

# The Impact of Electoral Laws on Peacebuilding in Lebanon After the Taëf Agreement

**Beyond Electoral Laws: Building a Comprehensive Infrastructure for Peace in Lebanon**

Doctoral Thesis

in order to obtain the title of Doctor  
from the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences  
at the University of Tübingen

Presented by

Ms. Sonia Nakad

Tübingen

2025

1<sup>st</sup> supervisor: Professor Dr. Andreas Hasenclever

2<sup>nd</sup> supervisor: Professor Dr. Uli Jaeger

Date of oral defense: 23.03.2026

Dean: Professor Dr. Taiga Brahm, and

Professor Dr. Dominik Papies

1<sup>st</sup> examiner: Professor Dr. Andreas Hasenclever

2<sup>nd</sup> examiner: Professor Dr. Uli Jaeger

### **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved children, Sofia and Kiyan, and to my nephews, Rita and Chadi, with the hope that one day they will be able to live peacefully in our country, Lebanon. May they grow up in a society built on harmony and justice.

I also dedicate this work to my mother, Sultana, for instilling in me the dream of earning a PhD and for always encouraging me to persevere through challenges. Her support and belief in me have been a constant source of strength.

## Acknowledgments

My first acknowledgment is for Professor Hasenclever, for giving me the opportunity to pursue this thesis under his supervision. Despite the many challenges I faced since the very first day I started this journey, and despite disappearing for long periods without making progress, Professor Hasenclever was always there whenever I asked for another chance to continue my PhD. He accepted every time, offering me the support and encouragement I needed to persevere. For your unwavering support and for not giving up on me when I lost faith in myself, I cannot thank you enough, Professor Hasenclever. Without you, this day would not have been possible.

I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to my friends Rihab, Saeda and Joanna, as well as my brother Chahid, who were continuously there for me during times I needed support, encouragement, and someone to brainstorm and discuss ideas with. Thank you for the long hours of discussion and the limitless phone calls. Your support meant the world to me.

This entire process and the dream of pursuing my PhD in Tübingen started back in 2012, when I was selected to participate in the IFA Exchange Program. It was Mrs. Christina Forch who kindly suggested my name to participate, leading me to an internship at the Berghof Foundation in Tübingen. There, I was introduced to Professor Dr. Uli Jaeger and Mrs. Anne Kruck, who then connected me with Professor Hasenclever, and from that moment, this journey began. To everyone involved in the IFA program, to Christina, Anne, and Uli, I am deeply grateful for opening this opportunity for me.

I would also like to thank all the individuals I interviewed, whose valuable opinions helped shape my ideas and guided the direction of my thesis: Dr. Carmen Abou Jaoudeh, Dr. Dima de Clerck, Dr. Makram Oueiss, Mrs. Wadad Halawani, and Mr. Fadi Abi Allam. Your insights have been instrumental in my research.

Finally, but most importantly, I want to thank my father, Youssef, from whom I learned the true meaning of peacebuilding and how to build bridges between people. His example continues to inspire me every day.

## Table of Content

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Methodology</b> .....	2
<b>Chapter 1: Infrastructure for Peace (I4P): A Base for Creating a Lasting Positive Peace</b> .....	3
<b>1.1. Definition and Evolution</b> .....	3
<i>1.1.1. Key Elements I4P</i> .....	9
<b>1.2. Elections as a Tool for Peacebuilding</b> .....	11
<i>1.2.1. Role of Elections</i> .....	11
<b>1.3. “Fair” and “Free”</b> .....	13
<b>1.4. Positive Relationship of Democracy and its Risks</b> .....	14
<i>1.4.1. Democratization and Peace</i> .....	14
<i>1.4.2. Risks of Democratization</i> .....	15
<b>1.5. Elections as Impediments for Peacebuilding</b> .....	16
<b>1.6. Integrity, inclusivity, Post-Election Processes</b> .....	18
<b>1.7. Key elements in Electoral Laws for Positive Peace Impact</b> .....	19
<b>1.8. Challenge of Post-Conflict Legitimacy</b> .....	21
<b>Chapter 2: Theoretical Foundations and Empirical Insights on Electoral Systems and Peacebuilding</b> .....	24
<b>2.1. Context of the Study</b> .....	24
<b>2.2. Theoretical Foundations of Peace and Conflict Studies</b> .....	25
<i>2.2.1. Galtung's Peace Theory: Beyond Negative Peace</i> .....	25
<i>2.2.2. Implications for Post-Conflict Governance</i> .....	27
<i>2.2.3. Critiques and Developments</i> .....	27
<b>2.3. Infrastructure for Peace: Evolution and Institutional Development</b> .....	28
<i>2.3.1. Historical Origins and Post-WWII Development</i> .....	28
<i>2.3.2. Conceptual Framework and Core Elements</i> .....	29
<i>2.3.3. Institutional Mechanisms and Governance Structures</i> .....	30
<i>2.3.4. Civil Society Engagement and Participatory Mechanisms</i> .....	31
<i>2.3.5. Legal Frameworks and Rule of Law</i> .....	31
<i>2.3.6. Communication and Information Systems</i> .....	32
<b>2.4. Elections in Post-Conflict Settings: A Double-Edged Instrument</b> .....	33
<i>2.4.1. The Democratic Peace Thesis and Its Limitations</i> .....	33
<i>2.4.2. Elections as Instruments of Legitimation and Transformation</i> .....	34
<i>2.4.3. Timing and Sequencing Challenges</i> .....	35

2.4.4.	<i>Case Studies in Electoral Success and Failure</i> .....	36
2.4.5.	<i>Electoral Violence and Security Challenges</i> .....	37
2.5.	<b>Electoral Laws and Institutional Design in Divided Societies</b> .....	38
2.5.1.	<i>Constitutional Engineering and Electoral System Choice</i> .....	38
2.5.2.	<i>Proportional Representation and Majoritarian Systems</i> .....	39
2.5.3.	<i>District Magnitude and Constituency Design</i> .....	40
2.5.4.	<i>Candidate Selection and List Systems</i> .....	41
2.5.5.	<i>Electoral Thresholds and Party Systems</i> .....	42
2.6.	<b>The Lebanese Experience: Electoral Engineering and Sectarian Management</b> .....	43
2.6.1.	<i>The Taif Agreement and Post-War Constitutional Framework</i> .....	43
2.6.2.	<i>Electoral Law Evolution: 2005-2022</i> .....	44
2.6.3.	<i>Mechanisms of Electoral Control and Manipulation</i> .....	46
2.6.4.	<i>Sectarian Representation and Political Outcomes</i> .....	47
2.6.5.	<i>Peace Outcomes and Democratic Deficits</i> .....	48
2.7.	<b>Synthesis: Connecting Theory with Practice: From Galtung's Framework to Contemporary Practice</b> .....	50
2.7.1.	<i>Infrastructure for Peace and Electoral Institutions</i> .....	50
2.7.2.	<i>Electoral Engineering and Conflict Transformation</i> .....	52
2.7.3.	<i>International Intervention and Local Agency</i> .....	53
2.7.4.	<i>Temporal Dimensions and Institutional Evolution</i> .....	54
2.8.	<b>Implications for Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Rethinking Electoral Success in Post-Conflict Settings</b> .....	56
2.8.1.	<i>Institutional Design Principles for Post-Conflict Elections</i> .....	57
2.8.2.	<i>The Role of Civil Society and Civic Education</i> .....	58
2.8.3.	<i>International Support and Local Ownership</i> .....	59
2.8.4.	<i>Economic Dimensions of Electoral Peacebuilding</i> .....	60
2.9.	<b>Conclusion</b> .....	61
<b>Chapter 3: Beyond the Sectarian Veil: Unmasking the Roots of Lebanon's Civil War (1920-1991)</b> .....		62
3.1.	<b>The Birth of Greater Lebanon</b> .....	63
3.1.1.	<i>Paving the Way Towards the Constitution</i> .....	64
3.2.	<b>The Independence</b> .....	66
3.2.1.	<i>The Constitution</i> .....	66
3.2.2.	<i>The National Pact</i> .....	67
3.3.	<b>The First Test for the New Republic: The 1958 Revolution</b> .....	68
3.4.	<b>The International Factors that Led to the 1975 Civil War</b> .....	70

3.4.1.	<i>The Nakba</i> .....	70
3.4.2.	<i>The Cairo Agreement and its Consequences</i> .....	71
3.5.	<b>The Political Polarization of Lebanon</b> .....	73
3.6.	<b>Inequality Masked by Confessionalism: The Socio-economic Roots of the Civil War</b> ...	76
3.7.	<b>The Rise of the Oligarch</b> .....	78
3.7.1.	<i>Socio-economic and Demographic Transformation</i> .....	81
3.7.2.	<i>The Rise of the “Misery Belt” and the Movement of the Disinherited (Harakat Al Mahrumin)</i> .....	82
3.8.	<b>The General Cultural Scene in Lebanon Before the Civil War</b> .....	83
3.8.1.	<i>The Failure to Create a National Identity</i> .....	84
3.8.2.	<i>The Failure of Reform and State-Building</i> .....	86
3.8.3.	<i>Students and Unions Against the Merchant Society</i> .....	90
3.9.	<b>The Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990): From Fragmentation to Taëf</b> .....	92
3.9.1.	<i>The Outbreak of Violence: The Two-Year War (1975–1976)</i> .....	92
3.9.2.	<i>Internal Christian Divisions and the Hundred Days’ War</i> .....	93
3.9.3.	<i>Israeli Involvement and the Shift in Regional Dynamics</i> .....	94
3.9.4.	<i>The Path to the Taëf Agreement: Structural Causes and Regional Dynamics</i> .....	95
3.9.5.	<i>The Signing of the Tripartite Accord: A Prelude to Taëf</i> .....	96
	<b>Chapter 4: The Taëf Agreement: A Failed Power-Sharing Agreement for Lebanon</b> .....	99
4.1.	<b>Post-Conflict Peace and Power-Sharing Challenges</b> .....	99
4.2.	<b>Three Experiences of Power-Sharing in Lebanon (1840-1989)</b> .....	100
4.2.1.	<i>From Qā’immaqāmiyya and Mutasarifiyya to the French Mandate: The First Power Sharing Agreement</i> .....	101
4.2.2.	<i>The National Pact: The Second Power-Sharing Agreement</i> .....	102
4.2.3.	<i>The New Balances that Lead to the Taëf: The third Power-Sharing Agreement</i> .....	103
4.3.	<b>The Dynamics Behind the Taëf Agreement</b> .....	105
4.3.1.	<i>What led to the Taëf Agreement?</i> .....	105
4.3.2.	<i>Agreements Before the Taëf</i> .....	107
4.3.3.	<i>The Role of Saudi Arabia</i> .....	109
4.3.4.	<i>The Taëf Republic</i> .....	112
4.3.5.	<i>Informal Mechanisms and Organizational Fragmentation</i> .....	112
4.3.6.	<i>The Political Culture of Bargaining and Clientelism</i> .....	114
4.4.	<b>The Foreign Shepherd</b> .....	115
4.4.1.	<i>The Syrian Occupation</i> .....	115
4.5.	<b>Decentralization</b> .....	117
4.5.1.	<i>Horizontal Decentralization: The Rise of Parallel Institutions</i> .....	117

4.6.	Hybrid Service Delivery .....	119
4.7.	Clientelism .....	120
4.8.	The Troika: An Alternative System for the State Institutions .....	124
4.9.	Development and Peace-Building .....	125
4.10.	The Lack of Mechanisms for Peaceful Means of Conflict Resolution .....	126
4.11.	Justice and Accountability .....	127
4.12.	Resistance to the Taëf Agreement .....	128
4.12.1.	<i>Refusal of Taëf Agreement by the Christians</i> .....	128
4.12.2.	<i>Shiia Muslim Resistance</i> .....	129
4.13.	Lessons Learned from Power-sharing Agreement .....	129
<b>Chapter 5 Manipulated Democracy: Parliamentary Elections in Postwar Lebanon (1992, 1996, and 2000) .....</b>		<b>132</b>
5.1.	Overview of Electoral Law Reforms and Implementation (1992 – 2022) .....	132
5.2.	Post-Taëf Political Landscape .....	135
5.3.	The 1992 Parliamentary Elections .....	137
5.1.1.	<i>Historical and Political Context</i> .....	141
5.1.2.	<i>Syrian Oversight and Electoral Engineering</i> .....	142
5.1.3.	<i>The Christian Boycott and Crisis of Legitimacy</i> .....	143
5.1.4.	<i>Boycotts as Delegitimizing Acts in Post-Conflict Elections</i> .....	145
5.1.5.	<i>Outcomes and Consequences</i> .....	146
5.1.6.	<i>Electoral Sovereignty and Occupied Territories</i> .....	146
5.2.	The 1996 Parliamentary Elections .....	147
5.2.1.	<i>Political Context and Shifting Alignments</i> .....	147
5.2.2.	<i>Electoral Law and Political Engineering</i> .....	148
5.2.3.	<i>Voter Behavior and Political Participation</i> .....	150
5.2.4.	<i>Outcomes and Political Consequences</i> .....	151
5.3.	The 2000 Parliamentary Elections .....	153
5.3.1.	<i>Political Context and Evolving Tensions</i> .....	155
5.3.2.	<i>Electoral Framework and Strategic Engineering</i> .....	156
5.3.3.	<i>Participation, Contestation, and Electoral Shifts</i> .....	157
5.3.4.	<i>Outcomes, Realignment, and Implications for Peace</i> .....	159
5.3.5.	<i>Regional and International shifts post-2000</i> .....	160
5.4.	Sectarian Districting and Alliance Management (1992- 1996- 2000) .....	161
5.5.	Conclusion .....	166
<b>Chapter 6: Lebanon's Post-Syrian Withdrawal Elections (2005, 2009, 2017, 2022): A Continued Display of Systemic Weakness .....</b>		<b>169</b>

<b>6.1. Overview of the Political Landscape</b> .....	169
<b>6.1.1. 2000 - 2005: A Pivotal period in Lebanon Political Landscape</b> .....	170
<b>6.1.2. The Aftermath: Lebanon's Political Landscape Post-Hariri</b> .....	172
<b>6.1.3. The Israeli war on Lebanon</b> .....	173
<b>6.1.4. May 2008 Mini-War and the Doha Agreement</b> .....	174
<b>6.1.5. The Syrian war and its impact on Lebanon</b> .....	174
<b>6.1.6. The 17th of October Revolution</b> .....	175
<b>6.2. Reframing Lebanon's 2005 Parliamentary Elections in the Context of Peacebuilding and Political Transition</b> .....	176
<b>6.2.1. Electoral Law, Districting, and Peacebuilding Implications in Post-Syrian Lebanon</b> ..	176
<b>6.2.2. Elite Behavior, Sectarianism, and Institutional Breakdown in the 2005 Post-Syrian Political Order</b> .....	179
<b>6.2.3. Consequences of the 2005 Elections: Inclusive Governance and Transitional Peacebuilding</b> .....	180
<b>6.3. The 2009 Parliamentary Elections</b> .....	182
<b>6.3.1. Electoral Campaign and New Electoral Law</b> .....	184
<b>6.3.2. Foreign Influence, Sectarian Fragmentation, and Electoral Engineering</b> .....	186
<b>6.3.3. From Electoral Triumph to Political Deadlock: The Elections of 2009 and the Limitations of Democratic Consolidation in Lebanon</b> .....	188
<b>6.3.4. The Challenge to Peacebuilding and Sectarian Entrenchment</b> .....	191
<b>6.4. The 2017 Electoral Reform and the 2018 Lebanese Elections</b> .....	193
<b>6.4.1. The Parliament Election and the Limits of Political Transformation</b> .....	196
<b>6.4.2. Civil Society Mobilization</b> .....	197
<b>6.4.3. Results of Parliament Elections and Electoral Reforms</b> .....	200
<b>6.5. The 2022 Lebanese Parliamentary Elections: Crisis-Driven Electoral Shifts in a Consociational System</b> .....	202
<b>6.5.1. The Structural Challenges</b> .....	204
<b>6.5.2. Shifts in Power</b> .....	206
<b>6.6. Conclusion</b> .....	207
<b>Chapter 7: Cutting the Levers: A Via Negativa Plan for Elections in Lebanon</b> .....	208
<b>7.1. Method- Via Negativa in Electoral Design</b> .....	208
<b>7.1. Structural Firewalls: Systemic Subtractions</b> .....	210
<b>7.1.1. Money-state Firewall</b> .....	210
<b>7.1.2. Administration - Election firewall</b> .....	213
<b>7.1.3. Security- Politics firewall</b> .....	215
<b>7.2. Competition Subtractions</b> .....	218
<b>7.2.1. Eligibility and Incompatibilities</b> .....	218

7.2.2.	<i>Money in politics</i> .....	221
7.2.3.	<i>Media Symmetry and Access</i> .....	222
7.3.	<b>Process and Adjudication Subtractions</b> .....	224
7.3.1.	<i>Eligibility and Venue for Complaints</i> .....	225
7.3.2.	<i>Clocks: Deadlines that Actually Bite</i> .....	226
7.3.3.	<i>Remedies: Proportional and Automatic</i> .....	229
7.3.4.	<i>Transparency: An E-docket Accessible to All</i> .....	231
7.3.5.	<i>The Constitutional Council’s Lane</i> .....	233
7.4.	<b>Implementation Instruments</b> .....	235
7.4.1.	<i>Money-State firewall</i> .....	235
7.4.2.	<i>Administration- Election Firewall</i> .....	236
7.4.3.	<i>Security- Politics Firewall</i> .....	238
7.4.4.	<i>Eligibility and Incompatibilities</i> .....	240
7.4.5.	<i>Money in Politics</i> .....	241
7.4.6.	<i>Media Symmetry and Access</i> .....	242
7.4.7.	<i>Process and Adjudication</i> .....	244
7.4.8.	<i>Stability and Districting</i> .....	246
7.5.	<b>Conclusion</b> .....	247
	<b>Chapter 8: An I4P Adapted to Lebanon</b> .....	248
8.1.	<b>Institutions</b> .....	248
8.1.1.	<i>Gaps</i> .....	248
8.1.2.	<i>Mitigation Measures</i> .....	250
8.2.	<b>Legal Framework</b> .....	255
8.2.1.	<i>Gaps</i> .....	255
8.2.2.	<i>Mitigation Measures</i> .....	259
8.2.2.1.	<b>Court Level Mitigation</b> .....	260
8.2.2.2.	<b>Designing an Efficient Alternative Dispute Resolution System with Emphasis on Local Peace Mechanisms</b> .....	261
8.2.2.3.	<b>Transitional Justice</b> .....	263
8.2.2.4.	<b>Reconciliation and Dealing with the Past</b> .....	268
8.3.	<b>Civil Society Engagement</b> .....	270
8.3.1.	<i>Gaps</i> .....	270
8.3.2.	<i>Mitigation Measures</i> .....	274
8.4.	<b>Capacity Building</b> .....	276
8.4.1.	<i>Gaps</i> .....	276
8.4.2.	<i>Mitigation Measures</i> .....	277

<b>8.5. Economy</b> .....	281
<b>8.5.1. Gaps</b> .....	281
<b>8.5.2. Mitigation Measures</b> .....	284
<b>8.6. Communication Channels</b> .....	289
<b>8.6.1. Gaps</b> .....	290
<b>8.6.2. Mitigation Measures</b> .....	292
<b>8.7. Conclusion</b> .....	294
<b>References</b> .....	299

### List of Tables

<b>Table 1</b> Galtung's Typology of Violence and Peace .....	5
<b>Table 2</b> Post-Conflict Elections: Contrasting Outcomes.....	55
<b>Table 3</b> Scale and geographic variation of the Christian boycott .....	145
<b>Table 4</b> Sectarian distribution of Parliamentary seats in 1992 elections.....	162
<b>Table 5</b> Sectarian distribution of Parliamentary seats in 1996 elections.....	163
<b>Table 6</b> Sectarian Distribution of parliamentary Seats in 2000 Elections.....	165
<b>Table 7</b> Number of Parliamentarians belonging to each political party.....	189

### List of Figures

<b>Figure 1</b> Galtung's "violence triangle" .....	7
<b>Figure 2</b> Breakdown of the 2009 election.....	184
<b>Figure 3</b> Breakdown of 2018 election.....	195
<b>Figure 4</b> Timeline of Contemporary civil movements in Lebanon.....	199
<b>Figure 5</b> Breakdown of 2022 election.....	204
<b>Figure 6</b> Lebanese Parliament results 2018 vs 2022.....	207

## List of Abbreviations

African Union (AU)  
Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)  
Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)  
Civil society organizations (CSOs)  
Community-Driven Development (CDD)  
Constitutional Council (CC)  
Constitutional Court (CC)  
Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)  
Early warning and response systems (EWRS)  
Election Dispute Resolution (EDR)  
Electoral Management Body (EMB)  
Free Patriotic Movement (FPM)  
General Confederation of Lebanese Workers (GCTL)  
Infrastructure for Peace (I4P)  
Institut de Recherche et de Formation en vue du Développement (IRFED)  
Institutionalization Before Liberalization (IBL)  
Internal Security Forces (ISF)  
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)  
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC),  
Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE)  
Lebanese Communist Party (LCP)  
Lebanese Democratic Party (LDP)  
Lebanese National Movement (LNM)  
Lebanese National Resistance Front (LNRFF)  
Members of Parliament (MPs)  
Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE)  
Ministry of Interior (MOI)  
National Peace Council (NPC)  
Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)  
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)  
Organization of African Unity (OAU)

Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)  
Progressive Socialist Party (PSP)  
proportional representation (PR)  
Saint Joseph University (USJ)  
Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)  
Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL)  
Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP)  
Télé Liban (TL)  
The Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR)  
The Organization of Communist Action (OAC)  
The State Commission for Elections (SCE)  
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs)  
Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM)  
United Nations (UN)  
United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF)  
United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIC)

## Abstract

In this thesis, I explore the critical importance of infrastructure for peace in societies emerging from long histories of conflict and war. Building sustainable peace requires more than just political agreements; it necessitates the development of a comprehensive infrastructure, an integrated framework that addresses political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions, designed to foster stability and reconciliation over the long term. The study begins by contextualizing this premise within the complex history of Lebanon, a country whose fragile statehood was established amid regional turmoil and internal divisions.

The recent history of Lebanon underscores how the foundational weaknesses of the state, compounded by external crises and regional conflicts, have rendered it highly vulnerable. The establishment of the Lebanese state, particularly after independence and through the post-independence period, was accompanied by structural vulnerabilities that were soon exploited by regional upheavals. These vulnerabilities were violently tested during Lebanon's civil war and subsequent conflicts, which resulted from a confluence of internal divisions and external interventions. Multiple attempts at conflict resolution, primarily through power-sharing agreements, intended as transitional mechanisms to restore normalcy, have repeatedly failed. These agreements, such as the Taëf Accord, were designed as temporary solutions but ultimately served as transitional phases that often entrenched sectarianism, enabling warlords and political elites to consolidate power under the guise of legitimacy. Consequently, Lebanon has cycled through recurrent crises, with each conflict deeper and more complicated than the last.

A significant portion of this thesis analyzes the role that elections have played in Lebanon's post-war trajectory, especially in restoring a semblance of normalcy. A detailed analysis of the electoral laws enacted after the Taëf Agreement reveals that, although the intended goal was to establish fair representation, democracy, and the rule of law, the outcome was often counterproductive. The electoral system, instead of curbing sectarianism and democratizing power, facilitated the entrenchment of traditional Lebanese political elites, commonly referred to as "zaim", who transitioned from being militia leaders during the war to legitimate political figures. This transformation allowed warlords and sectarian leaders to preserve and expand their influence under the veneer of electoral legitimacy, undermining the democratic process and perpetuating systemic inequalities.

Based on this analysis, the thesis proposes strategic reforms to the electoral laws, aiming to prevent the consolidation of *zaim* and limit electoral manipulation. These recommendations are rooted in a “*via negativa*” approach, focusing on incremental steps to remove the most detrimental elements within the current system, thereby creating a more equitable and representative electoral framework. Such reforms are essential to break the cycle of elite dominance and to foster genuine political inclusivity.

The overarching conclusion of this research is that Lebanon’s electoral processes, paradoxically, have played a somewhat negative role in peacebuilding, often deepening divisions rather than promoting reconciliation. Consequently, peacebuilding in Lebanon cannot be achieved through isolated political reforms alone. It requires the development of a comprehensive, multi-layered infrastructure for peace (I4P), tailored specifically to Lebanon’s unique socio-political landscape. This framework must encompass not only the aspects discussed in the initial chapters, such as legal reforms, institutional capacity, and security, but also broader societal elements, including social cohesion, economic justice, and cultural reconciliation.

The last chapter of this thesis advocates for a holistic approach to designing an I4P suited to Lebanon’s specific context. While it was beyond the scope of this work to elaborate exhaustively on all facets of such an infrastructure, the chapter emphasizes the most critical components from the perspective of the author. The work underscores that a comprehensive peace infrastructure is vital for Lebanon’s future, requiring sustained effort and strategic planning. The author envisions continual development and refinement of this framework, with hopes of contributing more extensively to Lebanon’s peacebuilding efforts in the near future.

In sum, this thesis highlights the limitations of current electoral and political reforms, advocating instead for a broader, systemic approach rooted in infrastructural development. Only through an integrated and context-specific peacebuilding infrastructure can Lebanon hope to transcend its cyclical crises, establishing a durable peace that is inclusive, just, and resilient.

## Introduction

The main idea of this thesis started from observing the impact that electoral laws had on peace in Lebanon after the Taëf agreement; laws that were supposed to bring equality and fair representation to different components of the Lebanese society. Before examining these laws, I thought it was essential to consider the structure of peace itself and how we plan for it. How do we build it? What are the main components to have in a society to be able to build sustainable peace? I was looking for “a sustainable peace”, a positive one, a peace that brings also the well-being for the people, the society, and the whole country.

This search for a positive peace found its echo in the positive peace theory of Galtung. This is why I attempted to explore theories of peace, positive peace, and infrastructure for peace in **Chapter 1**. **Chapter 2** delves into the theoretical foundations and empirical insights on electoral systems and peacebuilding. In **Chapter 3**, I provide a general background about Lebanon prior to the war, including its establishment, management, and the seeds of its own destruction. I also examine the external factors that contributed to the war in 1975.

In **Chapter 4**, I tried to analyze the peace that prevailed in Lebanon following the Taëf agreement. It was a peace that stopped the direct violence, but it was not the kind of peace that the Lebanese were expecting after 15 years of severe violence, torture, pain, division, and loss. It was a “peace” that established for other violence: mini-wars, severe political division and polarization, more wars and invasions, a paralysis of the institutions, and a diminished role for the state versus a bigger role for the traditional political leaders, or what we call in Arabic “Zai'im”, establishing a very complex system of clientelism. In this chapter, I analyze the Taëf itself as an agreement and try to understand why it failed to bring peace. Is it because of the agreement itself, or is it because of its implementation?

In **Chapters 5 and 6**, I examine the election laws implemented after the signing of the Taëf agreement, from 1992 to 2022, in an attempt to analyze how they were written and how they repeatedly manipulated the democratic process.

In **Chapter 7**, I attempt to discuss the general conditions or elements necessary in any electoral law for Lebanon, in order to fulfill its goal of fair representation and an honest process that helps the right people reach power.

Because I conclude that elections alone are not enough to help achieve positive peace, specifically in Lebanon, and that elections need to be part of the infrastructure for peace, I

suggest in **Chapter 8**, the necessary I4P that are essential to be able to achieve positive peace in Lebanon.

### **Methodology**

This thesis employs a mixed research methodology, integrating both qualitative and analytical approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of Lebanon's complex history, conflict dynamics, and peacebuilding processes. The research is primarily based on a thorough review and analysis of existing literature, including academic articles, books, and scholarly publications that detail Lebanon's historical trajectory, the development and escalation of its conflicts, and the various power-sharing arrangements, including the Taef Agreement. This literature review allowed for an in-depth understanding of the historical context, structural factors, and political developments that have shaped Lebanon's ongoing struggles with violence and instability.

In addition to the desk research, the study incorporates primary data collected through semi-structured interviews with experts in the fields of peacebuilding, Lebanese history, and political science. These interviews provided valuable insights, contextualized contemporary issues, and offered expert perspectives on the challenges and opportunities for peacebuilding in Lebanon. The interviews were carefully designed to explore the experts' views on the effectiveness of past peace initiatives, the current state of political processes, and potential pathways toward sustainable peace.

The combination of document analysis and expert interviews facilitated a triangulation of data, strengthening the validity and depth of the research findings. This mixed methods approach allowed for a nuanced analysis, combining theoretical frameworks from academic literature with practical insights from field experts. Overall, this methodology ensures a comprehensive exploration of Lebanon's history and current realities, supporting the development of well-informed conclusions and recommendations for peacebuilding strategies in the country.

## **Chapter 1: Infrastructure for Peace (I4P): A Base for Creating a Lasting Positive Peace**

The theories of I4P are explained in this chapter, laying the groundwork for the understanding that peacebuilding is a complex endeavor with multiple interdependent layers and factors essential for its success. While upcoming chapters will examine elections and electoral law design and their influence on peacebuilding, it is crucial to recognize the vital role of a robust I4P in conjunction with these elections to achieve positive peace. As previously stated, this research uses I4P as a starting point and aims to adapt and apply it to the Lebanese context. The primary aim of this research is to examine elections as a component of I4P, which has not been done previously for Lebanon.

### **1.1. Definition and Evolution**

I4P refers to the systematic and coordinated network of institutions, policies, mechanisms, and resources that enable societies to prevent conflict, mediate disputes, and sustain long-term peace (Giessmann, 2016). This infrastructure encompasses governmental agencies, civil society organizations, local communities, and international actors working collaboratively to foster social resilience against violence.

Unlike traditional conflict resolution mechanisms that react to crises, I4P emphasizes prevention by building robust structures that detect, mitigate, and address tensions before they escalate into violence. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been instrumental in advocating for and supporting the development of peace Infrastructure worldwide, recognizing their role in ensuring stability and sustainable development (UNDP, 2022).

I4P represents an evolving framework of institutions, mechanisms, values, and processes designed to build societal resilience, prevent violent conflicts, and sustain peace. Although the term itself is relatively recent, the conceptual foundations of I4P are deeply rooted in the historical progression of global peace efforts, tracing back to the aftermath of World War II and extending through various phases of conflict resolution and peacebuilding practices (Giessmann, 2016).

The origins of I4P can be linked to the post-World War II era, when the international community recognized the urgent need for structured mechanisms to prevent the recurrence of

large-scale conflict. The establishment of the UN in 1945 marked a significant milestone in institutionalizing peace efforts at the global level (United Nations, 2020). The UN Charter emphasized the importance of maintaining international peace and security, promoting diplomacy, and fostering cooperation among nations to address conflicts without resorting to violence (United Nations, 1945). Early peace efforts during this period were primarily focused on interstate conflicts, reflecting the geopolitical realities of the time, particularly in the context of the Cold War. The creation of UN peacekeeping missions, such as the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in 1948 (United Nations, 2025) and the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in 1956 (United Nations, 2020), demonstrated a growing commitment to international conflict management. However, these missions were largely reactive, deployed to monitor ceasefires and maintain buffer zones between warring states, rather than addressing the root causes of conflict or preventing violence at the local level (United Nations, 2024).

As the Cold War progressed, the rigid focus on interstate conflicts and the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs limited the UN's ability to engage effectively in intrastate conflicts, which became increasingly prevalent. The decolonization process across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century led to the emergence of newly independent states, many of which faced internal tensions, ethnic divisions, and political instability (Ghara, 2023). While some efforts were made to mediate these conflicts through regional organizations like the Organization of African Unity (OAU), there was still a lack of comprehensive, institutionalized mechanisms at the national level to prevent and manage conflicts within states (Schalk et al., 2005).

The end of the Cold War in the early 1990s marked a significant turning point in the evolution of peace infrastructure. The collapse of the bipolar world order led to a surge in intrastate conflicts, including civil wars, ethnic violence, and political upheaval, particularly in regions like the Balkans, Africa, and parts of Asia. The international community began to recognize that traditional peacekeeping approaches were insufficient for addressing the complexities of these conflicts. In response, there was a shift towards more holistic peacebuilding strategies that incorporated conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction, and the promotion of democratic governance (Boutros-Ghali, 1992).

This period also saw the introduction of key theoretical frameworks that would later inform the I4P concept. The Agenda for Peace, presented by UN Secretary-General Boutros

Boutros-Ghali in 1992, emphasized the importance of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peacebuilding. This comprehensive approach highlighted the need for proactive measures to address the underlying causes of conflict, such as political exclusion, economic inequality, and social injustices (United Nations, 2024). The concept of “positive peace,” introduced by peace theorist Johan Galtung, further influenced this shift by emphasizing the importance of building institutions and societal structures that promote justice, equality, and human rights, rather than merely preventing violence (Galtung and Fischer, 2013, p. 173–178).

As previously stated, Galtung (1964, 1969) distinguished between negative peace, defined as "the absence of violence, absence of war" (Galtung, 1964, p. 2), and positive peace, which refers to "the integration of human society" through the establishment of social justice, equality, and harmonious social structures that eliminate the root causes of conflict (Galtung, 1964, p. 2). Integrating positive peace is essential for sustainable conflict resolution because it addresses underlying structural inequalities rather than merely stopping immediate violence. This comprehensive framework for understanding peace and its components is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1** Galtung's Typology of Violence and Peace

<b>Type of Violence</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Peace Implication</b>
<b>Direct (Personal)</b>	Physical or overt violence with a clear perpetrator and victim	War, murder, assault, torture; human-rights abuses by security forces	<b>Negative Peace:</b> Achieved when direct violence ceases (e.g., a ceasefire stops war). However, negative peace is fragile if underlying issues remain.
<b>Structural</b>	Indirect violence "built into" social, economic, and political systems; no identifiable single aggressor	Poverty-related deaths, inequality, repression, racism/sexism embedded in laws or institutions	<b>Positive Peace:</b> Requires removing or reforming unjust structures. Peacebuilding must address root causes like inequality and lack of opportunity. Absence of structural violence means a just society where all groups have equal life chances.

<b>Cultural</b>	Aspects of culture (ideologies, norms, narratives, religion, art) that legitimize or glorify violence	Propaganda dehumanizing an enemy; extremist ideology teaching that violence is honorable; historical feuds celebrated in media	<b>Positive Peace:</b> Entails transforming cultural attitudes. A culture of peace and tolerance must replace hate and war glorification. Cultural change helps make peace morally acceptable and sustainable.
-----------------	---	--	--

*Note.* Adapted from "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" (Galtung, 1969) and "Cultural Violence" (Galtung, 1990)

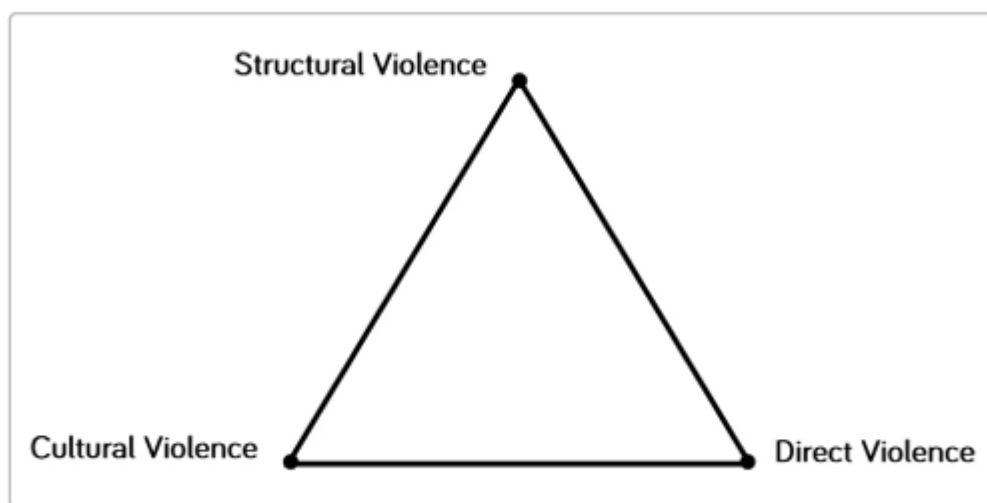
Galtung's also developed the important concept of cultural violence, creating what became known as the "violence triangle" (Galtung, 1990, p. 291). This framework demonstrates how three distinct but interconnected forms of violence reinforce each other in self-perpetuating cycles that make conflict transformation particularly challenging.

