's area of operation for a phased transition of responsibilities. The UNIFIL mandate is renews annually by the United Nations Security Council at the request of the Lebanese government. Except from the third "Flights *across borders who are internationally regarded as refugees in need of international protection*", thanks to the strong commitment of the Lebanese diaspora, Lebanon fulfills the criteria to be ranked as a weak State.

Some other scholars (Rice and Patrick, 2008) have identified twenty indicators to categorize states ranking their weakness. The "Index of State Weakness in the developing world" has been launched in 2008 and it aims at analyzing a State's strength or weakness in function of its effectiveness, responsiveness, and legitimacy across a range of government activities. The report's original aim is to advocate governments new policy tools to deal with developing countries facing weakness risks, and mainly to give US policy-makers a tool to understand key implications of their use of economic power in developing countries. Despite the fact they have been conceived as an instrument of the American Foreign Policy, the indicators that have been used to assess countries' level of weakness are still on point and may be useful to understand the Lebanese situation. This index includes twenty indicators, and they are divided as it follows:

Economic	**Political**	**Security**	**Social Welfare**
GNI per capita	Government Effectiveness	Conflict intensity	Child mortality
GDP growth	Rule of Law	Political Stability and Absence of Violence	Primary School Completion

Inflation	Voice and Accountability	Incidence of Coups	Undernourishment
Inflation	Control of Corruption	Gross Human Rights Abuses	Percent population with access to improved water sources and with access to improved sanitation facilities
Regulatory quality	Freedom rights	Territory affected by conflict	Life expectancy

Each indicator is given a grade between 0 (low) and 10 (high), where values close to zero represent failure, while values close to ten indicate low weakness. Gross National Income (GNI) per capita values can be analyzed in a comparative way. To have a reference, in 2008 Italy's GNI per capita was around 37,910 $ while Syrian Arab Republic's one was around 8,970 $ and Guinea-Bissau's was 1,260 $ (World Bank Atlas, 2022).

Rank	Country	Overall Score	Economic	Political	Security	Social Welfare	GNI per capita
93	Lebanon	7.02	7.05	4.86	6.77	9.40	5490

According to those data, referred to the range 2006 – 2008, Lebanon is part of the top quintile among developing countries for Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, it is on the fourth quintile for social welfare and economy, and it shows its worst scores in political and security-related indicators. While it is not surprising that Lebanon ranks low in security-related indicators, due to the ongoing conflict with Israel, it is interesting to remark that its worst performance is in policy. Lebanon is therefore ranked as a country where the Rule of Law is poorly implemented, the Government is not effective, there is no accountability for political leaders, corruption is high and freedom rights are not granted.

The World Bank Group provides a GNI per capita (Atlas Method) which can be useful to understand the trajectory of the Lebanese economy. According to this graphic offering a wide timeline, Lebanon is periodically affected by collapses in the GNI. First crash dates 2003, likely due to the repercussions of the American invasion of Iraq which make the country unstable by fueling religious divisions. The second episode can be observed in 2006, in correspondence of the war against Israel. Since then, Lebanon's GNI

saw an exponential growth in GDP until 2011. As aforementioned, 2011 marks the end of the Lebanese positivity of the Balance of Payments because of the implementation of the Hariri's urban renovation plan calling on diaspora to finance Beirut's reconstruction and the beginning of a period of moderate changes in the economic indicators. Another fall, in 2015, is to be imputed to the social movement "You Stink" that once again altered the mood of the diaspora, main donor of the country. Growth resumed immediately after and then started a terribly negative trend in 2019 as a Thawra effect and continued because of the Port of Beirut explosion, the Lebanese default on its debt, and the pandemic of COVID-19.

Gross National Income, which represents an "unambiguous improvement" (Todaro and Smith, 2011) because it reflects what citizens can do with the income they receive, nonetheless leaves out a fundamental factor, namely the remittances. Lebanon is a country of emigration, as demonstrated by the fact that six million of Lebanese live within the national borders while almost the triple lives abroad. Remittances also have important implications at the macro level and on the profile of national accounts and it is undeniable that also the different components of the Current Account Balance are an essential element to understand the weaknesses and the strengths of the economy (Capelli and Vaggi, 2014). According to the World Bank Database, remittances in Lebanon in 2012 represented 16% of the GDP.

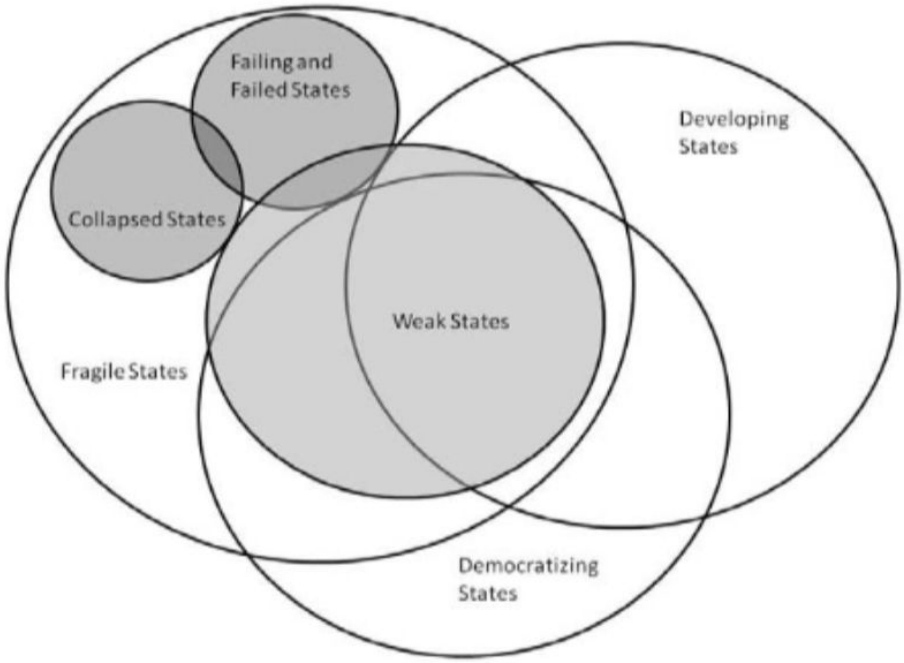
In a nutshell, Lebanon has started an economic descent before the explosion of Beirut and the outbreak of COVID-19, because of poor governance, lack of accountability, and mismanagement of resources.

Despite the effectiveness of economic indicators, the weakness of a state can also considers social capacity-building, the impact of policy-makers on everyday life. "*Joel S. Migdal's finding that weak states' top political elites share a general security predicament, which places them in a dilemma, encouraging them so sacrifice long-term security for short-term survival, thus perpetuating both state weakness and regime insecurity. […] The actions taken to ensure long-term regime security tend to undermine short-term government survival.*" (Feraru, 2021). In this frame, a state can be ranked as weak owing to its political elites' incapacity to act sustainably, considering the needs of future generations. Lijphart (1977) defines political stability as: "*A multidimensional concept, combining ideas that are frequently encountered in the comparative literature:*

system maintenance, civil order, legitimacy, and effectiveness. The foremost characteristics of a stable democratic regime are that it has a high probability of remaining democratic and that it has a low level of actual and potential civil violence. These two dimensions are closely related; the latter can also be viewed as a prerequisite for, and as an indicator of, the former. Similarly, the degree of legitimacy that the regime enjoys, and its decisional effectiveness are related both to each other and to the first two factors. Jointly and interdependently, these four dimensions characterize democratic stability." So, adapting Lijphart to the post Stockholm 1972 conceptualization of sustainable development, the ruling system in place in Lebanon would allow us to think about the impossibility of a pattern of growth in line with sustainability: *élites* in Beirut have always prioritize the maintenance of the system of privileges that grants them the survival over the wealth of citizens. This is what Joel S. Migdal has defined "politics of survival" (PoS), acknowledging that it implies insecure leaders in weak States to employ legal or illegal strategies to undermine the potential for political mobilization. Feraru (2021) adds that PoS can be referred also to actions undertaken by political leaders in pursuing their survival needs that end up "*eroding the State-society relationship, along the control and/or legitimacy dimension(s).*" (Feraru, 2021)

In brief, "*fragility is not an end state*" (Miner and Trauscherizer, 2014) but a measure of the extent to which actual practices and capacities differ from their idealized image. To sum up, fragility is a matter of degree, not kind. Pursuant to Carment and Samy, there are three core parameters for understanding fragility: authority, legitimacy, and capacity.

But how can we witness the degradation of a weak state into a failed state, and what is a failed State? During the UNOSOM II (1993 – 1995), Madeline Albright, United States Ambassador to the United Nations at the time, identified Somalia as a failed State. Somalia was hit from famine, it was in anarchy and could not survive without external help (Albright, 1993). A failed state is recognized as utterly incapable of sustaining itself as a member of the international community (Helmand and Ratner, 2010). According to Carment and Samy, "*these are states that have typically fallen into complete collapse brought on by man-made calamity, such as civil war or a mismanaged economy, sometimes exacerbated by environmental degradation or natural disasters. These states are, despite international efforts, utterly incapable of managing their political and economic space.*" (Miner and Trauscherizer, 2014).



Fragile States Venn Diagram. Source: Miner and Trauscherizer, 2014

The diagram shows that not all weak States follow the path to failure and collapsed and failed state overlap minimally. It is important to understand that Lebanon is not necessarily going towards the collapse as a result of the worsening of its indices, but it may remain in the grey area of weakness for an indefinite period of time. Lebanon is now at a crossroad: "*understanding the dynamics of state failure and strengthening weak nation-states in the developing world assumed new urgency*".

1.3.Systemic Dysfunctions

As suggested by the title of the paragraph, there are some similarities between the human body and the government of a State. Both of them can be affected by chronic illnesses and for both of them, there is a reputed science advocating for the best practices to undertake. Good governance positively affects the wellbeing of the population, establishing a system of human rights compliance, economic livability, and providing "social lifts" while bad governance reduces political life to a mechanism aimed at the survival of the ruling class with no benefits for the vast majority of the population.

According to the Lebanon Economic Monitor (LEM), a brief aiming at giving an update on key economic developments and policies over a six months period and presenting the work of the World Bank in Lebanon, "*the Lebanon financial and economic crisis is likely to rank in the top ten, possibly top three, most severe crises episodes globally since the mid-nineteenth century.*" (LEM, 2021). It is interesting to note how the tones of this periodical report on the Lebanese situation have aggravated:


Fall 2019
So, when Gravity Beckons, the Poor Don't Fall


Fall 2020
The Deliberate Depression


Spring 2021
Lebanon Sinking


Fall 2021
The Great Denial

These sources describe the dizzying collapse Lebanon has been experiencing since October 2019. Indeed, Lebanon has not been able to cope with social tension, inflation, capital outflows, and the reduction of remittances coming from the diaspora. This inability to get to grips with crises is the result of deep-rooted systemic dysfunctions.

First of all, the reinforcement of sectarian politics after the Ta'if agreement has led to the paralysis of political and administrative authorities. No reforms have been implemented, no justice system has been established and seeking justice is denied to ordinary people. Lebanon's dysfunctions were brought to sunlight during the damage count following the Port of Beirut explosion when President Michel Aoun addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations calling on the international community to support the reconstruction rather than providing the citizens with truth, accountability, and reparation for the economic and social losses.

Dysfunctions should be differentiated into two macro areas: social-judicial and economic. The lack of accountability for violations against ordinary citizens, the amnesty Law of 1991, systemic corruption, prioritization of personal and sectarian interests, and political immunity belong to the first category, while the shadow economy generated by remittances, informal employment, corruption, and illegal activities but also the default on Eurobond repayment and hyperinflation fall into the second.

Lebanon has pegged its currency (LBP) to USD ($) in 1997 at a rate of 1507.5 LBP per USD. When the country slid into an economic crisis in October 2019, the currency lost its value on the open market losing up to 80% of its worth, but the official

rate stayed stuck at the 1997 peg. The Lebanese government decided to impose strict capital controls, including cash withdrawal and foreign exchange limitations. Today, the Lebanese Pound has lost more than 90% of its value, plunging the country into a crisis of hyperinflation. Lebanon's currency is now sold in the black market at the exchange rate of 27.000 LBP per USD. As aforementioned, the population demand for services and goods cannot be covered by local production, so Lebanon is forced to import more than 85% of consumer goods and it is therefore highly dependent on the exchange rate.

This is just one of the outcomes of the inflation crisis currently hitting the country, but it is the main factor influencing the capacity of attracting foreign investments. "*Lebanon has been exposed to long-standing twin deficits – one regarding its public finance and one regarding its current account*" (Tawilé, 2021); Lebanese fiscal deficit in 2018 exceeded 11% of the GDP and the country hit the record of a 170% of GDP public debt before the default on the Eurobond payment in March 2020.

As witnessed by data, systemic dysfunction in the Lebanese system has prevented the management of public debt, and the supervision of fiscal deficit. Thus, the artificial consensus established around the nepotism of a corrupted political class created a climate of rent-seeking, diverting capitals entering the country for personal or sectarian purposes.

Lebanon's GDP is made up of 20% of the remittances of the Lebanese living in diaspora and these amounts are not controlled: they surely contribute to the survival of some lower and middle-income households, but they also stimulate a bloating in the economy of the country. In 2009 real estate marketing had developed a financial bubble of speculation, mostly due to the unregulated inflow of capital from the diaspora.

Alongside this economic distortion, the employment sector is not transparent. To maintain their power over the religious group they represent, leaders often hide outside the employment classification framework, violating the law and encouraging a shadow economy. People living outside the strict schema of nepotism and corruption, namely stateless and refugees, use informal work to survive. This apparatus causes a loss of revenues for the government on two sides: the illegal hiring for sectarian purposes increases the deficit and the expansion of informal employment alters the collection of taxes, creating a downward spiral.

Another element of the Lebanese dysfunction is the infamous post-war reconstruction process, led by Rafik Hariri and its enterprise *Solidère*. This private-public

partnership was supposed to end in 2019, after the reconstruction of the City Center of Beirut, but is still alive and has been prolonged until 2029. This example clarifies the strict link among public expenditure, private firms, and political elites. Moreover, the reconstruction after the civil war was financed through borrowing, issuing debt denominated in domestic currency during times of high interest rates. When the currency was stabilized then, the debt stock increased generating an unsustainable debt path that keeps on worsening thwarting economic growth.

However, the reconstruction-related dysfunctions are not the largest. Lebanon is sadly famous also because of the state's inability to collect taxes. The level of tax revenues stops at around 15% of GDP (Bifani et al., 2021), lower than the average of developing regions. This tax revenue to GDP ratio is closest to Egypt and Sub-Saharan Africa and it generates the impossibility to finance social policies and deliver basic public services. This issue in providing the citizen with livable environments should be paired with the lack of guarantee on human rights compliance.

"*Lebanon's state-owned electricity sector, financially deficient since 1992, has been another source of funds hemorrhage*" (Tawilé, 2021). Lebanon's inhabitants have a provision for 3 to 4 hours per day of electricity owing to the dangerous lack of resources. Parts of the country suffer 12-hour-long electricity cuts and it is also due to the bloated political system of employment, that does not reflect capabilities but just nepotism. This status of things incentivizes a network of private generator owners selling power connections at high prices. This activity is often concerted with the political elites: generators "mafia" helps maintain the status quo not reform a system that remains profitable for the vast majority of ruling elites, whose victims are Lebanese citizens.

The healthcare system is also part of the dysfunctional policy practice in Lebanon. Hospitals and health services "*have become highly politicized issues used for private gain and the policy and political structures of the Lebanese health social welfare system have clearly gad a negative effect on the health of the nation*." (R4HC et al., 2022) with a disastrous effect mainly for low and middle classes that cannot afford private sector's care. According to the study of R4HC, Lebanon spends 8 to 10% of its GDP on healthcare, which is not far from OECD expenditures on health (before COVID-19) but its investments are concentrated in high-tech-high-cost interventions for the profit of a small part of the population, while little efforts are made to make care accessible.

Firstly, the judiciary cannot be considered independent. Despite its enshrining in the Constitution (Article 20), it seems not to have administrative or financial autonomy. The Lebanese judicial system, following the Legislative Decree No. 150 of 16 September 1983, includes ordinary courts and the High Judicial Council. The last's scope is to surveil the proper functioning and the independence of the judiciary (Daoud et al., 2010). Nonetheless, as witnessed by the brief paper "The Lebanese High Judicial Council in light of International Standards", published in 2017 by the International Commission of Jurists, "[…] *the ICJ is concerned that the provisions of Decree-Law No. 150/83 allow for executive influence over the composition of the High Judicial Council (HJC), and provide for an inadequate procedure for the election of its members*." (ICJ, 2017). Based on these assumptions, the ICJ recommends amending Decree-Law No. 150/83 to provide "[…] *at least the majority of the HJC members be judges from all courts and tribunals are elected by their peers*." (ICJ, 2017). Also, to meet international standards, the Decree-Law No. 150/83 should also provide objective criteria to appoint and/or elect HJC members, granting integrity, ability, and experience, but also equality, as emphasized by article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. Moreover, the High Judicial Council's decisions are not subjected to appeal, violating the international standards required for the conditions of a fair trial.

After the explosion of the 4th of August, the High Judicial Council showed all its limits in delivering transparent and fair decisions. On August 10, 2020, Judge Fadi Sawan was appointed by the Minister of Justice to investigate the catastrophe. Political forces and parties, authorities, and other civil society representatives have heavily interfered causing delays and obstruction to the course of justice. Despite those interferences, Judge Sawan charged around forty people (junior to mid-level port officials, employees of companies working in the stocking process). Twenty-five of them are now facing pre-trial detention. No senior official has been charged for the Beirut blast. Later on, the designated Judge charged some former Ministers, including Hassan Diab, the Prime Minister at the time of the explosion. He was soon removed from the case by the Court of Cassation in February 2021. Several months later, Judge Tarek Bitar was appointed for the investigation on the Port of Beirut Explosion. Nonetheless, there has been no evolution on the judicial side. Protests have increased and Judge Bitar had to "survive" –

as stated by Reuters –the attempts of removing him from the position coming from political parties (El Dahan, 2021).

Another matter can be found in the two legislative provisions: the Amnesty Law of 1991 and the immunity of politicians. These two conditions contribute to the malfunctioning of the system: the Amnesty Law, which is to be intended in its timeframe, aimed at closing as fast as possible the chapter of the civil war, giving a general absolution for the crimes committed during the conflict, but it ended up diffusing a sense of collective impunity vis-à-vis war crimes, briberies, and mismanagement of resources; the immunity of politicians, strongly debated during the investigations on the Port of Beirut explosion, gives to the elites and the sectarian leader an enormous privilege which conflicts with the international *ius cogens* rule attesting that all citizens are equals.

In conclusion, the Lebanese landscape is dotted with malfunctioning and dysfunctions which seriously attempt to the wellbeing of the community. This situation is a fertile breeding ground for corruption, illegal practices, and human rights violations.

CHAPTER 2

2.1. Inner competition for resources

Economics is the study of the allocation of scarce resources. Thus, we have desires and needs but a limited amount of resources to satisfy them. Men and women should therefore compete for getting their needs and desires satisfied, this is the logic of the capitalistic system both in presence of bad and good governance. There is however a substantial difference: good governance allows competitiveness to improve the wellbeing of citizens, providing them with vast choices in terms of costs and products while bad governance profits from competitiveness unfairly to increase biases and distortions that only benefit corrupted elites.

In Lebanon, scarce resources represent a medium of exchange: the confessional power-sharing enables a mechanism that uses electricity, water, and other basic public services as a tool to impose politics. The system of patronage has made it normal to secure resources on the base of the belonging to the community "*which results in a hollowing out of state service provision in favor of corrupt patronage networks*" (COAR, 2022). This system's implementation has not only led to the lack of service provision but also an unequal distribution of resources and uneven development efforts. Disparities are on the rise both concerning the regions of the country and within the major cities (Beirut and Tripoli).

In this scenario, providing resources to the citizens becomes an affair that goes beyond the control of the state-apparatus and falls into the one of the state as a political entity seeking consensus and survival, namely parties and sectarian associations. From school education to health and electricity, there are no basic state provisions in Lebanon and this inner competition for resources accelerates a path toward the abyss. From a purely historical point of view, this is the result of the failure of the Ta'if Agreement and the Amnesty Law of 1990, but this explanation is not exhaustive. After the Civil War (1975-1990), Lebanon has structured a system of power-sharing formally related to sectarianism, the ideological frame is therefore fundamental, but it cannot be overestimated. Some scholars define Lebanon as the only possible democracy for a multi-religious state, others argue that consociational democracy cannot even be counted among

typed democracies. The truth lies in the middle. According to *On Democracy*, the representative form of government should grant the citizens effective participation, equity in voting, and final control over the agenda, and it should also include all adults in the procedures of voting (Dahl, 1998). If we apply these categorizations to the Lebanese political life, the result is immediate: citizens do participate but they cannot reach apical positions if they do not surrender to the power-sharing logic; there is also formal equity in voting, but the procedures are not transparent; all the adults are formally included but there is no guarantee for them to participate to the control over the agenda, which is set far from where the people stay. In a nutshell, Lebanon is a democracy heading to failure because of the lack of real inclusion that prevents citizens from implementing political reforms.