Direct violence involves clear, tangible harm with an identifiable perpetrator, including killing, assault, torture, and organized warfare between armed groups (Galtung, 1969). This most visible form of violence typically receives the greatest attention from media, policymakers, and international interveners because its effects are immediate and dramatic. However, focusing exclusively on direct violence obscures the deeper structural and cultural factors that make such violence possible and acceptable.

Galtung refers to structural violence as "it is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations" leading to unequal power distributions, poverty, repression, and other injustices that shorten lives and deny basic needs (Galtung, 1969, p. 171). Unlike direct violence, structural violence often lacks clearly identifiable perpetrators, making it more difficult to recognize and address. Examples include institutionalized racism, economic exploitation, political exclusion, and legal systems that systematically disadvantage particular groups.

Cultural violence encompasses "the symbolic sphere of our existence—exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (Galtung, 1990, p. 291). This dimension of violence operates through symbols, narratives, and belief systems that make violence appear natural, necessary, or morally justified. Propaganda that dehumanizes enemies, religious doctrines that promote holy war, and academic theories that rationalize inequality all function as forms of cultural violence.

The triangular relationship between these forms of violence creates what Galtung described as “the causal flow among the three types of violence” that move from cultural through structural to direct violence, and vice versa (Galtung, 1990, p. 295). Cultural violence legitimizes structural violence, which creates conditions conducive to direct violence, which in turn reinforces cultural narratives about the necessity and acceptability of violence. This cyclical dynamic explains why simply ending direct violence through peace agreements often proves insufficient for preventing conflict recurrence.



**Figure 1** Galtung’s “violence triangle”

Source: Cultural Violence (Galtung, 1990)

Figure 1 illustrates direct, structural, and cultural violence as mutually reinforcing corners of a single phenomenon. In post-conflict societies, this model implies that to achieve lasting peace, efforts must address all three sides: not only silencing the guns (direct violence), but also reforming unjust structures and transforming hostile cultural narratives

Contemporary scholars have extended Galtung's insights to examine how different types of electoral systems and governance arrangements either contribute to or undermine positive peace. John Paul Lederach's concept of conflict transformation builds directly on Galtung's framework by emphasizing the need for fundamental changes in relationships, structures, and cultures rather than simply managing or resolving particular disputes (Lederach, 2003). Lederach's influential work provided crucial theoretical foundations for I4P by emphasizing the need for embedded peacebuilding mechanisms at all levels of society. His concept of "sustainable transformative approaches" argued that effective peacebuilding required more than elite-level agreements; it demanded the creation of institutions and

processes that could transform relationships and address grievances at multiple social levels simultaneously (Lederach, 1997, p. 20–21, 94–95). His concept of I4P refers to a network of interdependent systems, resources, values, and skills within a society that are organized to prevent conflict and promote reconciliation across all levels—from grassroots to elite. This framework emphasizes connecting different social sectors and geographic locations through a process of “horizontal” and “vertical integration” to build sustainable peace by involving diverse actors and fostering deep-rooted relationships (Lederach, 2012, p. 37–39).

Importantly, Galtung’s framework appears to have potential for analyzing peace in Lebanon. Thus, this research uses his model to examine the form of peace that existed in Lebanon after the Taëf Agreement, at the end of the Civil War. Galtung's "violence triangle" model and its components can provide a useful analytical tool for assessing the type of peace that was existent during this period.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the concept of national and local peace Infrastructure began to gain traction, particularly in countries recovering from violent conflicts. The establishment of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) in countries like South Africa, Sierra Leone, and Guatemala exemplified efforts to address past injustices and promote national healing through institutionalized processes (Avruch & Vejarano, 2002). Similarly, countries like Ghana and Kenya developed national peace councils and local peace committees to mediate disputes, particularly during periods of political tension and electoral violence (Lederach, 1997).

The formalization of the I4P concept was further advanced by the UNDP and other international organizations, which recognized the need for sustainable, locally-driven mechanisms to prevent conflict and promote peace (UNDP, 2016). The UNDP began actively supporting countries in establishing and strengthening their peace Infrastructure, focusing on processes, policies, and institutions that enhance social resilience to violent conflict. This approach emphasized inclusivity, participation, and the integration of diverse stakeholders, including government institutions, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, and marginalized communities.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the I4P framework has continued to evolve in response to emerging global challenges, such as the rise of violent extremism, political polarization, and the impacts of climate change on social stability. The African Union (AU) and other regional bodies have adopted early warning systems and conflict prevention mechanisms to identify and address

potential sources of violence before they escalate (Maru, 2016). Additionally, there has been a growing emphasis on the role of technology and digital platforms in supporting peacebuilding efforts, enabling real-time conflict monitoring and facilitating dialogue across diverse communities.

Today, Infrastructure for Peace represents a comprehensive, multi-level approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, integrating international, national, and local efforts to create sustainable frameworks for peace. By focusing on the root causes of conflict, promoting inclusive governance, and fostering dialogue among diverse stakeholders, I4P continues to play a critical role in addressing the complex dynamics of contemporary conflicts and building resilient societies.

### ***1.1.1. Key Elements I4P***

The I4P framework operates through the collaboration of various actors at the national, regional, and local levels, including governments, civil society, and international organizations. The main elements of I4P function interdependently to create an environment conducive to dialogue, conflict prevention, and sustainable peacebuilding.

Institutional mechanisms form the backbone of I4P, providing formal structures that facilitate the management and resolution of conflicts. These include national peace councils, mediation committees, and early warning systems designed to detect potential conflicts and enable timely interventions. For example, Ghana's National Peace Council (NPC), established in 2011, plays a critical role in preventing electoral violence by fostering dialogue among political stakeholders (Pillay & Scanlon, 2008). Similarly, Kenya's local peace committees, developed in response to the 2007-2008 post-election violence, have proven effective in mediating community-level disputes and promoting reconciliation (Ekwenye & Iteyo, 2023). Early warning and response systems (EWRS) such as the African Union's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) further exemplify the institutionalization of conflict prevention at regional levels, providing real-time data and analysis to preempt violent outbreaks (Maru, 2016).

Legal frameworks are essential in establishing the rule of law and providing the foundation for peaceful conflict resolution. These frameworks encompass constitutions, laws, policies, and international treaties that safeguard human rights, promote justice, and create avenues for non-violent dispute resolution. South Africa's post-apartheid constitution is a notable example, embedding principles of human rights, reconciliation, and social justice

within its legal structure. Legal frameworks also include transitional justice mechanisms like truth and reconciliation commissions, which address past human rights abuses and foster national healing. The implementation of Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods, such as mediation and arbitration, within legal systems encourages non-adversarial conflict resolution, contributing to a culture of dialogue and cooperation (Siddiqui, 2025).

Civil society engagement is a cornerstone of I4P. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), religious leaders, youth groups, and community-based organizations play critical roles in facilitating dialogue, advocating for human rights, and monitoring government actions. For instance, Women's Peace Huts in Liberia have been instrumental in mediating local disputes and advocating for women's inclusion in peace processes (UN Women, 2019). Grassroots initiatives often have a deep understanding of local conflict dynamics and can implement culturally sensitive solutions. Furthermore, civil society actors contribute to public awareness through peace education campaigns and advocacy efforts, promoting a broader societal commitment to non-violence and reconciliation.

Capacity building is integral to I4P, focusing on the development of skills, knowledge, and institutional capabilities necessary for effective conflict prevention and resolution. Training programs in negotiation, mediation, and conflict analysis equip individuals and institutions with the tools to address disputes constructively; it has shown efficiency in constructive and peaceful resolution of conflicts (Turnuklu et al., 2008; Aggrawal & Magana, 2024). These programs target a wide range of stakeholders, from political leaders and security forces to community members and youth organizations. Beyond individual skill development, capacity building also involves institutional strengthening, such as enhancing the operational effectiveness of governmental bodies, legal systems, and civil society organizations. Moreover, empowering marginalized groups, particularly women and youth, is a critical aspect of capacity building, which ensures that diverse perspectives are represented in peace processes and decision-making (Khandagale, 2024).

Communication channels are vital for fostering dialogue, promoting transparency, and facilitating the exchange of information among stakeholders. Effective communication mechanisms help prevent misunderstandings, build trust, and enable collaborative problem-solving. Dialogue platforms, such as national dialogues, public consultations, and community forums, provide structured opportunities for conflicting parties to engage in constructive discussions. The Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, which played a pivotal role in the

country's democratic transition following the Arab Spring, exemplifies the power of inclusive dialogue in achieving political stability (Mahmoud & Súilleabháin, 2020). The media also plays a significant role in peacebuilding. Indeed, peace journalism can engage in conflict-sensitive reporting that highlights solutions and promotes understanding, thereby avoiding polarization (Youngblood, 2016). In the digital age, technology and social media platforms have become increasingly important tools for peacebuilding. Digital platforms enable real-time communication, facilitate the dissemination of peace messages, and support early warning systems that monitor conflict indicators. For example, the Ushahidi platform in Kenya, created in 2007 in the context of violence incidents in the aftermath of the Kenyan presidential elections, has been used to crowdsource information on electoral violence and coordinate responses during political crises (Rotich, 2017).

The main elements of Infrastructure for Peace -institutional mechanisms, legal frameworks, civil society engagement, capacity building, and communication channels-function synergistically to create a robust, adaptable, and sustainable peacebuilding framework. By integrating these elements into national and local governance structures, societies can build resilience against violence and foster a culture of dialogue, cooperation, and mutual respect. The success of I4P depends on the active participation of diverse stakeholders, the adaptability of peace mechanisms to local contexts, and the continuous investment in capacity building and inclusive governance. As the nature of conflict evolves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I4P frameworks will continue to adapt, incorporating new technologies, addressing emerging threats, and fostering a global culture of peace.

## **1.2. Elections as a Tool for Peacebuilding**

### ***1.2.1. Role of Elections***

Elections play a crucial role in maintaining peace by providing a structured, legitimate, and widely accepted method for the transfer of power and the resolution of political disputes. In democratic societies, elections ensure that leadership transitions occur peacefully rather than through force or coercion, reducing the risk of political instability and violent conflicts. "Democracy functions with minimal coercive force because of the legitimacy of the system and the voluntary compliance of the public" (Dalton, 2004, p. 12). When electoral processes are conducted transparently and fairly, they reinforce the legitimacy of governing institutions, as elected leaders derive their authority from the consent of the governed (Gilley, 2006). This

legitimacy fosters trust between the state and its citizens, strengthening the social contract and reducing the likelihood of protests, uprisings, or resistance to government authority.

Additionally, elections promote accountability by subjecting political leaders to periodic public scrutiny. Knowing that they must seek re-election, leaders are more likely to act in the interest of the people, address societal needs, and avoid corruption, thereby fostering a more responsive and stable political environment (Bågenholm & Charron, 2020). Furthermore, elections facilitate political inclusion by offering a platform for diverse voices, including marginalized communities, ethnic minorities, and opposition groups, to participate in governance. Political inclusion has often been closely tied preserving stability and peacebuilding (Manning et al., 2023). By contrast, political exclusion is often considered a key driver of conflict, as groups that feel disenfranchised often resort to violence to make their voices heard (Meierrieks et al., 2021). By ensuring fair representation, elections help integrate these groups into the political system, reducing tensions and fostering social cohesion.

Beyond domestic stability, elections also play a role in preventing international conflicts and fostering diplomatic relations. Countries that uphold democratic elections are more likely to gain international legitimacy, receive foreign aid, and engage in stable diplomatic ties. Whereas nations plagued by electoral fraud or undemocratic transitions often face sanctions, isolation, or intervention. Moreover, elections serve as a mechanism for resolving political disputes in a non-violent manner. Competing ideologies and interests can contest power through debates and campaigns rather than armed conflict, ensuring that political disagreements are addressed within a legal and institutional framework. This prevents the emergence of violent power struggles that have historically plagued many nations with weak democratic institutions (Mayoral & Mueller, 2025). Additionally, electoral fraud, voter suppression, or manipulation of results can erode public trust, leading to post-election violence, civil unrest, or even armed conflicts, as seen in numerous historical instances where disputed elections led to prolonged instability (Siachiwena & Saunders, 2021). Therefore, strong electoral institutions, independent monitoring bodies, and civic education are essential to maintaining the integrity of elections and ensuring that they fulfill their role as instruments of peace.

In sum, elections are fundamental to political stability and peace, but their effectiveness depends on the credibility and fairness of the electoral process. By upholding democratic principles and ensuring broad participation, societies can harness elections as powerful tools

for maintaining order, resolving conflicts, and fostering long-term peace both nationally and internationally.

### **1.3. “Fair” and “Free”**

For the election to be based on a successful foundation, it should be conducted in a fair and free manner. It is imperative to establish clear definitions and distinctions for the terms "fair" and "free" in order to differentiate them from other democratic attributes. Both of these notions ought to be converted into particular requirements for determining the degree of freedom and fairness in an election.

In the words of Elkit and Svensson (1997), their conception of "freedom" is fundamentally opposed to compulsion. "Freedom entails the right and the opportunity to choose one thing over another (Elkit & Svensson, 1997, p. 34). Coercion implies the absence of choice, either formally or in reality: either all options but one is disallowed, or certain choices would have negative consequences for one's own or one's family's safety, welfare, or dignity." (Elkit & Svensson, 1997, p. 35). They also added that "the opposite of fairness is unequal treatment of equals, whereby some people (or groups) are given unreasonable advantages. Thus, fairness involves both regularity (the unbiased application of rules) and reasonableness (the not-too-unequal distribution of relevant resources among competitors) (Elklit & Svensson, 1997).

Within the elections' framework, it is imperative to incorporate the freedom component, which includes various facets of citizen engagement in the electoral process, such as the exercise of voting rights and the opportunity to pursue political office, devoid of any form of coercion. On the other hand, fairness is largely focused on the establishment of and adherence to the regulations governing a particular activity or situation. Elkit and Svensson (1997) also state that freedom ought to serve as a priority, because it is a precondition for democracy and elections as a means to that end. In the absence of regulations that establish formal political liberties, the inquiry into the fair execution of regulations becomes devoid of significance, while the inquiry into the parity of resources becomes irrelevant (Fala, 2018).

Thus, the electoral process plays an essential part in democratic systems. Both help ensure that power and authority are distributed equally and fairly and that political leadership transitions are transparent and peaceful. Hence, since the 1990s, international policy circles have shone a light on democratization as a feasible approach towards long-term and lasting

peace. The concept of simultaneously promoting peacebuilding and democratization emerged due to the acknowledgment that political oppression and discrimination frequently serve as the primary catalysts for armed resistance by various groups. Therefore, the process of democracy not only facilitates the expression of political rights but is also perceived as a means of addressing the underlying factors contributing to conflict. The provision of assistance to enhance institutional capacity in order to foster democratic norms and uphold the principles of democratic supremacy of law is currently recognized as critical to the peacebuilding process.

## **1.4. Positive Relationship of Democracy and its Risks**

### ***1.4.1. Democratization and Peace***

Democratization and peace are interconnected concepts that often share a reciprocal relationship in political theory and international relations (Nesterova & Kim, 2024). Democratization refers to the process of establishing and expanding democratic principles within a political system. Some of its key elements include the establishment of representative institutions, protection of individual rights, and the promotion of free and fair elections (Siachiwena & Saunders, 2021). Positive peace encompasses, not only the absence of conflict, both domestically and internationally, but also the lack of overt violence, coupled with the presence of social, economic, and political stability, as well as the elimination of structural and cultural violence (Nesterova and Kim, 2024).

Conversely, the establishment of peace can create a conducive environment for democratization. In societies marked by stability and security, there may be greater opportunities for political participation, the development of democratic institutions, and the protection of human rights. While this positive relationship is a common perspective, it is essential to note that the dynamics between democratization and peace can be complex and context-dependent. Challenges and exceptions exist, and democratization can sometimes run counter to building peace in post-conflict contexts (Mross, 2018). In this sense, the successful intertwining of these two processes often requires careful consideration of historical, cultural, and socio-political factors.

This perspective underscores the multidimensional nature of transitions from conflict to democracy and peace. Moreover, viewing democracy and peace as mutually exclusive is dangerous and poses further challenges, emphasizing the need for refined approaches to address the complex relationship between these crucial elements in post-conflict scenarios.

### ***1.4.2. Risks of Democratization***

Empirical evidence and contemporary scholarly investigations indicate that the process of democratization in nations undergoing transition or affected by conflict, with a specific focus on elections, can sometimes impede rather than facilitate the establishment of peace. In his book *“From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict”*, Snyder (2000) stated that “If the ‘elite-persuasion’ model is correct, partition may cement difference whereas the transitional context could provide an opportunity to shape an inclusive identity (Snyder, 2000). To do so, democracy requires much more than simply holding elections. Civil society and strong state institutions that can enforce the rule of law, for example, are important elements (Snyder, 2000). So, the ‘elite-persuasion’ model is a significant way in which influential people persuade their followers to adopt extreme beliefs.

Other scholars argued that elections can generate conflicts, rather than solve them. Kammerud (2012) stated that “Electoral violence is just such a challenge. It requires electoral practitioners to look beyond the lens of the electoral cycle to formulate effective strategies for analyzing, mitigating, and resolving electoral violence.” (Kammerud, 2012). Collier (2009), in his book *“Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places”*, claims that elections in dangerous places, or countries with an elevated risk of conflict, frequently seem to presage the onset of hostilities (Collier, 2009).

While democracy is often regarded as a pathway to peace, these scholars caution against oversimplified assumptions. They emphasize the importance of recognizing the potential for elections to generate or exacerbate conflicts, especially in regions marked by pre-existing vulnerabilities. This nuanced understanding is crucial for policymakers and practitioners seeking to navigate the intricate dynamics of electoral processes in diverse and challenging contexts.

Existing research has provided evidence indicating that the endeavor to establish democracy has the potential to hinder the achievement of peace, while conversely, endeavors to attain peace might compromise the essence as well as the caliber of democracy. Therefore, within practical terms, advancement of democracy along the endeavor for peace might potentially conflict with one another (Leininger & Grimm, 2012). Elections are not always in harmony with both the realization of peace and the advancement of democracy. Elections can become problematic in fragile or post-conflict states as they can:

- Hinder the peace process by deepening societal divides if society is polarized or if the electoral system is unfair. Elections are seen as a zero-sum game.
- Or compromise the quality of democracy in a power sharing agreement where political pluralism, human rights, and the rule of law are compromised for the sake of stability.

Premature elections (elections are held before the necessary institutions or political consensus are in place), won't be truly fair and free, which undermines the peace and democratic objectives. Exclusive electoral systems undermine the legitimacy of the election process which disintegrates the social contract necessary for sustainable peace.

### **1.5. Elections as Impediments for Peacebuilding**

Scholars have extensively examined the outcomes of post-conflict elections. Research has shown that successful electoral processes can contribute to durable peace (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003), the protection of human rights (Dreef & Wagner, 2013), enhanced stability (Brancati & Snyder, 2011), economic growth (Collier, 2009), and increased international legitimacy (Kumar, 1998). These findings suggest that, when properly managed, elections can reinforce broader peacebuilding objectives. However, elections are not a guaranteed solution. They may also deepen societal divisions, particularly in societies with unresolved grievances, weak institutions, and exclusionary political systems.

Collier (2009) provides a sobering perspective on elections in fragile states, especially those home to the bottom billion, populations living in extreme poverty and political instability. In such contexts, elections are less about democratic renewal and more about zero-sum power struggles (Collier, 2009). Collier acknowledges the optimism surrounding global democratization, but warns that without economic development and robust institutions, elections may trigger violence rather than prevent it. His research suggests a clear divergence: while democracy correlates with reduced violence in middle-income countries, it often destabilizes low-income nations when prematurely implemented.

This distinction reinforces the critical role of timing and preparation. Elections held too early in a transitional process can entrench the power of former combatants, warlords, or sectarian elites. These actors may exploit the electoral system to legitimize their authority while resisting meaningful reform. Furthermore, if institutions such as the judiciary, electoral commission, and security apparatus are weak or compromised, electoral processes can become

instruments of manipulation rather than democratic expression. Thus, elections should be understood not as isolated events, but as part of a continuum of democratic institution-building.

Paris (1997) echoes this view, advocating for a nuanced, risk-aware approach to post-conflict elections (Paris, 1997). They caution against both indefinite postponement and hasty implementation, emphasizing the importance of assessing local conditions. According to his framework, two conditions are paramount: the establishment of basic security and the inclusion of all relevant political actors. Elections should only proceed once the threat of violence has subsided and mechanisms exist to ensure the participation of all groups—including marginalized communities and former belligerents.

Security is not the only prerequisite. “Economic stabilization is equally essential” (Kireyev, 2025, p. 2). High unemployment, unequal distribution of resources, and economic marginalization can fuel resentment and increase the risk of post-election unrest. Investment in public services, job creation, and infrastructure contributes to social cohesion and public trust (Kireyev, 2025). In this regard, international economic assistance can play a vital role. By supporting post-conflict recovery, donors and development agencies help create the conditions necessary for credible, peaceful elections.

International engagement in electoral processes can be both beneficial and risky. Technical assistance, training, observation missions, and mediation support can help enhance transparency, build trust, and deter fraud. However, poorly designed or overly prescriptive interventions can undermine domestic ownership and fuel perceptions of foreign interference (Levin, 2016). Therefore, external actors must work closely with local stakeholders and tailor their support to the specific political, cultural, and historical context of the post-conflict society.

The design of electoral systems also matters. Proportional representation (PR), power-sharing arrangements, and mechanisms to promote the inclusion of underrepresented groups can help foster more equitable and representative governance, and have shown significant efficacy according to research (Bernauer et al., 2013). Additionally, legal reforms to ensure campaign transparency, regulate political financing, and combat electoral malpractice are also essential to the credibility of the process (Mavengano & Chirongoma, 2023). Civic education and media freedom can also play important roles in shaping informed participation and countering divisive narratives (Frayha, 2003).

Based on the work of Aila M. Matanock, Lappin reinforces the idea that elections embedded within inclusive peace agreements, where both government and rebel actors agree

to compete politically, tend to yield more durable peace outcomes (Matanock, 2017). These arrangements help bridge the divide between former adversaries and integrate them into a shared political framework. By doing so, they transform violent contestation into institutionalized competition.

Ultimately, elections in post-conflict settings are complex and multifaceted undertakings. They encompass three key phases: the pre-electoral period, which involves legal and institutional preparations; the electoral period, where the act of voting takes place; and the post-electoral period, which requires dispute resolution, government formation, and institutional follow-through. Each phase must be carefully managed to mitigate the risk of violence and ensure that elections contribute positively to peace.

### **1.6. Integrity, inclusivity, Post-Election Processes**

The relationship between elections and peace is complex and multifaceted, as elections can either serve as instruments of stability and democratic legitimacy or become sources of tension and conflict, depending on how they are conducted (Mross, 2018). When managed effectively, elections reinforce political stability by granting legitimacy to governing bodies, providing citizens with a voice in decision-making, and ensuring peaceful transitions of power. However, when electoral processes are flawed, marked by fraud, exclusion, or lack of transparency, they can incite protests, violence, and deep political divisions. Several key factors influence whether elections contribute to peace or instability, with electoral integrity, inclusivity, and post-election processes playing crucial roles.

Linebarger and Salehyan (2020) argue that “electoral integrity is one of the most significant determinants of whether elections will foster peace or create conflict” (Linebarger & Salehyan, 2020, p. 260). When elections are conducted with high standards of transparency, fairness, and adherence to democratic principles, they gain legitimacy in the eyes of both the electorate and political stakeholders. Transparent electoral processes, including unbiased voter registration, independent election monitoring, and reliable vote counting, help prevent allegations of fraud that could otherwise trigger political unrest. Conversely, if an election is perceived as rigged, manipulated, or unfair, opposition parties and dissatisfied voters may reject the results, leading to protests, civil disobedience, or even violent uprisings (Linebarger & Salehyan, 2020). Electoral integrity also depends on the impartiality of electoral commissions, judiciary bodies, and law enforcement agencies, all of which must function independently to ensure fair dispute resolution and uphold democratic principles. The presence

of international observers can further enhance credibility and deter potential malpractice, reinforcing public confidence in the electoral system.

Post-election processes are equally critical in determining whether elections will lead to peace or unrest. The aftermath of an election is often a volatile period, especially in closely contested races or deeply polarized societies (Michelitch, 2015). Thus, effective post-election mechanisms for addressing disputes, ensuring peaceful power transitions, and maintaining public trust in the democratic process are essential for stability (Michelitch, 2015). Independent judicial bodies must be equipped to handle electoral complaints efficiently and impartially, providing a legal and structured avenue for resolving grievances (OSCE, 2023). If election losers perceive that their concerns are dismissed without due process, they may resort to extralegal means, including protests, strikes, or armed resistance. Additionally, responsible political leadership is vital during this period—both winners and losers must commit to democratic principles, avoiding inflammatory rhetoric, violence incitement, or attempts to undermine electoral institutions. Peaceful transitions of power, reinforced by constitutional norms and political traditions, further strengthen democratic stability. In cases where electoral disputes arise, negotiated settlements, coalition governments, or mediation by neutral bodies can prevent escalation and maintain national unity.

Ultimately, the relationship between elections and peace depends on how electoral systems are designed and implemented. While free and fair elections enhance political legitimacy, foster inclusivity, and provide a peaceful means of resolving disputes, poorly managed elections can deepen societal fractures and fuel instability. Strengthening democratic institutions, upholding electoral integrity, and ensuring broad-based political participation are crucial steps in ensuring that elections serve as catalysts for peace rather than triggers for conflict. Societies that successfully embed democratic norms into their political culture are more likely to experience stable governance, social harmony, and sustainable peace.

### **1.7. Key elements in Electoral Laws for Positive Peace Impact**

For electoral laws to have a positive impact on peace, they must incorporate essential elements that ensure fairness, inclusivity, transparency, accountability, and effective conflict resolution. These elements collectively contribute to the legitimacy of the electoral process, fostering trust among citizens and reducing the risk of post-election violence or political instability. One of the most fundamental aspects of electoral laws is the guarantee of broad political participation, ensuring that all eligible citizens have the right to vote and run for office

without discrimination. When electoral laws protect and promote voter access, particularly for marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities, women, and persons with disabilities, they prevent political exclusion, which is often a source of tension and unrest (Reynolds, 2006). By establishing measures such as voter education programs, accessible polling stations, and legal protections against voter suppression, electoral laws strengthen democracy and enhance social cohesion.

In addition to participation, inclusivity in electoral laws ensures that all political, social, and ethnic groups are fairly represented in governance. Provisions that support PR, power-sharing mechanisms, or reserved seats for underrepresented groups can prevent the political marginalization that often leads to social conflicts (Reynolds, 2006). Electoral laws that regulate fair districting practices and prohibit gerrymandering further uphold inclusivity by preventing the manipulation of electoral boundaries for partisan advantage. A system that provides equal opportunities for all groups to have a voice in political affairs contributes to national unity and long-term peace by fostering a sense of belonging and representation.

Another critical element is transparency, which strengthens public confidence in the electoral process. When laws establish clear regulations for campaign financing, vote counting, and result dissemination, they reduce opportunities for fraud and manipulation, ensuring that elections are perceived as fair and credible. Transparent campaign financing laws help prevent corruption and the undue influence of wealthy individuals or entities, ensuring a level playing field for all candidates (Casal Bértoa et al., 2024). Similarly, clear and publicized vote-counting procedures, along with independent monitoring, minimize suspicions of electoral fraud and enhance trust in election outcomes. When citizens believe that elections are conducted fairly, they are more likely to accept the results peacefully, even if their preferred candidates do not win.

Accountability is also essential in electoral laws to prevent malpractices and reinforce the integrity of elections. Effective laws must establish independent electoral commissions and judicial bodies that can monitor, investigate, and penalize election-related offenses such as voter intimidation, ballot tampering, and fraud. Mechanisms for independent election monitoring and media oversight ensure that electoral misconduct is detected and addressed promptly, discouraging political actors from engaging in unlawful activities (OSCE & ODIHR, 2005). When electoral violations are met with appropriate legal consequences, the credibility

of the electoral system is preserved, reducing the likelihood of post-election disputes and violence.

Finally, Asante and Adams (2020) emphasize that “conflict resolution mechanisms must be embedded in electoral laws to provide structured and peaceful avenues for addressing electoral disputes” (Adams & Asante, 2020. p. 245). Given that contested election results are a frequent trigger for political crises, laws should outline clear procedures for filing complaints, conducting recounts, and resolving disputes through impartial legal channels. Independent courts and arbitration mechanisms must be empowered to handle election-related grievances efficiently and fairly. Furthermore, electoral laws should encourage responsible political behavior by requiring candidates and parties to respect electoral outcomes and refrain from inciting violence or unrest. When losing candidates trust that their grievances will be addressed through legal means rather than through protests or armed conflict, the risk of post-election instability is significantly reduced.

A well-designed electoral system that prioritizes participation, inclusivity, transparency, accountability, and conflict resolution strengthens democratic institutions and ensures that elections contribute to peace rather than becoming sources of division. By embedding these principles into electoral laws, societies can build resilient political systems that facilitate stable governance, promote civic engagement, and prevent conflicts related to electoral processes. Ultimately, electoral laws play a crucial role in determining whether elections serve as instruments of democratic consolidation and peace or become catalysts for political turmoil.

### **1.8. Challenge of Post-Conflict Legitimacy**

When conducted alongside efforts to reestablish the rule of law, defend human rights, and promote reconciliation, elections may significantly contribute to the restoration of deeply divided societies and help establish an environment conducive to post-conflict reconstruction. This concept was noted by Reilly and Reynolds (1999), “free and fair elections are the most appropriate way both to avoid and to manage acute internal conflict in other countries.” (Reilly & Reynolds, 1999, p. 3). Elections that are democratically conducted lend legitimacy to emerging political leaders, foster transparency and effective administration, initiate long-term democratic change, and help maintain national equilibrium. They also create credible opportunities for international actors to engage in the economic, political, and social rehabilitation of post-conflict states.

However, despite their central role in peacebuilding, elections can also become sources of instability if they legitimize individuals previously involved in armed conflict or criminal activity. In several post-conflict contexts, elections held under power-sharing agreements have inadvertently elevated former militia leaders or warlords to high office. This dynamic effectively sanitizes prior violence and enables such individuals to wield political authority without having faced meaningful accountability.

A stark example is Afghanistan, where post-Taliban elections enabled figures like Abdul Rashid Dostum, a former warlord accused of human rights abuses, to secure positions of power, including the vice presidency (Darnolf & Smith, 2019). Although elections in Afghanistan were intended to promote democracy and stability, the elevation of controversial figures raised concerns about the consolidation of power among former combatants and the impediments this posed to reconciliation and institutional trust.

The absence of thorough and impartial accountability mechanisms for wartime atrocities exacerbates this problem. Granting amnesty or political immunity enables such actors to entrench themselves in positions of influence while avoiding prosecution. This undermines prospects for truth, justice, and healing among victims and their communities, and reinforces a cycle of impunity. In this context, elections can reinforce a state of negative peace, characterized by the absence of overt violence but the persistence of structural injustice. Lebanon provides a pertinent example: since 1989, electoral frameworks have often been designed to preserve the power of dominant groups rather than advance effective governance or positive peace.

Following the signing of a peace agreement, the restoration of trust among former adversaries requires time and deliberate effort. Continued distrust, persistent grievances, and weak institutions pose significant challenges. The role of the international community remains vital—not only in monitoring elections but also in supporting broader institution-building and rule-of-law initiatives.

Electoral participation is increasingly acknowledged as both a fundamental right and a stabilizing force in peacebuilding contexts. Guarantees for participation affect the perceived legitimacy of electoral processes and outcomes, influencing stability at both the national and regional levels. Yet the implementation of inclusive elections is often hindered by legal, logistical, and political barriers. When large segments of the electorate are disenfranchised or intimidated, elections risk deepening political and socioeconomic divisions rather than healing

them. Transparency, inclusivity, and the equitable enforcement of electoral laws are essential to rebuilding trust and achieving peacebuilding objectives.

Ultimately, elections in post-conflict contexts must be designed not only to restore governance but also to lay the groundwork for reconciliation and long-term peace. Without accountability, inclusivity, and justice, elections may merely entrench old divisions under the veneer of democratic legitimacy. Their ability to foster stability depends on a constellation of factors—security, inclusion, economic recovery, institutional readiness, and international support. When approached as part of a broader strategy for democratic consolidation and social transformation, elections can serve as powerful instruments for rebuilding trust and advancing reconciliation. However, if rushed or poorly executed, they may reignite tensions and undermine the very peace they are intended to secure.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Foundations and Empirical Insights on Electoral Systems and Peacebuilding**

### **2.1. Context of the Study**

The relationship between democratic processes and sustainable peace in post-conflict societies represents one of the most complex challenges in contemporary peacebuilding theory and practice. This literature review examines the intricate connections between electoral systems, institutional design, and peace consolidation, with particular attention to how electoral laws can either facilitate genuine democratic transformation or perpetuate conflict dynamics under democratic facades.

The academic discourse on post-conflict peacebuilding has evolved significantly since the end of World War II, moving from narrow conceptions of peace as the mere absence of violence toward more comprehensive understandings that encompass social justice, institutional transformation, and structural reform. This evolution has been paralleled by growing recognition that elections, while often viewed as essential milestones in democratic transitions, can serve as double-edged instruments that either consolidate peace or reignite conflict depending on their design, timing, and implementation context.

Johan Galtung's seminal contributions to peace studies, particularly his distinction between negative and positive peace and his conceptualization of the violence triangle, provide essential theoretical foundations for understanding why post-conflict elections sometimes fail to deliver lasting peace (Galtung, 1969; Galtung, 1990). His framework demonstrates that addressing direct violence through ceasefires and peace agreements represents only the first step toward sustainable peace, which requires dismantling structural violence and transforming cultural narratives that legitimize conflict.

The concept of I4P, which emerged from post-WWII recognition that sustainable peace requires institutional mechanisms beyond formal agreements, offers important insights into how societies can build systematic capacities for conflict prevention and resolution (Van Tongeren, 2011; UNDP, 2010). This framework emphasizes the importance of embedding peacebuilding mechanisms within state and civil society institutions rather than treating peace as a temporary intervention.

The Lebanese case provides particularly rich empirical material for examining these theoretical concepts in practice. Farid El-Khazen's comprehensive analysis of Lebanese post-

war elections demonstrates how electoral laws have been systematically manipulated to manage sectarian divisions while preventing genuine democratic transformation (El-Khazen, 2000). His work reveals how formal democratic procedures can mask authoritarian control mechanisms and how power-sharing arrangements, while preventing renewed conflict, may also freeze the structural conditions that originally generated violence.

This literature review synthesizes these theoretical and empirical contributions to develop a comprehensive understanding of how electoral systems function within broader peacebuilding frameworks. It examines both the potential of well-designed electoral institutions to contribute to positive peace and the risks of electoral processes that reproduce conflict dynamics under democratic guises. The analysis pays particular attention to the temporal dimensions of post-conflict transitions, the role of external actors in shaping electoral processes, and the complex interactions between formal institutions and informal political practices. This literature review will provide background and lay the foundation for integrating elections into the peacebuilding framework in the Lebanese context, which remains a largely unexplored area in current research.

The review's central argument is that electoral systems in post-conflict settings must be understood not merely as technical arrangements for aggregating preferences, but as fundamental components of broader peacebuilding architectures that either contribute to or undermine long-term social transformation. This perspective requires moving beyond narrow assessments of electoral freedom and fairness toward more comprehensive evaluations of how electoral institutions interact with other peacebuilding mechanisms to address the root causes of conflict.

## **2.2. Theoretical Foundations of Peace and Conflict Studies**

### ***2.2.1. Galtung's Peace Theory: Beyond Negative Peace***

Johan Galtung's foundational contributions to peace studies, beginning with his 1964 establishment of the *Journal of Peace Research*, fundamentally transformed how scholars and practitioners conceptualize peace and violence. His distinction between negative and positive peace represents perhaps the most influential theoretical framework in the field, providing analytical tools that remain central to contemporary peacebuilding efforts (Galtung, 1969).

Negative peace, defined as "the absence of violence, absence of war," represents the minimal condition typically achieved through ceasefires, peace agreements, and the cessation

of direct hostilities (Galtung, 1964). While necessary, negative peace proves insufficient for sustainable conflict resolution because it fails to address the underlying conditions that generate violence. This concept resonated with earlier insights from figures like Martin Luther King Jr., who observed that "true peace is not merely the absence of tension... it is the presence of justice" (Atack, 2009).

Positive peace, by contrast, encompasses "the integration of human society" through the establishment of social justice, equality, and harmonious social structures that eliminate the root causes of conflict (Galtung, 1969). This more ambitious conception of peace requires addressing systemic inequalities, building inclusive institutions, and fostering cultural transformation that makes violence unthinkable as a means of resolving disputes. Positive peace thus represents not merely the end of war but the creation of conditions for human flourishing and social harmony.