The competition in place for the resources thus originates from the bid to prevail in the political arena but what is interesting is that resources keep on degrading enabling a Ponzi scheme in which there is no winner but only one loser: the Lebanese people.

There is also another factor to consider when analyzing the regional management of resources. If Lebanon's first subdivision of resources is linked to power-sharing-related issues, it is also true that the country has not developed as a whole. In terms of social and economic characteristics, Lebanon is the result of different phases of evolution. The first is connected to the Western penetration in the region during the XVIII and XIX centuries; it saw a development mainly in the capital, Beirut, and Mount Lebanon. French administration needed an ally and Christian offered the best viable option. The second phase started after the American Blue Bat operation in 1958, during Shebab's Presidency, and saw a horizontal development throughout the country, nonetheless, iniquity remained present. The last phase can be identified as the process of unequal reconstruction during the '90s after the Civil War (Nehmeh, 2001). This renewal of the country has been the prerogative of one single class. This *excursus* helps understand the reason why competition for the resources is still high in Lebanon, and why the politically corrupted class uses the basic needs of the population to govern.

The disparity in Lebanon concerns economic diversity and activities, human development, social structure, political representation, and participation. Unfortunately, the Central Administration of Statics (CAS) updated its demographic and social statistics last in 2009 in cooperation with The World Bank and more recent data are not available.

Nonetheless, economic diversity can be derived from an analysis of bank credits and deposits. Beirut and Mount Lebanon receive more than 85% of the credits, and less than 1% of total beneficiaries in 2000 received more than 50% of total credits (Nehmeh, 2001). Human development's recent data cannot be found in official sources, they all date from the past decade. As we have mentioned above, Lebanon is not compliant with the international standards on data sharing. Even UNESCO's data stops in 2015. However, economic statistics identify a link between literacy, income, health access, and human development. On the word of illiteracy rate, CAS data (2000) underline a difference of around 12% between Beirut and the Beqaa Valley (Annex 1).

Also, the distribution of energy can be used as a tool of analysis. According to the World Bank Report of 2020 (Ahmed, 2020), "*the failings of the Lebanese power sector traces back to the days of the civil war between 1975 and 1990, which resulted in substantial destruction of the state-owned power utility Electricité du Liban (EdL) generation, transmission and distribution assets*.". Moreover, the increase in electricity demand is not met by EdL and the supply-demand deficit is expected to grow to 56% by 2025. Besides, power cuts are not uniform: Beirut enjoys the best electricity coverage with 3 hours of outages per day, but Akkar districts and Baalbak-Hermel districts endure outages of more than 10 hours per day.

The gap in the electricity supply is generally covered by private companies. They are expensive and unequal, and they represent one of the major sources of pollution in the country. This led to the creation of an informal economy profiting from the lack of regulation of the Lebanese government. In the beginning, private generators were not metered so it was easier for the population to call on non-transparent companies for the provision of energy: consumption was paid at a flat rate. Since 2018, a system of metering has been put in place and there was an increase in demands on EdL's service provisions, mainly during hot summer and cold winter. However, EdL has not been able to meet the demand and it resulted in more outages and a subsequent increase in the share of power derived by private generators.

In Lebanon, the delivering of power and energy became a battleground for the political parties to ensure continuity in their governmental roles: "*As the public sector became more and more bloated, EdL absorbed many low-skilled workers with no*

technical expertise, mainly at the direction of political elites seeking to provide their constituents with jobs." (Tawile, 2021).

The implementation of this system gave birth to a power mafia related to the approvals and permissions to sell private diesel generators. Owing to the revenues this mechanism generates in terms of votes, the government has no appetite for the application of a stricter and fairer regulation, the under-supply of energy represents one of the most important electoral basins.

Also, the Water and Sanitation (WEs) has witnessed depletions in supplies, revenues, financial, and human resources according to the World Bank (The World Bank, 2021). Except for the consequences of the outcome of the pandemics, service delivery has suffered from weakened institutions. Those institutions are lacking funds, rely on limited resources, and do not have subsidies. In particular, in the aftermath of the economic crisis, the wages declined, and it was not easy to grant salaries to the workforce. The delays in the delivery of Water and Sanitation increase the risks of water-borne diseases that could pressure the "*already vulnerable public health system*" (The World Bank, 2021). This is the consequence of years of power-sharing and inner competition for resources: political parties exchanged votes for jobs ending up building a non-technical workforce in key-sectors granting the well-being of citizens.

Another ground of competition among political parties is represented by education. The sectarian system favorizes a typical schema of primary-level corruption and secondary-level sectarian sharing. More precisely, the competition for the resources at the governmental level sees one particular form of competition among political parties, related to the hoarding of votes while secondary and private institutions, such as schools, can be used as a way to compete for the description of the world as it is. Lebanon has no agreed curriculum on history, and the civil war is not even mentioned in 90% of school books. This exemplifies the pervasiveness of competition for resources in Lebanon: even the human capital, and therefore the education and formation of the new generation, becomes a fertile ground to struggle over resources.

In conclusion, Lebanon is a country with a reduced amount of profitable assets. Those few resources are the object of desire of political parties aiming at profiting from the public dysfunctions to gain political influence and integrate the state institutions. This

circle creates an unfair competition that disadvantages common citizens, leading Lebanon to failure.

2.2. *Mis-governance* and capital outflows

The World Bank defines governance as the process by which governments are selected, monitored, and replaced, including their capacity to formulate and implement sound policies, and the relation citizens build with the institutions and the State. It also provides an index of six indicators, namely: voice and accountability, political stability and the absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and the control of corruption. The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project combines the view of a large number of enterprises, citizens, and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries (World Bank, 2022). According to this index, Lebanon scores poorly mainly in the indicators related to political stability and the absence of violence, but also in the control of corruption (see Annex 2), which has worsened by 5% since 2015 (see Annex 3). What is interesting to underline is that most of the scores have not improved throughout time, and the government's effectiveness has fallen by more than 25% in five years (2015-2020). Nonetheless, this is not surprising: Lebanon has indeed experienced a retarded social and political turmoil following the mainstream revolutionary narrative of the Arab Spring. The demand for equity stemmed from the youth, and later gained a broader space in the social and political arena.

The country is plagued with corruption since its birth, but 2020 data show an important decrease in the ability to control it. This is surely imputable to the outcomes of the economic crisis but also related to the delay in the elections of 2013. The deflagration of Thawra in 2019 has undoubtedly contributed to the decline in the government's effectiveness, power has been challenged by various forces, including the Youth. The Port of Beirut explosion (PoB) in August only represents the final step of a path: regulatory quality has kept on worsening since 2010, and the capacity to provide the people with tools to fulfill basic needs is the most visible effect of this trend. Unpredictably the score on the index of "voice and accountability" has improved. It is true that Lebanese people spoke up and took the streets both in 2015 and 2019 showing a profound desire for unity and change, but it is also undeniable that accountability is one

of Lebanon's most renewed weaknesses. The Charter of the High Judicial Council and its non-transparent voting procedures clearly witness the lack of freedom to a fair trial but also the impossibility for the judicial system to work independently from the major parties. This system seems to admit political interferences, adding to the mismanagement of resources also the impossibility for the Lebanese people to see their rights granted.

In this framework, *mis-governance* should be interpreted, on a scale going from good governance to bad governance, as a middle to low performance. According to the indicators provided above and in Annexes 2 and 3, Lebanon is a failed State. Nonetheless, Lebanese people proved themselves resilient cooperating with the change of the system in place. To this extent, the author decided to use the term *mis-governance* rather than bad governance. This terminological choice allows a reflection on the possible paths to transform the political system and invert the trend, conducting the country toward the implementation of reforms in regulation, anti-corruption measures, and accountability procedures.

At the same time, good governance has no receipt. Scholars have identified, throughout the years, various courses of renovation but none of them has emerged as a universally applicable model. States do have different compositions, social demands, and political conformations and ready-made indexes exploring governance can mislead the analysis in peculiar cases, such as Lebanon. First of all, the religious mosaic and its impact on the political life of the country should be part of the indicators, while the WGI only integrates the idea of political stability when relating to governmental practices. In brief, when analyzing the governance perspective in a country like Lebanon, religion and mafia-like systems having pervasive impacts on the societies shall be considered as key factors. In this direction, there is no single hypothesis of reform we can provide. Firstly, Lebanon shall not engage in a path leading to growth but development. This can start from political change, and the inclusion of the oppositions in the ruling of the country or be inducted by economic growth and capital accumulation in disregard of freedom of speech, equality, and social mobility.

According to the outcome of the elections of May 15th, 2022, on 128 seats, the anti-establishment and traditional groups running on anti-establishment platforms got 22. This election marked a failure for the March 8 Alliance, the bloc of Amal and Hezbollah and its allies got 58 seats, a small number if compared to the 71 of the 2018 elections.

March 14 Alliance got 48 seats, less than the 56 of 2018. The vote took place for the first time with a great absence, the Future Movement of the former Prime Minister Saad Hariri, whom affiliated candidates ran separately, securing a total of 8 seats within the count of March 14 Alliance. This new layout, challenging the traditional composition of power, will lead to a reform in the decision-making process which can paralyze governance or restructure the participation of the people. Since its establishment as a Republic, Lebanon has never seen the inclusion of openly non-confessional parties within the ruling system of the country. What the October 17-backed representatives will bring to the parliamentary discussion is fundamental for the renaissance of Lebanon, but the political structure would not benefit from the lack of a majority and reforms may be retarded or delayed. Lebanon must secure its governance by stabilizing its economy, and the outcome of the elections will not make this job easy. Despite the enthusiasm among the youngest, 22 seats will not be enough for the anti-establishment parties to influence the course of decision-making, in generating a doom-loop heading to political paralysis.