The evolution of Galtung's thinking through the 1980s drew explicit inspiration from health sciences, where health is understood not merely as the absence of disease but as a positive state of physical, mental, and social well-being (Galtung, 1985). He argued violence works like a disease in society. Just as physical signs or symptoms can warn about health concern that is not apparent on the surface, structural violence can warn that bigger conflicts might be coming. For instance, when people cannot get what they need to survive and thrive, or when people suffer from social inequality, it creates conditions that may eventually lead to more overt forms of violence like open conflict or war. This analogy proved particularly powerful for peacebuilding practitioners, suggesting that societies, like bodies, require not only the removal of harmful elements but also the strengthening of protective factors that build resilience against future threats.

Importantly, Galtung's later theoretical development elaborated on these notions and introduced the concept of cultural violence alongside his earlier analysis of direct and structural violence, creating what became known as the "violence triangle" (Galtung, 1990). This framework is useful in explaining how three distinct but interconnected forms of violence reinforce each other in self-perpetuating cycles that make conflict transformation particularly challenging. This approach to understanding violence will be discussed in further details in the next chapter.

### ***2.2.2. Implications for Post-Conflict Governance***

Galtung's theoretical framework has profound implications for understanding post-conflict governance and the role of electoral systems within broader peacebuilding efforts. If sustainable peace requires addressing all three corners of the violence triangle, then post-conflict governance mechanisms must move beyond simply preventing renewed fighting to actively transforming the structural and cultural conditions that originally generated conflict.

From this perspective, elections represent potentially powerful tools for building positive peace, but only if they are designed and implemented in ways that address structural exclusion and cultural narratives that legitimate violence. Electoral systems that reproduce pre-war power imbalances or that reinforce divisive identities may contribute to negative peace by providing alternatives to armed conflict while simultaneously perpetuating the structural and cultural violence that makes future conflicts likely.

The framework also highlights the importance of temporal considerations in post-conflict transitions. Building positive peace requires long-term institutional transformation that cannot be achieved through single elections or short-term interventions. Instead, it demands sustained efforts to create inclusive institutions, redistribute power and resources, and foster cultural transformation that delegitimizes violence as a means of political competition.

### ***2.2.3. Critiques and Developments***

While Galtung's peace theory remains influential, it has faced several critiques that have contributed to its refinement and development. Some scholars argue that the terminology of "negative" and "positive" peace creates unfortunate value judgments that may not reflect the preferences of conflict-affected populations, who often prioritize immediate security over broader social transformation (Hansen, 2013). Others contend that the concept of positive peace is too vague and normatively loaded to provide practical guidance for peacebuilding interventions (Sharp, 2014).

Despite these critiques, most scholars acknowledge that Galtung's framework captures important insights about the multidimensional nature of conflict and the need for comprehensive approaches to peacebuilding. The vagueness of positive peace, rather than representing a weakness, may actually constitute a strength by leaving space for context-appropriate and locally-driven innovations rather than imposing predetermined templates for social transformation.

Recent developments in peace studies have built on Galtung's foundation while addressing some of these critiques. The concept of "hybrid peace" developed by scholars like Mac Ginty (2011) recognizes that post-conflict societies typically blend formal peacebuilding mechanisms with informal, indigenous, or illiberal practices in ways that may be more stable than purely liberal peace models but also less transformative (Mac Ginty, 2011). Indeed, there is not one form of peace that works universally, as each society must find its own combination of traditional and modern approaches that reflects its specific cultural context and historical experience. This approach acknowledges the reality that positive peace may take different forms in different contexts while maintaining Galtung's insight that sustainable peace requires addressing root causes of conflict.

## **2.3. Infrastructure for Peace: Evolution and Institutional Development**

### ***2.3.1. Historical Origins and Post-WWII Development***

The concept of I4P emerged from the post-World War II recognition that sustainable peace requires more than treaties and agreements – it demands systematic institutional mechanisms capable of preventing conflicts and managing disputes constructively over time. While the term itself gained prominence only in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, its conceptual foundations trace back to the creation of international institutions like the United Nations (UN) in 1945, which represented early attempts to institutionalize peaceful conflict resolution at the global level (Boutros-Ghali, 1992).

The initial focus of post-WWII peace infrastructure was primarily international, reflecting the geopolitical realities of the Cold War period when interstate conflicts dominated security concerns. The establishment of UN peacekeeping missions, beginning with the UNTSO in 1948, demonstrated growing commitment to international conflict management, though these early efforts were largely reactive rather than preventive in nature (Bellamy et al., 2010).

The end of the Cold War marked a crucial turning point in thinking about peace infrastructure. The proliferation of intrastate conflicts in the 1990s revealed the limitations of traditional peacekeeping approaches and highlighted the need for more comprehensive strategies that could address the complex dynamics of civil wars, ethnic violence, and state fragmentation. This period witnessed significant innovation in peacebuilding practice,

including the development of truth commissions, local peace committees, and national reconciliation bodies that served as precursors to contemporary I4P concepts (Lederach, 1997).

### ***2.3.2. Conceptual Framework and Core Elements***

Infrastructure for Peace refers to "the network of interrelated structures, mechanisms, resources, and skills that a society uses to prevent conflict and build peace on an ongoing basis" (Van Tongeren, 2011). This definition emphasizes several key characteristics that distinguish I4P from more traditional approaches to conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

First, I4P operates as a system rather than a collection of isolated interventions. Like physical infrastructure that supports economic activity through interconnected networks of roads, utilities, and communications, peace infrastructure functions through coordinated relationships between different institutions and mechanisms that collectively enhance a society's capacity for peaceful conflict management (UNDP, 2010).

Second, I4P emphasizes prevention rather than reaction. While traditional conflict resolution focuses on addressing disputes after they have escalated into violence, peace infrastructure aims to detect and address tensions before they reach crisis points. This preventive orientation requires early warning systems, community-based monitoring mechanisms, and rapid response capabilities that can intervene at early stages of conflict escalation (Unger et al., 2013).

Third, I4P is designed to be permanent rather than temporary. Unlike post-conflict interventions that are typically time-limited, peace infrastructure represents an ongoing governance function that should exist before, during, and after specific conflicts. This permanence allows societies to develop institutional memory, build expertise, and maintain relationships that prove crucial during periods of crisis.

The core elements of effective peace infrastructure have been identified through extensive research and practice across different contexts. These include: institutional mechanisms such as peace councils and mediation bodies; legal frameworks that protect human rights and provide non-violent dispute resolution; civil society engagement that ensures broad-based participation in peacebuilding efforts; capacity building programs that develop skills for conflict analysis and resolution; and communication channels that facilitate dialogue and information sharing (UNDP, 2010).

### ***2.3.3. Institutional Mechanisms and Governance Structures***

The institutional dimension of peace infrastructure encompasses both formal government bodies and hybrid institutions that bridge state and civil society. National peace councils, which have been established in countries like Ghana, Kenya, and Nepal, represent one important model for institutionalizing conflict prevention within governmental structures. These bodies typically combine representatives from government, civil society, traditional authorities, and sometimes international organizations to provide coordination and oversight for national peacebuilding efforts (Oduro, 2020).

Ghana's National Peace Council, established by law in 2011, illustrates how formal peace infrastructure can contribute to democratic consolidation and conflict prevention. The Council played crucial roles in preventing electoral violence during the 2016 and 2020 elections by facilitating dialogue between political parties, monitoring potential flashpoints, and providing rapid response to emerging tensions. Scholars note that Ghana's peace architecture not only mitigated specific conflicts but also helped consolidate democratic practices by creating institutional channels for addressing grievances and building trust between competing political forces (Atuobi, 2019).

Kenya's experience following the 2007-2008 post-election violence demonstrates how peace infrastructure can emerge from crisis and evolve into permanent institutional arrangements. The violence, which claimed over 1,100 lives, prompted the establishment of local peace committees, early warning systems, and national dialogue mechanisms that have since been formalized into ongoing governance structures. These institutions combine modern conflict analysis techniques with traditional mediation practices, demonstrating how effective peace infrastructure can build on existing cultural resources while adapting to contemporary challenges (Lemon, 2016).

The EWRS represent another crucial component of institutional peace infrastructure. These systems collect and analyze information about potential conflict indicators, enabling timely interventions before disputes escalate into violence. The African Union's CEWS exemplifies regional-level peace infrastructure that supports national efforts while providing broader strategic analysis of conflict trends and prevention opportunities (Kodjo, 2018).

#### ***2.3.4. Civil Society Engagement and Participatory Mechanisms***

Effective peace infrastructure requires robust civil society engagement that ensures peacebuilding efforts reflect community needs and build broad-based support for peaceful conflict resolution. Civil society organizations, including NGOs, religious institutions, traditional authorities, women's groups, and youth organizations, play multiple roles within peace infrastructure by facilitating dialogue, monitoring tensions, advocating for policy changes, and implementing grassroots peacebuilding programs (UNDP, 2010).

Women's Peace Huts in Liberia provide a compelling example of how civil society initiatives can evolve into integral components of national peace infrastructure. Originally established during the civil war as safe spaces for women to mediate local disputes and coordinate humanitarian assistance, these institutions have been formalized into the national governance structure and continue to play important roles in community-level conflict prevention and resolution (Gbowee & Mithers, 2011).

The integration of traditional and religious authorities into formal peace infrastructure represents another important dimension of civil society engagement. In many African contexts, traditional chiefs and religious leaders maintain significant legitimacy and possess extensive knowledge of customary conflict resolution practices. Effective peace infrastructure creates mechanisms for incorporating this traditional knowledge while adapting it to contemporary challenges and human rights standards (Boege et al., 2009).

Youth engagement represents a particularly critical aspect of civil society participation in peace infrastructure. Young people are often both perpetrators and victims of political violence, making their inclusion essential for effective conflict prevention. Youth peace ambassadors, school-based peace education programs, and youth councils represent different approaches to engaging young people as active contributors to peacebuilding rather than simply beneficiaries of peace programs (UNOY, 2016).

#### ***2.3.5. Legal Frameworks and Rule of Law***

The legal dimension of peace infrastructure encompasses constitutional provisions, legislation, and judicial mechanisms that protect human rights, provide peaceful dispute resolution, and create accountability for violence and abuse. Strong legal frameworks serve multiple functions within peace infrastructure by establishing clear rules for political

competition, providing remedies for grievances, and creating consequences for those who violate peace agreements or engage in violence.

Constitutional design plays a particularly important role in post-conflict settings where legal frameworks must balance competing demands for inclusion, stability, and transformation. For instance, South Africa's post-apartheid constitution exemplifies how constitutional provisions can serve as foundational elements of peace infrastructure by embedding principles of human rights, federalism, and social justice within the basic law while creating institutions like the Constitutional Court and Human Rights Commission to protect these principles (Klug, 2000).

Truth and reconciliation commissions represent another important legal mechanism within peace infrastructure. While these bodies are typically temporary, they can contribute to longer-term peace infrastructure by establishing historical records, providing acknowledgment to victims, and creating precedents for accountability that inform future institutional development. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's emphasis on restorative rather than retributive justice helped establish norms that continue to influence approaches to transitional justice in other contexts (Wilson, 2001).

The ADR mechanisms, including mediation, arbitration, and traditional justice systems, provide important complements to formal court systems within peace infrastructure. These mechanisms can address conflicts more quickly and affordably than formal litigation while potentially preserving relationships and addressing underlying causes of disputes. The integration of customary and modern legal systems represents a particular challenge and opportunity for peace infrastructure in many post-conflict societies (Wojkowska, 2006).

### ***2.3.6. Communication and Information Systems***

Communication channels and information systems form crucial components of peace infrastructure by facilitating dialogue, promoting transparency, and enabling coordination among different actors. Effective communication infrastructure includes both formal mechanisms like national dialogues and peace conferences as well as informal networks that enable ongoing relationship-building and information sharing.

National dialogues have emerged as important mechanisms for inclusive decision-making in post-conflict societies. Tunisia's National Dialogue Quartet, which facilitated the country's democratic transition following the Arab Spring, demonstrates how broad-based

dialogue processes can provide alternatives to violent political competition while building consensus around fundamental political arrangements. The Quartet's success in bridging differences between secular and religious parties earned international recognition and contributed to Tunisia's relatively peaceful transition compared to other Arab Spring countries (Yerkes & Muasher, 2017).

Media systems play increasingly important roles in peace infrastructure, particularly as digital technologies enable new forms of communication and information sharing. Peace journalism, which emphasizes conflict-sensitive reporting that highlights solutions and promotes understanding rather than sensationalizing violence, represents one approach to integrating media into broader peacebuilding efforts. Training programs for journalists, media monitoring systems, and community radio stations all contribute to communication infrastructure that can either support or undermine broader peace efforts (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

Digital platforms and social media present both opportunities and challenges for peace infrastructure. Technologies like the Ushahidi platform, originally developed in Kenya to crowdsource information about electoral violence, demonstrate how digital tools can enhance early warning systems and facilitate rapid response to emerging conflicts. However, social media can also amplify hate speech, spread disinformation, and enable coordination of violence, requiring peace infrastructure to develop new capacities for monitoring and responding to online threats (Metzl, 1997).

## **2.4. Elections in Post-Conflict Settings: A Double-Edged Instrument**

### ***2.4.1. The Democratic Peace Thesis and Its Limitations***

The relationship between elections and peace in post-conflict settings has been shaped significantly by the broader democratic peace thesis, which argues that democratic countries are less likely to fight wars with each other and experience lower levels of internal conflict (Reiter, 2017). This theoretical foundation provided intellectual support for the "democratic reconstruction model" that became dominant in post-Cold War peacebuilding efforts, emphasizing rapid democratization through elections as a key pathway to sustainable peace (Ottaway, 2003).

However, the application of democratic peace theory to post-conflict settings reveals important limitations and complications. While the theory focuses primarily on international

peace between established democracies, post-conflict situations involve fragile states attempting democratic transitions under conditions of institutional weakness, social division, and potential spoiler threats. The assumption that democratic institutions automatically produce peaceful outcomes proves problematic when applied to societies emerging from civil war (Paris, 2004).

Empirical research has demonstrated that the relationship between democratization and peace is far more complex than originally theorized. Dawn Brancati and Jack Snyder's quantitative analysis of post-World War II civil wars found that early elections often correlate with relapse into conflict unless certain mitigating conditions are present, including decisive military victory, robust peacekeeping forces, effective disarmament, power-sharing arrangements, and strong administrative institutions (Brancati & Snyder, 2011).

The "electoral trap" or "danger of early elections" phenomenon highlights how premature democratization can exacerbate rather than resolve conflicts in fragile states. When elections are held before basic security is established, institutions are functioning, and trust is built between former adversaries, electoral competition can become a catalyst for renewed violence rather than a substitute for it. These dynamic challenges the linear progression from conflict to democracy that underlies much international peacebuilding practice (Snyder, 2000).

#### ***2.4.2. Elections as Instruments of Legitimation and Transformation***

Despite these risks, elections retain significant potential as instruments of political transformation and legitimation in post-conflict settings when properly designed and implemented. Elections can serve multiple functions that contribute to peacebuilding: providing legitimacy for new governments, creating incentives for peaceful political competition, integrating former combatants into political processes, and establishing precedents for non-violent transfers of power (Kumar, 1998).

The legitimacy function proves particularly important in post-conflict contexts where state authority has been weakened or destroyed. Free and fair elections can restore the social contract between rulers and ruled by demonstrating that governments derive their authority from popular consent rather than force. This legitimacy becomes crucial for implementing difficult reforms, collecting taxes, and maintaining public support for peace processes (Diamond, 2008).

Elections can also transform conflict dynamics by providing former adversaries with stakes in the political system and incentives to compete through votes rather than violence. When designed appropriately, electoral systems can encourage broad coalition-building, moderate policy positions, and cross-cutting alliances that weaken the mobilization potential of extremist groups. The key challenge lies in creating electoral rules that reward moderation and inclusion rather than polarization and exclusion (Horowitz, 1985).

The integration of former combatants represents another potential benefit of post-conflict elections. When rebel groups can transform into political parties and compete for power through elections, they may be more likely to maintain commitments to peace agreements and less likely to return to armed struggle. However, this integration must be carefully managed to avoid legitimizing war criminals or creating perverse incentives for future rebellions (Manning, 2008).

### ***2.4.3. Timing and Sequencing Challenges***

The question of when to hold elections in post-conflict settings has generated extensive debate among scholars and practitioners. The tension between international pressure for rapid democratization and local needs for institution-building and reconciliation creates difficult choices about electoral timing that can significantly impact peace prospects (Paris, 2004).

Arguments for early elections emphasize the importance of establishing legitimate authority quickly, providing hope for political change, and preventing institutional vacuums that spoilers might exploit. International donors often push for early elections to demonstrate progress and justify continued assistance, while local populations may demand opportunities to choose their leaders after years of authoritarian rule or conflict (Carothers, 2002).

However, research suggests that premature elections carry significant risks of legitimizing extremist parties, polarizing societies along conflict lines, and creating winner-take-all dynamics that exclude losing groups from political power. The absence of functioning institutions, security guarantees, and social trust can turn elections into zero-sum contests that reignite violence rather than consolidating peace (Brancati & Snyder, 2011).

The sequencing debate focuses on whether elections should precede or follow other institutional reforms such as constitutional development, security sector reform, judicial reconstruction, and economic stabilization. Roland Paris's "Institutionalization Before Liberalization" (IBL) approach argues that building effective institutions should take priority

over rapid democratization, as premature liberalization can unleash destabilizing forces that weak institutions cannot contain (Paris, 2004).

Alternative approaches emphasize the importance of gradual, iterative processes that build democratic practices through repeated electoral experiences while simultaneously strengthening institutions and building social trust. This perspective suggests that electoral quality may matter more than electoral timing, provided that basic security and institutional conditions are met (Lindberg, 2009).

#### ***2.4.4. Case Studies in Electoral Success and Failure***

Empirical analysis of post-conflict elections reveals significant variation in outcomes that helps illuminate the conditions under which elections contribute to peace consolidation versus conflict recurrence. Successful cases like Liberia (2005) and South Africa (1994) demonstrate how carefully designed electoral processes can serve as cornerstones of peaceful transitions, while failures like Angola (1992) illustrate the devastating consequences of poorly managed elections.

Liberia's 2005 elections are widely regarded as a successful example of post-conflict democratization. Held two years after the end of civil war, these elections benefited from several favorable conditions: UN peacekeeping presence providing security, neutral interim government preventing incumbent advantages, international monitoring ensuring transparency, and exclusion of warlords from presidential competition creating level playing fields. The resulting parliament was highly fragmented, requiring coalition-building and compromise that fostered democratic practices and included diverse interests (Harris, 2006).

The success of Liberia's elections also reflected careful attention to inclusivity and representation. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's victory as Africa's first elected female president symbolized political renewal, while the diverse composition of parliament ensured that no single faction could dominate. This diversity required ongoing negotiation and accommodation that helped establish democratic norms and prevented any group from feeling entirely excluded from political power (Harris, 2006).

South Africa's 1994 elections provide another model of successful post-conflict democratization, though under very different circumstances. The negotiated transition from apartheid included extensive power-sharing arrangements that reassured all major groups about their place in the new order. The interim constitution mandated a Government of National

Unity that included all parties winning more than 5% of votes, ensuring that former ruling parties retained influence even after electoral defeat. This inclusive approach prevented backlash and encouraged acceptance of electoral outcomes (Giliomee & Simkins, 1999).

In stark contrast, Angola's 1992 elections demonstrate how poorly designed or inadequately supported elections can trigger renewed conflict. Despite international certification as generally free and fair, rebel leader Jonas Savimbi rejected election results and returned to war, leading to renewed conflict that killed an estimated 500,000 people. The failure reflected inadequate security guarantees, incomplete disarmament, and absence of power-sharing arrangements that might have reassured the losing side (Tvedten, 1997).

#### ***2.4.5. Electoral Violence and Security Challenges***

Electoral violence represents one of the most serious risks associated with post-conflict elections, requiring comprehensive strategies for prevention, mitigation, and response. Violence can occur at any stage of the electoral cycle – pre-election, during voting, or post-election – and can take multiple forms including voter intimidation, attacks on candidates or supporters, manipulation of results, and rejection of outcomes leading to widespread unrest (Höglund, 2009).

Pre-election violence often involves efforts to intimidate opponents, restrict campaign activities, or create conditions favorable to particular candidates or parties. This violence may be perpetrated by state security forces, party militias, or criminal groups hired by political competitors. The 2007 Kenyan elections provide a stark example of how pre-election tensions can escalate into large-scale violence when underlying grievances are not addressed and electoral institutions lack credibility (Anderson & Lochery, 2008).

Election-day violence typically focuses on disrupting voting processes, manipulating results, or creating atmospheres of fear that affect voter participation. International election observation and domestic monitoring can help deter such violence, but require adequate security support and rapid response capabilities. The presence of peacekeeping forces can provide important deterrent effects, but their rules of engagement and coordination with local security forces require careful planning (Collier, 2009).

Post-election violence often proves most dangerous because it can trigger broader conflicts that undermine entire peace processes. The rejection of electoral results by losing parties can lead to protests, strikes, and armed resistance that escalate into renewed civil war.

Effective prevention requires not only credible electoral processes but also legitimate mechanisms for resolving disputes and managing transitions that maintain confidence in democratic institutions (Birch, 2011).

## **2.5. Electoral Laws and Institutional Design in Divided Societies**

### ***2.5.1. Constitutional Engineering and Electoral System Choice***

The design of electoral systems in post-conflict settings represents a critical form of constitutional engineering that can significantly influence both immediate peace prospects and long-term democratic development. Electoral engineers must balance competing objectives of inclusion, representation, governance effectiveness, and stability while addressing the specific conflict dynamics and social divisions that characterize particular post-conflict societies (Reynolds, 2011).

The literature on electoral systems in divided societies has been dominated by two competing approaches: consociational democracy, which emphasizes power-sharing and group accommodation, and integrative democracy, which seeks to encourage cross-cutting loyalties and moderate political competition. Each approach embodies different assumptions about the nature of social divisions and the most effective strategies for managing conflict through democratic institutions (Lijphart, 2004; Horowitz, 1985).

Consociational democracy, as theorized by Arend Lijphart, argues that deeply divided societies require explicit power-sharing arrangements that guarantee representation and protection for all significant groups. This approach typically involves PR electoral systems, grand coalition governments, minority vetoes, and segmental autonomy that allows groups to control their own affairs in certain domains. The logic emphasizes accommodation of differences rather than their transcendence (Lijphart, 2004).

Integrative approaches, championed by Donald Horowitz and others, argue that institutional incentives can encourage politicians to moderate their appeals and build cross-ethnic or cross-sectarian coalitions. Alternative vote systems, requirements for geographic distribution of electoral support, and other mechanisms can reward politicians who appeal beyond their own group's narrow interests. This approach emphasizes the transformation of conflict identities rather than their institutionalization (Horowitz, 1985).

The choice between these approaches involves fundamental questions about the nature of ethnic, religious, or sectarian identities and the possibilities for their political transformation.

Consociational approaches assume that group identities are relatively fixed and that peace requires acknowledging and accommodating these differences within political institutions. Integrative approaches assume that identities are more malleable and that appropriate institutional incentives can encourage their moderation or transformation over time.

### ***2.5.2. Proportional Representation and Majoritarian Systems***

The choice between PR and majoritarian electoral systems represents one of the most important decisions facing post-conflict constitutional designers. Each system type creates different incentives for political behavior and produces different outcomes in terms of representation, governance, and conflict management (Carey & Hix, 2011).

The PR systems tend to produce more accurate reflection of social diversity in legislatures by ensuring that parties receive seat shares roughly proportional to their vote shares. In divided societies, this can mean that ethnic, religious, or regional minorities receive representation corresponding to their demographic weight, potentially reducing feelings of exclusion that might otherwise fuel conflict. Many post-conflict constitutions have adopted PR systems precisely for these inclusive properties (Reynolds, 2011).

However, PR systems can also fragment party systems and make governance more difficult by requiring complex coalition negotiations. In post-conflict settings where trust between groups remains limited, coalition formation can prove particularly challenging and may reproduce conflict dynamics within government institutions. The proliferation of small parties under PR can also provide platforms for extremist groups that might be marginalized under majoritarian systems (Cox, 1997).

Majoritarian systems, particularly single-member district plurality systems, tend to produce more decisive electoral outcomes and clearer lines of accountability between voters and representatives. In some contexts, majoritarian systems may encourage broad coalition-building by requiring candidates to appeal beyond narrow ethnic or sectarian bases to win elections. The constituency links created by single-member districts can also strengthen vertical accountability between representatives and voters (Powell, 2000).

The risks of majoritarian systems in divided societies include the potential for permanent exclusion of minority groups and the creation of winner-take-all dynamics that provide little incentive for accommodation or compromise. If demographic patterns create safe

seats for particular groups, majoritarian systems may actually encourage politicians to mobilize ethnic or sectarian loyalties rather than build broader coalitions (Horowitz, 1985).

Mixed electoral systems that combine PR and majoritarian elements have gained popularity as potential compromises that capture benefits of both approaches while mitigating their respective weaknesses. Mixed systems can provide constituency representation through single-member districts while ensuring proportional outcomes through compensatory party lists. However, the complexity of mixed systems can create confusion among voters and opportunities for manipulation by sophisticated political operators (Shugart & Wattenberg, 2001).

### ***2.5.3. District Magnitude and Constituency Design***

The design of electoral constituencies represents another crucial dimension of electoral engineering that can significantly impact conflict dynamics and peace prospects. Decisions about district boundaries, district magnitude (number of representatives per district), and the relationship between electoral districts and administrative divisions can influence both the representation of different groups and the incentives for political cooperation or competition (Grofman, 1982).

Large, multi-member districts under PR tend to produce more diverse representation by enabling multiple parties to win seats within single constituencies. This diversity can encourage coalition-building and compromise within districts while ensuring that minorities are not gerrymandered into political irrelevance. However, large districts may also weaken links between representatives and constituents and make it more difficult for voters to hold politicians accountable (Carey & Hix, 2011).

Small, single-member districts can strengthen constituency links and create clear accountability relationships, but may also enable gerrymandering that either concentrates or disperses minority populations to minimize their political influence. In ethnically or religiously divided societies, district design often becomes a highly contentious political issue because boundary changes can significantly alter the balance of political power (Handley, 2007).

The relationship between electoral districts and conflict geography requires careful consideration in post-conflict settings. Districts that follow conflict lines may institutionalize divisions by creating safe seats for different groups, while districts that cross conflict boundaries may force politicians to appeal across group lines but could also create new tensions

if groups feel their representation is threatened. The choice depends partly on whether the goal is to accommodate existing divisions or to encourage their transformation (Reilly, 2001).

Administrative convenience often influences district design, with electoral boundaries following existing administrative divisions to simplify election management and reduce costs. However, administrative boundaries may not reflect demographic realities or may themselves embody historical patterns of exclusion or discrimination that electoral redistricting could address. The trade-offs between administrative efficiency and political representation require careful consideration in each context (Handley, 2007).

#### ***2.5.4. Candidate Selection and List Systems***

The mechanisms through which candidates are selected and presented to voters can significantly influence both the quality of representation and the incentives for political cooperation or competition. Closed party lists, open lists, and candidate-centered systems create different relationships between voters, candidates, and parties that can either reinforce or transcend existing social divisions (Shugart, 2005).

Closed list systems give parties complete control over candidate selection and ranking, potentially enabling party leaders to enforce discipline and promote moderate candidates while preventing extremist elements from capturing party nominations. However, closed lists can also reduce voter choice and accountability while strengthening party bosses who may not be representative of broader party membership or voter preferences (Carey & Shugart, 1995).

Open list systems allow voters to express preferences for individual candidates while maintaining PR at the party level. This can strengthen links between representatives and constituents while providing voters with more meaningful choices. However, open lists may also encourage intra-party competition that fragments political movements and makes coalition-building more difficult (Karvonen, 2004).

Preferential voting systems, such as the single transferable vote or alternative vote, enable voters to rank candidates in order of preference, potentially encouraging politicians to seek second and third preference votes from supporters of other candidates. This can create incentives for moderation and cross-group appeal while maintaining proportional outcomes. However, preferential systems require higher levels of voter education and more complex vote counting procedures (Reilly, 2001).

The integration of gender quotas, youth representation requirements, and other diversity mechanisms into candidate selection processes represents an important dimension of electoral engineering in post-conflict settings. These mechanisms can ensure that peace processes include voices that might otherwise be marginalized while building broader social support for democratic institutions. However, quota systems can also create tensions between descriptive and substantive representation if they are perceived as tokenistic or imposed from outside (Krook, 2009).

### ***2.5.5. Electoral Thresholds and Party Systems***

The design of electoral thresholds – minimum levels of support required for parties to win representation – can significantly influence both the structure of party systems and the incentives for political cooperation or fragmentation. High thresholds tend to discourage small parties and encourage larger formations, while low or absent thresholds can lead to highly fragmented party systems that make governance difficult (Lijphart, 1994).

In post-conflict settings, threshold decisions involve balancing inclusivity against governability. High thresholds may exclude minority groups or radical parties that could become spoilers if denied representation, while low thresholds may fragment legislatures and make coalition formation impossible. The appropriate balance depends partly on the nature of social divisions and the specific threats to peace in each context (Cox, 1997).

Formal legal thresholds represent only one mechanism through which electoral systems influence party formation and survival. The effective threshold – the minimum level of support actually required to win representation – depends on district magnitude, electoral formula, and vote distribution patterns. Small districts with majoritarian systems may have very high effective thresholds that exclude minority representation even without formal barriers (Lijphart, 1994).

The regulation of party formation, including requirements for demonstrations of support, geographic representation, and organizational capacity, can also influence political competition and representation. Restrictive requirements may prevent formation of ethnic or regional parties that could challenge national unity, but may also exclude legitimate political movements and drive opposition underground. Permissive approaches may encourage political pluralism but could also enable spoiler parties or criminal organizations to capture political space (Van Biezen, 2003).

The interaction between electoral thresholds and campaign finance regulations creates additional considerations for electoral engineers. Parties that cannot realistically expect to win representation may have difficulty raising funds for campaigns, creating barriers to entry that effectively increase thresholds beyond their formal levels. Public financing systems can help level playing fields but require significant state resources and may subsidize parties with limited popular support (Scarow, 2007).

## **2.6. The Lebanese Experience: Electoral Engineering and Sectarian Management**

Electoral management in Lebanon's sectarian and divided context has undergone several evolutions and has often aimed to reduce tensions, while creating additional challenges in some instances. This literature review provides an overview or panorama of electoral management and engineering. A more comprehensive and in-depth analysis will be conducted in subsequent chapters.

### ***2.6.1. The Taif Agreement and Post-War Constitutional Framework***

Lebanon's post-war electoral experience provides a complex case study of how constitutional engineering and electoral design can both contain conflict and perpetuate the structural conditions that generate instability. The 1989 Taif Agreement, which formally ended the fifteen-year civil war, established a delicate consociational framework that redistributed political power among Lebanon's various sectarian communities while maintaining the fundamental confessional character of the political system (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005).

The Taif Agreement modified the National Pact of 1943 by adjusting the sectarian distribution of parliamentary seats from a 6:5 Christian-Muslim ratio to equal 1:1 representation, acknowledging demographic changes that had occurred during the decades following independence. Executive power was transferred from the Maronite president to the Council of Ministers collectively, reducing Christian dominance while preserving sectarian allocation of key positions: President (Maronite), Prime Minister (Sunni), and Speaker (Shiia) (El-Khazen, 2000).

While the agreement promised eventual elimination of political confessionalism through gradual reforms, including the establishment of a bicameral parliament with a non-sectarian Chamber of Deputies and a sectarian Senate, these provisions remained largely unimplemented. Instead, the post-war period witnessed the entrenchment of sectarian

representation through successive electoral laws that reinforced communal divisions rather than transcending them (Salamey, 2014).

Farid El-Khazen's comprehensive analysis of Lebanese post-war elections reveals how the Taif framework created what he characterized as "democracy without choice" – formal democratic procedures that masked systematic manipulation designed to produce predetermined outcomes rather than genuine political competition. His examination of the 1992, 1996, and 2000 elections demonstrates how electoral laws were repeatedly modified to serve the interests of Syria and its Lebanese allies while marginalizing potential opposition forces (El-Khazen, 2000).

The institutionalization of Syrian tutelage through the Taif Agreement's provision for "special relations" between Lebanon and Syria created a framework for external oversight that profoundly influenced electoral processes throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Apart from the Ta'if Agreement, the 1991 Treaty of Brotherhood and Cooperation, together with seventeen other treaties, served as legitimation and institutionalization of Syrian interference in Lebanon's internal affairs as stated by Thompson. According to Khashan, the Ta'if agreement, which ostensibly resolved sectarian conflict in Lebanon, has, in reality, transformed the postwar Lebanese entity into a Syrian satellite (Khashan, 1992). The huge impact of Syria has had the greatest influence on the formation of the ruling elite after the war especially in the selection of the president of the republic. From 1976 to now, Lebanon's president has hardly ever been elected without tacit recognition from Syria and its approval. The politically important elite was expanded in 1991 when the executive appointed forty Members of Parliament to replace the deceased in the civil war and occupy twenty-nine new seats. All were previously associated with Syria. In the 1992 elections, twenty-nine of the appointees out of forty contested again in a parliamentary; while the 1996 elections brought twenty-five of them back, and in the 2000 elections, twenty-one remained in the same influential Lebanese political positions. As a result, Syrian involvement operated through multiple channels including military presence, intelligence coordination, and direct participation in drafting electoral laws and approving candidate lists (El-Khazen, 2000).

### ***2.6.2. Electoral Law Evolution: 2005-2022***

The withdrawal of Syrian forces following the Cedar Revolution of 2005 created new opportunities for electoral reform while also revealing the deep structural challenges embedded within Lebanon's sectarian system. Each subsequent election – 2005, 2009, 2018, and 2022 –

reflected different attempts to balance sectarian representation, political stability, and democratic legitimacy through electoral engineering (Salloukh, 2006).

The 2005 elections were conducted under the same law used in 2000, which divided Lebanon into large electoral districts generally corresponding to governorates. This arrangement contributed to a winner-take-all dynamic that produced a narrow majority for the March 14 coalition opposing Syrian influence, while leaving Hezbollah and other pro-Syrian parties in opposition. The polarized outcome contributed to political instability culminating in the May 2008 crisis when Hezbollah briefly occupied West Beirut (Young, 2010).

The 2008 Doha Agreement that resolved this crisis mandated a new electoral law designed to provide more balanced representation and reduce winner-take-all dynamics. The resulting 2009 electoral law returned to the small district model based on qadas (sub-governorates), creating 26 constituencies designed to ensure that each major sectarian community would elect its own representatives without interference from other groups. This arrangement succeeded in producing a national unity government and preventing renewed violence, but at the cost of further entrenching sectarian segregation (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012).

The 2018 elections introduced Lebanon's first experiment with PR, replacing the previous majoritarian system with PR in 15 medium-sized districts formed by combining multiple qadas. Voters cast ballots for party lists while also expressing preferential votes for individual candidates. While this reform appeared more inclusive and technically sophisticated, its implementation preserved sectarian advantages through district design that ensured clear sectarian majorities in most constituencies (Elghossain, 2017).

The 2022 elections, conducted amid unprecedented economic collapse and popular mobilization against the sectarian elite, used the same 2017 law with only minor modifications. Despite hopes that the October 2019 protest movement would enable breakthrough by independent candidates, the established sectarian parties largely maintained their dominance while making tactical adjustments to changing circumstances. The results reflected both continuity and change: independents won approximately 12-13 seats, Hezbollah lost its parliamentary majority, but the fundamental structures of sectarian power-sharing remained intact (Daoud, 2022).

### ***2.6.3. Mechanisms of Electoral Control and Manipulation***

El-Khazen's detailed analysis reveals sophisticated mechanisms through which Lebanese electoral processes were managed and controlled, particularly during the period of Syrian tutelage but continuing in modified forms after 2005. These mechanisms operated at multiple levels including legal frameworks, candidate selection, campaign activities, and vote counting procedures (El-Khazen, 2000).

The manipulation of electoral laws represented the most fundamental form of control, with district boundaries repeatedly redrawn to advantage preferred candidates and disadvantage potential opposition figures. This gerrymandering was conducted with precision that reflected detailed knowledge of sectarian demographics and voting patterns, often combining areas with no social or economic coherence to produce desired electoral outcomes (El-Khazen, 2000).