Another attack on governance comes from the capital flight (Annex 4). Since the outbreak of the Thawra, in October 2019, Lebanese banks started preventing the withdrawal of US dollars from a bank account. Commercial banks imposed their own capital control by setting withdrawal and transfer limits for their clients: they could only withdraw their US Dollars in the local currency at an inflated rate. This measure strongly contributed to the increase in poverty for low and middle-income households, while the Finance Ministry's Former Director-General, Alain Bifani, estimated that up to $6 billion was smuggled out of Lebanon between late 2019 and the summer of 2020 (Chehayeb, 2022). In brief, suddenly depositors have lost access to the money in their bank accounts. Once again, with no official implementation of capital control law, the rulers of the country have been able to smuggle their money abroad, while the people stayed forced to governmental regulations claiming that no withdrawal can be made in US Dollars if not aligned to the 1997 now old-fashioned peg. This practically means that people lost and will still lose more than 90% of the real value of their deposits if they withdraw at the official exchange rate set by the banks. The *ad hoc* capital controls law imposed has prevented most Lebanese from transferring money overseas or withdrawing from their bank accounts, even though 75 percent of accounts in Lebanese banks are denominated in dollars. Capitals generally outflow when a country is perceived as unstable politically

or economically. What happened in Lebanon is a combination of both: since the eruption of social protests in October 2019, the political thermometer started to worry foreign investors, and the default on Eurobonds generated also an outflow of the national investors in a spiral leading once again the country to total failure.

According to a study published by the United States Department of State concerning Climate Statements in Lebanon, there is evidence that Lebanon has always represented a liable partner for Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), thanks to the Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL) that awards licenses and permits for new investments granting special incentives and tax exemptions. Also, the records of capital and financial account witness this trend. In the second quarter of 2021, Lebanon registered a capital and financial account surplus of 279.30 USD million. It is low if compared with the first quarter of 2021, when data observe a surplus of 1880 USD million or the second quarter of 2020 with 5312 USD million. It is also interesting to notice how the 2019 Thawra has immediately impacted the financial and capital account looking at the data from the third quarter of 2019 with a drop of 1511 USD million below the zero.

The Lebanese economy is strongly dependent on external forces and capitals and the continuous degradation of governance in the country is likely to exacerbate the ongoing multi-rooted crisis. Deepening the comprehension of the causes could certainly help structure an organic and reliable program of reforms toward making governance sustainable in Lebanon. This is not utopic but can only happen if the political forces cooperate and align to international standards.

2.3. Brain drain and the Youth

The effects of years of *mis-governance* in Lebanon are visible not only in pure capital outflows but also in human capital outflows. The country experiences a marked disjuncture between higher education levels and economic growth. This is because, as witnessed by Arab Barometer (2022), young and well-educated Lebanese show their willingness to find a job abroad. Lebanon has more than forty universities on its territory, including internationally recognized schools with superior diplomas spendable worldwide. Nonetheless, the unemployment rate is skyrocketing; the World Bank shows a percentage of unemployed in the labor force that doubles from 2010 to 2020. Although

the complex level stays below the critical threshold, the measurement is based on surveys that are not always reliable. The country is plagued with a broad shadow economy, occupying more than 30% of the labor force.

Lebanon witnessed at the same time the improvement of higher education standards and a reduction in the employment rate. This is the outcome of a system of capillary corruption where the youth has no possibilities to integrate the administration of the country and therefore envisages the departure. Young people leave because of their frustration remaining in a country where even basic needs (water, electricity, public transportation, education, and healthcare) are not granted, but end up fearing their own desire to leave qualifying themselves as traitors. This schema of *frustration-leave-frustration* generates a collective psychosis that polarizes the ground and underlines the sub-division of the Lebanese society into those who leave and those who resist and stay. This dichotomy does not help structure a strong and common response to the establishment, which is perceived as corrupted and unequal. Also, the parties born in the wake of the Thawra are victims of the abovementioned logic. Rising migration trends reflect a broader frustration with poor governance: unsustainable fiscal paths, high level of corruption, and weak social mobility are the main pushing factors.

In a nutshell, brain drain effects are not visible only in the lack to build an in-country alternative because of the absence of the youth's intelligentsia but also in the risk that this dividing wall within the youth could over-polarize the political arena, repeating the path that led to the civil war in 1975. In that case, the Druze leader Joumblatt defined the Palestinians as "*Les colonisés de l'intérieur*", today the same title should apply to middle-low income households in Lebanon that do not participate in the decision-making process as transnational elites in the diaspora do. The migration path feeds the social rift: following the same course of the emigration during the Civil War, the wealthiest families only can afford to pay the cost of living abroad, thanks to their transnational boundaries and support.

Along with the aforementioned brain drain pushing factors, there is a strong desire for dignified compensation and equal career prospects, abandoning the dynamic of social injustice and the lack of livability. This is what sociologists call the pulling factor: the creation of a landscape of fairness located outside the national border.

Once they lose their talented and young citizens, countries develop slower. An example may be identified in the management of the covid-19 pandemic. The Lebanese healthcare system had already been hit by the Port of Beirut explosion, which destroyed part of the capital's hospitals practically. Moreover, the hyperinflation crisis and the economic default influence the allocation of medicines and medical equipment. In this frame, a wide percentage of Lebanese young graduates left the country after the eruption of the crisis, worried about future perspectives. During covid-19 Lebanon suffered not only the lack of instrumentations and medications but also of personnel. Drug shortages threaten tens of thousands of people and medics scramble to find alternatives that are missing, but the situation is dire since thousands of doctors and nurses have left the country. While donations and reforms can easily manage the first, the brain drain will not stop or diminish before long-run reforms are in place and the country recovers from *mis-governance*.

Thus, brain drain is depleting vital sectors of staff, but it also brings benefits in the shape of increased remittances. Those can help slow the rapid decline in living standards and the value of the Lebanese Lira.

Lebanese youth opened the floor to the discussion on brain drain on the streets during the October protests in 2019. An outcome of the participative observation I have conducted from October 2019 until March 2020 is related to the rebirth of these adolescents and early graduates participating for the first time in a process challenging the system: the demand for a common historical soil at school alongside the strong request of jobs, anti-corruption measures, and basic services found fertile ground in the surroundings of Martyrs' Square. This aggregative momentum helped build anti-establishment forces which took part in the elections of May 15th.

According to the results emerging from a survey submitted via social media to some focal points in Lebanon and then spread following a snowball effect, around 46% of the interviewed went to vote for the first time (Annex 6 – Graphic VI). Around 71% of the interviewed live in Lebanon, 38% in Beirut (Annex 6 – Graphic II). Among them, 77% were sure to go to vote (Annex 6 – Graphic III). While the expectations for the in-country vote were high, the participation is attested to around 45%. Diaspora votes reached peaks in the United Arab Emirates, where more than 70% of the population voted with a strong preference for pro-Thawra movements. The ballots collected outside

Lebanon strongly oriented votes toward anti-establishment parties, returning a frame of the complexity in the in-out relations to power. According to the survey (Annex 6 – Graphic IV), there is a strong relationship between age, residency, and the willingness to vote for post-Thawra political forces. Dissecting the results of the statistics, among the 60% endorsing a vote for change a great majority is composed of young people living in Europe and adults based in Beirut. This composition reflects the traditional sub-division of Lebanon into areas of power (Hezbollah and Amal in the South, Future Movement in Tripoli, Lebanese Forces, and the Free Patriotic Movement in Beirut East) but also underlines the capital's openness to movement mainly secular and nonsectarian. Beirut-based voters have opened the floor to change by investing in candidates to preserve the outcome of the Thawra. Transnational youth living abroad try to diminish the weight of in-country religious and political division by pushing forward the ideal of a Lebanon where civil rights of minorities are granted, a serious debate is open within the government and the society about climate change and the creation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), where there is freedom of education and sexual liberties. The Lebanese youth living abroad may envisage taking the role of key driver toward sustainable governance, thanks to its detachment from the dynamics of sectarian power-sharing, by aligning with the forces aiming at the renewal of governance via investments in human capital, sustainability, democracy, and the laicity of the State.

CHAPTER 3

3.1. Reforming public sector governance

Achieving reforms can only happen if Lebanon jointly addresses its economic, social, and political distortions. The legislative elections of May 2022, brought to the stage, for the first time in Lebanese history, the role of anti-establishment forces within the Parliament. The claims leading the waves of protests in the country since October 2019 are linked to the strong necessity of implementing good governance by means of reforms that touch upon the judiciary and the taxation system but mainly introduce accountability, transparency, and anti-corruption measures within the decision-making process as cross-sectoral guidelines. Thus, envisaging reforms within the actual composition of power seems unrealistic because of the unstable outcome of the election that led to fragmentation, polarization, and the lack of a proper majority in the Parliament to vote for those reforms.

The case of Lebanon is peculiar, this small state with turbulent borders (Israel and Syria) has represented, throughout history, a stake in the stabilization or destabilization of the whole region. Its characteristic attachment to Syria, the presence of the Iran-backed Shi'a militia Hezbollah, and the ongoing war with Israel make the "Land of Cedars" a valuable prize. Regional contenders must consider Beirut in every strategy, owing to the central financial role of the country and the impressive power of its diaspora, mainly in North America and Europe. Also, the religious division is part of the game: each confession has its own protector within the country and abroad. Those premises ought to serve as limits to this analysis that cannot provide simple bullet points for a timetable of reforms aiming at implementing positive governance because Lebanon is internally unstable because of its social, ethnic, and religious composition.

Putting Lebanon on a path to good governance firstly requires reforms strengthening the management of public funds. All the measures related to the good management of *res pubblica* also involve the reduction of corruption, strengthening governance and enhancing accountability, the improvement of transparency, and therefore the decrease of brain drain and the diffusion of equity-oriented common rules.

The question to answer is whether the political class now ruling shall be in charge of this change or it is so involved in non-transparent business granting its survival that could collide with the planning of reforms. Moreover, the unstable outcome of the elections, as witnessed by many observers, portends a paralysis of the executive.

First of all, Lebanon is internationally ranked as a failed state, as recently witnessed by the expert appointed as Special Rapporteur by the UN Human Rights Council, and thus should prioritize the re-build of its institutions in the sign of wider participation and improved transparency to grant access to the international community. In so doing, the political class shall also consider the impact of the protestors and the youth's requests for a non-confessional Lebanon and likewise envisage the possibility of finally implementing the dispositions of the 1990 Constitution aiming at the abolition of sectarianism. Moreover, rebuilding the international credibility of a country, now graded as failed, cannot be the short-run objective of single political forces, but the long-term aim of the political class as a whole. The anti-establishment elected Parliament Members (PMs) seem to have understood the need to preserve cohesion but the first divisive issue brought to the political arena, the discussion on Hezbollah's arms, has already paved the way for disruption. Although the strong desire of building a force within the Parliament that can overcome political and religious tensions through a common program for economic renaissance, Lebanon's political tradition is influenced by sectarianism and it can be easy to be entangled in the knit of confessionalism again.