Candidate approval processes provided another mechanism for political screening, with formal administrative procedures used to eliminate potentially problematic candidates before campaigns began. Syrian security services maintained detailed files on potential candidates and worked with Lebanese counterparts to ensure that only politically reliable figures could compete effectively. The formation of electoral lists often occurred through direct negotiations involving Syrian officials, effectively predetermining coalition arrangements (El-Khazen, 2000).

Campaign financing and media coverage were carefully managed to favor approved candidates while limiting resources and exposure for potential opponents. Security services monitored campaign activities and intervened when necessary to prevent developments that might threaten desired outcomes. The comprehensive nature of these control mechanisms meant that electoral competition occurred within carefully defined parameters that preserved overall Syrian influence while maintaining appearances of democratic choice (El-Khazen, 2000).

The post-2005 period witnessed modifications rather than elimination of these control mechanisms. While Syrian oversight ended, domestic political elites adapted similar techniques to manage electoral competition and preserve their positions. Electoral laws continued to be modified to serve partisan interests, candidate selection remained influenced by security considerations, and campaign financing reflected the advantages of established parties over potential challengers (Salloukh, 2019).

#### ***2.6.4. Sectarian Representation and Political Outcomes***

The Lebanese experience demonstrates both the potential benefits and limitations of consociational democracy in managing conflict while highlighting the challenges of transitioning from negative to positive peace in deeply divided societies. The sectarian representation system has successfully prevented renewed civil war while enabling the integration of formerly armed groups like Hezbollah into parliamentary politics. However, this success in maintaining negative peace has come at considerable costs in terms of governance effectiveness and democratic development (Salamey, 2014).

The institutionalization of sectarian representation through electoral quotas has created a political system in which identity-based mobilization is not only permitted but required for electoral success. Politicians must appeal primarily to co-religionists rather than building cross-sectarian coalitions, reinforcing communal boundaries and limiting the development of issue-based political competition. This dynamic has contributed to the persistence of clientelistic networks and patronage politics that characterize contemporary Lebanese governance (Leenders, 2012).

The balance of sectarian representation has evolved significantly across different electoral cycles, reflecting both demographic changes and shifting political alliances. Hezbollah's consistent representation of 7-8 seats across multiple elections demonstrates the party's successful integration into the parliamentary system while maintaining its armed capacity outside formal state structures. This dual strategy has enabled Hezbollah to benefit from democratic legitimacy while preserving military options that provide leverage over other political actors (Harik, 2004).

The 2022 elections marked a potential inflection point in Lebanese sectarian politics with the emergence of independent candidates who campaigned explicitly against the sectarian system. However, the limited success of these candidates – winning only 12-13 seats out of 128 – and their subsequent fragmentation in parliament suggests that sectarian structures remain resilient even under conditions of severe economic crisis and popular mobilization (Daoud, 2022).

The persistence of sectarian representation has created what many analysts describe as a form of "democratic authoritarianism" in which formal democratic procedures coexist with systematic limitations on political choice and accountability. Elections occur regularly and are

generally conducted fairly in technical terms, but their outcomes are constrained by structural arrangements that prevent fundamental challenges to the established order (Salloukh, 2019).

### ***2.6.5. Peace Outcomes and Democratic Deficits***

The Lebanese case illustrates the complex relationship between electoral democracy and peacebuilding in post-conflict societies. On one hand, Lebanon's electoral system has contributed to maintaining negative peace by providing institutional channels for political competition and ensuring that all major sectarian groups retain stakes in the political system. The absence of renewed civil war since 1990 represents a significant achievement given the depth of divisions and extent of destruction during the 1975-1990 conflict (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005).

However, the electoral system has also perpetuated many of the structural conditions that contributed to the original conflict, including political exclusion, economic inequality, and weak state capacity. The sectarian allocation of positions has created incentives for political elites to maintain communal divisions rather than building national unity, while the clientelistic distribution of resources has undermined efforts to establish effective public institutions (Leenders, 2012). In fact, Lebanese socio-political culture can best be understood through sectarianism and clientelism, with the latter being maintained over time mostly by the country's political system of confessionalism. The clientelist system has been examined in multiple contexts, including as a pre-civil war power structure (Stokes et al., 2013; Trantidis, 2025), its endurance through militias and party structures in the post-war era (Knudsen, 2010), and its utilization as an electoral strategy (Cammett, 2009). The political elites can be categorized as power brokers that influence elections and manipulate the decisions of people and other representatives who are promised education services, jobs, contracts, and money. In return for the electorate's loyalty, their support is expected to be evident sometimes during election periods. Aoyama et al. argued that the electoral system in Lebanon gets elites to set up party coalitions through cross-communal partnerships as well as build support from outside their sectarian group. The character of Lebanese politics persisted even after the destructive civil war of 1975-1990, as the political reforms introduced by the Taëf Accord were, as Rola El-Husseini, a Senior lecturer at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University, described that a change in regime, not a change of regime, took place, as consociationalism was not abandoned in favor of a deconfessionalized power-sharing formula (Perthes & El-Husseini, 2004).

The failure to achieve positive peace in Lebanon reflects broader challenges with consociational approaches to post-conflict governance. While power-sharing arrangements can successfully end violence and integrate former adversaries into political processes, they may also freeze existing divisions and prevent the social transformation necessary for sustainable peace. The Lebanese experience suggests that electoral systems designed primarily to manage conflict may inadvertently perpetuate the conditions that make conflict likely (Salamey, 2014). Moreover, Arendt Lijphart observed that “the stability of Lebanon is partly due to its productive economy and the social equilibrium it has maintained so far, but it may not be able to continue its successful consociational politics when the burdens on the system increase.” (Lijphart, 2008). As validated consistently over the years, this assertion remained true throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 2000s, with the Lebanese society collapsing during this time due to sectarian rivalries over resources and benefits. Indeed, the Lebanese consociational model has begun to stray from what Lijphart delineates. The political consociationalism in Lebanon has been weakened greatly by the domination of sectarian elites over Lebanese society and government who instead placed the communities in the framework of regional conflicts and power struggles. On the other hand, Horowitz (2002) asserted that Lijphart’s theory of consociational democracy may be too idealistic in the sense of failing to provide reasons for reaching a compromise. According to Russell et al., this idea appears to be particularly accurate in Lebanon. Yet, the idea of “consociation without reconciliation” after the Lebanese civil war should be considered. In accordance to Kerr (2005), the Taëf Accord was working on the wrong assumption that there was already peace among all Lebanese people by the time it was signed; something which meant that there was existence of a national consensus when the conflict ended in Lebanon, since Syria acted as the godfather figure that watched over every agreement on behalf of Lebanese people.

Contemporary Lebanon faces multiple challenges that highlight the limitations of electoral solutions to structural problems. The collapse of the banking system, massive unemployment, emigration of educated youth, and breakdown of public services reflect governance failures that electoral competition has been unable to address. The October 2019 protest movement represented the largest challenge to the sectarian system since the civil war, but its limited electoral impact in 2022 suggests the resilience of established power structures (Geha et al., 2019).

The international community's approach to Lebanese electoral reform has prioritized stability over transformation, often supporting electoral processes that maintain sectarian

arrangements rather than encouraging more fundamental reforms. This preference for negative peace over positive peace reflects broader challenges in international peacebuilding that emphasize conflict management over conflict transformation (Richmond, 2014).

The Lebanese experience provides important lessons for electoral engineering in other post-conflict societies. While carefully designed electoral systems can contribute to conflict prevention and democratic development, they cannot substitute for broader efforts to address structural inequalities, build effective institutions, and foster social transformation. The persistence of negative peace without positive peace in Lebanon suggests the need for more comprehensive approaches to post-conflict governance that move beyond electoral solutions to address root causes of conflict (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012).

## **2.7. Synthesis: Connecting Theory with Practice: From Galtung's Framework to Contemporary Practice**

The integration of Johan Galtung's theoretical insights with contemporary peacebuilding practice reveals both the enduring relevance of his conceptual framework and the challenges of translating theoretical understanding into effective institutional design. Galtung's distinction between negative and positive peace provides essential analytical tools for evaluating post-conflict electoral systems, while his violence triangle offers crucial insights into why elections may sometimes perpetuate rather than transform conflict dynamics.

The Lebanese case exemplifies Galtung's insight that negative peace – the mere absence of direct violence – proves insufficient for sustainable conflict resolution. Lebanon's post-war electoral system has successfully prevented renewed civil war while simultaneously perpetuating structural violence through economic inequality, political exclusion, and weak governance. The sectarian allocation of political positions, while ensuring that no group feels entirely excluded from power, has also institutionalized the very divisions that contributed to the original conflict (Salamey, 2014).

### ***2.7.1. Infrastructure for Peace and Electoral Institutions***

The concept of Infrastructure for Peace provides important insights into how electoral systems can be embedded within broader institutional frameworks that support conflict prevention and sustainable peacebuilding. Rather than viewing elections as isolated events, the I4P perspective emphasizes the need for ongoing institutional mechanisms that can address grievances, facilitate dialogue, and prevent conflicts before they escalate into violence.

Successful examples of peace infrastructure often include electoral components that are carefully integrated with other conflict prevention mechanisms. Ghana's National Peace Council, for instance, plays crucial roles in preventing electoral violence through pre-election dialogue, real-time monitoring during campaigns, and rapid response to emerging tensions. This integration enables electoral processes to contribute to broader peacebuilding objectives rather than simply serving as mechanisms for selecting leaders (Atuobi, 2019).

The Lebanese case reveals the absence of effective peace infrastructure that might complement electoral institutions in addressing underlying sources of conflict. While Lebanon maintains formal democratic procedures through regular elections, it lacks systematic mechanisms for early warning, conflict prevention, and dialogue facilitation that might address tensions before they escalate into crises. The reliance on external mediation during political crises – such as the 2008 Doha Agreement – reflects this institutional deficit (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012). Additionally, on the surface, the Lebanese case appeared to possess two crucial elements for sustaining peace after a civil war. Firstly, there was a power-sharing agreement that equitably redistributed power among different communities, preventing any single group from dominating and subduing others. Secondly, a third party, Syria, assumed the role of maintaining peace by deploying its forces in Lebanon and providing security as detailed by Zahar (2002). However, appearances can be deceiving. El-Khazen declared that despite the apparent “stability” in Lebanon and the absence of a civil war, this stability came at the cost of human rights, democracy, and national reconciliation. Therefore, for the past decades, the “stable peace” in Lebanon has been nothing more than an illusion. El-Khazen also argues that the civil war in Lebanon did not conclude due to internal reconciliation or agreement among the parties, nor did it end with the adoption of a political program endorsed by the majority of Lebanese. According to him, while the military conflict ended, the political struggle persisted. Since the cessation of violence, the situation has deteriorated, particularly concerning the integration of Lebanese from all sects and confessions and the promotion of coexistence. More than a decade later, communities still live in complete isolation, rejecting and blaming each other, leading to a volatile situation akin to a ticking time bomb.

Civil society engagement represents another crucial dimension of peace infrastructure that can either strengthen or undermine electoral contributions to peacebuilding. In Lebanon, civil society organizations have played important roles in election monitoring and civic education, but their impact has been limited by sectarian polarization and state restrictions (Geha et al., 2019).

The communication and information systems that comprise peace infrastructure can significantly influence how electoral processes function and their contributions to peacebuilding. Lebanese media systems, characterized by sectarian ownership and polarized coverage, often amplify rather than moderate political tensions during electoral periods. The absence of independent, professional journalism that might provide citizens with objective information about candidates and issues limits the quality of democratic deliberation and accountability (Dajani, 2013).

### ***2.7.2. Electoral Engineering and Conflict Transformation***

The literature on electoral engineering in divided societies provides important insights into how institutional design choices can either facilitate or hinder conflict transformation. The debate between consociational and integrative approaches to electoral design reflects deeper questions about whether post-conflict societies should accommodate existing divisions or actively seek to transform them through institutional incentives.

Lebanon's experience with consociational democracy demonstrates both the potential benefits and limitations of accommodation strategies. The sectarian power-sharing system has successfully integrated all major groups into the political process while preventing any single community from achieving dominance. However, this accommodation has also institutionalized sectarian identities and created incentives for political entrepreneurs to maintain rather than transcend communal divisions (Lijphart, 2008).

The evolution of Lebanese electoral laws across different cycles reveals how constitutional engineers have repeatedly chosen accommodation over integration, even when opportunities existed for more transformative approaches. The 2018 introduction of PR, while technically more sophisticated than previous systems, was implemented in ways that preserved sectarian advantages rather than encouraging cross-communal political competition (Elghossain, 2017).

Alternative approaches emphasizing integration and moderation might have included provisions for national-level PR, requirements for cross-sectarian coalitions, or incentives for parties to seek second-preference votes from other communities. However, the political incentives facing Lebanese elites – who benefit from existing sectarian arrangements – have consistently favored incremental modifications that preserve fundamental power structures rather than transformative reforms (Salloukh, 2019).

The failure to implement the Taif Agreement's vision of gradually eliminating political confessionalism illustrates how electoral reforms that threaten existing power structures face systematic resistance from incumbent elites. Constitutional provisions for establishing a non-sectarian Senate and reducing sectarian quotas in the Chamber of Deputies have remained dead letters, demonstrating the challenges of achieving transformative constitutional change through normal political processes (Salamey, 2014).

### ***2.7.3. International Intervention and Local Agency***

The role of international actors in post-conflict electoral processes raises important questions about the relationship between external support and local ownership of democratic transitions. International involvement can provide crucial resources, expertise, and legitimacy for electoral processes, but may also constrain local choices and impose external preferences that may not reflect domestic priorities or needs.

The Lebanese experience demonstrates both the potential benefits and risks of international engagement in post-conflict elections. During the period of Syrian tutelage, international actors largely accepted Lebanese electoral processes as legitimate despite widespread evidence of manipulation and control. This acceptance reflected broader geopolitical considerations that prioritized regional stability over democratic development, illustrating how international support for elections may serve external rather than domestic interests (El-Khazen, 2000).

Following Syria's withdrawal in 2005, international actors became more actively engaged in supporting Lebanese electoral reforms while continuing to prioritize stability over transformation. European Union and United Nations support for technical improvements in electoral administration helped enhance the credibility of electoral processes, but international reluctance to challenge fundamental sectarian arrangements limited the transformative potential of these reforms (Knudsen, 2010).

The tension between international preferences for rapid democratization and local needs for gradual institutional development appears clearly in the Lebanese case. International pressure for regular elections has sometimes conflicted with domestic recognition that more fundamental constitutional reforms might be necessary for sustainable democratic development. The postponement of elections in 2013 and 2014 due to security concerns and political deadlock reflected these tensions (International Crisis Group, 2014).

Local agency in electoral reform has been constrained both by international preferences and by domestic power structures that benefit from existing arrangements. Civil society organizations have advocated for various reforms including non-sectarian electoral options, gender quotas, and campaign finance regulations, but their influence has been limited by the dominance of established political parties and the absence of effective mechanisms for constitutional change outside the existing parliamentary framework (LCPS, 2018).

#### ***2.7.4. Temporal Dimensions and Institutional Evolution***

The temporal dimension of post-conflict electoral development reveals important patterns about how electoral institutions evolve over time and their changing relationships with peacebuilding objectives. Early post-conflict elections often prioritize immediate stability and conflict prevention, while later elections may provide opportunities for more transformative institutional development as societies gain experience with democratic procedures.

Lebanon's electoral evolution demonstrates how initial post-conflict arrangements may become entrenched over time, making subsequent reforms increasingly difficult despite changing circumstances. The sectarian framework established by the Taif Agreement was intended as a temporary arrangement that would gradually give way to non-sectarian democracy, but institutional interests and political incentives have combined to perpetuate these arrangements well beyond their intended lifespan (Salamey, 2014).

Comparative analysis of other post-conflict cases suggests that institutional change often occurs through gradual evolution rather than dramatic transformation, as political actors adapt existing arrangements to changing circumstances rather than replacing them entirely. South Africa's transition from the interim constitution's Government of National Unity to normal majoritarian democracy illustrates how temporary post-conflict arrangements can evolve into more conventional democratic institutions as societies develop trust and experience with democratic procedures (Giliomee & Simkins, 1999).

The challenge for post-conflict societies lies in maintaining sufficient flexibility within institutional arrangements to enable necessary adaptations while preserving stability and preventing renewed conflict.

**Table 2** Post-Conflict Elections: Contrasting Outcomes

Case	Election Design & Context	Outcome for Peace
<b>Angola, 1992</b>	Held ~1 year post-conflict (Bicesse Accords). Majoritarian presidential vote. Incomplete disarmament – both sides retained armies (Tvedten, 1997). Little power-sharing (loser expected to cede all).	<b>Failure:</b> Losing faction (UNITA) rejected results and returned to war (Human Rights Watch, 1993). Peace agreement collapsed, leading to renewed civil war and massive casualties. Timing was too early and guarantees for losers insufficient.
<b>Liberia, 2005</b>	Held 2 years post-war (2003 Accra Accord) with UN peacekeepers. Interim government in place; ex-warlords not automatically in power. Used two-round presidential vote and PR for legislature. Heavy international monitoring (Harris, 2006).	<b>Success:</b> Conducted peacefully and deemed fair. No incumbent advantage – "level playing field" (Harris, 2006). Resulting parliament was very diverse, which fostered compromise and included all factions (Harris, 2006). The elected government led by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf focused on reconciliation and reforms. Liberia has remained at peace since, illustrating that well-prepared elections can cement peace.
<b>South Africa, 1994</b>	Held 4 years into negotiated transition from apartheid. PR system nationwide. Interim Constitution guaranteed a Government of National Unity: all parties with $\geq 5\%$ of seats got cabinet positions (power-sharing) (Giliomee & Simkins, 1999). Strong international and domestic oversight.	<b>Success:</b> High turnout across all racial groups; election was peaceful and hailed as "free and fair." Resulted in Nelson Mandela's ANC in power but also included former rivals (National Party, IFP) in coalition government (Giliomee & Simkins, 1999). This inclusive approach prevented backlash and ensured a stable transition. South Africa's democratic transition is seen as largely successful, avoiding the feared racial civil war.

**Note.** Cases demonstrate varying approaches to post-conflict electoral design and their differential impacts on peace consolidation.

Source: Created by author

## **2.8. Implications for Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Rethinking Electoral Success in Post-Conflict Settings**

The synthesis of theoretical insights and empirical evidence suggests the need for more nuanced understandings of electoral success in post-conflict settings that move beyond narrow technical criteria toward more comprehensive assessments of peacebuilding outcomes. Traditional measures of electoral quality – such as freedom, fairness, and competitiveness – while important, prove insufficient for evaluating whether electoral processes contribute to sustainable peace and democratic development.

The Lebanese case demonstrates how elections can meet basic technical standards while failing to achieve broader peacebuilding objectives. Lebanese elections since 1992 have generally been conducted peacefully with reasonable levels of competition and transparency, yet they have not contributed to the social transformation necessary for positive peace. This gap between procedural democracy and substantive democratization suggests the need for evaluation frameworks that assess electoral contributions to long-term peace consolidation rather than simply immediate procedural quality (Salamey, 2014).

Alternative approaches to evaluating electoral success might emphasize outcomes such as: inclusion of previously marginalized groups in political processes; development of cross-cutting political coalitions that transcend conflict identities; strengthening of democratic institutions and rule of law; reduction of structural inequalities that contribute to conflict; and fostering of political cultures that legitimize democratic competition while delegitimizing violence (Diamond & Morlino, 2005).

From this perspective, electoral systems that produce decisive victories for moderate parties committed to inclusive governance might be considered more successful than systems that produce fragmented coalitions among extremist parties, even if the latter appears more representative in purely proportional terms. Similarly, electoral processes that encourage policy-based competition might be preferable to those that reinforce identity-based mobilization, regardless of their technical quality.

The temporal dimension of electoral success also requires greater attention, as immediate post-conflict elections may serve different functions than later elections in democratic consolidation processes. Early elections may appropriately prioritize stability and inclusion over efficiency and accountability, while later elections should increasingly

emphasize policy competition and democratic accountability as societies develop experience with democratic procedures (Lindberg, 2009).

### ***2.8.1. Institutional Design Principles for Post-Conflict Elections***

The accumulated evidence from post-conflict electoral experiences suggests several general principles that can guide institutional design while recognizing that specific applications must be adapted to particular contexts and conflict dynamics. These principles balance competing demands for inclusion, stability, effectiveness, and transformation that characterize post-conflict electoral engineering.

**Sequenced Implementation:** Electoral institutions should be implemented gradually with careful attention to sequencing that builds capacity and trust before introducing more complex or controversial arrangements. South Africa's transition from interim government to Government of National Unity to normal majoritarian competition illustrates how phased approaches can manage political risk while enabling institutional evolution (Giliomee & Simkins, 1999).

**Institutional Flexibility:** Electoral laws should include mechanisms for periodic review and adaptation that enable necessary modifications without requiring full constitutional crises. Sunset clauses for power-sharing arrangements, regular constituency boundary reviews, and built-in processes for constitutional amendment can provide needed adaptability while maintaining stability (Reilly, 2001).

**Inclusive Participation:** Electoral systems should actively encourage broad participation from all significant social groups while avoiding arrangements that entrench exclusionary practices or identities. This may require temporary special measures such as reserved seats or quotas, but these should be designed to promote rather than prevent eventual integration (Krook, 2009).

**Cross-Cutting Incentives:** Where possible, electoral rules should encourage politicians to appeal across rather than within conflict-defined groups through preferential voting, geographic distribution requirements, or other mechanisms that reward moderate, inclusive appeals (Horowitz, 1985).

**Institutional Integration:** Electoral systems should be embedded within broader institutional frameworks that support democratic governance and conflict prevention rather than functioning as isolated mechanisms. This requires coordination with judicial reform,

security sector transformation, civil society development, and economic reconstruction efforts (UNDP, 2010).

### ***2.8.2. The Role of Civil Society and Civic Education***

The evidence from post-conflict electoral experiences highlights the crucial importance of civil society development and civic education for electoral contributions to peacebuilding. Strong, independent civil society organizations can serve multiple functions in supporting democratic development including election monitoring, voter education, advocacy for reforms, and providing channels for citizen participation beyond formal electoral processes.

Lebanon's experience demonstrates both the potential and limitations of civil society engagement in electoral processes. While Lebanese civil society organizations have played important roles in election observation and civic education, their impact has been constrained by sectarian polarization, state restrictions, and limited resources. The October 2019 protest movement revealed significant civil society capacity, but the limited electoral impact suggests the challenges of translating social mobilization into sustainable political change within existing institutional frameworks (Geha et al., 2019).

Effective civic education programs must move beyond simple voter education toward more comprehensive democracy education that builds understanding of democratic values, institutions, and processes. This includes education about conflict resolution, tolerance, and the importance of peaceful political competition. School curricula, media programming, and community workshops can all contribute to building democratic political cultures that support electoral contributions to peacebuilding (Finkel, 2003).

Women's participation represents a particularly important dimension of civil society engagement in post-conflict electoral processes. Women's organizations often play crucial roles in advocating for peace, promoting reconciliation, and ensuring that electoral processes address gender-specific concerns. Electoral systems can support women's participation through reserved seats, gender quotas, and campaign finance provisions that level playing fields between male and female candidates (Krook, 2009).

Youth engagement poses both opportunities and challenges for post-conflict electoral processes. Young people may be less committed to conflict identities and more open to transformative political alternatives, but they may also be more susceptible to extremist appeals if they lack economic opportunities and political voice. Electoral systems that facilitate youth

participation through lower age requirements, student voting provisions, and youth quotas can help channel youthful energy toward democratic rather than violent political participation (UNOY, 2016).

### ***2.8.3. International Support and Local Ownership***

The relationship between international support and local ownership represents one of the most complex challenges in post-conflict electoral assistance. International actors can provide crucial technical expertise, financial resources, and legitimacy for electoral processes, but excessive international involvement may undermine local ownership and impose external preferences that do not reflect domestic priorities.

The Lebanese experience illustrates how international preferences for stability may conflict with local needs for transformation, leading to international support for electoral arrangements that preserve rather than transform conflict dynamics. International acceptance of Syrian manipulation during the 1990s and subsequent reluctance to challenge sectarian arrangements reflects how geopolitical considerations may override democratic development objectives (El-Khazen, 2000).

Effective international support for post-conflict elections should emphasize capacity building and institutional development rather than direct implementation or control. This includes training for electoral administrators, support for civil society monitoring, assistance with legal framework development, and provision of technical equipment and expertise. However, such support should be provided in ways that strengthen rather than substitute for local capacity (Hartlyn et al., 2007).

Regional organizations may be particularly well-positioned to provide electoral support that balances international expertise with regional understanding and legitimacy. The African Union's election observation missions and the European Union's electoral support programs demonstrate how regional approaches can provide credible international involvement while respecting sovereignty and local ownership (Tapoko, 2017).

Long-term international engagement may be more important than intensive short-term assistance around particular elections. Building sustainable electoral institutions requires sustained support for institutional development, civil society strengthening, and democratic education that extends well beyond individual electoral cycles. This long-term perspective

requires international donors to maintain commitments even when immediate results are not apparent (Carothers, 2004).

#### ***2.8.4. Economic Dimensions of Electoral Peacebuilding***

The economic dimensions of post-conflict electoral processes receive insufficient attention in much of the electoral assistance literature, despite growing recognition that economic inequality and lack of opportunity often contribute significantly to conflict recurrence. Electoral systems that fail to address economic grievances or that perpetuate exclusionary economic practices may contribute little to sustainable peacebuilding regardless of their political design.

Lebanon's experience demonstrates how electoral systems may perpetuate economic arrangements that contribute to structural violence and long-term instability. The sectarian allocation of political positions has been accompanied by similar patterns in economic distribution, with political elites using their positions to capture state resources and direct them toward their sectarian constituencies rather than pursuing broader national development (Leenders, 2012).

Electoral systems can potentially contribute to more inclusive economic development through several mechanisms. Constituency-based representation may create incentives for politicians to deliver economic benefits to their geographic areas, while proportional representation may ensure that economically marginalized groups receive political voice that can advocate for their interests. However, these potential benefits depend heavily on broader economic policies and governance arrangements (Powell, 2000).

Campaign finance regulations represent another important intersection between electoral systems and economic considerations. Unlimited campaign spending may advantage wealthy candidates or those with access to illicit financing, while public financing systems may level playing fields and reduce incentives for corruption. Post-conflict societies often face particular challenges in regulating campaign finance due to weak state capacity and the prevalence of informal economic networks (Scarrow, 2007).

The timing of economic reforms relative to electoral processes requires careful consideration in post-conflict settings. Economic liberalization and structural adjustment programs may create winners and losers that influence electoral outcomes, while electoral competition may constrain governments' ability to implement necessary but painful economic

reforms. Coordination between economic and political reform processes may be necessary to ensure that both contribute to rather than undermine peacebuilding objectives (Paris, 2004).

## **2.9. Conclusion**

This literature review has examined the complex relationships between electoral systems, peacebuilding, and provides the background for the principal aim of this research, which is, broadly speaking, to examine elections as a component of I4P, which has not been done previously for Lebanon. Overall, the literature review reveals both the significant potential of well-designed electoral institutions to contribute to sustainable peace and the serious risks of electoral processes. It suggests that electoral systems represent potentially powerful but inherently limited tools for post-conflict peacebuilding, whose effectiveness depends heavily on broader political, social, and economic contexts. The Lebanese experience demonstrates both the benefits and limitations of accommodative approaches: while sectarian power-sharing prevented renewed civil war, its failure to achieve positive peace shows the constraints of purely accommodative strategies.

The following chapters will comprehensively analyze how elections and I4P can be implemented in Lebanon's specific context. While establishing this connection is crucial for Lebanon's peace, it remains a gap in the current literature. To address this gap, the next chapter will begin with a theoretical elaboration of I4P. Subsequently, the research will examine the history of elections in Lebanon and establish the connection between elections and I4P within the Lebanese context.

### **Chapter 3: Beyond the Sectarian Veil: Unmasking the Roots of Lebanon's Civil War (1920-1991)**

The outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975 did not happen overnight; it was the outcome of many complex factors (Ochsenwald & Kingston, 2018). The aim of this chapter is not to add another historical reference to the existing literature, but to examine the dynamics between different factors that led to the big explosion in 1975, the official date of the outbreak of a long civil war, that had its seeds planted in the very first years of the establishment of the new republic of 1926.

This chapter offers a thematic examination of the underlying causes of the war rather than a chronological one. The central argument states that while confessionalism definitely played a significant role in shaping the conflict's dynamics, it was not its primary driver. Instead, confessional divisions often served as a convenient mask, hiding deeper structural inequalities and enabling a minority of oligarch leaders (“Zaiim”, in plural “Zu'ama”) to consolidate power and profit, perpetuating conflict by mobilizing people along sectarian lines. The same logic applies to other factors, mainly: the socio-economic disparities masked by confessionalism, the regional and international interventions made possible by the absence of strong state institutions, and finally, the absence of a unified national identity, which led to deep political polarization. Each of these elements can be found separately or together, in different historical events (the creation of Lebanon, the independence, the revolution of 1958, the Cairo accord, etc., all detailed in the chapter below). While many historians and scholars described these events as direct reasons for the war, they are regarded in this chapter as only a mask or a vehicle for the deeper causes stated above.

By thoroughly analyzing and understanding these interconnected root causes of the war, this chapter seeks to lay the groundwork for a later chapter on developing a tailored infrastructure for peace in Lebanon.

Thus, the first section discusses the reasons for the war, while the second part focuses on the main stages of the civil war from 1975 to 1990, noting significant events that helped form the division.

### 3.1. The Birth of Greater Lebanon

Following the San Remo Conference in April 1920 and the subsequent proclamation of the State of Greater Lebanon by General Gouraud on September 1, 1920, both Lebanon and Syria became under French Mandates governed by High Commissioners (Al-Khawand, 2001). This new Lebanese state, created by France in the aftermath of World War I, fulfilled the aspirations of Maronite Christians, who feared the prospect of being integrated into a unified Arab state with Syria, a vision favored by Sunni Muslims.

The “Greater Lebanon” was formed by annexing surrounding territories to the existing “Mount Lebanon”, to include specifically crucial maritime ports and the fertile agricultural lands of the northern plains and the Bekaa Valley. This expansion and the annexation of new territories were designed to ensure the state’s economic viability, particularly after the devastating Great Famine of 1915-1918, which had caused over 200,000 deaths, nearly a third of the population of the predominantly Christian Mount Lebanon (formerly the Mutasarrifiyya, a semi-autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire from 1861 to 1915)<sup>1</sup>. To achieve this, predominantly Sunni and Shia Muslim areas were detached from Syria and incorporated into the new Lebanese political entity. These included the Akkar Plain and the Tripoli region to the north, the Bekaa Valley to the east, and Jabal Amel to the south. Beirut, which had not been part of the autonomous province of Mount Lebanon, was designated as the capital of this new state (Al-Khawand, 2001).

For decades, a heated debate raged over the legitimacy of this new state. Most Christians supported its existence, while most Muslims preferred unification with a “Greater Syria”. This debate eventually subsided as the Muslim community slowly came to accept the new state that had been imposed upon them, and as Christians abandoned the idea of French protection.

---

<sup>1</sup> The main geographical constraints that led to the famine in the Mutasarrifiyya during WWI were:

- Lack of a Seaport: The Mutasarrifiyya was a landlocked mountain province. It had no major port of its own, making it completely dependent on ports like Beirut, which were outside its control and under a strict Allied naval blockade.
- Lack of Fertile Land: Its territory was mountainous and rocky, with very little arable land suitable for large-scale grain cultivation. It could not grow enough food to be self-sufficient and relied on grain imports from the interior plains (like the Bekaa and Hauran), which were cut off by the Ottomans.

This paved the way for the long march toward Lebanon's independence, which was finally achieved on November 22, 1943, with encouragement from Great Britain and the United States, despite strong French resistance.

### ***3.1.1. Paving the Way Towards the Constitution***

After the League of Nations approved the Mandate Charter in September 1922, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs formed the "Basic Law Committee," composed of several leading French political and legal figures under the chairmanship of Joseph-Paul Boncour. This committee drafted a series of questions to be presented to Lebanese intellectuals, politicians, leaders, and religious authorities to gather their views on the system of governance they wished to see established in their country. However, the French authorities deliberately excluded the Representative Council<sup>2</sup> and did not consult it regarding the constitution (Al-Khawand, 2001).

Amid the escalation of the Syrian Revolt against the French mandate, and in response to objections from the Representative Council over being sidelined, the French high commissioner Henry de Jouvenel and upon his arrival to Beirut, invited the Representative Council to convene in order to collaborate with the Mandate authorities on drafting the Lebanese Basic Law known later as the Constitution (Al-Khawand, 2001).

With this invitation and mandate, the Representative Council was transformed into a Constituent Assembly tasked with drafting the constitution. It convened in an extraordinary session on December 10, 1925, and elected a special committee to prepare the draft constitution. This body, known both as the "Basic Law Committee" and the "Constitutional Committee," was composed of 13 deputies<sup>3</sup>. A subcommittee was also formed to consult Lebanese notables and social bodies (Traboulsi, 2012). It soon became clear that many groups, overwhelmingly from the Muslim community, refused to respond to the committee's questions. On January 5, 1926, Muslim notables and leaders gathered at the headquarters of the Islamic Maqassed Philanthropic Association in Beirut and issued a statement declaring: "... It is well

---

<sup>2</sup> The Representative Council during the French Mandate for Lebanon was a legislative body established by the French authorities as part of their administrative system in Lebanon. It was created to give a semblance of local representation and participation in governance, although ultimate authority remained with the French High Commissioner and the mandate authorities. The council was composed mainly of Lebanese representatives, including some elected members, and served as an advisory body rather than a full legislative assembly with independent powers. Its functions included discussing issues related to local governance, administration, and development, but decisions were ultimately subject to approval by the French authorities.

<sup>3</sup> The deputies are: Moussa Nammour (President of the Constituent Assembly, as chair), Shibli Dammous, Omar Daouk, Fouad Arslan, Michel Chiha, Youssef Salem, Georges Zoueïn, Petro Trad, Roukoz Abou Nader, Sobhi Haidar, Abboud Abdel-Razzak, Georges Thabet, and Youssef Zain (Al Khawand, 2001)

known that the wishes and demands of the Muslim community, which constitutes the overwhelming majority in the country, are to reject incorporation into Greater Lebanon and to call for union with the Syrian Federation (...) Accordingly, the Muslim community in Beirut has decided (...) to reaffirm its protest against annexation to Lebanon and to refuse participation in drafting its constitution.” (Juha, 1995, p. 269).

With the proclamation of May 23, 1926, the era of the State of Greater Lebanon (1920–1926) came to an end, and the era of the Lebanese Republic began under the provisions of the constitution, which was unanimously approved by the Representative Council. Then, the constitution also renamed the Representative Council as the “Chamber of Deputies” and stipulated the creation of a Senate to represent sects and regions. This constitution was composed of 102 articles (Al-Khawand, 2001). The most significant among them were those that addressed sectarianism, which had already begun to find its way into the legal texts of Lebanon’s basic systems since the time of the *Qa’immaqamate* (district governorate system). It adopted a flag with a cedar tree at the center of its white band as the national emblem. French was recognized as an official language alongside Arabic. Notably, the constitution did not define Lebanon’s borders, as if to imply that they remained open to modification (Traboulsi, 2012).

The 1926 Constitution was a hybrid text: while its republican framework legislated individual rights, freedoms, and legal and political equality among citizens, it was supplemented with provisions concerning the rights of sects and sectarian representation. There is reason to believe that Michel Chiha, a Lebanese nationalist, was the one who drafted these additions. Some members of the Representative Council, aware of the dangers and consequences of sectarianism, sought to go beyond it in the new system, to neither adopt it nor mention it in the constitution. However, the majority of members opposed this secularist approach, and a compromise was eventually reached through the inclusion of Article 95, which stipulated that sectarianism be adopted on a temporary basis; a “temporary” status that, as of the late year 2000, is still in place, with sectarianism becoming ever more entrenched, fueling disputes and igniting conflicts (Al-Khawand, 2001). Article 9 stated that in the name of safeguarding absolute freedom of conscience, the state relinquishes its legislative and judicial authority to religious sects in matters of personal status. Its text reads: “Freedom of belief is absolute. In performing its duty of reverence to Almighty God, the state respects all religions and sects, guarantees the freedom to practice religious rituals under its protection, provided

this does not disrupt public order. It also guarantees to the people, of all their confessions, respect for personal status laws and religious interests.” (Lebanese Parliament, 1926).