According to the Parliament Members elected, their priority is linked to the recovery of the fragile economy. Nonetheless, reforming the economic system cannot be enough if the reforms are not implemented in the management of resources and mainly in Lebanon's homemade *perestroika* aimed at laying the foundations of a new political season. The country is plagued with corruption, as indicated by Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) raking (143/180), and thus economic productivity stays low, owing also to a large portion of production that stays under the surface. In a nutshell, the economic system cannot re-start if inefficiencies and illicit outflows are not reduced or stopped. The crisis hitting Lebanon since 2019 had also an impact on shadow economy, which has grown rapidly if compared to the IMF data of 2015. Those data already underestimated the size of shadow economy (around 30% of the GDP) because of the lack of data related to Syrian migrants, who owned 66% of the

informal enterprises between 2012 and 2014. Also, the confessional system contributes to the growth of informal economy, with an entrenched mechanism of proxy protection. Owing to this, there was an increase in networks of tax evasion and monopolies of some segments of the market, posing threat to fair competition and therefore widening social inequalities. Moreover, shadow economy and its illegal networks also feed organized crime, in a loop that generates insecurity and make public disorders more likely.

So, to address the challenge of economic recovery, measures shall interest the rules on investments, accountability, and regulations. Most of the articles codified in the Lebanese system are terribly outdated, they also show their inefficiency because of the lack of organicism; in fact, they are the result of a general amnesty after Civil War and consequently the product of political compromises often condemned to instability and inadequacy.

Once one recognized the need for ethical change along with the restructuring of the economic system, one should also analyze the issue related to the relationship between the citizens and the institution. Social turmoil has revealed its strongest face in Lebanon during the last two years, and it is clear that there is a collective power emerging from the streets. Those voices do not trust the institutions, which are identified as merely corrupted bodies vowed to the survival of perverted elites. To this extent, the newly-elected Parliament cannot underestimate the role of the youth and the ideologies of the protesters. Rebuilding the bond of trust linking the decision-makers to the citizens must represent the first step in addressing the massive problem of economic reform, accountability, and governance. If Lebanese citizens themselves are not in the measure to invest in their own state, for the renaissance of their own economy, then there is no option for external observers and potential investors to enter the country.

Furthermore, as witnessed by Tawilé (2021), fiscal reforms are needed: tax incentives to promote the public good, the establishment of a more equitable and efficient tax system, and the reduction of the informal economy are basic measures to adopt toward the building of sustainable governance in the country. In his "After the Crony", the Lebanese economist also underlines the need for implementing an environment of fair competition and the abolishing of "*existing banking secrecy laws, which at this point serve mainly to obfuscate problematic and illegal financial activity*." (Tawilé, 2021)

Although this perspective of improving governance in the country with the help of measures, such as fair competitiveness, that also look beyond national borders, the analysis of Acemoglu and Robinson shall be helpful. In their essay "*Why Nations Fail*" (2012), they describe two types of institutions: inclusive and extractive. They argue that inclusive institutions involve large participation while extractive ones are dominated by a small number of individuals which engage themselves in what Marx would have defined as "exploitation". By using these categories, one could easily consider the institutions of Lebanon after the civil war as extractive ones and can therefore understand why the lack of good governance has led the country to slow development. Acemoglu and Robinson also argue that extractive institutions generally fail when innovation and creative destruction are needed to push the frontier. To this extent, the Thawra of 2019 can be investigated as the creative destruction resulting in the election of revolutionary-backed Members of the Parliament. Inclusive institutions are identified as those providing basic needs to all citizens and encouraging participation in economic activities, precisely "*must feature secure private property, an unbiased system of law, and a provision of public services that provides a level playing field in which people can exchange and contract*" (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012).

Needless to say, what Lebanon wants is: education, public transportation, waste management, electricity provision, and agricultural subsidies to face the food crisis coming from the East; all these demands shall only be answered by implementing governance of inclusiveness. And this is also what the Lebanese economy needs to recover and start developing in the name of sustainable governance.

3.2. Aligning with international standards

One may argue that Acemoglu and Robinson's inclusive institutions represent a viable option for Lebanon to escape the downhill path it has embarked on; however, our globalized system is faster than institution-building and the country cannot help but fit into international trade and global finance to recover. This is the reason that led the political forces to undertake "*prior actions*" to consult the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

After the economic crisis erupted, political leaders seemed to be going through a period of stasis that pushed the World Bank to title its report on Lebanon, "*The Deliberate Depression*" in Fall 2020. Although this first impasse, they are now reinforcing governance measures such as bank resolution legislation, the modification of capital control, and deposit withdrawal to acquire a stronger negotiating position for future talks with the International Monetary Fund. The reforms proposed by the Government to the IMF provide a business plan touching upon solvency, banking supervision, exchange rate, monetary policy, deposit insurance, recapitalization of viable banks, and special audits with *Banque du Liban* (*BdL*).

Lebanon is a member of the IMF since 1947 and its Special Drawing Rights (SDR) amount to 3.06 million. SDR is not a currency, but "*an international reserve asset created by the IMF to supplement the official reserves of its member countries*" (IMF, 2022). It depends on the contribution of the country to the IMF, it is based on a basket of five countries' currencies, and it adds no costs to a country's debt. Lebanon's Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP) is aiming at obtaining from the IMF a 46-months extended arrangement of up to $3 billion (at the current exchange rate) under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the aim to signal the country's commitment to implementing sound policies and so bolstering market confidence.

As aforementioned, although the internal pressures for change do exist, the international arena and mainly the global financial institutions play a strong role in the recovery of developing countries. The power of those global regulatory systems, aiming at standardizing market practices and financial ratios for credits, often goes beyond the internal political will. Lebanon's position in the international arena is unclear and it does not help to stabilize the financial perception of the country, which is often seen as a Syrian or Iranian outpost or else a territory preparing for another open confrontation with the State of Israel. And it is also for these reasons that the country is rated "*D*" by the major rating agencies (e.g. COFACE, S&P, Moody's), along with the skyrocketing corruption that does not allow the inclusion in a sound system of investments. The internal instability is accompanied by a delicate geopolitical situation that makes the country easy prey for contemporary imperialists.

The question of whether aligning to international standards and consequently benefitting from international aid and support opens another question related to

independence and self-determination. The Lebanese economy is highly dependent on the rest of the world, as one can witness by looking at its balance of trade and current account. Lebanon imports more than 80% of consumer goods and it has no industrial apparatus capable of satisfying the basic needs of the population. Even if it were able to implement fiscal and monetary reforms, increase accountability, and attract foreign investments, it would not be able to become independent from imports. Its size, as witnessed by the classical theory of international trade, condemns the country to long-lasting dependence from abroad.

However, aligning with the international standards and therefore benefitting from international aid, shall allow Lebanon to enter again the flow of investments, improving its FX and restoring credibility. At the same time, Finckenstein opens the floor for questioning the idea of aid to development itself. According to her report on Lebanon, "*there are several indicators that suggest that foreign aid has postponed necessary reforms*." (Finckenstein, 2021). It is certainly true that only relying on external forces to improve governance is not a viable solution if there is a system of corruption and mismanagement of resources that profits of international aid for its survival. On the other side, Lebanon is not able to recover on its own. Therefore, international organization should envisage a more diligent role, increasing independent audits and reports, and also a direct link with local NGOs, fostering coordination.

The country has had a fixed peg since 1997 and therefore widely urges to stabilize its foreign currency reserves in USD; this can only happen by implementing transparent measures reducing the circulating Lira and controlling capital to halt the depletion of foreign currency. According to scholars, the currency crisis the country is witnessing today began with the depreciation of LBP in September 2019. Lebanon has always accumulated foreign reserves from capital inflows covering its twin deficits (budget account and current account) but when – since 2011 turmoil in the region – capital inflows decreased, and deficit still increased, the pressure on the currency mounted. The crisis was then worsened by Thawra, and then COVID-19 mismanagement added other pressure to the currency and vertiginously increased budget and current account deficits.

Along with the IMF's policies and the Extended Fund Facility, the country has other international standards to align to in order to recover. One is the CEDRE (*Conférence économique pour le développement, par les réformes et avec les*

entreprises). This international summit was held in 2018 and hosted by Mr. Macron and Mr. Hariri and aimed at supporting Lebanon in dealing with its vulnerabilities and mounting challenges. On this occasion, the former Prime Minister Mr. Saad Hariri had presented his "*Vision for stabilization, growth, and employment*", based on four pillars: *"(a) increasing the level of public and private investment; (b) ensuring economic and financial stability through fiscal adjustment; (c) undertaking essential sectoral reforms and cross-sectoral reforms, including fighting corruption, modernization of the public sector and public finance management; and (d) developing a strategy for the reinforcement and diversification of Lebanon's productive sectors and the realization of its export potential."* (Relief Web, 2018). Although these pillars could have improved Lebanon's international financial position, they have not been implemented because of political impasses in voting the requested reforms to obtain funds from the partners. Analyzing in-depth the measures proposed by former PM Mr. Hariri, they echo what the Government is now proposing to the International Monetary Fund. This is the demonstration that the reforms needed to align to international standards and acquire a better international status are well known by the political forces, hesitation derives from the strong demand for accountability and transparency that is not in line with the bloated economic system.

To this extent, Lebanon must envisage a package of reforms that aims to: (a) halt the collapse by improving capital control law and reducing the circulating LBP to stop hyperinflation, (b) address twin deficits by investing in education, infrastructure, and accountability on the medium to long term, (c) enter the global market by diversifying its economic output and creating high-quality products competitiveness, and (d) abolish the existing banking secrecy law delivering the image of a country that is embarking on the reduction of corruption. Once these measures are adopted, the International Monetary Fund will step in and help Lebanon re-enter the flow of global trade and finance, attracting also Foreign Direct Investments in USD, re-calling the investments of the diaspora, and stabilizing the peg to an adjusted but closer to 1.507 LBP for USD rate. If, by then, the implemented reforms would have also created a fertile ground for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to develop, and for sustainable development related investments to be made, then Lebanon would grab the opportunity to shape its economy through a positive path to innovation, digitalization, and sustainability.

As abovementioned, the country is entrenched not only in foreign aid and international organizations' funds, but also in the homeland-diaspora relationship. More than 12 million Lebanese live outside the country and the impact they have on the economy of Lebanon is substantial: first of all, the diaspora provides Lebanon with remittances which contribute to the GDP for around the 19%; secondly, the diaspora mobilizes forces, money, and political influence from abroad, impacting the country both financially and politically. According to the Bank for Investment Settlements (BIS), private non-bank residents hold capital that exceed of more than six times their banking debts in offshore banking accounts. Despite their attachment to the homeland, Lebanese living abroad have reduced their investments in the country since the eruption of social and economic turmoil. Nonetheless, the diaspora showed all its power in the aftermaths of the Port of Beirut explosion, when important initiatives have been taken to support the management of the crisis thanks to donations of medical supplies and equipment, providing foods, and other necessities for the most vulnerable communities. Their humanitarian effort granted millions of dollars of donations and activated a domino-effect on solidarity, but there is no long-term engagement for the developing of proper institutions and building economical solidity in the country. According to Mr. De Schutter, appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, "*the political establishment knew about the looming cataclysm for years but did little to avert it. Well-connected individuals even moved their money out of the country, facilitated by a legal vacuum that allowed capital to flow out of the country. Truth and accountability must be sought as a matter of human rights*." (United Nations, 2022). Much of the support given is for general needs, mainly social activities and urgent issues, and education, but the diaspora may play an important role in the political reconstruction of the country after these years of economic and social crisis. Members of the diaspora can thus vote for the elections in Lebanon and so contribute to decision-making, altering the geography of vote, as showed in the recent elections of May 2022. The Lebanese governance so appears deterritorialised and the state is subjected to great external pressures. Needless to say, the diaspora could be a key driver in the structuring of a development strategy both for its economic power over the country and the brain drain effect previously discussed.

3.3. Generating sustainability

Lebanon has been generating unsustainable governance since the French mandate. And even before the Society of Nations established this indirect rule mechanism, Lebanon had experienced conflicts of power and religious clashes, mainly in the area of Mount Lebanon and the Beirut's suburb, Quarantine. The unfair census of 1932 – which is still reputed valid – paved the way for instability by privileging the Christians – and Maronites specifically – at the expense of the Muslim component of the society. French rules needed some allies in the region, and the Maronites represented a solution, being the wealthiest section of society and sharing their religious beliefs. Since then, Lebanon has experienced social turmoil and discriminating power-sharing, amplifying unbalances and pushing governors to rule for one-sided interest rather than collective demands. Lebanon has so developed a corrupted political class, benefitting from the diaspora's donations and foreign investment to fulfill partisan needs and gain social acknowledgment. To this extent, Lebanon can only be analyzed by considering its peculiarities, both social and economic. The ruling of the country entrenches its roots in partisanship: communities, confessions, and *Moutassarifat*, this is the way Lebanon was born.

First of all, and foremost, making public debt sustainable. "*Fiscal policy is the cornerstone of any sustainable economic plan, as existing hemorrhage points in the state's financial system will effectively drain any new capital inflows. A new path must be put in place towards public debt sustainability based on debt restructuring*." (Tawilé, 2021).

The restructuring of Lebanese public debt can only happen via the International Monetary Fund. In April 2022, Lebanon and the IMF agreed on a 46-month Extended Fund Facility. Lebanon asked for access to around $3 billion. This measure will be applied only if Lebanon witnesses its commitment to reforms that include the allocation of the $70 billion holes in the financial system, and the eight reforms of the MEFP (e.g. banking secrecy law reform, audit of *BdL* foreign asset position). It would also be desirable to envisage a constraint mechanism on those reforms, ensuring that the implementation of new measures is in line with the development of sustainability. At the present moment, the IMF stated that the comprehensive economic reform program is "*aiming to rebuild the economy, restore financial sustainability, strengthen governance*

and transparency, removing impediments to job-creating growth, and increase social and reconstruction spending." (IMF, 2022) According to the IMF press release of April 7th, the facility would also include international partners to support the authorities' efforts. The mission led by Mr. Ramirez Rigo detected five key pillars: (a) restructuring the financial sector, (b) implementing reforms aiming at ensuring debt sustainability, (c) reforming state-owned enterprises (and the energy sector), (d) strengthening AML/CFT frameworks, and (e) establishing a credible and transparent monetary and exchange rate system (IMF, 2022). The UN Human Rights Council's Report published in May 2022 underlines the role of Central Bank policies into the failure of the country, and the Special Rapporteur De Schutter affirms that "*Central Bank policies, in particular, led to a downward spiral of the currency, the devastation of the economy, the wiping out of people's lifetime saving and to plunging the population into poverty*" and it concludes its Report endorsing the responsibility of the Lebanese State in a "*clear contravention of international human rights law*." (United Nations, 2022)

Digitalization, innovation, sustainability in energy provision, and a reduction in Syrian energy dependence, are just some of the issues to tackle to establish a path to sustainability.

According to scholars, one way of acquiring sustainable governance is the establishment of transparent institutions. This action generates a positive domino-effect leading investor to optimism and therefore engendering innovation, and hence development. Sustainable governance is related to the idea of development rather than growth. These two terms often used as synonyms convey different paradigms. Growth is related to the practical improvement of economic performance, while development can encompass a long-term strategy aiming at innovation, widening participation, and promoting democratization. As witnessed by the mainstream political science doctrine, an increase in per capita growth does not correspond in an improvement of citizens wellbeing. There are a few examples, such as the United Arab Emirates or Saudi Arabia, where growth is solid, but inequalities arise. Growth does not address systemic changes or human rights implementation, nor does it reduce inequalities among citizens, it only refers to the wellbeing of the market. Fair energy provisions, sustainable management of resources, healthcare, and equity can be targeted by shaping nondiscriminatory institutions thriving for the collectivity.

During the COVID-19 crisis, Lebanese authorities showed their weakness and left citizens to face the pandemic with self-made means. The use of masks, lockdown, and no serious health policy have been implemented in the country. Needless to say, this mis-management of the calamity allowed severer social conflicts. The country saw an increase in the number of protesters and protests themselves: if Beirut had been the main square of the Thawra in 2019, then also Tripoli, Akkar, Saida, and additionally Naquora's citizens took the streets to claim security and a valid healthcare system. Nonetheless, the government remained locked. In the aftermath of the Port of Beirut explosion and along with the social protests of the Thawra, Lebanese citizens strongly participated in the public life of their country. After decades of disenchantment, the people had remonstrations and formed social corpora claiming a place in the decision-making process.

Thus, as previously mentioned, anti-corruption regulations and transparency-aimed measures should be implemented to achieve both social peace and international recognition. From a financial point of view, Lebanon cannot survive on its own. The small country has to integrate the market to achieve sustainable development and the only way it has to do so is to innovate its production, by promoting high-quality standardized products and establishing a system of small and medium-sized enterprises attracting the drained brains back. The eradication of corruption and the accomplishment of transparency in the institutions cannot be achieved by high-level panels and enforcements of rule of law, it needs a community-based approach: if the government substitutes partisan religious communities and associations providing the people with basic needs, then it will open a breach paving the way for the rebuilding of trust. This mechanism generates positive outcomes in the economy, it indirectly invites the youth to remain in the country and consequently the financial intervention of the powerful diaspora in the development of innovation, digitalization, and sustainability.

With regards to the options provided throughout this study, a combination of local reforms aiming at creating inclusive institutions and a financial alignment with international standards required by the IMF and other organizations shall represent the entry point for the country to recognition and renaissance. Development banks and multilateral development banks will then align to the ratings, and good governance and economic growth, in pair, will conduct Lebanon to a general path of sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Generating sustainability in a country hit at the same time by economic, social, and political crises seems an unrealistic possibility, nonetheless Lebanon's resilience is not on average. According to the outcome of the May 2022 political elections, one can witness a path leading to transformative political action. The presence of the so-called "Thawra members" and its consequences alter the decision-making process by mining the majority in the Parliament. At the same time, their existence in the executive may trigger reforms and transformations.

This study has first analyzed the roots of the crises striking the country, thus it has identified an original prime cause in the amnesty at the end of the Civil War. Despite its pervasive consequences, there is no aim to discuss and investigate the current downhill path of Lebanon by just referring to the political operation of the '90s. It is unambiguous that the civil conflict has influenced the outcome of Lebanon's rules and regulations, but it would be reductive to neglect the impact of external powers and global standardizing institutions.

The discussion has secondly investigated the definition of weak and failed states, concluding that Lebanon can be defined as a failed state, because of its incapacity of sustaining itself as a member of the international community. Needless to say, Lebanon's strong diaspora complicates its integration on a standard. Even if the country itself is failed, mainly economically, there is a robust component outside national borders that can certainly take the lead in the transformation of the political system, thanks also to the possibility to express their vote on the rulers of the country.

Thirdly, the discussion on the systemic dysfunctions in Lebanon allowed a reflection on the concept of wellbeing of society. This is often related to resources and their management in view of the redistribution to the citizens and the preservation of the planet. To this extent, Lebanon's governance is poisoned with corruption and sectarianism and thus has systematized dysfunctions that contribute to a general slowing on the way toward development. As analyzed, Lebanon has had a path of growth after the civil conflict but no contribution to the collective wealth of society. Brain drain, illegal capital inflows, and outflows, along with a pervasive non-regulation of corruption, the lack of independence of the judicial system, and a severe sectarian regulation in politics, have not allowed the

recovery of the country after the conflict but they have incentivized a non-sustainable direction in decision and policy-making.

Once acknowledged the historical context in which Lebanon moves, the study has analyzed the present outcomes of historical inequalities and dysfunctions. First of all, Lebanon is a playground for the management of resources along sectarian lines. This competition originates from the bid to prevail in the political arena and it is possible because of a general lack of basic services to and for the citizens, such as electricity and public transport. This Ponzi scheme of resource *mis-management* for power securitization also interests the role of the country with the diaspora along two lines: the first is related to the impact of external capital inflows and outflows, and the other concerns brain drain and its effect on Lebanon. The study has identified a strong relationship between diaspora capital outflows and brain drain. To be effective, the measures Lebanon undertakes should also target the engagement of the diaspora in the reformative process, aligning in so doing not only to the diktats of international organizations but also to the needs of the 16 billion Lebanese living abroad and potentially directly influencing the outcome of the reforms. One must acknowledge that Lebanon cannot be only identified with the 6 billion Lebanese living in the country, but it is a composite population capillary present in Europe, the Gulf, and North America. Moreover, the vote – open to the diaspora – makes in-the-country Lebanese a slight minority. The outcome of the May 2022 elections, and mainly the great result of Thawra-members, has shown the influencing power of the diaspora on the Parliament. Also, it is because of the stop of capital inflows, mainly originating in the diaspora, that Lebanon experienced the effects of a sudden-stop crisis. The ambivalence of the diaspora, partly engaged in terms of political will but also driven by self-interest when it comes to investment, is a fundamental key driver of Lebanon's future moves toward sustainability.