Unlike most republican constitutions, which place the responsibility for supporting public education on the state, Article 9 of the Lebanese Constitution assigns the state the responsibility of supporting private religious education, provided it does not contradict “public knowledge.” Most importantly, the Constitution legalized the Mandate, affirming French control over matters of security, the army, and foreign policy (Lebanese Parliament, 1926).

## **3.2. The Independence**

The independent Lebanese Republic of 1943 was established through two founding documents: the first was the official constitution, and the second was an oral understanding between Bechara El Khoury (the Maronite President of the Republic) and Riad El Solh (the Sunni Prime Minister), known as the National Pact (Kassir, 1994).

### ***3.2.1. The Constitution***

The constitution is based on a fundamental dichotomy. On the one hand, it affirms the political, legal, and civil equality of all Lebanese as citizens; meanwhile, on the other hand, it establishes their political, legal, and civil equality as subjects belonging to hierarchical religious groups that apportion varying shares of political power and public office.

Despite this seemingly fair distribution between different confessions, a deeper look reveals a clear hegemony of the Maronite sect over the other sects (Kassir, 1994). Below is a quick look at how the main state positions were divided among sects:

- The seats in the parliament are divided based on the “6/5 principle,” meaning six seats for Christians and five seats for Muslims.
- Governments were often composed of the six main sects: Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Druze, Sunnis, and Shiia.
- Key positions in state institutions were reserved exclusively for the Maronite sect. These included the following positions: Army command, Intelligence Directorate (then known as the Second Bureau), the General Security Directorate, the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the presidency of the Lebanese University, and the governorship of the Bank of Lebanon.

- In addition to that, the presidency of the republic enjoyed broad, quasi-monarchical powers according to Samir Kassir (Kassir, 1994), including almost complete executive powers, assisted by the ministers. He also had broad powers to:
  - Form the government by appointing ministers, naming the prime minister, and dismissing them at will.
  - Sign cabinet decisions, along with the relevant minister or ministers.
  - Sign decrees promulgating laws with the government.
  - Has the right to veto laws passed by the parliament.
  - He was also considered the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, both in office and in function, as he had direct and absolute authority.
  - Although the president is himself elected by the House of Representatives, the constitution empowers him to dissolve parliament and call for new elections.

Although the political system emerging from the 1926 Constitution was theoretically parliamentary in nature, inspired by the constitution of the French Third Republic, the presidency drew on borrowings from the Belgian and Egyptian constitutions during the reign of the monarchy (Shehadi & Harney, 1989).

### ***3.2.2. The National Pact***

The (unwritten) National Pact was based on a consensus between the Christian Maronite president, Bechara Al Khoury, and the Muslim Sunni prime minister Riad El Solh. Its only written record is the ministerial statement that El Solh read before the Council of Ministers on October 7, 1943. This pact, also founded on the principle of a separate country from the Syrian state and an independent state under the French protection, was a major milestone in achieving independence on November 22, 1943 (Kassir, 1994).

Among the most prominent provisions of the National Pact:

- Affirming the formula for power-sharing among sects, established a “5/6 formula” in favor of Christians in political and administrative representation, and granted the presidency of the republic to a Maronite Christian, that of the prime minister to a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of the Parliament to a Shia.
- *Defining Lebanon* as a country having an “Arab face” and establishing two fundamental “NOs”: “No to the unity with Syria” that many Muslims were asking for, and “No to the foreign intervention and protection” that many Christians were still demanding.

As historian Samir Kassir notes, “This was probably the only historical moment in which the political class in Lebanon proved its maturity, supported by an exceptionally favorable international situation. The fact that the formula was said in the negative “NO” to joining Syria and “NO” to French protection, did not detract from its importance. The popular jubilation, on the other hand, proved, at least at that moment, that the Lebanese wanted to live together.” (Kassir, 1994, p. 59). Thus, it can be said that the Pact provided political guarantees for Christians in exchange for political, social, and cultural promises for Muslims.

Historian Fawaz Traboulsi says: “The consequences of establishing an independent Lebanon upon two foundational documents instead of a single one cannot be overstated. Indeed, much of Lebanon's subsequent history and its conflicts have revolved around the divergent readings of these two texts and the continuous effort to prioritize one over the other.” (Traboulsi, 2012, p. 106).

Two writings formed the new republic, which was distinguished by the dominance of one sect over others. This hegemony is based on the deep fear and trauma of a small minority of Christian-Maronites in this region of the world (fear and trauma from previous wars (1840-1860), ottoman oppression, grand famine), a hegemony that falsely promises the Maronites independence, liberty, and safety, only to imprison them in a deceiving spiral of violence that will strip them of every single privilege they thought they had acquired.

### **3.3. The First Test for the New Republic: The 1958 Revolution**

This absolute control of the Maronite sect over most state facilities has created a feeling among Muslim sects that this Lebanese state is not “their” state, and that they are subordinate and not sovereign. Hence, voices began to be heard saying that Muslims feel wronged by this newly established state, and the keyword used by the Muslims by then was “Al Ghubn”, which translates into “inequity”. Faced with this “inequity” (Kassir, 1984), only “Al Musharaka” (understood as greater participation in the instances of power) can remedy this frustration, but many Christians are reluctant to renegotiate the foundations of the National Pact of 1943 (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020). Muslims' feelings of injustice and frustration continued and increased, especially after the involvement of the Maronite president Bechara El Khoury (1st president in the independence era), his brother, and many politicians in his circle, in numerous corruption cases and exploitation of their power to amass personal gains and wealth (Al-Khawand, 2001). El Khoury resigned, and Camille Chamoun was elected as the country's new president. While some optimism initially prevailed among the opposition, the era soon dashed

the opposition's hopes after several shortcomings, most notably: the failure to implement radical reforms and put an end to corruption, the falsification of the 1957 parliamentary elections resolving in the loss of the opposition, and the decision of the president to join the Baghdad Pact and the signing of the Eisenhower Doctrine in March 1957 (Al-Khawand, 2001).

Following the signing of the Eisenhower Doctrine, a deep division prevailed in Lebanese public opinion (Picard, 1996). The Lebanese who were against the Eisenhower Doctrine,<sup>4</sup> saw it as nothing more than a service to Zionism and Western interests, primarily those of the United States, and a direct acceptance to allow the USA to interfere in the internal Lebanese affairs.<sup>5</sup> While the President of the Republic and the Christian supporters loyal to him saw adherence to this doctrine as a form of guarantee and protection for the Christians and the independence of “their” state, his opponents saw it as a threat to the country and to the Arab nationalist movement led by the Egyptian president Jamal Abdel Nasser. Abdel Nasser, who was leading the Arab nationalist movement and was very influential and popular in all the Arab countries by this time, launched a fierce attack on it and contributed to mobilizing Arab public opinion against it. No Arab government, except Lebanon, dared to join it (Picard, 1996). This division was obviously another consequence of the cold war.

After the start of the election campaign in 1957, Lebanese regions were gripped by clashes between regime supporters and the opposition. This wave reached its peak when violations proliferated during the elections, and the opposition lost. This violence continued to escalate, leading the opposition to declare an open and general strike and the start of the violent revolution on May 9, 1958 (Picard, 1996).

The 1958 mini-war lasted approximately six months, from May to October. It took the form of an uprising involving a Muslim majority and a Christian minority against the rule of President Camille Chamoun. As with past and future crises and wars, there is always a direct cause, and in this case, the president attempted to amend the Constitution to allow him to renew his term without holding new presidential elections. While Chamoun's attempt was the primary

---

<sup>4</sup> Among the most important names of the revolution: Abdallah Yafi, Rachid Karameh, Ahmad el Assaad, Sabri Hamada, Maarouf Saad, Hamid Franjeh, they were later joined by Kamal Joumlatt, Saeb Salam following the parliamentary elections and after the outbreak of the revolution officially on May 9, 1958. The Maronite Patriarch El Maouchi also supported the opposition. This opposition was called "the front of national unity".

<sup>5</sup> The Eisenhower Doctrine reflected the real interference of the United States in Middle Eastern affairs, following the defeat of the tripartite political aggression against Egypt, which was declared by US President Dwight D. Eisenhower. In January 1957, the US Congress granted Eisenhower the authority to use the army to defend Middle Eastern countries against the "danger of the communist party," and to use \$200 million to help these countries develop their economies and strengthen their armed forces.

cause of the 1958 mini-war, it alone is not sufficient to explain the country's descent into civil war. Further causes are intrinsically linked to the country's internal infrastructure. These encompass the sectarian composition of the political system, the running debate on building a shared Lebanese identity, overall corruption, and the increasing social and economic divide between classes. Moreover, regional and global conflicts regularly amplify these internal pressures, layering the division in Lebanese society once more (Wilson, 2002).

While it appears that this mini-war lasted only for 6 months and ended with minimal damage, with the intervention of the US Marines and the election of a new president, this was in fact nothing more than a postponement of the big explosion that would occur in 1975 with enormous losses, exorbitant costs, and a devastating war that lasted for 15 years (Ochsenwald & Kingston, 2018). This is because, except the efforts made during the era of Fouad Chehab, which we will address later, there were no serious attempts by the ruling political class to make any system reforms to address the root causes of those conflicts, which underwent significant amplification in the ensuing years because of the aggravation of internal resentment and the combination of regional and international factors and conflicts (Abou Jaoude, 2021).

Just as the policy of Western alliances, the State of Israel declaration, and the Nasserite movement deepened divisions in the country, they ultimately led to the events of 1958. Similarly, the magnitude of the 1967 defeat will later impact the fate of Lebanon.

### **3.4. The International Factors that Led to the 1975 Civil War**

#### ***3.4.1. The Nakba***

The creation of Israel was a violent occupation process that entailed the ethnic cleansing and the forced expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homeland to establish a Jewish-majority state, as per the aspirations of the Zionist movement. Between 1947 and 1949, at least 750,000 Palestinians from a 1.9 million population were made refugees beyond the borders of the state. Zionist forces had taken more than 78 percent of historic Palestine, ethnically cleansed and destroyed about 530 villages and cities, and killed about 15,000 Palestinians in a series of mass atrocities, including more than 70 massacres (Al-Tahhan, 2018). The Nakba, which means “catastrophe” in Arabic, refers to the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians. During the Nakba, around 104,000 Palestinian refugees came to Lebanon and were distributed over 12 camps across Lebanon (Al-Majdal, 2025).

### *3.4.2. The Cairo Agreement and its Consequences*

In September 1965, during a meeting for the Arab leaders in Alexandria, Egypt, the Arab leaders officially recognized the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and granted it observer status in the Arab League. The Arab leaders also allowed the establishment of the Palestinian Liberation Army.

Following the Arab defeat in the June 1967 war, Palestinian guerrilla operations against Israel began to intensify. Their operations against Israel from Lebanese territory reached 29 in 1968 and 150 in 1969 (Al-Khawand, 2001). With the continuous Arab support for the Palestinian resistance to operate from within Lebanon, the Lebanese government was unable to oppose the general Arab position. Although the Lebanese state continued to supervise the refugee camps until 1969 and had a security and intelligence presence there, Palestinian armament was taking place openly.

On November 3, 1969, the Cairo Agreement was signed between the Lebanese Army Command and the PLO under pressure from Arab states and popular pressure from Sunni leaders and Lebanese leftist parties (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020). The Cairo Agreement recognized the right of Palestinian guerrillas to an armed presence in Lebanon and legitimized armed struggle from Lebanon, provided it was conducted "within the principles of Lebanon's sovereignty and integrity and non-interference in its internal affairs" (Helou, 1995) and in coordination with the Lebanese Army. This agreement also granted Palestinians the right to supervise the Palestinian refugee camps. Following the Cairo Accords and the military crushing of the PLO in Jordan following "Black September 1970", Lebanon established itself as a "safe base" for the Palestinian resistance to retreat. Starting in 1967-1968, the PLO guerrilla operations accelerated. As a result, the clashes between the Lebanese Army and Palestinian fighters (the first in March 1968) and between Palestinians and Israel accelerated (El-Khazen, 2000).

The armed clashes between the Lebanese Army and the Palestinian Fedayeen were due to violations committed by the latter. The Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, Youssef Salem, stated that there was a general unease due to the actions of Palestinians on Lebanese territory, which have even reached Beirut. Palestinian fighters have set up checkpoints on the roads, where they stop cars and order drivers to show their identity cards (Salem, 1998). Every confrontation between the Lebanese army and the Palestinian resistance resulted in more tension and division in the Lebanese scene. The confrontations were brutal,

and their intensity increased after the Cairo Agreement. Each fight left Lebanese society highly polarized, reflected by massive protests for the Palestinian armed struggle, rejecting the army's suppression of it, and calling for the unrestricted freedom of Palestinian actions from Lebanese territory. Some of the most significant confrontations were as follows:

- On 23 April 1969, an unlawful armed demonstration was staged in protest against what the Palestinian resistance considered to be restrictions imposed on it by the Lebanese army. The outcome was dozens of fatalities and injuries among Palestinians and Lebanese supporters nationwide. This led to the resignation of the Prime Minister and caused a political crisis of several months' duration in which he was unable to form a new cabinet.
- On 25 March 1970, there was a clash between Palestinian fighters and the Kataëb Party's Christian armed militia, with more than twenty killed and wounded. The violence spread to several Lebanese regions and was followed by confrontations between the army and Palestinians.
- On 10 April 1973, following an Israeli commando raid in Beirut in which three senior Palestinian officials were killed along with two members of Lebanon's Internal Security Forces, the streets of Lebanon witnessed violent and furious retaliation. Demonstrations erupted, and three weeks later, Palestinians fought with the Lebanese army, involving the use of air strikes by the Army as they bombed Palestinian strongholds and refugee camps.
- Since the late 1960s, Christian parties had already begun arming themselves, asserting that the Lebanese army could not stop Palestinian violations due to Arab pressures, as well as pressures from the Lebanese Leftist Parties and Palestinian supporters. These parties established their own armed groups and began fundraising campaigns in Christian communities to purchase weapons. Arms and ammunition, arriving openly through Beirut Port and the Jounieh Yacht Club, arrived from many different countries to supply Christian militias. In response, the Palestinians also began to arm and train their Muslim and leftist allies and successfully formed several militias within a matter of months.
- In the last two months of 1974, a surge of unprecedented violence swept the country, as bombings, murders, and looting took place amidst the inability of police and military forces to restore order.

- On 18 January 1975, armed clashes occurred between Palestinian fighters and the Lebanese army in the southern border region, including the launching of rockets at army barracks.
- On 26 February 1975, following a protest in the city of Tyre between fishermen with the support of leftist parties and the Member of Parliament for Sidon, Ma'ruf Saad, violent clashes broke out between the army and the demonstrators. Saad was badly wounded and died shortly afterward. This resulted in mass demonstrations and battles between the army and the Leftist militias, resulting in sixteen deaths.

The Lebanese-Israeli border became the scene of an increasing number of operations launched by Palestinian fighters in Israeli territory: 150 in 1969 compared to 29 in 1968 and only 2 in 1967 (O'Neill, 2019). The phenomenon took on a new scale at the beginning of the 1970s: 345 operations in 1971, 442 in 1972. At the same time, according to Lebanese army statistics, Israel committed 3,000 violations of Lebanese territory between 1968 and 1974, an average of 1.4 incidents per day, with nearly 800 Lebanese and Palestinian victims. For the period 1974-1975, there was an average of seven daily violations of the territory (Hudson, 1978).

The recurring confrontations between Palestinian forces and the Lebanese Army on one hand, and the escalating conflict between Palestinians and Israel, including the retaliatory attacks they engendered on the other hand, were the direct reasons for a profound and severe division within Lebanese society. The Palestinian armed presence constitutes a powerful dividing factor within Lebanese society on the eve of 1975. The gap between Christians and Muslims widens, and the consensus necessary for the survival of the political system in place is increasingly thin (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020).

### **3.5. The Political Polarization of Lebanon**

The Palestinian supporters were primarily grouped under a coalition known as the Lebanese National Movement (LNM). It included:

- The Progressive Socialist Party (PSP): Led by the influential Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt, who was the head of the LNM. This was one of the most powerful forces supporting the PLO.
- The Lebanese Communist Party (LCP): A key ideological and organizational ally.
- The Organization of Communist Action (OCA): Another significant Marxist group.

- Nasserist Parties: Various groups that followed the pan-Arab ideology of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, such as the Independent Nasserist Movement (Khalaf, 2002), which was a powerful Sunni militia.
- Ba'ath Party (Pro-Syrian and Pro-Iraqi factions): Both factions of the pan-Arab Ba'ath party were strong supporters.
- Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP): Advocated for a "Greater Syria" and saw the Palestinian struggle as part of that vision.

While the main Muslim figures included Sunni prime ministers Rachid Karamah, Saeb Salam, and Abdallah Al Yafi.

The religious leaders included:

- Hassan Khaled: Grand Mufti of Lebanon and the highest spiritual authority for Sunni Muslims in the country,
- Moussa Al Sader: A prominent Shiia political and religious leader who established The Supreme Islamic Shiia Council (1967) and The Movement of the Disinherited (1974), and created the resistance movement against Israel, the Amal Movement (1975).
- Muhamad Abou Chakra: "Sheikh al-Aql" translates to "The Sheikh of Intellect/Reason." This position is the supreme spiritual head of the Druze community (1949-1991), responsible for safeguarding the esoteric Druze faith, interpreting religious law, and managing the community's religious affairs and endowments.
- In addition to other Sunni figures like Sabri Hamadeh and Houssein Al Oueini.

The main opponents of the armed Palestinian resistance were primarily from the established Christian-dominated parties, often referred to as the "Christian Right" or the Lebanese Front (though the Front was formally created just as the war began). It included:

- The Kataëb Party (Phalanges): Led by Pierre Gemayel, this was the largest and most powerful Maronite Christian party and the leading force against the PLO's armed presence.
- The National Liberal Party (NLP): Led by former President Camille Chamoun, another major Maronite party with a powerful militia, "the Tigers" (Al Ahrar in Arabic).
- The Marada Brigade: The personal militia of President Suleiman Frangieh, who, despite being president and trying to find a middle ground, was fundamentally opposed to the erosion of state sovereignty.

- The Lebanese Army Command: While officially neutral, the army's leadership was deeply unhappy with the Cairo Agreement, which undermined its authority and forced it to stand by while a foreign army operated on its soil. Many officers and soldiers were loyal to the state and opposed the PLO's autonomy.

This political polarization and division provided the necessary fuel for the subsequent catastrophe. The LNM and its PLO allies saw an opportunity for revolution, while the Christian-led parties saw an existential threat to the state and their community's existence. This clash of visions and interests made a military confrontation almost inevitable.

In Christian literature, the figure of the Palestinian becomes that of the ungrateful, arrogant, and impostor enemy, responsible for all of Lebanon's ills 1943 (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020). Accused of espousing Palestinian interests, Lebanese Islam itself is perceived as a traitor to the true Lebanon, whose essence is presented as Christian. Conversely, Christians are targeted in the speeches of Muslim leaders. In "I Speak for Lebanon", Kamal Jumblatt designates the Maronites as the target group capable of crystallizing Druze resentment (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020). In contrast to the Maroni, burdened with all the defects, the Druze has all the ideal virtues (Jumblatt, 1982). Jumblatt justifies his "crusade" against the "isolationists" and "Christian Zionists," accusing them of having ruined Lebanon. He sometimes accuses the Maronites of having launched the sectarian wars of 1840-1860 to impose their political control over Mount Lebanon, while asserting that the movements launched by the Druze between 1842 and 1860 "are the response to the Maronite offensive intended to establish a Lebanon dominated by Christians." For him, the Maronite leaders stole the power and privilege of the Druze, and therefore those of the Jumblatt. He believes that a "historic opportunity" was presented to him in 1975, namely, replacing the sectarian system under Maronite hegemony with secular and democratic institutions (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020).

While the Lebanese conflict is habitually described in confessional terms, the polarization that developed around the Palestinian presence cannot be reduced to a Muslim-Christian dichotomy. The LNM, while led by Kamal Jumblatt and backed by a majority of Muslim leaders, also included a significant number of Christian figures and parties. The LCP, OAC, SSNP, and other left-wing and pan-Arab members joined their Muslim counterparts in demanding that the Palestinian cause be defended and that there be political reform. This goes to show that the conflict was not solely sectarian but also ideological, opposing secular, left-

wing, and pan-Arab forces, Christian and Muslim, against the Lebanese Front's conservative, isolationist Maronite-led parties.

### **3.6. Inequality Masked by Confessionalism: The Socio-economic Roots of the Civil War**

Paradoxically, the Lebanese Civil War did not erupt from poverty but in a context of rapid economic growth. Fueled in part by an influx of Palestinian capital, 1974 stood as Lebanon's most prosperous year before the conflict, with per capita income reaching \$1,200, double the average annual income recorded just seven years earlier in 1967 (Beyhum, 1991).

The country's economic prosperity was evidenced by a sustained period of growth from 1950 to 1974, which averaged 7% per year. This expansion was primarily linked to three factors: significant investment from Gulf countries, a thriving banking sector, and the growth of tourism (Kassir, 1994). The Lebanese liberal economic model, established as a system since independence and reinforced in 1956 by the banking secrecy law under the presidency of Camille Chamoun, consolidated a "merchant republic" based on economic *laissez-faire*. The *laissez-faire* model, which produced significant economic imbalances and social and territorial inequalities, was challenged by President Fouad Chehab (1958-1964), who, after the mini-civil war of 1958, and for the first time since independence, initiated an ambitious program of social reforms and planning (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020). The infrastructure investments launched by the state then helped to reduce the gaps between a hyper-capital concentrating most of the wealth and the still underdeveloped peripheries, whose leaders, mainly Muslims, were the spearheads of the anti-government insurrection in 1958. The social policy implemented above all helped to improve the standard of living in the peripheries and aimed to strengthen the sense of belonging of Muslims to the Lebanese state by integrating them more into the national economic circuits polarized by the capital (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020).

The popular image of Lebanon as the "Switzerland of the Middle East", built on the achievements of Chehabism and a facade of prosperity, masked a reality of deep-seated and worrying issues. Glaring social inequalities persisted on the eve of the war. Data from 1973-1974 shows that 54% of the population remained poor or relatively poor, while only 25% constituted the middle class, and 21% were very rich (Labaki & Abou Rjeily, 1993).

This social divide defies the simplistic, ideological stereotype of rich Christians and poor Muslims. For instance, the industrial working class in the outer suburbs of East Beirut was multi-confessional, but the majority comprised Shiia (44%) and Maronites (28.4%) (Dubar

& Nasr, 1976). Nevertheless, an extensive educational gap between Christians and Muslims allowed Christians to remain in control of most of the key places in the economic sector, including roles as company managers and bankers" (Traboulsi, 1993).

The resulting conflict was a product of a complex interplay of forces, with different groups and factions seeking control and influence. The conflict was characterized by a deep sense of polarization, with different communities and ideologies against one another. The Muslim camp, in particular, was a key player in the conflict, with differing factions and groups seeking to apply their influence and control.

However, it is essential to note that the conflict was not limited to the Muslim camp only and that political parties, groups, and communities like the Syrian Social Nationalist Party and the Maronite Christian community also had important roles to play. The conflict was a multifaceted, complex process with many factors and forces contributing to its escalation and continuation.

On the occasion of Christmas in 1968, the Christian Youth Movement issued a statement that condemned the financial and political power of the Church, which, it argued, helped contribute to the prevailing feudal and capitalist exploitative system in Lebanon. It also condemned the Church for its legitimization of the system. It called on the Church and Christian Lebanese to view themselves as an integral part of the Arab world, sharing in its struggles, challenges, and hopes of liberation, and towards developing a modern society for all. The statement concluded by affirming the collaboration of Christian Youth Movement with the democratic front for the Liberation of Palestine movement and urging the faithful to commit themselves to the revolutionary transformation of Lebanese society (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020).

Meanwhile, the Orthodox Youth Movement, led by Bishop Georges Khodr, was an attempt at reviving an Eastern Christianity that is open to dialogue with Islam. Another movement emerged in early 1974, led by Beirut's Melkite Archbishop Grégoire Haddad. Haddad criticized Lebanon's exploitative society, calling for a sincere commitment to the "Arab human cause," and for reforms that would make Lebanese society more just, humane, and infused with moral values. He argued that excessive social inequalities were the origin of the crisis, which had led to violence, and suggested a solution based on social justice that would provide employment, food, housing, and healthcare to everyone (Emmaus International, 2015).

### 3.7. The Rise of the Oligarch

Lebanon's problem was never that its communities couldn't live together, it was that its elite wouldn't let them unite against injustice (Salibi, 1988). It is impossible to discuss these indicators of the war without considering the emergence of this oligarchy, since the independence of the civil war and up to the Taëf and afterward. This oligarchy played a crucial role in preventing the ascension of a state founded on good governance and solid institutions following independence. It also contributed to the demolition of the last institutions of this state after the end of the war and in the post-Taëf period. This oligarchy was able to establish a new state machinery, linking business and politics, interweaving a multi-dimensional and robust framework on which corruption, sectarianism, and clientelism are intertwined, forming a structural factor that prevented the establishment of the basic infrastructure for a positive peace in Lebanon, where institutions, accountability, and good governance are among its most essential elements. This ideology will be thoroughly examined in the following chapters.

Additionally, the economic crises and the significant wealth imbalance between various social classes prompted social unrest, which began in the 1950s and worsened in the 1960s. This crisis was aggravated by a decline in agricultural and industrial activities. People who had previously relied on these industries in rural regions relocated to cities when agriculture collapsed, resulting in the formation of a "Misery Belt" on the edge of urban areas. This, in turn, led to unfavorable social phenomena, while the economy became more reliant on the service industry, imports, and trade, such as tourism and banking.

The historian Fawaz Traboulsi asserted that because of the President of the Republic's unique administrative and legislative capabilities, the presidency has emerged as a key pillar of dominating economic interests. This practice, which originated during the first independence era, has become a distinguishing element of Lebanon's political economy (Traboulsi, 2012). In an attempt to describe this oligarchy and the extent of its control over the country, Traboulsi says:

“The commercial and financial oligarchy that seized economic power in the country during the independence era comprises approximately thirty families, clustered around a solid core: the ‘consortium,’ composed of the President’s two brothers, his sons, and approximately a dozen allied families. The degree of monopolistic control these families exercised over the country’s economy is astonishing [...]” (Traboulsi, 2012, p. 89).

In terms of sectarian distribution, the oligarchy had 24 Christian households vs. 6 Muslim families. Inter-marriage was used by Christian households to protect or grow family income and property, as well as to consolidate economic ties. Marriage united 10 oligarchic families in a single generation: the Khoury, Faraoun, Chiha, Haddad, De Freij, Kattaneh, Aridas, Bustros, Assaili, and Doumit families. These oligarchic families accumulated their wealth from three major sources: first, the silk economy and import trade during the Mutasarrifate; second, war profits (between 1940 and 1944, the Allied forces spent £76 million in Syria and Lebanon); and third, immigration funds in Africa, the Americas, and Arab oil-producing countries, particularly Iraq and Saudi Arabia (Traboulsi, 2014, p. 33).

Members of the consortium held positions of control over all sectors of the country's economy. In the financial sector, they owned a dozen local or mixed-capital banks, most notably the Bank of Syria and Lebanon, which held the concession to issue currency, manage state finances, and control credit and trade with France. The largest insurance company, "the National Union", was a partnership between several members of the consortium and French capital. Most of the consortium's members were importers of Western-manufactured products, controlling the largest share of the local market for foodstuffs, weapons and ammunition, agricultural and industrial equipment and machinery, construction materials, beverages, pharmaceutical and medical products, stationery, wood, coffee, cars and spare parts, and much more. Of the fifty agencies representing American companies, half were held by a single company, the Kettaneh family, while the remainder was divided between the Fattal Sehnaoui and Faraoun families. These families were also pioneers in the tourism sector and owned the largest and most luxurious hotels in Beirut (the St. Georges and the Bristol), as well as the summer resorts of Bhamdoun and Sofar, and the ski resorts of Faraya and the Cedars. In the services sector, the consortium, in partnership with French capital, controlled concessionary companies and public service companies: the Beirut Port Company, the water and electricity companies, the Regie Libanaise des Tabacs et Tombacs, and others. The consortium also controlled the largest contracting company in the country and one of the largest in the Middle East (Emile Bustani's "CAT" company). Members of the consortium owned the airlines Air Liban and Middle East Airlines, the largest land transport company, and the largest companies producing electricity, cement, textiles, beer, matches, canned goods, vegetable oil, paint, glass, etc. Some of these families combined the local manufacture of materials with the import of them from abroad, as in the case of cement and building materials. In addition to that, these families were composed of major landowners in the city and the countryside (Traboulsi, 2014).

The wealth of 15 of these families was estimated at 245 million Lebanese pounds, equivalent to nine times the state treasury in 1949 and more than 40% of the national income in 1958. A significant portion of this wealth was invested outside Lebanon (Traboulsi, 2014).

During this period, 13 members of the oligarchs were elected to the Lebanese parliament, five of them held ministerial positions, and one of them, Hussein al-Ouini, was appointed Prime Minister, succeeding Riad al-Solh in 1950. He was the richest member of the oligarchs. He amassed his wealth in Saudi Arabia. Al-Ouini was a partner of the consortium's families in a number of major companies in the financial, transportation, real estate, textile, fuel, insurance, and aviation sectors. He also owned a pilgrimage transport company and was one of the founders of the Bank of Lebanon and the Migrant Bank (Traboulsi, 2014).

Most of the oligarchy's representatives were imposed on their regions from above, particularly in the Bekaa Valley and the South, where they played the role of financiers of the electoral lists of the political feudal system. This represented a marriage between the feudal lords and the businessmen, a phenomenon that established the new Lebanon. This phenomenon continues to this day and plays a fundamental role in the destruction of the infrastructure (or the inability to establish a state of institutions). Thus, 36 representatives, 26 of whom were Christians, owned or held majority stakes in the country's 230 largest companies (Traboulsi, 2014).

In addition to the description above, Traboulsi in his work cites Michel Chiha<sup>6</sup>, who considers that "Lebanon's strength lies in its free economy, based on individual initiative and the banking sector, making it an essential commercial and financial intermediary between the East and the West. Michel Chiha has crafted a model for the relationship between economic and political power in Lebanon. He advocates for businessmen to exercise economic power

---

<sup>6</sup> Michel Chiha (1891–1954) (ميشال شيجا) was a Lebanese banker, writer, politician, and, most importantly, the foremost political philosopher behind the creation and ideology of the state of Greater Lebanon. He was the principal author of the Lebanese Constitution in 1926 and the intellectual father of the National Pact of 1943. His influence cannot be overstated; he essentially wrote the "operating manual" for the Lebanese state, a system that, for all its flaws, continues to this day.

Michel Chiha's legacy is immense and deeply controversial:

His supporters see him as a visionary who created a unique formula for Christian-Muslim coexistence and prosperity, a pluralistic model that was an exception in the Middle East. They argue that his system, when it worked, made Lebanon the "Switzerland of the Middle East."

His critics argue that the system he designed was fundamentally flawed and contained the seeds of its own destruction. They contend that by institutionalizing sectarianism, creating a weak central state, and favoring a merchant oligarchy, his model produced massive social and economic inequalities that ultimately led to the Civil War of 1975.

through the head of the executive power, with the president of the republic at the center of the financial and commercial oligarchy and its partner, who defends its economic interests.

### ***3.7.1. Socio-economic and Demographic Transformation***

The Lebanese industry saw tremendous growth during World War II. Its expansion was, however, hindered by the expanding shift of the economy towards the tertiary sector, coupled with the commercial–financial oligarchy utilizing its control of political authority to impose its own logic and necessities on industrial interests (Traboulsi, 2012). As a result, industrialists, unable to secure control over the domestic market, which was overwhelmed with foreign products, nor to establish a reasonable space within it, had to produce mainly for export, distributing their products into Arab and African markets.

Nevertheless, the role of Lebanon as an intermediary economy did not assert itself without resistance. Among those advocating for an alternate opinion was Naeem Amyouni, the Assistant Director General in the Ministry of National Economy. In a speech delivered to the Junior College (currently referred to as the Lebanese American University) in July 1946, he introduced himself as someone who was convinced of establishing productive sectors, raising food production self-sufficiency, and diversifying exports (Bidayat, 2025). Amyouni reminded his audience that commerce is the engine of the economy, but it is not the sum of the economy, expressing concern over the rapid increase in the number of merchants, brokers, and intermediaries (Bidayat, 2025).

He observed the ongoing shift of capital from land ownership to finance and commerce, with the massive importation of luxuries and consumer goods. Amyouni stressed that the principal resources of Lebanon were agricultural and industrial, rather than touristic. He pointed out that two industrial sectors, tanning and textiles, generated two and a half times the revenues of the entire tourism sector (10 million Lebanese pounds compared to 4 million pounds in 1944–1945) (Traboulsi, 2012). In what was presumably a direct rebuttal to Michel Chiha's contention that the Lebanese rejected "enslavement" to industrial labor, Amyouni predicted that tourism would doom the Lebanese to a "servant class."

Amyouni spoke at length about the missed opportunities for Lebanese agriculture. The citrus production of Lebanon was equivalent to that of Palestine before World War I, but at the end of World War II, its production fell to a tenth of this figure. He emphasized the negative effect of the proliferation of brokers and intermediaries on agricultural prices, which rose by 100 to 150 percent (Traboulsi, 2012). The Lebanese economy was degrading, with inflation

jumping to an average of 8% in the three years before the war, up from 2-3% before 1971 (Traboulsi, 2012). This pointed to a structural crisis in Lebanese capitalism (Nasr, 1978), where a financial oligarchy linked to political elites controlled the dominant banking and commercial sectors, which by 1970 constituted 72% of the GNP (Hourani, 2010). The banking sector's growth, fueled by foreign capital, marginalized productive sectors like agriculture and industry and increased Lebanon's dependence on the West (Moore, 1983).

This economic strain fueled social unrest. From 1968, strikes became more frequent and the union movement more demanding as the urban working class was increasingly proletarianized. Tensions reached a violent turning point on November 11, 1972, when a strike at the Ghandour factory in Chiyah led to a bloody confrontation with security forces, leaving two workers dead. It was the first such fatal suppression of a labor movement since independence and foreshadowed the violence of the coming war (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020). Simultaneously, the agricultural sector was in crisis. Intensive, monopoly-driven agriculture impoverished the peasantry, sparking a massive rural exodus to Beirut that had begun in the 1960s but accelerated dramatically between 1970 and 1975 due to the social crisis and Israeli bombardments (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020). By the eve of the war, this exodus, facilitated by Chehab-era roads that better connected the peripheries to the city—had affected nearly 40% of the rural population (65% in the South) (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020). Consequently, agricultural employment plummeted to just 18% of the workforce by 1975 (Longuenesse, 2007).

The war thus erupted during a moment of intense and rapid urban transition. A country that was two-thirds rural in 1950 had become 70% urban by 1975, making Lebanon one of the most urbanized nations in the Arab world. Driven by real estate speculation, the population of the Beirut area had tripled in just 25 years; a true case of urban macrocephaly (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020). Greater Beirut was populated by 1.2 million inhabitants in 1975. It concentrated half of the country's resident population and, as of 1973, nearly 175,000 Palestinians (which was almost half of the entire Palestinian population in Lebanon).

### ***3.7.2. The Rise of the “Misery Belt” and the Movement of the Disinherited (Harakat Al Mahrumin)***

The rural migrants who flocked to Beirut contributed to the emergence of the “misery belt” and provided cheap labor for the industrial and service sectors (Dubar & Nasr, 1976). Among these migrants, the rural Shiia mixed with other urban communities, but they

constituted the majority of the newly proletarianized urban classes crowded into the “misery belt” before the war (Bourgey, 1985). By 1973-1974, they represented more than 29% of the population of Greater Beirut, a dramatic increase from just 6% in 1943 (Dubar & Nasr, 1976).

Long neglected by the state and a victim of socio-economic underdevelopment, the Shiia community began to express its social demands in the late 1960s. Galvanized by their charismatic leader, Imam Moussa al-Sadr, the founder of the “Movement of the Disinherited” (Harakat al-Mahrumin), the Shiia openly transitioned from social mobilization to political action (Norton, 1987). At the heart of their demands was a call for greater participation in the mechanisms of political and administrative power (Norton, 1987).

These new demands coincided with a spectacular demographic surge within the community. By 1975, the Shiia represented nearly 30% of Lebanon’s population (likely tied with the Sunnis for the largest community), up from 18.2% in 1948 (Nasr, 1978). Amidst this demographic boom, the Shiia felt severely underrepresented within the state. In fact, on the eve of the war, they held only 19 out of 99 parliamentary seats. It was not until 1974 that members of the community began to access first-category civil service positions (Chaib, 2009).