In a nutshell, this study has answered the question whether governance quality in Lebanon can be enhanced from the inside by a new political coalition leading to institutional stability or if foreign pressure can be the channels for stabilizing the country toward efficient use of resources for investment and sustainable governance and development by underlining the unstable outcome of the May 2022 elections, and stressing the importance of a combination of external and internal reforms: the diaspora can drive a change from abroad by re-investing in the country, and the newly elected

Parliament, where the forces of change are present and conservative political coalitions do not have a majority anymore, shall push for the implementation of the mandatory reforms to reach an agreement with the International Monetary Fund on the 46-months extended fund facility. Lebanon has suffered extractive institutions since its establishment as a Republic and thus should reform them as suggested by Acemoglu and Robinson. However, as previously stated, our globalized system is faster than institution-building and the country cannot help but fit into international trade and global finance to recover. To do so, the role of the International Monetary Fund is fundamental, while other regional developing banks may not live up to the expectations. It is certain that establishing transparent and inclusive institutions generates a positive domino-effect and leads investors to optimism, but Lebanon is not in the measure to recover on its own. International organizations should therefore envisage a more diligent role, increasing independent audits and reports, and also corroborating a direct link with local NGOs, fostering coordination.

In conclusion, Lebanon will remain in a free fall until it implements serious reforms nurturing transparency, fighting corruption, and attracting diaspora investments reducing brain drain, aligning with the international standards required to benefit from the International Monetary Fund's financing that will, in turn, mobilize additional funding from others IFIs (World Bank and EBRD) while opening the door to FDI and other private capital funding. Good governance will pave the way to a gradual return to credibility, hence to market access.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BCC	Banking Control System
BdL	Banque du Liban
BIS	Bank for Investment Settlements
CAS	Central Administration of Statics
CEDRE	Conférence économique pour le développement, par les réformes et avec les entreprises
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
EdL	Electricité du Liban
EEF	Extended Fund Facility
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
FX	Foreign Exchange Market
HCJ	High Judicial Council
IBR	International Bank of Regulations
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IDAL	Investment Development Authority of Lebanon
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
FCS	Fragile and conflict-affected situation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FPM	Future Patriotic Movement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
LAF	Lebanese Armed Force
LBP	Lebanese Pound
LEM	Lebanon Economic Monitor
LF	Lebanese Forces
MEFP	Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies
MENA	Middle-East North-Africa
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index

NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NFA	Net Foreign Assets
PFM	Public Financial Management
PMs	Parliament Members
PoB	Port of Beirut Explosion
PoS	Politics of Survival
SDR	Special Drawing Rights
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SOEs	State Owned Enterprises
WB	The World Bank
WEs	Water and Sanitation
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia

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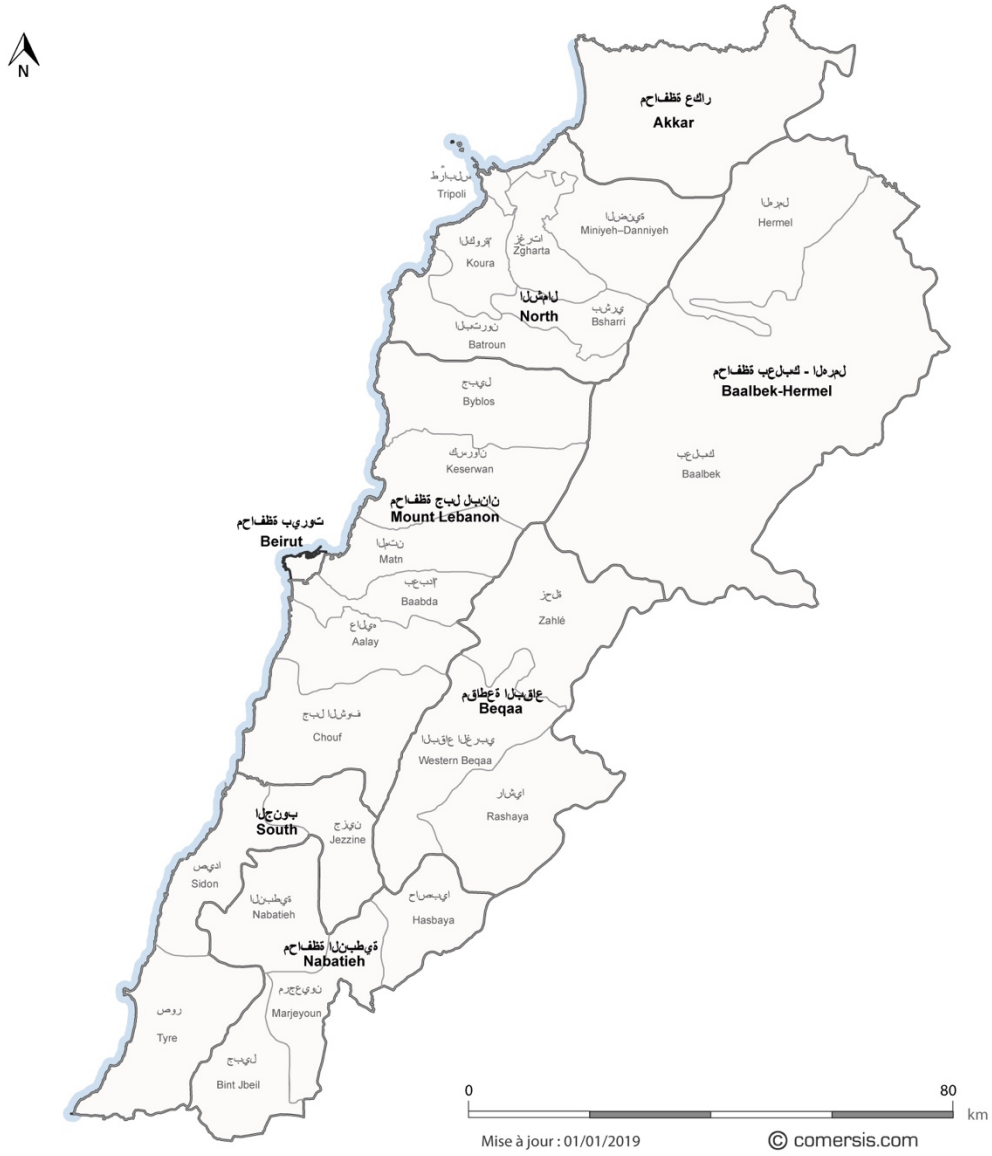
ANNEXES