Imam Moussa al-Sadr’s discourse became more radical under the combined effect of exacerbated social struggles, rising sectarian polarization, and the erosion of the state’s monopoly on violence (Picard, 1996). The Movement of the Disinherited, born in the 1960s around a social program, became increasingly militarized. In May 1974, during a public gathering in Tyre, over 50,000 heavily armed Shiia men surrounded Imam al-Sadr and swore an oath to continue the fight for their cause and for that of all “disinherited” people (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020). On another occasion in Baalbek, before a crowd of nearly 100,000 armed individuals, the Imam delivered his famous slogan: “Arms are the adornment of men” (Kassir, 1984) which was a call to armament). By the autumn of 1975, he announced that the Shiia population of Jabal Amel (Southern Lebanon) was beginning to arm itself

### **3.8. The General Cultural Scene in Lebanon Before the Civil War**

As the demographics of the city continued to shift, the migrant population became a significant force in shaping the city's cultural and intellectual landscape. The influx of migrants from various countries, including Libya, brought with them a diverse range of perspectives and ideas, which contributed to a vibrant cultural scene. This cultural exchange was facilitated by a significant increase in literacy rates, with an estimated 25% of the migrant population able to

read and write (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020). However, increasing conflicts between groups, as well as the growth of radical ideologies, contributed to a divided social atmosphere. The city's political scene became more divided, with many organizations and factions competing for power and influence. The Lebanese civil war, which began in 1975, was a direct outcome of these tensions, as well as long-standing confrontations between various communities and ideologies.

### ***3.8.1. The Failure to Create a National Identity***

#### **❖ Sectarian Institutions:**

The sectarian institutions enabled each sect to preserve its own religious institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and social services. This prevented the development of a unified national identity. The educational system allowed each school to maintain its autonomy.

The stages of the establishing the Lebanese University is an important example of the failure to create a national identity. The idea of the Lebanese University began as an offspring of popular mobilization and the establishment of student movements in 1948, on one side, and the growing, escalating claims of the students at Saint Joseph University (USJ) in the late 1950s, on the other. In this period, USJ students created a protest movement against administrative authoritarianism and the cost of tuition fees (Ibrahim, 2025). But, when the government failed to act on the student committee's demands, the students organized a huge demonstration in February of the same year in downtown Beirut, declaring that there can be no real independence without a national university education (Ajao & Wielenga, 2017). Confrontations between the security forces and the students left many students injured and one student dead four months later as a result of his injuries.

Due to these significant events, the Lebanese government held a ministerial meeting on 5 February 1951, during which it decided to establish a special committee that would be tasked with paving the road towards the creation of the Lebanese University. However, the issue was not limited to students' protests; in fact, the very idea of the creation of the university soon took on a sectarian nature. There was significant resistance from both the political leadership and the religious authorities against the establishment of a public university, primarily because they viewed it as a threat to the dominance of private religious institutions. Many religious leaders and political figures feared that the creation of a secular, public university would undermine the influence of private universities such as the American University of Beirut and Université Saint-Joseph, which were closely tied to specific sectarian communities and played a central

role in preserving religious and sectarian identities (Mallat, 1993). This resistance was rooted in the perception that a strong public university could weaken the power and authority of sectarian-based educational and religious institutions, thus challenging their social and political influence. Despite the official decision to establish the Lebanese University in 1951, the project was never given the priority it deserved. Political infighting, sectarian considerations, and competing interests often delayed its development, and it remained underfunded and under-resourced for decades (Makdisi, 2000). Nevertheless, the Lebanese University has the potential to be a unifying institution, bringing together students from different regions and religious backgrounds and fostering a shared national identity. By serving as a space where diverse groups can interact and learn together, it could play a crucial role in promoting national cohesion and reducing sectarian divisions. However, there was little genuine political will to realize this potential, and the university's development was often hindered by sectarian and political agendas that prioritized maintaining existing sectarian privileges over fostering national unity (Saad, 2017).

#### ❖ **Absence of Unified Personal Status Law**

The 1943 Constitution did not change Articles 9 and 10 of the original 1926 Constitution. Article 9 grants, in the sake of safeguarding absolute freedom of religious belief, state legislative and judicial authority over issues of personal status as marriage, divorce, custody, inheritance, etc., to the sectarian communities. Article 10 is however, unique from most republican constitutions, granting state responsibility for patronizing public education. It places the burden on the Lebanese state to aid private religious education, provided that this does not disrupt "public knowledge."

Lebanon's sectarian system, institutionalized within the constitutional framework, has long served to undermine the formation of a shared national identity by its impact on private education and institutional leadership. Article 9 of the Lebanese Constitution, traceable back to the 1926 Constitution and preserved in the 1943 National Pact, reserves religious communities' exclusive jurisdiction over personal status issues such as marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance (Hokayem, 2014). Such constitutional validation of sectarian domination encourages a fragmented educational system under which religious communities dominate private schools whose primary function is to enhance distinct religious identities and values rather than a national curriculum. These schools, in encouraging confessional teaching

over others, enhance sectarian allegiances and hinder the development of an integrated Lebanese national identity.

Article 10 complicates this landscape further by obliging the Lebanese state to support religious private education, as long as it does not contradict "public knowledge". This constitutional provision effectively institutionalizes and subsidizes sectarian schools, allowing them to be administered with considerable autonomy and limiting the development of a secular, inclusive public education system that could foster national unity and belonging (Elias, 2022).

The outcome of such constitutional guarantees is an educational sector segmented along sectarian lines, with neither national control nor consolidated curricular standards. Such fragmentation maintains community loyalties at the expense of forging a single Lebanese identity, a problem that has been frequently raised in scholarly publications. Notably, many scholars argue that the lack of a structured, secular curriculum stifles the development of a common national consciousness, which is critical for social cohesion and political stability in Lebanon (Salem & Khouri, 2004). His sectarian divide in education has historically contributed to societal polarization and is one of the elements indirectly connected to the commencement of Lebanon's civil war.

The excessively sectarian nature of Lebanon's educational system is embedded in historic arrangements during Ottoman and French rule, when religious authorities had tight control over education. By the mid-1920s, private religious schools accounted for up to 90% of the schools, which were managed, to varying degrees, independently of state supervision. Subsequent constitutional provisions have preserved the system, embedding sectarianism in the very foundations of the state and limiting efforts to impose a unified national curriculum (Elias, 2022).

### ***3.8.2. The Failure of Reform and State-Building***

The general cultural environment in Lebanon was grey, dominated by a severe social and economic crisis. The country was seized by waves of strikes that erupted in numerous sectors, indicating the depth of anger and instability. In February 1970, the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers (GCTL) threatened an open-ended strike, prompting the government to activate the health department of the National Social Security Fund, which provided benefits to roughly 250,000 workers and employees (Tufaro, 2023). In 1973, the CGTL went on strike again, seeking an end to arbitrary dismissals, pay rises, rent reductions, profit limitations for businesses, and support of cooperative ventures. This was the first time

the labor movement attempted to question the commercial-financial oligarchy's hidden and almost holy power.

Moreover, since 1968, the industrial world has been shaken by a constant wave of strikes and grassroots mobilizations. The rapid rate of industrialization, which depended mainly on young manual laborers from rural areas who were quickly and brutally changed into industrial workers, increased their class awareness and willingness to join in conflict. Their demands encompassed every aspect of labor life: enforcement of labor laws on the eight-hour workday, family allowances, sick and maternity leave, the right to unionize, recognition of workers' committees in factories, an end to arbitrary dismissals, the inclusion of agricultural workers in social security (including its union branch), and the improvement of workplace conditions, including safety standards, compensation for occupational accidents, and the cessation of sexual harassment faced by female workers (Traboulsi, 2012). In addition to these developments, student movements also emerged as a turning point, an issue that will be addressed in detail later.

### **1- Fouad Chehab's Attempts**

President Fouad Chehab viewed socio-economic disparities as the main cause of disturbances and political tensions, embodying the root issue that demanded resolution. To address these disparities, Chehab felt the need to create a new socio-political ideology and implement it. In fact, the strategy of Chehabism relied on balancing powers and providing a fair distribution of national resources between classes, regions, and other social groups in Lebanon. This fell within a modern socio-political environment, liberal, democratic, and based on redefining the state, and also reestablishing the relationship between the political institution and civil society by encouraging every citizen to engage in the molding and execution of common projects at the national level (Abou Jaoude, 2021).

To achieve this goal, President Chehab entrusted Father Louis-Joseph Lebret, director of the Institut de Recherche et de Formation en vue du Développement (IRFED), to conduct surveys and overall studies of Lebanon's natural, human, economic, and social resources, and to render recommendations, projects, and solutions for the country's existing economic and social problems. The choice of such an international organization was deliberate, intended to put the studies and reform initiatives beyond the reach of traditional power brokers and special interests (Abou Jaoude, 2021).

The IRFED mission produced reports that were brought together in eight volumes covering all the fields of development in Lebanon. The volumes included a complete list of natural, human, social, and economic data for each district and its environment, and detailed studies of the nature and needs of each city and village and the innovative capacity of each region in each sector.

These studies formed the basis for organizing comprehensive and integrated development plans within the country, issuing a series of laws and decrees in various fields, and classifying regions according to their industrial, agricultural, or touristic orientation, so that no territory in Lebanon would remain neglected, wasted, or distorted. Two successive IRFED missions prepared these studies in the period between 1959 and 1964 (Verdeil, 2003).

### **IRFED Summary of Reports on Lebanon:**

Lebanon is a cultural gateway connecting multiple civilizations and possesses a global role in communication and cultural exchange. Its persistent interaction with other civilizations vindicates that coexistence is possible between Arab and Western civilizations. Lebanon faces economic challenges since it is economically dependent on migrant remittances and foreign trade services, and possesses very few natural resources (Yaghi, 2024). Foreign income diversification and local production development of resources are essential, along with securing the economy against international market volatility. The problems are depletion of Lebanese savings, lack of local investment, and the need for better utilization of land to export high-demand niche products (Yaghi, 2024).

Lebanon can supply high-quality products to foreign markets and must responsibly steer its economy to maintain and enhance its global standing. Lebanese markets for migration must be diversified from Europe and Africa, building technical expertise and entrepreneurial experience among Lebanese (Yaghi, 2024). Lebanese are a highly adaptable and resilient people, making them more competitive in the foreign labor market; their networks around the world can be better utilized. Lebanon's economy is liberal but recognizes the need for state intervention in development and infrastructure, without destroying individual initiative. Weak governmental and administrative machinery inhibits development; cooperation between social and cultural elites needs to be introduced for balance and social justice to be met. Improving living standards depends on the development of water, roads, and schools, land conservation, and providing regular technical consultancy (Yaghi, 2024). It is necessary that inclusive development is accompanied by active community participation and a shift in mindset for

ensuring national solidarity and a secure future. Changes in behavior and mentality are important for sustainable development and have to be accompanied by sustained efforts from all institutions and authorities (Yaghi, 2024).

In summary, Lebanon possesses great economic and cultural potential but is burdened by challenges that require administrative and economic reforms, a shift in mindset, and greater national solidarity to achieve sustainable development and a secure and prosperous future. However, its implementation was hindered by Lebanon's traditional political system, dominated by oligarchic and entrenched politicians who favored maintaining a weak state structure. These politicians perceived a strong state as weakening their powers and preferred to keep Lebanon vulnerable to internal conflicts, thereby ensuring that their own powers never got weakened. Hence, despite the highly detailed suggestions of the report, opposition from the political leadership meant that the reforms and investments necessary to translate the developmental vision into concrete reality never came through (Fouad Chehab Foundation, 2024). This reflects a broader pattern where vested interests have long conspired to stop the formation of a stable, integrated Lebanese state.

#### **Reform obstruction:**

When President Chehab launched his reforms, his main opponents were the entrenched politicians known in Arabic as "za'im", powerful figures representing established tradition and the local notables' entrenched power. These za'ims perceived themselves personally threatened by Chéhab's efforts to modernize and centralize the state, as his reforming was directed against dissolving their grip on political and economic power (Harb, 2007). The za'ims controlled extensive clientelistic networks, with power rooted in their patronage systems. They asserted their dominance through ministerial roles or parliamentary seats, using these to grant favors such as governmental jobs and infrastructure projects, guaranteeing support and loyalty from their followers. These mainstream politicians, who were so entrenched in the system, saw Chehab's efforts towards institutional reforms as a challenge to their dominance. Those za'ims were directly or indirectly connected to the same network of oligarch that was discussed above and constituted a strong resistance to any attempt to reduce their grip on power (Kashar, 2023).

Chehab's reforms eroded their ability to operate the system, notably efforts to formalize recruitment and administrative procedures, which threatened to reduce their personal control and clientelistic leverage. The attempt to provide development priorities in the peripheral regions of the nation further alarmed the za'ims since it involved increased taxation and

restrictions on their traditional sources of power, including trade and local privileges (Kashar, 2023). The resistance of the za'ims was firm. They fought back against Chehab's reforms by opposing his government and rallying against the push for a stronger, centralized state. Their opposition was led by figures like Camille Chamoun (ex-president) and Saëb Slam, a Beirut leader whose influence waned with time and who resigned as Prime Minister in 1961 after being marginalized by Chehab's domination. This was not only a political but an ideological conflict, in which the za'ims and the regime saw the reforms as threatening their existence due to their traditional means of power (Kashar, 2023). Their opposition led to the rejection of the regime's police and authoritarian tactics, including using the Second Bureau of the military and electoral interference to favor the ruling regime (Saliba, 2024). This opposition became particularly evident in 1961, following a coup attempt by oppositionists friendly to Greater Syria, aiming to challenge Chehab's leadership and preserve the old order.

Thus, the main opposition to Chehab's reforms came from the za'im class, those whose long-standing dominance was threatened and who openly fought against the creation of a more powerful and centralized state that threatened their entrenched interests. Additionally, according to Kamal Salibi, the Lebanese bourgeoisie and political establishment, both Muslim and Christian, were unwilling to give up any of their advantages in support of the reform movement (Salibi, 1988).

### ***3.8.3. Students and Unions Against the Merchant Society***

The student movements exceeded the framework of social and economic demands, placing Lebanese and Arab society under profound scrutiny from the national, moral, and cultural perspectives. The movements were significantly influenced by the June 1967 defeat, the development of the world youth revolutions, particularly in France, and the momentum of the armed Palestinian resistance, and also by the consequences of the May 1968 student uprisings.

The mobilizations began with a long March 1967 strike, initiated by secondary school students who were asking for lower tuition fees, the elimination of the disqualifying grade in foreign languages, and the unification of textbooks. The police fired at a student demonstration in Tyre and killed the student Edouard Ghanimeh (Traboulsi, 2012). In June 1967 and the weeks that followed, student activism regarding the Arab–Israeli conflict intensified, leading to the official closure of schools and universities. The campus of the American University of

Beirut was stormed by police, its striking students were expelled, and its campus was occupied (Traboulsi, 2012).

Returning to socioeconomic demands, in April 1968, the students and professors of the Lebanese University called for a fifty-day-long strike requesting raises in salary, employment guarantees, one university campus, more scholarships, and cafeterias within the university. While the administration objected to these demands, the students succeeded in gaining recognition for the "National Union of Lebanese University Students," which won a majority of the seats. The Progressive Socialist Party and the Communist Labor Organization (aligned with the newly formed Communist Party) openly expressed solidarity, which characterized the radical nature of the student movement. The Union called for another strike in March 1972 to advance these demands. Private universities, including the American University, Saint Joseph University, and the Arab University, participated in solidarity. The Lebanese University strike reoccurred the following year, ending only after the police intervened and the firing of multiple professors by the administration (Traboulsi, 2012).

In 1969 alone, teachers and students in both public and private schools went on strike three times, seeking increased compensation and the formation of a mutual aid fund, but received no response. Vocational schools in both urban and rural regions saw significant mobilization, with demands for improved teaching conditions, increased specialized diversification, and better job chances for graduates. They completed their efforts with a countrywide strike at the start of 1974. However, like other aspects of the student and social movements, they failed to produce real outcomes (Traboulsi, 2012). Private universities also rallied behind their own causes. In 1971, students at the American University of Beirut, the majority of whom were from the middle and upper classes, coordinated a strike over tuition hikes, occupying university facilities and staging a big demonstration. The police intervened and evicted the students from campus, with the help of Kataëb Party (Traboulsi, 2012).

In 1972, Lebanon experienced a nationwide strike by 16,000 government school teachers who were calling for raises, the right to unionize, and retirement after 25 years of service. The two-month strike ended when the Ministry of Education announced it would halt salary payments to teachers. When the strike resumed between January and July 1973, Prime Minister Saeb Salam dismissed 324 teachers and branded them as "instigators." The action triggered an outbreak of demonstrations and solidarity protests across the country. The hunger strike by the dismissed teachers in Beirut drew delegations from every sector of the social

movement. Even the Maronite Church intervened to demand the reinstatement of the sacked teachers, but it was in vain (Traboulsi, 2012).

### **3.9. The Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990): From Fragmentation to Taëf**

The Lebanese Civil War was a devastating and protracted conflict that fundamentally reshaped Lebanon's political, social, and sectarian landscape. Rooted in a complex web of historical grievances, regional rivalries, and internal divisions, the war's trajectory reveals how Lebanon's fragile political institutions and sectarian structures ultimately contributed to its descent into chaos. The culmination of this chaos was the Taëf Agreement of 1989, a regional-brokered effort to restore stability and redefine Lebanon's political order. To understand how the conflict reached this point, it is essential to analyze the initial phases of violence, the escalation driven by external actors, and the internal sectarian dynamics that prevented meaningful national cohesion.

#### ***3.9.1. The Outbreak of Violence: The Two-Year War (1975–1976)***

Although tensions and skirmishes had been ongoing for years, the official start of the Lebanese Civil War is widely marked by the events of April 13, 1975. On that day, violence erupted when a bus convoy carrying Palestinian fighters was attacked in Beirut's Ain al-Rummaneh district by armed members of the Kataëb Party, resulting in the death of approximately 22 Palestinians (Malley, 2018). This incident acted as a catalyst for a broader eruption of violence, which quickly engulfed Beirut and spread to other regions, notably the north and the Beqaa Valley.

The violent phase that followed was characterized by brutal massacres, street battles, and shifting alliances among sectarian militias. Major episodes included the Karantina Massacre, the Damour Massacre, and the siege of Tel al-Zaatar, each leaving hundreds, if not thousands, dead. The primary factions were the Christian militias, supported by the Lebanese presidency and segments of the army against the Palestinian and leftist militias supported by regional actors, particularly Syria and Libya. As the conflict intensified, the Lebanese army was increasingly divided; some units defected and joined militias, while others remained loyal to the state, often unable to contain the violence.

The intervention of Syria in November 1976 marked a turning point, ending the initial phase of the war with the Syrian army supporting the Christian militias and backing a regional

bargain involving the United States, Israel, and Arab states like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Syria's stance and the alliances it supported evolved significantly over the course of the Lebanese Civil War and based on its proper interests. Initially, Syria justified its intervention in Lebanon as an effort to protect the Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese leftist factions, claiming that its goal was to safeguard Lebanon's stability and maintain regional balance. However, this positioning was largely a façade. In reality, Syria's primary objective was not genuine protection or stability but rather to establish a dominant regional role (Salloukh, 2005). In the beginning of the war, the Palestinian and their supporters (backed up by the Syrians) were ahead. Later on, Syria created the pretext to enter Lebanon under the guise of safeguarding the Christian community, a move that allowed it to legitimize its military presence and influence (Harris, 1985). This shift was strategic: it provided Syria with the opportunity to expand its regional power, positioning itself as a key player capable of bargaining with major powers like Israel and the United States (Rabinovich, 1985).

In reality, this was a calculated move to deepen Syria's involvement in Lebanon's internal affairs, enabling it to project power and secure its regional interests. This intervention marked the beginning of a prolonged Syrian dominance that would last until 2005, fundamentally shaping Lebanon's political landscape and preventing genuine national reconciliation. Syria's role was thus less about protection any of the conflicting parties, and more about strategic regional domination an ambition that significantly influenced Lebanese politics for decades. Starting 1976 the Syrian began to exert control over Lebanese political decisions, militias, and regional power balances, effectively turning Lebanon into a client state under Syrian dominance (Salloukh, 2005).

The Christian community, which initially welcomed Syrian support as a counterbalance against Palestinian and leftist forces, gradually grew cautious of Syrian dominance. The Syrian military's expansion into Lebanon was perceived by many Lebanese Christians particularly the Kataëb Party and its allies as an occupation that threatened their sovereignty and their vision of Lebanon as a Christian-led state. This growing resentment culminated in internal conflicts, notably the Hundred Days' War in 1978.

### ***3.9.2. Internal Christian Divisions and the Hundred Days' War***

The internal Christian landscape, once relatively united under the leadership of figures like Bashir Gemayel (Kataëb), began to fracture due to mounting tensions with Syria. Bashir's efforts to unify the Christian militias and resist Syrian influence were met with hostility from

Damascus, which saw the Christian militias as obstacles to its regional ambitions and a threat to its control over Lebanon. This rivalry erupted into the "Hundred Days' War" in 1978, a brutal siege in East Beirut's Christian districts. The conflict was driven by Syria's support for Palestinian and leftist militias opposing the Christian militias, which by then included the Lebanese Forces and the Kataëb. Syria's backing of Palestinian fighters, combined with its support for other anti-Christian militias, was perceived as an attempt to weaken Christian control over Beirut and to expand Syrian influence at the expense of Christian political aspirations. The siege resulted in intense urban combat, destruction, and a deepening of sectarian animosities, setting the stage for the broader regional and internal conflicts to come (Dakhli, & Wieland, 2024).

The Hundred Days' War revealed the extent to which Syrian intervention had shifted from ostensibly protective to overtly hegemonic, with Damascus seeking to weaken Christian militias and expand its strategic foothold. It also marked a turning point where the Christian community, particularly the Kataëb and Lebanese Forces, increasingly viewed Syria as an occupier rather than a protector, leading to a profound realignment in their political and military strategies.

### ***3.9.3. Israeli Involvement and the Shift in Regional Dynamics***

The Israeli invasion of June 6, 1982, marked a decisive escalation, with Operation Peace for Galilee aiming to eliminate the Palestinian presence in Lebanon and establish a security zone. The invasion resulted in the siege and bombardment of Beirut, the first Arab capital under Israeli siege, and the evacuation of Palestinian fighters and civilians under the auspices of international pressure (Parkinson, 2007). The aftermath was marked by political assassinations, most notably the killing of Bashir Gemayel, Lebanon's president-elect, which plunged the country into further chaos.

The massacres at Sabra and Shatila Palestinian camps, carried out by Lebanese Christian militias members (mainly Lebanese Forces and Kataëb) under Israeli supervision, underscored the brutalization of the conflict. These atrocities, along with the rise of non-sectarian militias like Hezbollah, signaled a shift from conventional sectarian warfare towards asymmetric resistance movements. The Lebanese National Resistance Front (LNRF), a coalition of leftist and Palestinian militias, emerged as a major force resisting both Israeli occupation and sectarian militias allied with Israel.

The early 1980s also saw the ratification of the 17 May 1983 agreement between Lebanon and Israel, which was later revoked, further destabilizing the political landscape. The agreement's failure, coupled with continued clashes, intensified the sectarian and regional rivalries.

The period from 1985 to 1990 was marked by extreme violence, including the War of the Camps (1985–1987), in which Lebanese militias fought Palestinian refugee camps, and the Mountain War (1988–1990), a brutal sectarian conflict between Druze and Christian militias. The assassination of President René Mouawad in 1989 and the subsequent "War of Elimination" in early 1990, led by Michel Aoun against rival militias, culminated in Syrian military intervention and the exile of Aoun in France. During this period, sectarian militias solidified their control over territorial enclaves, often fighting amongst themselves. The Lebanese Forces, Amal, Hezbollah, and other militias established de facto autonomous zones, perpetuating a state of war and deepening sectarian divides. The political vacuum after the end of President Amine Gemayel's term in 1988, coupled with the lack of a unified government, created an environment of lawlessness and continued violence.

#### ***3.9.4. The Path to the Taëf Agreement: Structural Causes and Regional Dynamics***

The prolonged violence and internal fragmentation revealed fundamental flaws in Lebanon's political system, rooted in sectarian power-sharing arrangements established in the National Pact and reinforced by constitutional provisions like Articles 9 and 10. These articles enshrined sectarian control over personal status laws and education, institutionalizing confessionalism and fostering societal divisions. However, it is crucial to recognize that Lebanese political leaders were adept at manipulating the narrative of sectarian war to maintain and deepen divisions, even when many of the actual conflicts were not purely sectarian in nature.

A close examination of the various battles throughout the war reveals a more complex picture. For instance, the battles in the camps, such as those involving Palestinian factions and Shia militias like Amal, were essentially fights between Muslim groups, often driven by ideological, political, or territorial disputes rather than purely sectarian animosities. Similarly, conflicts between Christian militias such as the Lebanese Forces and the Marada, or between Kataëb and Ahrar, often reflected rivalries within the Christian community rather than a simple sectarian divide. The fights between Amal and Hezbollah, both Shia groups, further

underscore the internal complexity of Lebanese factionalism. The most glaring and brutal confessional conflict was the Mountain War of 1982, fought between Christian and Druze militias, which was explicitly encouraged and armed by Israel to create divisions and weaken Lebanese unity. This war, marked by massacres and deep-seated animosities, was less a reflection of natural sectarian hatred than a strategic manipulation aimed at fragmenting Lebanon along sectarian lines.

In essence, while sectarian identities often served as a facade for conflict, many of the wars and battles were driven by political rivalries, territorial disputes, and regional interests, with sectarianism exploited as a tool rather than an inherent cause. This manipulation allowed political leaders to perpetuate divisions, ensuring that Lebanon remained a fractured society, incapable of forging a unified national identity (Kalyvas, 2006).

The dominance of sectarian militias and regional actors had created a fragile state, unable to impose authority or foster a shared national identity. The devastating human toll, destruction of infrastructure, and regional destabilization underscored the urgent need for comprehensive political reform.

The regional context was equally critical. Syria's intervention, initially aimed at stabilizing Lebanon, evolved into a hegemonic presence that deeply influenced Lebanese politics and militias' alliances. Syrian forces initially entered Lebanon under the guise of protecting Christian communities during the 1976 war, claiming to uphold the safety of Lebanon's Christian population amidst rising chaos. However, over time, their presence shifted from that of protectors to occupiers, as Syrian troops established military bases, controlled key strategic areas, and exerted influence over Lebanese political decisions (Salloukh, 2005).

### ***3.9.5. The Signing of the Tripartite Accord: A Prelude to Taëf***

The Tripartite Accord of 1985 (in Arabic Al itifak Al thulathi) was a significant, albeit short-lived, agreement signed in Damascus, Syria, aimed at ending the Lebanese Civil War. The accord was negotiated between the three major Lebanese factions: the leader of the Lebanese Forces then Elie Hobeika, along with the Druze leader Walid Jumblatt representing the PSP, and the leader of Amal Movement Nabih Berri. The agreement was brokered under Syrian auspices, reflecting Syria's growing influence over Lebanon during this period. It aimed to restore stability by establishing a new political framework, including provisions for disarmament of militias, constitutional reforms, and the reopening of Lebanese institutions that had been paralyzed by years of conflict (Al-Khawand, 2001).

However, the accord faced immediate resistance from various Lebanese factions, particularly from the Christian community. Samir Geagea who overthrew Hobeika from the leadership of the Lebanese Forces few days after signing the agreement, strongly opposed its terms which he perceived as a betrayal of their military achievements and political aspirations. Also, the President of the Republic Amine Gemayel openly criticized the accord viewing it as a capitulation to Syrian interests and a betrayal of the sacrifices made during the civil war.

The internal divisions within the Christian community became even more apparent when it culminated in violent clashes within the Christian militia ranks and further destabilized the fragile peace process. The subsequent violence underscored the profound mistrust and conflicting interests among Lebanese factions, especially within the Christian community, which believed that their military strength and political influence could secure better terms if they continued fighting.

The signing of the accord did little to halt the ongoing violence, and the Lebanese Parliament rejected it outright, viewing it as insufficient and threatening Lebanese sovereignty. Many leaders, notably the Christians' ones, misjudged the political landscape by believing they could leverage their military power to negotiate more favorable terms or even reverse the gains made by Muslim and Syrian-backed factions (Al-Khawand, 2001). At this stage, Syria was backing up different fighting factions, many times opposing each other, in order to keep the violence and chaos on going and to strengthen their grip over the situation in Lebanon. This overconfidence by the Christians was a critical miscalculation. They underestimated the extent to which Syria had entrenched itself in Lebanese affairs and overestimated their own capacity to impose their will through continued conflict.

This misjudgment proved disastrous. Instead of consolidating their position or securing better terms, the Christian factions prolonged the civil war, which resulted in devastating consequences. The continued fighting caused immense destruction, especially in Beirut, and led to the deaths of tens of thousands of Lebanese civilians. The internal divisions within the Christian camp, combined with the broader regional and international pressures, ultimately weakened their negotiating position later on in the Taëf conference (Al-Khawand, 2001). Their refusal to accept the realities of Syrian dominance and the changing geopolitical landscape only prolonged the conflict, leading to further suffering and loss of life.

Historically, this episode exemplifies how overconfidence and miscalculation can have tragic consequences in war (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020). The Christian factions believed

they could continue fighting to secure a better deal, but this approach ignored the shifting power dynamics and regional realities. Their insistence on military resistance and political intransigence only led to greater destruction, more casualties, and a fractured national identity. Had they accepted the terms of the broader regional peace efforts earlier, and recognized the limits of their military power, Lebanon might have avoided much of the devastation that ensued. The tragic lesson remains clear: in conflicts rooted in deep sectarian divisions, stubbornness and overconfidence can lead to unnecessary suffering, and pragmatism and compromise are often the wisest courses toward peace (De Clerck & Malsagne, 2020).

Knowing that the terms of the Tripartite Agreement had a great resemblance to the terms of the Taif Agreement, unfortunately the Lebanese have to wait four more years before signing the Taëf agreement and stopping the disastrous cycles of violence.

## **Chapter 4: The Taëf Agreement: A Failed Power-Sharing Agreement for Lebanon**

The Taëf agreement, which ended the Lebanese Civil War in 1989, promised peace and stability in Lebanon. Despite some strengths, the agreement carried several issues. This chapter provides an in-depth critical analysis of the Taëf Agreement. It explores the historical background of power-sharing in Lebanon from 1840 to 1990. It analyzes the provisions of the Taëf Agreement, including political restructuring, decentralization, demilitarization, and foreign involvement (notably Syria). The main strength of the agreement was that it ended the ongoing war and violence between the various parties. However, it failed to pave the way for lasting peace in Lebanon. As Salam (1998) notes, following the end of the Lebanese Civil War, “politics was the continuation of war by other means.” (Salam, 1998). While the fighting and gunfire ceased, the agreement did not resolve the underlying conflicts and tensions that persisted in the country. This chapter will discuss the several issues with the Taëf Agreement: the changes that emerged through the Taëf agreement, issues with the content of the agreement, gaps that prevented reaching true positive peace, and problems regarding implementation. The chapter concludes with lessons learned, emphasizing how the agreement institutionalized sectarianism and clientelism rather than overcoming them. A general overview was crucial prior to delving into an analysis of how the election law affected the Taëf power-sharing agreement's effectiveness and success in the coming chapters.

### **4.1. Post-Conflict Peace and Power-Sharing Challenges**

In their study, Juon and Boshcler (2021) stated that “corporate” power-sharing is based on quotas, explicit veto powers granted to minority representatives, and geographical provisions that closely mirror ethnic settlement trends (Juon & Bochsler, 2021). These institutions are inflexible, provide little room for interethnic rivalry, and concentrate power in the hands of a small number of governing elites, undermining democratic principles of rivalry and transparency. Juon and Boschler (2021) also show that the overall effects of corporate power-sharing are mixed between positive and negative, with a potential for negative consequences.

In this context, it could be argued that the scenario of Lebanon demonstrates the aspirations for democratic growth under corporate power-sharing arrangements. While power-sharing enabled it to maintain an appearance of democracy, the Lebanese state has essentially

locked itself into a segmental patronage system (Juon & Bochsler, 2021). Its quota system not only ensured a steady power allocation among sectarian parties, but also instilled serious political policy of extreme conservatism among them. Numerous analysts see Lebanon's democracy as a procedural façade (Ghosn & Khoury, 2011), with significant and ongoing problems in electoral democracy and competitiveness. The priorities placed on elite accords and limited reform capabilities are apparent in Lebanon's weak state machinery.

Several questions remain regarding civil wars and post-conflict peace. What makes civil wars so tricky and so likely to restart? Is power-sharing considered as an effective strategy for resolving civil conflicts and fostering sustainable positive peace? Do new electoral laws solve the problem? From the perspective of the bargaining model of conflict, the persistence of civil war can be attributed to the challenges associated with achieving a mutually binding agreement that effectively resolves conflicts related to resources or authority, hence preventing the occurrence of costly violence. The manifestation of violence in a political conflict implies that a resolution through a mutually agreeable and self-enforcing agreement, which circumvents the need for armed intervention, is unlikely.

We will now explore Lebanon's post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, focusing on the Taëf Agreement as a starting point. Regarded as the treaty that brought an end to the war, the accord officially divided political authority evenly among Christians and Muslims. Within the realm of the overarching rift, both official and unofficial sectors govern the allocation of political authority within various sects among the mentioned societies. This dual-layered approach aimed to disentangle demographic representation from that of political participation by ensuring equitable distribution of overall shares though allowing potential adjustments to this power-sharing arrangement in the short term and unofficially. A series of constitutional reforms were implemented, overseen by Syria, the primary guardian-to-be of the post-war agreement, to establish the necessary political and economic conditions for sustainable peace and stability. Three decades later, the outcomes of this endeavor are, at best, ambiguous and at worst, indicative of failure.

#### **4.2. Three Experiences of Power-Sharing in Lebanon (1840-1989)**

The period between 1840 and 1989 was characterized by numerous violent incidents and the establishment of three power-sharing agreements brokered by external actors.

#### ***4.2.1. From Qā'immaqāmiyya and Mutasarifiyya to the French Mandate: The First Power Sharing Agreement***

The origins of communal violence can be traced back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly to events unfolding in 1858 (Khuri-Makdisi, 2013). At that time, Maronite peasants, primarily in the northern district of Kisrawan, rebelled against the landlords. This conflict soon spread to other regions of Mount Lebanon, particularly in the south, *where* the lords of the Druze utilized collective sentiments to garner support from the peasants. In July 1860, the Druze faction emerged victorious, inflicting severe losses on the Christian community, with approximately eleven thousand fatalities. In response to the escalating violence, the Ottoman Empire, supported by a coalition of European powers, introduced the Règlement Organique (Organic Law) on June 9, 1861 (Zahar, 2005). This marked the inception of the first power-sharing arrangement aimed at addressing the sectarian tensions and restoring stability in Lebanon.

Indeed, prior to its establishment as an independent nation in 1920, Lebanon operated under governance systems based on power-sharing arrangements. These systems were designed to manage societies vertically divided along sectarian associations; a characteristic particularly pronounced in Lebanon. Sectarian power-sharing frameworks had been a defining feature of the Lebanese system since as early as 1840, laying the foundation for what would evolve into the contemporary Lebanese government. In his book "*Lebanon: A History, 600–2011*" Harris stated that the political factions in Mount Lebanon were often based on clan alliances and local loyalties, rather than strictly religious affiliations (Harris, 2015). The historical circumstances that facilitated this transition of sectarian or religious affiliation to become the primary organizing foundation of the Lebanese political structure trace back to the events of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Various aspects converged culminating in the establishment of a sectarian-based political structure initially formalized through the system of qā'immaqāmiyya throughout the 1840s. The initial system, although brief, laid the groundwork for the subsequent Mutaṣarrifiyya system implemented in 1861, which effectively extended the sectarian framework throughout the entire government. These primary models of sectarian governance established a precedent for allocating political power and representation along sectarian lines. This laid the groundwork for subsequent governance structures in Lebanon, shaping the country's political landscape for years to come (Winslow, 1996). As Lebanon's political system evolved, it continued to reflect and build upon these sectarian foundations, influencing the

distribution of authority, the formation of coalitions, and the dynamics of political participation.

After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of Lebanon under the French mandate period (1920 till 1943), a fresh political order emerged, maintaining the sectarian system of power-sharing. The conditions of the League of Nations' Mandate for Lebanon specifically safeguarded the independence of religious communities in overseeing their internal affairs and preserving their educational institutions and their personal civil law (Collelo, 1989).