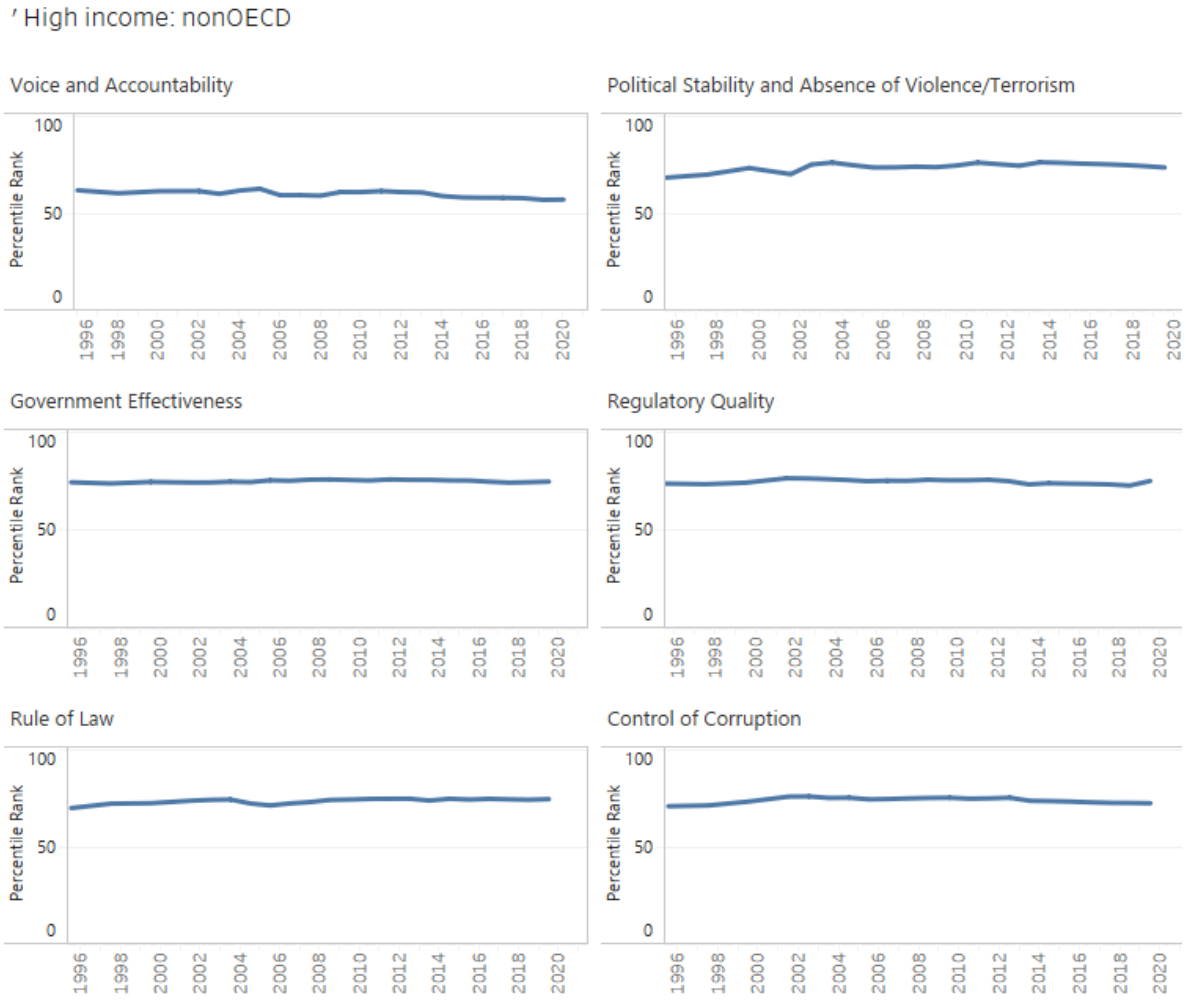
Annex 1 – Map of Lebanon



Annex 2 – Worldwide Governance Indicators

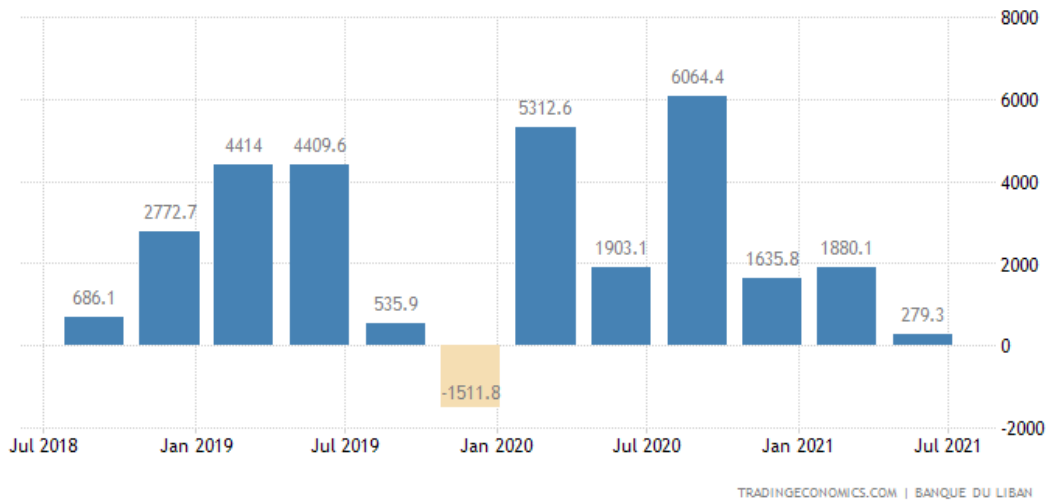
Indicator	Country	Year	Percentile Rank (0 to 100)
Voice and Accountability	Lebanon	2010	
		2015	
		2020	
Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism	Lebanon	2010	
		2015	
		2020	
Government Effectiveness	Lebanon	2010	
		2015	
		2020	
Regulatory Quality	Lebanon	2010	
		2015	
		2020	
Rule of Law	Lebanon	2010	
		2015	
		2020	
Control of Corruption	Lebanon	2010	
		2015	
		2020	
			0 20 40 60 80 100

Annex 3- Worldwide Governance Indicators – Time Series



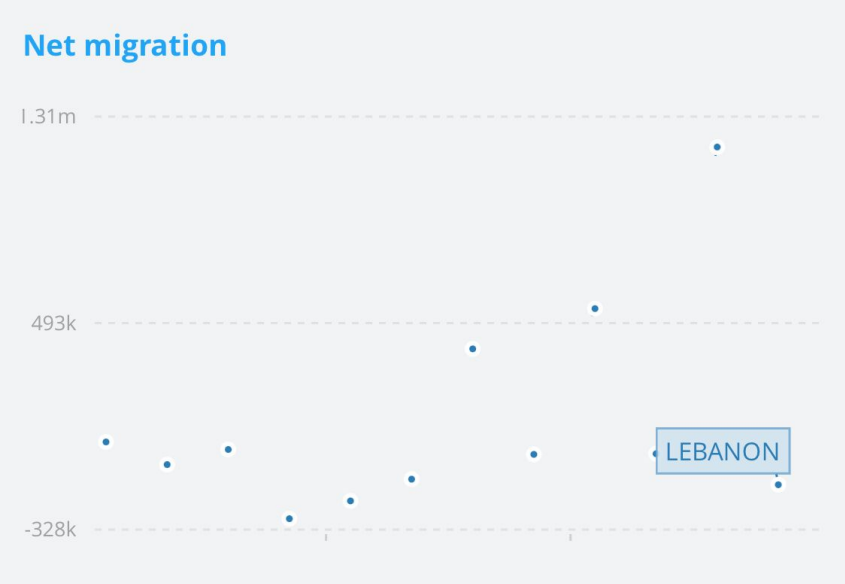
Source: Worldwide Governance Indicator, 2022

Annex 4 – Lebanon Capital Flows



Source: Banque du Liban, 2022

Annex 5 – Lebanon Net Migration



Source: United Nations Population Division, World Population Prospects, 2019

Source: United Nations Population Division, World Population Prospects, 1992

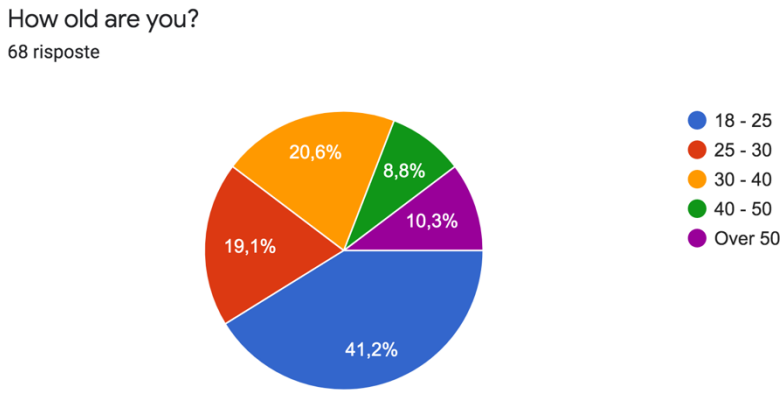
Source: United Nations Population Division, World Population Prospects, 2002

Source: United Nations Population Division, World Population Prospects, 2012

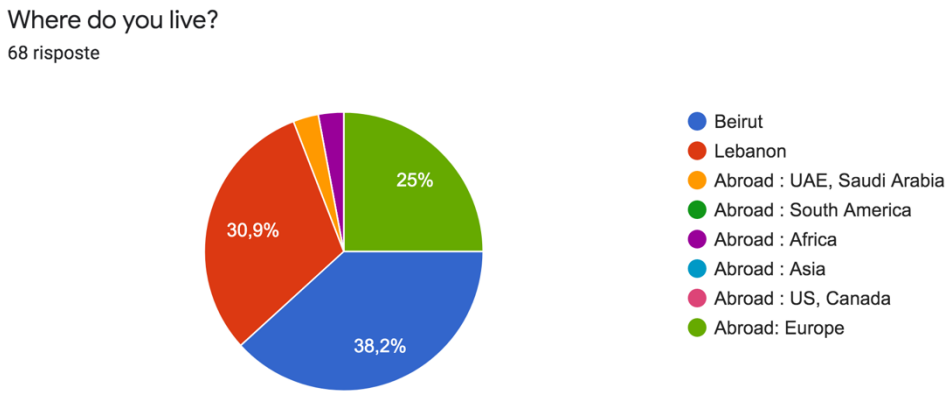
Source: United Nations Population Division, World Population Prospects, 2017

Annex 6 – Lebanese Elections and the Youth (Survey)

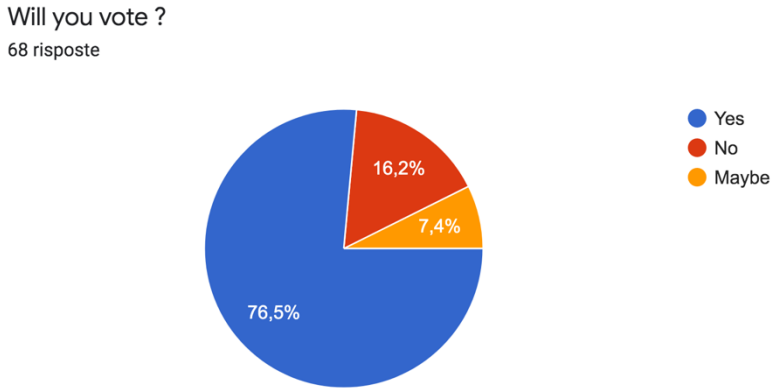
Graphic I



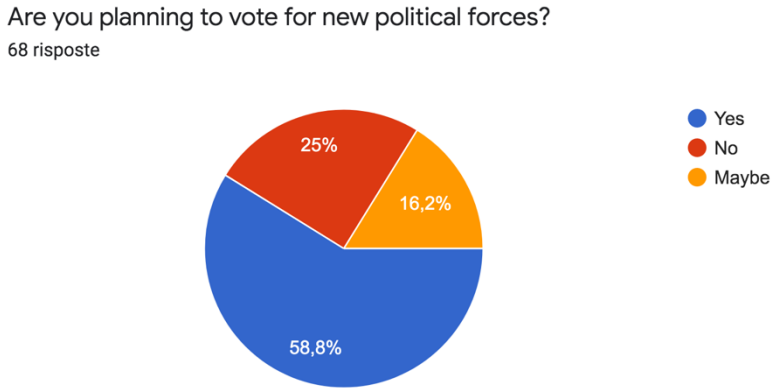
Graphic II



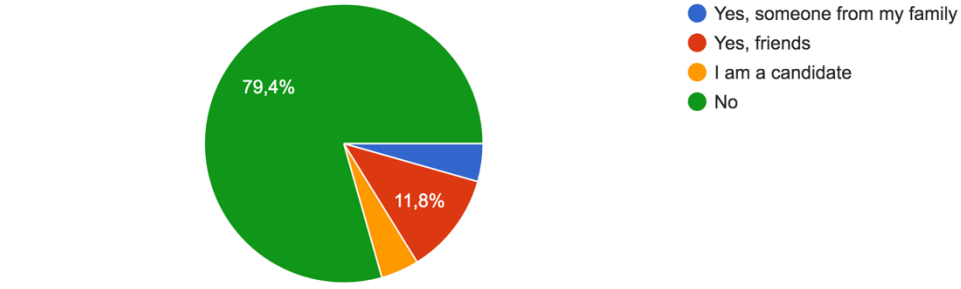
Graphic III



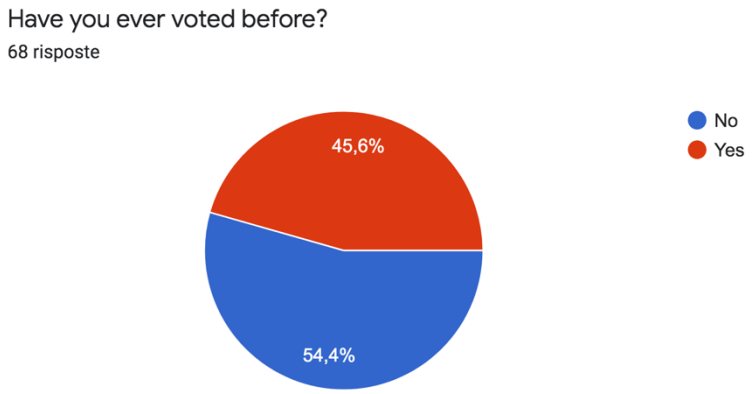
Graphic IV



Graphic V



Graphic VI



Graphic VII