#### ***4.2.2. The National Pact: The Second Power-Sharing Agreement***

In 1943, following Lebanon's independence, both the National Pact and the Lebanese Constitution solidified the sectarian power-sharing arrangement. The National Pact, an informal agreement, delineated the division of political authority among the country's diverse communities, giving the presidency to Christian Maronites, the prime minister to the Muslim Sunni and the speaker of the parliament to Muslim Shiia as explained in the previous chapter. This agreement outlined the basic guidelines of the political landscape: communal coexistence and the distribution of positions among communities domestically, alongside a stance of neutrality in international matters (Norton, 1985).

The Constitution, on the other hand, openly enshrined the religious rights of societies to govern their internal religious matters, personal status laws, and educational systems (Articles 9, 10, and 95) (Lebanese Parliament, 1926). Furthermore, the parliament was divided along sectarian lines, with a ratio of 6 Christians to 5 Muslims, while the cabinet and administrative posts were informally distributed among sects. This period marked the institutionalization of Lebanon's sectarian-based governance structure, shaping the country's political landscape for decades to come. It is interesting to note that the second agreement was only put to the test 13 years after its implementation, during the 1958 Lebanese conflict. This conflict exposed the weaknesses of the National Pact and demonstrated its inability to preserve peace in the country. Its failure stemmed largely from the pact's reliance on an informal, sectarian power-sharing arrangement that could not adapt to shifting political and demographic realities, and the absence of foreign sponsorship.

Despite successive adjustments to the power-sharing framework following Lebanon's independence, the nation still plunged into a lengthy and dreadful war (Fakhoury & Aitken, 2024). The war that took place from 1975 to 1990 was widely interpreted as evidence of the

ineffectiveness of this approach to governing societies torn by division (Ochsenwald & Kingston, 2018). The fundamental aim of power-sharing systems is to ensure political representation of the pertinent parties, thereby mitigating potential conflicts and preventing sectarian dominance. However, these arrangements encounter numerous challenges. Centralizing decision-making proves difficult within such frameworks, leading to inefficiencies and gridlock, which was the case in Lebanon. Additionally, the state did not possess the adaptability needed to respond effectively to changing circumstances or emerging grievances, which eventually made the state fragile and prone to breakdowns (Malaeb, 2018). Moreover, power-sharing arrangements often rely heavily on international arbitration and involvement, which can introduce complexities and dependencies. External actors may exert significant influence over conflict resolution processes, potentially undermining the sovereignty and autonomy of domestic parties. In Lebanon's case, the civil war starkly demonstrated the shortcomings of its power-sharing system. Instead of addressing the root causes of earlier conflicts, such as socio-economic inequality and sectarian tensions, the system aggravated these issues, fueling further violence and division.

#### ***4.2.3. The New Balances that Lead to the Taëf: The third Power-Sharing Agreement***

The resolutions that occurred after the war acknowledged various difficulties mentioned earlier while disregarding others. The prevailing narrative of the conflict attributed the war to sectarianism and the state's failure to accurately reflect the underlying sectarian power dynamics (Karam, 2012). The Taëf Agreement aimed to repair the existing power-sharing system in Lebanon, which had been criticized for perpetuating inequalities and marginalizing Muslim Sunni and Shia. By creating a more inclusive political and institutional framework, the agreement wanted to rectify past biases and ensure that all segments of Lebanese society were adequately represented in the governance structure. Furthermore, the agreement was not solely focused on addressing the immediate aftermath of the civil war. It also aimed to acknowledge and accommodate the societal transformations that had taken place in Lebanon during the latter half of the twentieth century. These transformations included changes in demographics, shifts in political attitudes, and evolving social dynamics. Most notably and as previously mentioned, the demographic landscape had shifted significantly with the Muslim population experiencing substantial growth relative to the Christian population challenging the foundation of the 1943 National Pact which had allocated political power based on the assumption of Christian demographic dominance. In essence, the Taëf Agreement

represented a recognition of the need for Lebanon's political system to adapt to the realities of a changing society. By incorporating these changes into its provisions, the agreement aimed to lay the groundwork for a more stable and inclusive political environment in Lebanon.

Thus, this agreement arose after a period of fifteen years of strife and over forty years of societal evolution subsequent to the prior power-sharing arrangement. The shift in the direction of socioeconomic parity began as Muslims transitioned to a demographic majority before the conflict erupted. Between Lebanon's independence and the signing of the Taëf Agreement, there was a noticeable ascent of Muslim communities in economic and social spheres, challenging the Christian dominance that characterized Lebanon's early years.

Several factors contributed to this sectarian rebalancing of social and economic influence. Internally, policies promoting stable expansion, particularly throughout the presidency of Fouad Chehab that lasted for six years (from 1958 till 1964), enhanced the admission of Muslims to being hired in the public sector and schooling (Nicolaysen, 2008). Furthermore, changes in regional economies, particularly the rise of the Gulf region as a major economic center, had a significant impact on Lebanon's Sunni community. The economic prosperity and opportunities in the Gulf attracted many Sunnis from Lebanon, leading to an increase in their economic influence and status within Lebanese society. Similarly, the migration of a growing number of Shiia to Africa in search of employment opportunities had important consequences for the Shiia community in Lebanon that sent remittances back to their families and communities, which contributed to the accumulation of capital and investment within the Lebanese Shiia population (Siklawi, 2014). These remittances played a crucial role in boosting economic and social development and stability within Shiia communities in Lebanon, enabling them to invest in businesses, infrastructure, and education (Mahmalat, 2020).

Social transformations were precipitated by the civil war, intensifying efforts toward sectarian equilibrium. Alternative urban centers emerged as Beirut became alienated within two zones that were controlled by competing political factions. Additionally, illegitimate activities flourished to fulfill the needs and requirements of numerous militias.

These shifts in politics, society, and the economy's dynamics influenced the makeup of the dominant leaders resulting in additional disintegration. As power became more dispersed, alternative power centers emerged, each representing different social, economic, and political interests. These power centers often had varying agendas and priorities leading to competition

and sometimes conflict among them. Moreover, the presence of multiple power centers introduced complexities and challenges to governance, as decision-making processes became more fragmented and consensus-building more difficult (Leenders, 2004). These elites frequently found themselves at odds, forming and breaking clientelist associations with different factions. Nevertheless, these distinct constituencies entrenched the conflicting welfares among them, often rendering traditional negotiations and concessions inadequate for resolving their disputes.

In Lebanon, the political elite associates, along with political and social scientists, drew lessons from the civil war and observed the societal shifts that unfolded at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Everything arrived at a similar conclusion: the Lebanese system needed to undergo significant recalibration to incorporate the novel social parties and better reflect their increased influence. Before the war, power was primarily concentrated in the upper echelons of the Lebanese state, which was perceived as facilitating Maronite dominance, and required replacement by an extra-inclusive decision-making process. The previous noninterventionist approach to socioeconomic issues in Lebanon was deemed insufficient for addressing the socioeconomic disparities among sects, necessitating the implementation of a more structured system of redistribution.

### **4.3. The Dynamics Behind the Taëf Agreement**

#### ***4.3.1. What led to the Taëf Agreement?***

As President Amin Gemayel's term came to an end, preparations for the impending elections got more difficult. External powers such as Israel, the United States, and Syria have traditionally had a crucial role in deciding the presidency in Lebanon, frequently working in tandem with militias seeking a share of power. Syria, in particular, tried to manage the process by asking the candidates to submit their presidential programs according to the Tripartite Agreement it had hosted in Damascus between Hobeika, Jumblatt, and Berri; however, the candidates refused such terms (Al-Khawand, 1994). Meanwhile, as Speaker of Parliament, Hussein Husseini attempted to convene a parliamentary session, the Lebanese Forces boycotted the meeting by their deputies, thereby blocking a quorum and therefore, the election.

In the absence of a new president, executive authority was to be passed on to the government. The then-prime minister, Omar Karami, had already submitted his resignation, which was not accepted by Gemayel. Following the assassination of Karami, Gemayel

appointed Education Minister Salim al-Hoss to head a caretaker government. The political vacuum invited direct foreign intervention: United States ambassador Richard Murphy traveled to Damascus, where he and the Syrians agreed to suggest Michel Daher as president, warning Lebanon that it was a matter of "either Daher or chaos." (Al-Khawand, 1994, p. 53). The blatant interference met with sharp criticism, particularly from Christian leaders such as General Michel Aoun, who rejected a Washington and Damascus imposed president. Even the Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea called on his rival Aoun to dissuade Gemayel from yielding to Syrian pressure.

The deadlock further hardened when Aoun and Geagea made a public declaration that al-Hoss's government was not legitimate, and Aoun proceeded to form his own war cabinet. This created two rival governments: al-Hoss's, supported mostly by the Muslims, and Aoun's, supported by Christian parties. Both sides claimed constitutional authority since each appointed its own officials as well as security leaders. While Berri and Jumblatt announced that they rather team up with Syrians than with "government controlled by the west and Israel's friends" (Al-Khawand, 1994, p. 573), dismissing Aoun as a tool of Western and Israeli interests, militias across the country consolidated power at the state's expense. Conflicts even escalated into clashes between Aoun and the Lebanese Forces, which were also aggravated by the latter's ability to tax and reward their fighters better than the national army. Even when the Maronite Patriarch intervened to halt the fighting, Aoun continued to demand that the militias hand over illegal ports to his administration. The Syrians hit back in the form of bombardments, which escalated to Aoun's declaration of the "War of Liberation" against Syrian forces on 14 March 1989.

The violence escalated when Aoun's soldiers battled with Syrian-backed militias such as Amal, Hezbollah, and the Druze. International reactions differed. The United States, angered by Aoun's resistance to Daher, stayed mainly silent, while France accused Syria of invading Lebanon and attempted to engage the United Nations. With Soviet assistance, France was successful in pressing Lebanon's suffering before the UN Security Council, forcing the Secretary-General to call for a truce and support Arab League mediation. As the conflict progressed, Christian leaders began to question their support for Aoun, citing the mounting human and material casualties. By April 1989, Aoun hinted at resolving the conflict stating that "it should continue but in diplomatic ways," (Al-Khawand, 1994, p. 581), but Syrian bombing merely worsened.

During the Arab Summit of May 1989, leaders of Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Algeria formed a committee to press towards a political solution. They called for the activation of political reforms in six months, the election of the new president, the formation of a national unity government, and the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty. The Troika also pressured Syria to respect a ceasefire and forced Iraq to halt its military aid to Aoun. Diplomacy continued, but Syrian shelling never abated, most persistently targeted at Aoun's stronghold in Baabda. Lebanon was devastated by the summer: thousands were killed, factories were burnt, and hundreds of thousands were displaced.

International and regional pressure finally forced improvement. The Troika reconvened in September 1989 and was successful in establishing a truce, restoring highways, airports, and ports, and preparing for a National Accord Document to be discussed by parliament in Saudi Arabia. The success of this endeavor was due to a mix of international pressure on Syria, including from its own allies, and concessions to Syrian requests, such as ending Iraqi assistance for Aoun and accepting a limited Syrian retreat.

Lebanese reactions to these incidents highlighted the country's significant differences. Amal, Hezbollah, and al-Hoss's administration wanted far-reaching constitutional revisions, including a numerical majority voting system. The Druze urged that their soldiers' sacrifices be acknowledged via genuine reform. Sunni critics of Syria were intimidated into silence. Meanwhile, Christians, led by Aoun, rejected the entire accord, seeing it as a surrender to Syrian domination.

#### ***4.3.2. Agreements Before the Taëf***

Several failed reconciliation attempts culminated in the Taëf Agreement. The first occurred in 1983, during the Geneva National Reconciliation Congress, where Lebanese leaders agreed on Lebanon's Arab character, the necessity for security monitoring, and reform programs while being observed by Saudi and Syrian officials. However, growing violence made it impossible to continue these conversations. A year later, in 1984, Saudi Arabia interfered again, brokering a cease-fire and convening the Lausanne National Reconciliation Congress. This idea recommended separating opposing forces, transferring the army to barracks, suspending media campaigns, and even writing a new Lebanese constitution. However, like its predecessor, it crumbled under the strain of Lebanon's worsening security situation.

A third attempt was made in 1985 known as the Tripartite Agreement, which was brokered in Syria among the Amal Movement, the Progressive Socialist Party, and the Lebanese Forces. The agreement reasserted Lebanon's Arab nature, called for deconfessionalization, suggested fresh political institutions, and established intimate security and military interpenetration with Syria. Though signed, it disintegrated shortly afterwards due to an internal uprising within the Lebanese Forces that forced it to be abandoned.

These successive failures to conclude the war brought the conditions for a broader agreement. In October 1989, negotiations for the Taëf Agreement commenced in the Saudi city of Taëf, which lent its name to the agreement and was held under the patronage of Saudi Arabia. It is important to mention that The Taëf Agreement made Saudi Arabia a powerful new force in Lebanese political life. Unlike Syria, whose social, cultural, and familial connections in Lebanon are long-standing, Saudi Arabia has no such deep history. The agreements therefore, do not explicitly state Saudi Arabia's role and the kingdom is mentioned only as hosting the negotiations in Taëf city. Its influence is more hinted at indirectly by its function as intermediary and symbolism that the agreement signing occurs on its soil. In the period of post-war reconstruction, Saudi Arabia had a major role in Lebanon in matters of finance and economics, but not a physical presence. This approach was likely informed by the fact that the reconstruction period fell at the same time as the First Gulf War, an issue that needed to be addressed urgently by Saudi Arabia in light of its geographical location and strong alignment with the United States (Stedem, 2011).

At the time of negotiation, the various Lebanese factions presented divergent demands, each seeking political advantage. The Christian representatives focused on the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon and on preserving the presidential powers traditionally associated with their religious group. In contrast, Muslim ministers opposed any Syrian withdrawal prior to implementing political reforms, reorganizing the military, and ensuring sovereignty over South Lebanon, which remained under Israeli occupation. Shiia ministers advocated for the abolition of sectarian-based proportional laws, while the Druze community pushed for the establishment of a Senate.

Additionally, several Arab countries, namely Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Syria, exerted significant pressure to conclude the agreement and end the long-winded Lebanese Civil War. Given the starkly contrasting demands of the sectarian groups, none of the parties was fully satisfied with the outcome. However, they were compelled to accept the compromise

under international and regional pressure. For example, General Michel Aoun (delegated prime minister), who enjoyed considerable support among Christians at the time, rejected the agreement outright, which influenced the Christian community's skepticism toward Taëf. Similarly, Nabih Berri and Walid Jumblatt, the Shiia and Druze leaders respectively, expressed dissatisfaction because many of their demands were not addressed.

Overall, the Taëf Agreement was not embraced enthusiastically by any of the sectarian factions; rather, it was accepted as an imposed compromise. Consequently, hostilities persisted even after the agreement was signed, continuing until 1990 when Syria enforced its implementation through military intervention. During this period, Syria demonstrated its dominance by orchestrating the assassination of Lebanese president-elect René Moawad (first president to be elected after the Taëf), who appeared misaligned with Syrian interests. This underscored the extent of Syrian influence in Lebanon at the time. Eventually, the factions gradually acquiesced to the agreement, which ultimately constituted an externally imposed power-sharing arrangement.

Practically, the Taëf Agreement outlined the rules governing the post-war era, encompassing codified power division, customary practices regulating power distribution, and various mechanisms for implementing and circumventing the dispersal (Larché et al., 1996). The initial aspect of regulations aimed at increasing the reliance of the government on the support of fundamental sectarian groups. The Taëf Agreement embodied the fragmentation of the political landscape and calls for a more widespread distribution of power or allocation of political authority and institutional privileges.

#### ***4.3.3. The Role of Saudi Arabia***

Historically, Saudi involvement in Lebanon has been adaptive, relying less on permanent alliances with either side and more on tactical alliances with individuals or blocs who can counterbalance pro-Iranian activity (Ghaddar, 2023). The kingdom has generally struggled to construct an integrated social base or concentrate its resources on strengthening one solid Sunni political party. Similarly, it has not mobilized Lebanon's diverse Sunni Muslim constituents effectively into a broad-based national movement either (Ali, 2025). One notable exception to this pattern is the Hariri family, which has been politically supported by Saudi Arabia since the Taëf Accord. Riyadh viewed the Hariris' considerable parliamentary influence as a tool to advance its interests, coordinating Saudi interests with those of key cabinet members. Saudi Arabia wanted to counter Iranian efforts at Shiia political dominance, in

particular through organizations like Hezbollah through internal leverage (Ali, 2025). But this strategy was narrowly focused on the Hariris who despite being the largest Sunni bloc, did not speak for the rest of the Sunni community. Consequently, other Sunnis including the Karami and Solh families were left out, further polarizing the Sunni community into a number of political parties.

The political environment in Lebanon has historically posed significant obstacles to any attempt at unifying the country's Sunni population under a single leadership. In the 1960s and 1970s, several secular pan-Arab parties were influential in Lebanese politics; although they did not define themselves by religious affiliation, they commanded considerable support from Sunni communities (Zeghal & Waldman, 2025). The outbreak of the civil war fragmented these movements, sharpening rivalries and weakening their strength. Following the Taëf Accord, Saudi Arabia appeared to hope that Hariri family political influence, with the Kingdom's vast economic resources behind it, could bring such competing Sunni factions together (Kalout, 2022), but Sunni interest groups have remained very fragmented. Four principal groups dominate the Sunni political scene, one of them present themselves as secular, but others emphasize a sectarian loyalty (Kalout, 2022). Among these, the only party showing sustained consistency in adhering to Saudi interests is the Future Party headed by Hariri, whereas other parties at times regard the Kingdom as a strategic adversary. The main groups include: Nasserite pan-Arab parties; secular independent movements such as the Azm Movement of the ex-Prime Minister Najib Mikati; and pan-Islamist, anti-Salafist groups such as Al-Ahbash and Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiyya (Kalout, 2022). Saudi Arabia has always rejected pan-Arab parties as allies, viewing them as a danger to its domestic legitimacy and actively seeking to undermine them. On the other hand, former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri formed a close political and personal relationship with the Saudi royal family, securing their backing for his party's representation of the Sunni sect inside Lebanon since 1990 (Ali, 2025).

Being recognized as the legitimate political representative of Saudi Arabia in Lebanon carries significant influence, particularly with those who view the Kingdom as a guardian of the Islamic faith. Without such endorsement, it would be extremely unlikely that any Sunni religious-political leader would gain broad support in Lebanon (Zeghal & Waldman, 2025).

On another note, Saudi Arabia and Iran have foreign policies that are inversely opposed both in principle and approach. The Saudi approach is highly centralized, relying heavily on financial resources to achieve its objectives in a mercantilist policy manner while Iran's

approach is horizontal, emphasizing transversal cooperation, alignment on values, and relational investment long-term without transactional exchange (Zeghal & Waldman, 2025). Considering these variant frameworks allows one to gain a clearer comprehension of the strategic variables at stake in Lebanon, where Iran and Saudi Arabia's foreign policy approaches intersect and compete.

Saudi Arabia has never attempted in Lebanon to build an ideology-based political bloc. Instead, its strategy has rested primarily on the petro-dollar power of diplomacy, using economic incentives to counter the Iranian influence in the country. With enormous economic resources at its disposal, Riyadh shapes policy in Lebanon by simply compelling Lebanese political parties to adopt its agenda by offering them monetary support (Ali, 2025). The Saudi relationship with these groups tends to be transactional rather than ideological. The Saudi conception of what they are doing in the area is to be a champion of Sunni empowerment, extending their power across the Middle East and establishing a tutelary model for the sake of maintaining long-term control over the political system of Lebanon, even in periods of demographic change (Kalout, 2022).

In Lebanon, this economic incentivization policy became more visible in the 1990s as Saudi Arabia sought to fill a power vacuum that Iran was also attempting to fill at the time. Riyadh has since then tried to maintain friendly Sunni forces in power and legitimize them in the eyes of the general population. Geopolitically, particularly since the 2006 Lebanese–Israeli War, this policy has focused on preventing the formation of a Shiia power axis from Iran to the Eastern Mediterranean (Mahmoudian, 2024). Saudi initiatives are primarily focused on controlling Lebanon's inner political machinery, thereby stunting the capacity of pro-Iranian forces to carry out externally financed operations. By utilizing the power of this internal leverage, the Kingdom seeks to limit the expansion of Iranian influence both inside Lebanon and in the region as a whole.

From the Saudi viewpoint, the Kingdom positions itself as the protector of Sunni Muslims of the Middle East and the world. Based on this perception, Saudi rulers have portrayed Iran as a factor of instability in the region, accusing it of pursuing sectarian and expansionist agendas and supporting terrorism. Additionally, Saudi Arabia claims that Iran attempts to distract attention from its own actions by making unfounded accusations against Saudi Arabia, thereby justifying their own efforts to counter Iran's influence in the region. (Wastnidge & Mabon, 2022).

#### ***4.3.4. The Taëf Republic***

The term “Taëf Republic” is often used in Lebanon to emphasize the importance of the constitutional amendments brought about by the Taëf agreement (Karam & Catusse, 2010). Taëf was the most significant change to the constitution since Lebanon gained its independence in 1943. Lebanon had a semi-presidential system prior to these modifications, with the President of the Republic having significant executive authority. The Taëf agreement, however, changed the political system to one that is more parliamentary. Nevertheless, Lebanon’s system is not entirely parliamentary, as the President of the Republic still retains certain powers that are not common in typical parliamentary systems (Karam & Catusse, 2010).

At the highest stratum of authority, significant executive power was transferred from the Maronite President of the Republic to the Sunni Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, which evolved to a collective entity applying power throughout the accord. In this sense, decision-making was dispersed among the three presidencies, interwoven through a network of checks and balances, requiring representation from the three primary sects before governing a decision (Karam & Catusse, 2010). Most importantly, the Taëf Agreement stipulated that government decisions should be reached by consensus, and if consensus proved unattainable, by a majority vote. However, this arrangement resulted in significant challenges to decision-making and frequent institutional deadlocks. For instance, in situations of disagreement, some ministers resorted to boycotting sessions to prevent a quorum, thereby obstructing the voting process. Furthermore, the Taëf Agreement lacked a clear and practical mechanism for resolving such impasses, which further exacerbated governance difficulties.

Furthermore, the legislative authority was safeguarded against dissolution by the executive, except in rare circumstances. An arrangement made up of checks, balances, alongside vetoes was presented midst the three primary leaders, that are known as presidencies, imposing inclusion of major actors in the procedure of decision-making. The reforms in the institutions imitated the insights learned from the harsh experience of the civil war along with the shortcomings of prior forms of power-sharing agreements (Karam & Catusse, 2010).

#### ***4.3.5. Informal Mechanisms and Organizational Fragmentation***

Yet, the attempt to impede the undermining of the power-sharing arrangement by any one group monopolizing power led to another type of subversion. This manifested in the conversion of the already fragile Lebanese state to a provisional and fragmented entity. While

it is common for states to rely on the backing of core societal elites, the post-war period in Lebanon introduced a system where the state became increasingly dependent on the constant approval of dominant religious groups. In practice, this meant that formal decision-making processes, such as voting, were insufficient on their own; decisions required consensus among the various sectarian communities to be considered legitimate. As a result, any limited autonomy previously held by certain factions within the power structure was effectively erased. The conditionality obligation of the Taëf Republic dispersed political power lightly amid several political groups and casually owed transferring authority from state institutions to sects, effectively granting them veto power over the most important decisions. Respectively, the institution relished relative autonomy due to its political protection within the agreement privileged control of the main political landscape.

This sectarian distribution of executive portfolios, which frequently had conflicting duties, resulted in the state being fragmented into different institutions governed by political actors, redundancy of labor, and disagreements when interests collided. Thus, conflicts between political actors descended into conflicts among organizations, while political ententes transformed into organizational alliances. Organizational conflict grew to become the norm, where organizational checks turned into worries about organizational necessities for consistency. Stability in politics often came at the expense of other institutional goals, such as productivity, effective policy-making, financial efficiency, and good governance. The severe constraints on the organizations of the state were the reason behind the firm operation of the Lebanese state after the war, turning minor decisions into inter-sectarian bargaining games and eroding the state's unity, and credibility.

The second aspect of the parameters of the situation after the war revolves around an array of political and administrative devices created to address the pressures of representing sectors and enhance the efficiency of institutions. To bridge the gaps left by the agreement, to execute its provisions, and temporarily avoid the necessities of sectarian representation, extra-organizational solutions were presented and swiftly integrated into the domestic political framework. These solutions were not formalized in written laws but instead circumvented the state altogether, highlighting the institutional complexity inherent in state structures. Each institution benefited from a degree of autonomy due to its political lining within the agreement privilege dominating the broader political game (Karam, 2012).

The absence of formal systematization, either due to practical impossibility or deliberate omission, was the reason behind the temporary and ambiguous nature of the agreement (Bahout, 2016). Reliant on shifting distribution of power among key actors in the political sector, the devices served as pictures of the relationships between numerous elites. This environment of uncertainty and instability fostered a culture of bargaining and compromise as the primary mode of process within the Lebanese system. With a reference to a frail state and a fragile political settlement, talks arose as a means of handling political tensions and exerting control over the diverse array of actors.

#### ***4.3.6. The Political Culture of Bargaining and Clientelism***

The fact that negotiations provided only a temporary respite for the Lebanese state, can be understood as both formal feature of the political structure and a result of conflict practices on the ground. On the structural level, the Taëf agreement institutionalized ambiguity in the distinction of executive powers, particularly in the relationship between the president of the republic and the prime minister. This lack of clear delineation fosters a space where interpretation and negotiation replace the formal mechanism of governance. As Bahout (2016) notes, such vagueness turned the Council of Ministers into an arena for sectarian bargaining, rather than unified policymaking, reinforcing the centrality of ongoing negotiation to maintain political function (Bahout, 2016).

At the same time, on the ground, sectarian dynamics and clientelist practices embedded in Lebanon's post-war political culture transformed negotiations into a practical tool for conflict management. As actors pursued short-term compromises to avoid escalation, this practice entrenched a mode of governance reliant on ad hoc agreements rather than consistent institutional development.

Public office and state resources are often used to serve private or sectarian interests, undermining the neutrality and autonomy of public institutions. The overlap is not merely incidental but rather structurally embedded: sectarianism both enabled and normalized this erosion, and even the mechanisms that were meant to mitigate sectarian tensions—such as quota-based representation and consensus-driven governance—contributed to the informal appropriation of public roles for private gain (Karam, 2012).

According to Fakhoury (2014), the Council of Ministers evolved from a cooperative decision-making entity to a ground for sectarian negotiating, where ministers acted as protectors of the societies they represent (Fakhoury, 2014). Whether it was the delivery of

public employment or changes in city arrangement, any effort to alter the fundamental property rights structure sparked political conflicts that may perhaps endure for days or even years.

#### **4.4. The Foreign Shepherd**

As mentioned above, the foreign shepherd has historically been essential for the success of power-sharing in Lebanon. The external powers, particularly Ottoman empire and France, played a crucial role in facilitating and maintaining the delicate balance of political power among Lebanon's various sectarian groups. Thus, throughout Lebanon's modern history, external intervention has been a defining feature of its political landscape. The system of power-sharing, which emerged in the aftermath of French colonial rule and continued into the post-independence era, relied heavily on the involvement of external actors to ensure its stability. The first power-sharing agreement in Lebanon was overseen by the Ottoman Empire, the second by the French Mandate authorities, and the third by Syria through the Taëf Agreement.

##### ***4.4.1. The Syrian Occupation***

One of the primary factors contributing to the state's disruption was the part assumed by Syria in the post-war era. Following the civil war, Syria was the dominant influential factor in Lebanon, tasked with maintaining peace in the split society that arose from the conflict. Given the challenges in implementing the Taëf Agreement and the inherent uncertainties within it, coupled with Lebanon's fundamental political tensions, an enforcer was deemed necessary. Syria willingly assumed this role, enjoying full regional and international support, mainly from the United States. The Taëf Agreement stipulated that Syria would assist the Lebanese government for a transitional period of two years. However, Syrian involvement gradually expanded throughout the 1990s and persisted until 2005, ultimately encompassing nearly all major political decisions in Lebanon. This was a clear violation of the original terms of the agreement.

Initially serving as a provisional guardian of a provincial agreement, the influence of Syria transformed to become the sole dominant player in Lebanon. Syria's intervention in Lebanon's political landscape evolved over time, starting from its initial involvement as a peace guardian following the civil war. However, rather than facilitating a smooth transition to stability and independence, Syria gradually expanded its influence, exploiting the vulnerabilities and divisions within Lebanon's political system. One key aspect of Syria's

strategy was to exacerbate the existing uncertainties within Lebanon. By fomenting and manipulating internal conflicts, Syria could position itself as a necessary arbiter and protector, thus solidifying its control over Lebanese affairs. This manipulation of internal dynamics created a climate of perpetual instability, which in turn heightened the reliance of Lebanese political actors on Syria's patronage and support. Moreover, Syria actively obstructed efforts at reconciliation and consensus-building within Lebanon. Instead of encouraging domestic initiatives aimed at resolving differences and promoting national unity, Syria sought to perpetuate division and discord. By stifling the emergence of internal agreements and blocking attempts at reform, Syria ensured that Lebanon remained dependent on external actors, particularly Syria itself, for any semblance of stability and order (Karam, 2012).

Syrian interference manifested prominently in the manipulation of electoral laws, particularly through gerrymandering. In the post-war period, elections lost their traditional role as a means of gathering and choosing political preferences. Instead, they became arenas for inter-elite competition aimed at harvesting Syrian support. The interference of Syrian intelligence effectively eliminated any impression of free and fair elections, rendering them mere social event devoid of political substance (El-Khazen, 2004).

Thus, the enforcer perpetuated the circumstances that explained its presence, effectively obstructing the option of achieving sustainable peace that would make its intervention needless. These interventions were paralleled by financial and economic corruption associated with the political power of Syrian origins. Exploitation flourished in the aftermath of the Lebanese Civil War, exerting harmful impact on the government's financial plan and the occupational situation. Determining the scale of corruption and its economic impact is challenging, but the consensus among most economists is that corruption escalated significantly in the aftermath of the war. Syria, as the highest political authority in Lebanon, oversaw this corruption, which primarily benefited Syrian and Lebanese politicians and their Lebanese clients. Major corruption cases implicated Syrian officials or Lebanese officials shielded by Syria, particularly in sectors such as international communications, oil trafficking, and operations within free zones at airports and international ports. Therefore, Syria's role in enforcing the fragile peace prevailing in the 1990s post-war Lebanon was, at best, vague and uncertain. The clash between political legitimacy—predominantly sectarian legitimacy—and institutional efficiency was evident in Lebanon after the war. However, the methods employed to uphold these aspects resulted in the same outcome: the further disintegration of the frail state of Lebanon (Karam, 2012).

Furthermore, it is important to note that Syria's role as the primary enforcer in Lebanon not only hindered peacebuilding and the implementation of reforms but also contributed significantly to widespread Lebanese rejection of the Taëf Agreement. Acts such as the assassination of political figures and the exertion of pressure to influence key decisions fueled this opposition, as discussed in more detail later.

At the end, Syria hindered the complete implementation of the Taëf Agreement, with the Lebanese political class acting as an accomplice in this obstruction. Some of the most notable aspects that remain unimplemented include the formation of the Senate, conducting parliamentary elections based on a single electoral district in Lebanon without sectarian divisions, the withdrawal of Syrian forces to the Beqaa region within the span of two years from commencement of the Taëf Agreement's implementation, with subsequent plans for their complete withdrawal from Lebanon, and the establishment and activation of The Economic and Social Council.

#### **4.5. Decentralization**

The Taëf agreement also mentions the notion of decentralization; however, this provision was never effectively implemented. Indeed, during the era that took place after the war, the imperatives of stability alongside the absence of direct violence were prioritized at the expense of organization and state building. Reorganization efforts became entangled with widespread corruption, leading to the appropriation of public offices by private individuals. Likewise, the necessity for political adaptability in response to evolving political landscapes frequently resulted in ad-hoc measures that conflicted with the objective of establishing and strengthening organizations. Given this institutional environment, it is not surprising that administrative improvements, including decentralization, were destined to fail from the outset.

##### ***4.5.1. Horizontal Decentralization: The Rise of Parallel Institutions***

The issue of managerial decentralization has been a source of ongoing debate and controversy in Lebanon, which is considered a potential precursor to sectarian-based federalism. Consequently, political parties, often those of Christian orientation, advocating for political decentralization have proposed administrative decentralization as an initial step. However, these proposals have faced resistance due to the political stigma associated with federalism, especially considering Lebanon's commitment towards maintaining its identity as a state of unity.

The historical context of Lebanon's formation plays a significant role in shaping the sensitivity surrounding decentralization efforts. The borders drawn by the French mandate in 1920, without full consideration of local demographics and historical affiliations, created a sense of artificiality and resentment among certain communities. This led to ongoing disputes over territory and identity, contributing to a broader sense of insecurity regarding Lebanon's national unity. Furthermore, the traumatic experience of the civil war exacerbated existing divisions and deepened mistrust among various sectarian groups. Geographical divisions emerged during this period, with different regions of the country becoming associated with specific religious or ethnic communities. This fragmentation of the country's social and political landscape further intensified concerns about decentralization potentially exacerbating divisions and weakening the central authority. In the discourse surrounding decentralization, proponents argue that devolving power to local authorities could lead to more efficient and responsive governance, better suited to address the diverse needs of Lebanon's population. They argue that decentralization could empower local communities and promote a sense of ownership and accountability in decision-making processes.

In 1998, the municipal elections were the primary official effort towards decentralization, which were the first held in almost two decades. Nevertheless, this vertical power transfer proved insufficient. Municipalities faced constraints such as limited financial resources leading to political vulnerability and nominal organizational authority. Moreover, the lack of constant grassroots demand for contribution and local supremacy intended that the power remained largely unchallenged, even after initiatives such as weakening unions following the Taëf Agreement, including the General Labor Union, the Teachers Union, and others. Thus, without significant grassroots movements pushing for decentralization, municipalities have largely remained under the control of local representatives who rely on the goodwill of politicians in the capital to secure even basic funding. This dependence on centralized authority limits the autonomy and effectiveness of local governance structures, as decisions are often made with little consideration for the unique needs and priorities of each municipality. Furthermore, policies aimed at weakening trade unions and excluding them from social discourse have had far-reaching implications for economic policymaking. Trade unions and professional associations traditionally play a crucial role in representing the interests of workers and professionals, advocating for fair labor practices, and contributing to the formulation of economic policies that benefit all stakeholders. However, by marginalizing these organizations and silencing their voices, policymakers risk formulating economic

policies that do not adequately address the concerns of workers or reflect the broader interests of society.

Facing this state institutions failure, horizontal decentralization emerged in a form of alternative institutions, a system created by Rafic Hariri, who became the most powerful prime minister in the post Taëf era, in accordance and partnership with the broader political establishment. These organizations had overlapping responsibilities with state institutions and would create confusion or inefficiency. The newly created institutions were designed to sabotage or undermine the government's ability to function effectively and enforce its mandate and in parallel strengthen the clientelistic grip over the citizens. Through these institutions political power and resources were distributed based on personal loyalty or sectarian affiliation rather than merit or rule of law.

Over time, these parallel institutions became deeply entangled in sectarian politics, clientelism, and factional governance, eroding state unity and effectiveness and dishonoring many ideologies of 'good governance'. Some prominent examples of these parallel institutions are: The Council for Development and Reconstruction, Central Fund for Displaced, Council of the South, Higher Relief Committee, and multiple security agencies with overlapping jurisdictions.

#### **4.6. Hybrid Service Delivery**

The Taëf Agreement also proposed economic reforms aimed at promoting equality among Lebanon's regions and sects, recognizing that such equity is essential for nation-building. While the agreement emphasizes the principle of equality, its provisions are relatively vague and lack detailed guidance, which complicated practical implementation. For example, if a particular region received a specific reform, other regions could legitimately demand similar measures, resulting in a fragmented and uneven system of service delivery.

Indeed, the fusion of public and private sector dynamics is a notable characteristic of how provisions are distributed in Lebanon. While there should be a clear understanding of who does what, Lebanon's case has blurred this clear distinction. In Lebanon, both sectors have been forced or have chosen to take on roles that overlap or replace one another. Both sectors play significant roles in the distribution of provisions. Public services like electricity, healthcare, and education, among others, are not only offered by the government, but also by

political parties, NGOs, and private companies. This hybrid system leads to inefficiency, inequality, and clientelism.

However, this hybrid approach has its challenges, including issues of accountability, equity, and regulation. Furthermore, the post-war period in Lebanon saw the formalization of sectarian representation within state institutions. This was protected in the Taëf Agreement, which aimed to distribute power among the country's various religious communities. However, the lack of clear regulations and oversight meant that this requirement for sectarian representation led to a proliferation of different operational methods within state organizations. With a weak state unable to effectively regulate or streamline these multiple institutional systems, the requirement for sectarian representation became more than just a mechanism for ensuring political inclusivity. Instead, it morphed into a tool for patronage and clientelism, further complicating the delivery of public services and perpetuating institutional dysfunction; access to services depends on connections rather than rights.

#### **4.7. Clientelism**

In Lebanon, the current political and economic stalemate can be traced back to an extensive background of warlord governance and economic clientelism. Exploitation, favoritism, neglect, and clientelism, frequently concealed beneath the veil of sectarianism, have been pivotal factors in both the operation and breakdown of Lebanon's consociational system. With the conclusion of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), the factions involved in the conflict established cartels that perpetuated a war economy designed to enrich a privileged few based on sectarian quotas.

As stated by Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980), clientelism has historically been characterized as a system in which the political elite offers benefits and security, or more broadly, resources in return for client loyalty (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1980). Dignity introduces another dimension where access to amenities and defense might serve as the tangible foundation for dignity that becomes the representative foundation where protection rests or upon which the patron-client relationship hinges. The emergence of clientelism in Lebanon cannot be understood without considering the unique context of Lebanese nation-building, characterized by a complex array of societal dynamics. Lebanon has served as a model in the development of a multi-ethnic nation, oscillating between communal fragmentation and model intercommunal compromise and co-existence (Ziadeh, 2006).

Throughout history, Lebanon has been subject to the rule of various powers, including the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Ottomans, French, and others, due to its strategic geopolitical location. Furthermore, Lebanon has been a refuge for numerous ethnic and social minorities, leading to diverse religious, political, and economic organizations. However, this diversity has also sparked competitiveness over power, prompting individuals to seek access to influential figures, thus giving rise to favoritism and clientelistic practices. The paradoxical history of confessional Lebanon reflects this complexity: despite members of different confessions facing persecution and seeking refuge in Lebanon's mountains, this shared experience did not unite them (Ziadeh, 2006). Instead, it contributed to the perpetuation of communal divisions and the emergence of clientelism as a means of navigating and consolidating power within Lebanon's intricate social landscape.

Indeed, clientelism in Lebanon has deep historical roots, with its origins intertwined with the feudal system that prevailed during the Ottoman era. Under Ottoman rule, the feudal system was instrumentalized to control and weaken Lebanon's political and economic sovereignty. Managed by “Two qaim-maqamat” and later the “Mutasarrifiyah”, Landlords, feudal leaders, and influential intermediaries were granted allegiance by the public in exchange for security, economic subsidies, and social recognition. As stated by Khalaf (1968), in feudal Lebanon, the whole fabric of the social structure was based on the fidelity of a man to his overlord (Ziadeh, 2006). Romaniuc (2012) asserted that it is of utmost importance to understand how and why clientelist arrangements emerge and persist over time (Romaniuc, 2012): In Lebanon, the political leaders’ arrangement appeared as a consequence of dual factors: first, the feudalistic families and second, the warlords. Nearly no political leader initiated from outside those two products. The emergence of the socio-political term “Za'im” after Lebanon's independence, further solidified the role of feudal leaders in contemporary politics. Za'ims, akin to feudal leaders or landlords, wielded their economic power and public influence to secure political support. They offered economic and social favors to their clients, such as jobs, educational opportunities, and bureaucratic assistance, in exchange for unwavering political allegiance.

The concept of a Za'im transcends sectarian boundaries, as it is deeply entrenched in Lebanon's consociationalism. “The Za'im will protect “his” clients and will foster his own interests at the same time as theirs” asserted Hottinger (Hottinger, 1961, p. 127). These communal leaders, known as zu'ama, represented and controlled their respective communities, fostering a system of clientelism that perpetuated their own interests alongside those of their

clients. This phenomenon underscores the intricate interplay between Lebanon's historical, socio-political, and sectarian dynamics in shaping its political landscape.

This discussion arises within the framework of a political landscape characterized by sectarianism, which serves to reinforce and fortify established clientelistic networks. The Lebanese political system is characterized by a written constitution that is largely secular, theoretically recognizing the equal rights of all people, irrespective of religion or other differences. However, it also operates under the National Pact, an unwritten agreement established in 1943, which laid the foundation for a multi-confessional state and acknowledges the distribution of government positions along sectarian lines. The 1989 Taëf Agreement, which is considered the accord officially ending Lebanon's civil war from 1975 to 1990, upholds the National Pact but specifically calls for the elimination of the system of political sectarianism, without providing specific details on how this should be achieved. Cobban (2019) and Salibi (1987) argued that the distinction between political sectarianism and sectarianism as a broader aspect of people's identity politics is frequently overlooked in discussions where sectarianism is portrayed as an inherent and unchanged category, often perceived as primordial (Cobban, 2019; Salibi, 1987).

Individuals often resort to sectarian affiliations to determine their political loyalties, partially because the structure of politics exploits sectarian documentations. In this notion, Salti and Chaaban (2010) discussed that this exploitation can take various forms, ranging from the allocation of government positions to the distribution of public expenditures (Salti & Chaaban, 2010). People also rely on these groups since political elites utilize kinship and sectarian affiliation to establish patron-client relationships. When clientelism and sectarianism intersect, they not only create influence that might hinder social mobilization, but also possess the potential to incite it.

Lebanon has long been characterized by its confessionalism system, which profoundly shapes domestic political life. While distinct from theological regimes, Lebanon's religious elites and powerful national figures wield significant influence over the political landscape. They exert pressure on decision-makers and representatives to lodge their specific needs tailored to serve both the collective interests of their religious communities and their individual, often private, interests.

Confessionalism has institutionalized sectarian divisions, discouraging the national residency concept. For instance, Islamic special courts receive government support through

allocations from the general budget, aimed at protecting their interests, since each religious denomination maintains its own distinct social hierarchy preventing the application of a unified civil law for personal status. As a result, Lebanon has at least twelve different personal status laws according to each sect. The failure to adopt a unified civil law for personal status matters has perpetuated sectarian divisions and prevented the establishment of a common legal framework that could transcend religious boundaries. Among these frames, confessional superiors serve as mediators between their followers and these institutions, often engaging in aggressive behavior to facilitate admittance to the services and goods they offer. The politics of confessionalism are often employed in an aggressive manner to prevent the dominance of other sects, or at the very least, to minimize any potential advantages they may gain.

Moreover, the Syrian intervention effectively composed Lebanese clientelistic networks, positioning itself as the primary orchestrator that directed, managed, and utilized domestic clientelistic dynamics. Subsequently, the guardianship forced by the Syrian existence aggravated the divisions among sectarian parties, where they came to view Syria as the primary benefactor of political and economic benefits. Makdisi (2004) detailed that this combination of sectarianism, familialism' sustained 'clientelism', and, following the 1990s, the increasing influence of wealthy businessmen and political funding proved to be significant obstacles to political and institutional reform, thereby hindering the establishment of a stable political system (Makdisi, 2004).

Meanwhile, following the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in 2005, both national and international inquiries began to intensify, raising concerns about the uncertain future facing Lebanon. The fifteen-year period of consociationalism was perceived as coming to an end, with Hariri, often regarded as the "godfather" of the Taëf Agreement, being closely associated with Lebanon's economic, social, and political trajectory. As noted by Habib (2009), at the turn of the twenty-first century, Lebanon had no alternative to Harirism but chaos at the economic, political, and societal levels (Habib, 2009).

The multitude of challenges outlined above highlights a pessimistic commonality within the various sects in Lebanon: there exists the distress of being deprived of power-sharing and the dominance of other sects. These fears have fostered clientelistic associations and shaped leaders best characterized as sectarian populists. In Lebanon, a known leader often advances sectarian schemas disguised by deceptive political slogans, rather than pursuing earthly and reformist goals. Such leaders capitalize on the mass mobilization of their clientele

to consolidate their power, providing benefits in exchange for loyalty. Clientele are mainly established by the loyalty to a specific family, then to a sectarian leader, after that the sectarian party, and finally, the community. These factors collectively shift the focus away from nation-building and patriotism, relegating them to secondary concerns that are often viewed through the lens of sectarian loyalty. This phenomenon persists because of the lack of a strong political culture and the void in power. This enabled warlords to maintain their influence.

In the upcoming chapter, we will embark on a deeper exploration of Lebanon's electoral laws and delve into how electoral processes have significantly contributed to the reinforcement of clientelism within the country.

#### **4.8. The Troika: An Alternative System for the State Institutions**

The Taëf Agreement promoted power-sharing and decision-making based on the consensus of the various sectarian groups, thereby aiming to prevent conflicts. In this context, state institutions can and should play a pivotal role in navigating power-sharing agreements alongside handling the fragile balance between adaptability and formalization. The state institutions serve as the main mediator that is responsible for implementing and enforcing provisions of such agreements, ensuring that they are adapted to changing circumstances and effectively applied in practice. Additionally, state institutions should act as an arena where negotiations and compromises among different groups take place, facilitating the resolution of disputes and the maintenance of stability (Harris & Reilly, 1998). However, their effectiveness in fulfilling these roles is contingent upon its strength and capacity. In Lebanon, the post-war period witnessed a collective weakening of the Lebanese state due to various factors such as sectarian representation, institutional inefficiency, and external influences like Syrian hegemony. This weakened state was unable to fully transcend the power-sharing arrangement or effectively manage the balance between flexibility and codification.

Undeniably, the lack of success of the Lebanese state in effectively fulfilling its part was a fundamental challenge facing the Taëf Republic. Without a functioning state that could uphold the rules of the power-sharing agreement and ensure its proper implementation, the agreement became vulnerable to subversion and manipulation by sectarian interests (Sriram & Zahar, 2009). This led to a cycle of fiscal mismanagement, with redistribution efforts resulting in unsustainable deficits and mounting public debt (Aoun, 2007). Moreover, the constant threat of sectarian conflict loomed in the background, further complicating efforts to maintain stability. In this context, attempts to purify the accord or introduce devices to exceed the

primary circumstances or manage the equilibrium between flexibility and formalization, are subordinate to the institution's essential concern in responsibility of implementing and changing the accord. The primary issue was the absence of a capable institution tasked with applying and reforming the agreement. Without a strong and legitimate state authority, even basic political processes such as bargaining and negotiation could exacerbate the system's instability.

In the Taëf period, Lebanon adopted a system known as the Troika, which involved the joint leadership of three prominent figures: Rafik Hariri, Walid Jumblatt, and Nabih Berri (Haddad, 2002). This arrangement aimed to distribute power and representation among Lebanon's major sectarian groups. The Troika system reflected the delicate balance of political forces in Lebanon during that time. Decisions made by the Troika were often based on political considerations and compromises rather than adherence to established state procedures or laws. This informal arrangement allowed the Troika members to negotiate and broker deals that would serve the interests of their respective constituencies and maintain stability in Lebanon's fragile political landscape (Haddad, 2002). Thus, the Troika's decision-making process bypassed traditional state institutions and formal mechanisms of governance.

#### **4.9. Development and Peace-Building**

Lebanon's historical context challenges simplistic views regarding the relationship between the economy and the likelihood of struggle. The impact of the economy on both conflict and peace is intricate and heavily influenced by political dynamics. However, when the economy is fragile, it can provide fertile ground for the escalation of political disputes into violence (OECD, 2025). The several instances of violence that occurred after the war in Lebanon were predominantly driven by political factors rather than socioeconomic ones. In Lebanon, post-war violence was primarily rooted in political tensions and grievances rather than socioeconomic disparities. However, the absence of violence driven by socioeconomic factors does not diminish the importance of a stable and prosperous economy in maintaining sustainable peace. A stable economic and financial environment can help alleviate the uncertainties that often fuel political instability. Economic stability provides a sense of security and predictability, reducing the likelihood of conflicts erupting due to economic grievances or disparities (Elsharkawy, 2024). Moreover, a thriving economy can create opportunities for employment, investment, and growth, offering citizens tangible benefits and incentives to support peace efforts (Sindaki, 2024). Furthermore, equitable redistribution of resources is

crucial for ensuring the credibility and sustainability of peace agreements, particularly in societies marked by deep-seated divisions and inequalities. Without meaningful efforts to address socioeconomic disparities and ensure that the benefits of economic growth are shared fairly among all segments of society, peace agreements may lack legitimacy and face challenges in implementation.

However, relocation, particularly when driven by political motives and in the absence of a robust and cohesive state, carries economic and organizational drawbacks. While certain financial and economic policies were introduced as tools to implement the Taëf Agreement on a societal level, they failed to generate sustainable economic growth. These policies did not improve living standards or create meaningful employment opportunities. For economic policies to be effective in such a context, they must adopt a long-term perspective, akin to the institutional mechanisms designed to stabilize power-sharing agreements (Rickards, 2020). This long-term vision plays an essential role in preventing relocation from becoming a lasting feature of the governance framework, with its consequent economic and fiscal ramifications.

The economic system implemented after the Taëf Agreement in Lebanon was characterized by fragility and unsustainable practices. It relied heavily on strategies such as accumulating public debt to finance the treasury and attracting capital through high interest rates, which were aimed at channeling funds into Lebanese banks rather than fostering investment and developing a robust economy based on sound economic policies. This approach prioritized short-term gains and liquidity over long-term sustainability and growth. While it may have provided temporary relief and liquidity for the government, it failed to address underlying structural issues or stimulate productive economic activity. Instead, it exacerbated Lebanon's dependence on debt and speculative financial practices, leaving the economy vulnerable to shocks and crises. The economic collapse that Lebanon experienced in 2019, coupled with the subsequent collapse of its banking sector, is a stark testament to the failure of this economic system (Rickards, 2020). It highlighted the unsustainability of relying on debt-driven growth and speculative financial practices, as well as the need for comprehensive economic reform and a shift towards more prudent and productive economic policies.

#### **4.10. The Lack of Mechanisms for Peaceful Means of Conflict Resolution**

One of the key limitations of the Taëf Agreement was its inability to provide mechanisms for resolving conflicts outside the political sphere. There were no effective judicial or institutional avenues to address disputes, leaving political consensus as the sole means of

conflict resolution. The Troika approach temporarily managed disagreements, it reinforced existing clientelistic practices and perpetuated a system in which political bargaining took precedence over institutionalized conflict resolution. The Troika is a term used after the Taëf to describe how the decision was taken in the country. Most issues and conflicts were settled through negotiations and compromises among the three (Troika) dominant community leaders: Berri (Shiia), Hariri (Sunni), and Jumblatt (Druze), and sometimes involving the president (Christian/Maronite). This is how and instead of institutionalizing the decisions and the procedures to reinforce good governance, they were instead negotiated on the political level and the decisions were taken by three or four community leaders.

Importantly, the Taëf Agreement did not include measures for post-war reconciliation to facilitate long-term conflict resolution. There were no judicial proceedings to address war crimes or massacres, and the agreement made no provisions for fostering a unified national identity, promoting citizenship, or implementing peace education. Consequently, opportunities to address the root causes of societal divisions and to cultivate a culture of accountability and national cohesion were largely neglected.

#### **4.11. Justice and Accountability**

One of the most significant shortcomings of the post-Taëf period was the complete absence of justice and accountability for wartime atrocities. The Lebanese Parliament issued a general amnesty law in 1991, which granted blanket pardons to individuals and groups responsible for crimes committed during the civil war. This law effectively shielded political and militia leaders from prosecution and allowed many of them to transition into positions of power within the post-war government. The reliance on amnesty as a conflict management tool was repeated on multiple occasions, even after the civil war, creating a general culture of impunity.

To elaborate further, in recent times Lebanon encountered various types of conflict without any party being held responsible, highlighting a historical disruption within the judiciary system. These conflicts include a series of events such as the 25 assassinations or attempts between 2005 and 2013, the military conflict in May 2008 between Hezbollah and pro-government, clashes between Sunni Bab El Tebbaneh and Alawite Jabal Mohsen from 2011 to 2015, the Beirut Port explosion in 2020, and the severe economic crisis starting 2019, as well as various instances of lawlessness across the country including violent disputes, murders in public, road rage incidents escalating to gunfire, ransom kidnappings, and numerous

conflicts involving Syrian refugees. In practice, this power-sharing approach and the emphasis on achieving consensus among the various sectarian groups tended to prioritize stability over substantive reforms often resulting in political deadlocks.

## **4.12. Resistance to the Taëf Agreement**

### ***4.12.1. Refusal of Taëf Agreement by the Christians***

As mentioned above, General Aoun vehemently refused the Taëf Agreement and made every effort to resist its implementation, particularly in the areas under his control. As the main opponent of Syria in Lebanon, he stood in staunch opposition to Syrian influence and interference in Lebanese affairs. Despite Aoun's opposition, Syria succeeded in garnering support from most of the Lebanese politicians for the Taëf Agreement. Crucially, Hezbollah, the Lebanese Forces under Samir Ja'Ja, and the Maronite religious establishment in Bkerki threw their weight behind the Taëf Accord. Even President Elias Hrawi<sup>7</sup>, initially sought Syria's assistance against General Aoun (Phares, 1995).

In 1990, Syria's reputation received a significant boost in both Arab and international circles throughout the Gulf Crisis. By joining the US-led anti-Iraq coalition, Syria aligned itself closely with Western interests, particularly those of the United States. This newfound rapport was evident during James Baker's visit to Damascus in September 1990, where Syria was given the green light to act against General Aoun in Lebanon (Bengio & Ben-Dor, 1999). In response, Syrian forces launched an offensive against General Aoun's stronghold around the Baabda presidential palace in Beirut on October 13, 1990. After capturing the palace, they extended their control over East Beirut. General Aoun sought refuge in the French Embassy before eventually going into exile in France (Zisser, 2000).

The exile of Michel Aoun and the assassination of president-elect René Moawad contributed to the perception among many Christians that the power-sharing arrangement excluded them. They came to view themselves as the losers of the war and as being subordinated to external influences. This perception was a major factor behind the widespread rejection of the Taëf Agreement by the Christian community.

---

<sup>7</sup> Elias Hrawi second elected president after Taëf Agreement. His presidency lasted from November 24, 1989, to November 24, 1998.

#### ***4.12.2. Shia Muslim Resistance***

The Shia community as a whole, expressed dissatisfaction with the terms of the Taëf Agreement. Specifically, Hezbollah, along with their backers in Iran, voiced strong discontent towards the agreement. Their opposition indirectly benefited the Maronites and Sunnis while undermining their own gains made during the prolonged civil war. Despite being elevated to a position nearly equal to that of the Maronite president and Sunni prime minister, they felt the concessions in the Taëf Agreement were inadequate. They believed the compensation offered was insufficient considering their growing population, which they deemed the largest in the country. Additionally, the Shia community encountered significant obstacles in the process of Lebanon's state rehabilitation, particularly in reclaiming political power corridors and securing influential positions. This resulted in a struggle to fill these political offices with sophisticated associates of their public, placing them at a hindrance regarding the national power-sharing dynamic. The emergence of Hezbollah in Lebanese politics further exacerbated their concerns, as they perceived a threat due to their community's weaknesses highlighted after the Taëf Agreement. Despite these challenges, Hezbollah managed to adapt to the new circumstances and assert itself in Lebanese politics, gradually filling the longstanding vacuum. Before the Taëf Agreement, Hezbollah faced an identity crisis to represent Lebanon's Shia community, failing to present a viable Islamic alternative to address their community's grievances. The accord inadvertently bolstered Hezbollah's rival organization, Amal, which proved more adept at aligning with the new Lebanese framework and participating in the reformed political system (Sela, 2002).

It is important to note that Hezbollah initially opposed the Taëf Agreement and was perceived as a tool of Iranian influence in Lebanon. However, over the following four decades, Hezbollah transformed into one of the most influential players in both local and regional politics. Through its military capabilities, social services, and political activities, Hezbollah has emerged as a key powerbroker in Lebanon and a significant actor in regional affairs, shaping dynamics in the Middle East.

#### **4.13. Lessons Learned from Power-sharing Agreement**

The power-sharing agreement in Lebanon after the war addressed the issue of monopolization by resorting to fragmentation. However, its continual reliance on sectarian representation led to the reproduction and, in some cases, reinforcement of the initial circumstances of disintegration through the institutionalization of sectarianism in the 'Taëf

Republic'. This reliance on the cooperation of various sectarian representatives presented a level of inflexibility in the progression of decision-making, that often circumvented in exercise over numerous methods like short-term agreements, negotiating, ad-hoc conclusions, and extralegal devices. This mixture of official and unofficial elasticity gives the system a broader scope for managing conflict and adapting to provincial changes, albeit at the expense of additional deinstitutionalizing and fragmenting the state. While the Taëf institutional framework succeeded in maintaining conflicts at a low-intensity level, it failed to reverse this trend or establish a mechanism for transcending it.

One significant lesson learned from the Lebanese experience is that power-sharing agreements must include mechanisms to surpass their primary conditions of fragmentation instead of merely justifying or representing societal divisions. In this regard, the Taëf Agreement attempted to pledge such a process by including various mechanisms. For example, it proposed the formation of a committee to eradicate sectarianism, a provision that has not been implemented to date. Furthermore, by distributing political power evenly among Christians and Muslims, the parties involved in the Taëf Agreement aimed to separate demographic weight from political representation. This clause could have been a crucial step towards depoliticizing demographic issues. Though, the architects of the agreement succumbed to pressures from resurgent sectarianism, with increasing demands for replacing the 50-50 power-sharing arrangement with a tripartite division among Christians, Sunnis, and Shiia. This effectively reintroduced political significance into demographic considerations.

An additional lesson drawn from the period that took place after the war pertains to the delicate equilibrium between the inflexibility and flexibility of the system. In a society marked by imitative inclinations, any alteration in the established order is susceptible to being seen through sectarian lenses, potentially sparking conflict. Consequently, a quasi-religious<sup>8</sup> devotion to the status quo often appears as the seemingly sole feasible solution. However, in order to navigate an altering environment, address unforeseen expansions, and maintain a degree of organizational competence, elasticity must be brought into effect again in the system. The equilibrium between rigidity and flexibility depends on the explicit circumstances, setting, and evolving situations of each experience. Nonetheless, as demonstrated by the Lebanese case, implementing flexibility in an ad hoc method results in a significant incoherence between

---

<sup>8</sup> Resembling something that is religious. synonyms: sacred. concerned with religion or religious purposes.

actual governing practices and official regulations. This discrepancy undermines the legitimacy of the latter and risks plunging the institutional framework into chaos.

Despite the benefits of the Taëf Agreement, important lessons can also be drawn from its gaps and omissions. For instance, the agreement failed to establish clear 'red lines' that should not be crossed to prevent armed conflict. It also lacked provisions for non-violent mechanisms of conflict resolution during periods of tension, a critical shortcoming in a country like Lebanon, which has historically experienced repeated wars and remains at risk of future conflicts.

Moreover, the agreement did not emphasize the establishment of councils or platforms for dialogue to promote peace education, citizenship, the development of a unified national identity, or the transcendence of sectarian divisions.

Lastly, there were no mechanisms for regular evaluation or updates that could have transformed the agreement from a short-term instrument for freezing conflicts into a framework for sustainable peace. Power-sharing arrangements should serve as a transitional phase during which the necessary foundations for achieving sustainable peace are established. In essence, the Taëf Agreement lacked the necessary infrastructure to foster long-term stability and prevent the recurrence of armed conflict.

## **Chapter 5 Manipulated Democracy: Parliamentary Elections in Postwar Lebanon (1992, 1996, and 2000)**

This chapter analyzes the nature and evolution of parliamentary elections in Lebanon after the Taëf Agreement, focusing on 1992, 1996, and 2000. While postwar elections maintained the appearance of a democratic process, research reveals their function as tools for consolidating Syrian hegemony and reinforcing elite and war lords' domination.

This critical analysis examines how the Taëf Agreement, rather than fostering genuine democratic transition and paving the way for true peacebuilding, created structural conditions that enabled electoral manipulation and authoritarian control under procedural legitimacy. The chapter applies Johan Galtung's previously explained distinction between negative and positive peace to demonstrate how Lebanon's postwar elections achieved stability through the absence of violence (negative peace) while systematically preventing the emergence of justice, equity, and genuine democratic participation (positive peace).

### **5.1. Overview of Electoral Law Reforms and Implementation (1992 – 2022)**

Although the constitution guarantees a 50/50 Christian-Muslim seat quota, nearly all electoral districts are composed of mixed constituencies. The parliamentary elections in 1992, 1996, and 2000 were held in a mega-district configuration, meaning that many Christian seats were effectively filled by voters from Muslim-majority areas (El-Khazen, 2000). Following the Syrian withdrawal in 2005, Christian political groups began advocating for a return to smaller districts, known as qada' (or caza), similar to the system implemented by the 1960 electoral law, which remained in operation until the last pre-war elections in 1972, before the civil war erupted in 1975. Under this law, Christian constituents were able to elect the majority of their representatives (48 out of 64 Christian MPs) in the 2009 elections.

The whole election system in Lebanon is based on two major administrative divisions: the Muhafaza (governorate) and the qada' (district). The Muhafaza is the highest administrative level, which is governed by a Governor (Muhafiz), and includes several qada'. Historically, Lebanon was divided into six muhafazat: Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, Beqaa, and South Lebanon. Three additional muhafazat have been added recently: Akkar, Baalbek-Hermel, and Keserwan-Jbeil. The qada', as the second administrative level located inside a muhafaza, is managed by a District Commissioner (Qaim-maqam) and contains several

municipalities. For example, Mount Lebanon used to comprise the qada' of Baabda, Aley, Chouf, Metn, Keserwan, and Jbeil (before the separate Keserwan-Jbeil governorate was formed) (El-Khazen, 2000).

### **1992 Electoral Law**

The first post-war elections were heavily influenced by Syrian control and conducted under a majoritarian law that was hastily drafted. It was “three laws in one”: Beirut was one large district; the North and South used the wide governate (Muhafaza), but seats were allocated by qada'; Mount Lebanon and the Beqaa were under small qada' districts (see Table 4). This uneven mix violated the core of the Taëf Agreement (Abouaoun, 2016).

According to El-Khazen, 26 Christian deputies were decisively affected by Muslim/Druze electorates: 9 due to demographic gaps, 7 due to displacement, and 10 due to boycott. While Christians were decisive in only 3 Muslim seats (El-Khazen, 2000). The dual counting rule in 1992 (muhafaza voting/ qada' competition) was a design that undermined real representation.

The 1992 elections saw the widest gap in seats per voter: large constituencies elected 28, 23, and 19 MPs each (respectively: North, South, and Beirut); whilst small ones elected 3 to 6 MPs. Additionally, a high share of seats was won unopposed, and turnout was minimal in many Christian areas (Jbeil 6.5%).

### **1996 Electoral Law**

For the 1996 elections, the 1992 architecture persisted, with the same majoritarian design and the security-brokered lists dominated. With higher Christian participation, many Christian seats were still decided by Muslim voters, sustaining the grievance of diminished Christian presence. Meanwhile, Hariri's business-state coalition expanded amid a neoliberal reconstruction drive.

Beqaa is the only area that saw changes in its districting (see Table 5). The aim was to ensure more dilution of the Christian vote and to reduce Sunni leverage, enabling the Amal-Hezbollah (Shiia) to dominate the Beqaa (Rizkallah, 2015). While Beirut, North, South, and Mount Lebanon maintained their 1992 districting, safeguarding key patrons: Frangieh and Karame in the North, Amal/ Hezbollah in the South, Jumblatt and Murr in Mount Lebanon, all of them Syria allies. As a result, Syrian control and Christian misrepresentation were sustained. The numerically dominant Amal/ Hezbollah vote in Baalbek-Hermel resulted in deepening the

imbalances, where more Christian seats were decided by non-Christian electorates than under the 1992 three-district setup.

### **2000 Electoral Law**

Similar to 1992 and 1996, the 2000 law was parachuted despite strong opposition from both the government and the parliament. Districting was the topic of debate, and the majoritarian system was maintained. Law enforcers in Damascus and Beirut were sure to modify earlier districting to target particular political figures, while simultaneously protecting others. To prevent Hariri from winning a sizable parliamentary bloc, Beirut was divided into three districts (Rabil, 2005). To prevent the Lebanese Forces, a Christian party, from influencing the results of the elections, Becharre, a Christian qada' in the North, was diluted in a district with a plurality of Muslims- Akkar. Beqaa was split up into three districts again (as in 1992). Mount Lebanon's six districts were reduced to four serving Murr (Minister of Interior, and Mount Lebanon's most prominent figure and allies of Syria after the Ta'êf), to control the outcome of the elections (see Table 6).

### **2005 Electoral Law**

The 2005 elections' law and districting were a replica of the 2000 cycle. But with more Christian participation, and the return of General Michel Aoun from exile, a respectful portion of Christian MPs were elected by Christian electorates (Mount Lebanon, 15 MPs).

### **2009 Electoral Law**

These elections came with a return to what is widely known as "the 1960 law". Majoritarianism was maintained, and Lebanon was divided into small districts. Until now, the Christian vote has not been influential in the choice of Christian MPs. The "1960 law" was supposed to restore representation for the Christians; they were able in 2009 to choose around 50 of their MPs (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2018). Thus, Lebanon was divided into 26 districts, qada' (refer to the district distribution in Chapter 6).

### **2018 Electoral Law**

Lebanon adopted proportional representation in 2018 for the first time. In order to maintain the dominance of traditional political lords, Lebanon was divided into 15 districts, with a preferential vote on the qada level (refer to the district distribution in Chapter 6). Thus, reinforces sectarian discourse and clientelist practices (Deets & Skulte-Ouais, 2020).

### **2022 Electoral Law**

These elections saw no change in the electoral system nor in the districting. Note that both elections, 2018 and 2022, witnessed expatriates' participation in the process for the first time.

## 5.2. Post-Taëf Political Landscape

The reintroduction of parliamentary elections in postwar Lebanon was a central pillar of the political reconstruction envisioned by the Taëf Agreement. After a twenty-year interruption, the last elections having taken place in 1972, the staging of electoral contests in 1992, 1996, and 2000 was officially framed as a restoration of democratic life. However, in practice, these elections functioned less as mechanisms of democratic renewal and more as instruments for institutionalizing the postwar elite consensus and stabilizing sectarian power-sharing under a new configuration (Salloukh, 2006).

While Taëf recalibrated sectarian balances, reallocating parliamentary seats equally between Christians and Muslims and shifting executive authority toward the Council of Ministers, instead of the president of the republic, it preserved the foundational logic of sectarian clientelism. Elections became structured arenas where wartime actors re-legitimized their authority through patronage networks and identity-based mobilization. The confessional quotas, short electoral cycles, and the absence of strong party platforms reinforced the fragmentation of the political field and suppressed opportunities for programmatic contestation or cross-sectarian coalition-building (Lijphart, 1987).

The 1992 elections, held under the shadow of widespread political distrust and poor turnout, especially among Christian voters, set the tone for the postwar electoral order. Critics described the process as exclusionary and stage-managed, with many prominent Christian parties boycotting the vote altogether. As Farid El Khazen (2000) shows in his comprehensive study of the 1992, 1996, and 2000 elections, the postwar electoral system operated within narrow limits that restricted competition and guaranteed the reproduction of elite power. He characterizes this phase in his book *“Intikhabat Lubnan ma ba‘d al-Harb 1992, 1996, 2000: Dimuqratiyya Bila Khiyyar”* as “democracy without choice,” where electoral procedures existed without meaningful alternatives (El-Khazen, 2000).

While turnout improved in 1996, the elections remained dominated by established sectarian actors, many of whom were former militia leaders turned parliamentarians. The 2000 elections introduced some openings, particularly in Mount Lebanon and Beirut, where

independent and civil society candidates gained visibility, yet these remained marginal in a system that continued to structurally favor clientelist blocs and entrenched interests (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005).

Throughout this period, elections operated within a framework of constrained pluralism, formally democratic but substantively limited. The broader political environment was shaped by a stabilizing, yet controlling, external presence that guaranteed the continuity of the postwar order without enabling systemic reform. Syrian tutelage during this era served to enforce the rules of the post-Taëf game while limiting the scope of political transformation (Picard, 1996).

In short, while the return to elections after Taëf fulfilled a symbolic and procedural role in Lebanon's peacebuilding process, it failed to generate substantive democratic renewal. Instead, the electoral system helped consolidate a consociational order premised on elite continuity, clientelist mediation, and political immobilism, an arrangement that ensured stability, but deferred deeper democratic change (Knudsen, 2010).

Before delving into the consecutive electoral laws starting 1992, it is important to make this general remark about all the electoral laws from 1992 till 2018. For the 1992, 1998, 2000, 2005 and 2018 elections and according to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2018), the below characteristics remained the same for all of the electoral laws:

- The right to stand is confessional: seats can only be contested by candidates who are from the confession it is allocated to.
- The right to vote is non confessional: voters can vote for all available confessional seats, regardless of the voter's own confessional group.
- Voters have more than one vote: Lebanon uses multi-member electoral districts. Voters are able to vote for as many candidates as there are seats available in what is known as the block vote system.
- Voters vote with a single ballot paper: On a single ballot paper, a voter chooses the names of candidates they wish to vote for.
- It is a plurality/majority system: there is only one seat for a confession, the seat is won by whichever candidate from that confession has the most votes which is known as the first-past-the-post system.

### 5.3. The 1992 Parliamentary Elections

The 1992 parliamentary elections marked a critical moment in Lebanon's postwar trajectory: they were the first elections since 1972 and the first to be held under the framework of the Taëf Agreement. Officially portrayed as a return to institutional normalcy and a cornerstone of peacebuilding, these elections were deeply contested in both process and outcome. They revealed the fragility of Lebanon's post-conflict democratic architecture and laid bare the tensions between formal procedures and substantive political legitimacy (Salloukh, 2006).

The electoral law governing the 1992 parliamentary elections was one of the most controversial and consequential aspects of the postwar political settlement. Drafted under tight deadlines and largely behind closed doors, the law was the product of elite negotiations involving key Lebanese officials and Syrian authorities, without meaningful consultation with civil society, opposition groups, or marginalized communities. Its design reflected a preference for political control over representative fairness.

The law adopted a majoritarian, winner-takes-all system based on large administrative districts that often grouped together diverse and geographically dispersed communities. These district configurations were intentionally engineered to dilute the influence of independent candidates, secular reformists, or any actors not aligned with the dominant postwar coalitions. In some cases, districts were drawn in such a way that loyalist candidates could secure victory with minority support, while opposition candidates were divided across incompatible constituencies. This is a tactic commonly described as gerrymandering (El-Khazen, 2000), a practice defined as the practice of drawing the boundaries of electoral districts in a way that gives one political party an advantage over its rivals (Duignan, 2025).

Notably, the law failed to implement several key institutional reforms outlined in the Taëf Agreement. Among these were the creation of a Senate to represent communal identities outside the regular parliament and the introduction of proportional representation, which would have allowed for a more accurate reflection of Lebanon's pluralistic society. These omissions were not accidental: they ensured that power remained concentrated in the hands of traditional sectarian elites who could mobilize support through clientelist networks and patronage rather than through national programs or policy-based platforms.

The structure of the electoral districts also favored incumbents and figures close to the Syrian-Lebanese security establishment. By linking together disparate regions into oversized constituencies, the law made it nearly impossible for localized or reformist candidates to mount effective campaigns. The absence of campaign finance regulation, independent oversight, or equal media access further skewed the playing field in favor of those with access to state resources and external backing.

In effect, the 1992 electoral law served to institutionalize a system of managed pluralism, where elections were held but meaningful competition was structurally suppressed. Rather than serving as a neutral legal framework for democratic participation, the law became a tool of electoral engineering, consolidating elite dominance and ensuring that the postwar parliament would reflect the logic of the peace settlement, not the preferences of a mobilized or representative electorate.

For instance, in the Beirut I district, the law grouped together largely Christian neighborhoods with Sunni-majority areas in a way that effectively neutralized Christian electoral influence. Similarly, the Zahle district in the Beqaa was drawn to include a heterogeneous mix of sects and political orientations, but was structured so that candidates backed by the Syrian-aligned security establishment could dominate with pre-negotiated lists. In Jbeil and Keserwan, historically Maronite strongholds, opposition to the law was intense, as districting weakened the electoral weight of communities perceived as less cooperative with Syrian policy (Picard, 1996; El-Khazen, 2000). It is important to clarify that in Lebanon's electoral law, all citizens, regardless of their sectarian identity, vote for any candidate running in their district. The division along religious lines does not restrict voters to elect candidates of their own sect; instead, the system is designed to allocate parliamentary seats based on sectarian quotas. For example, a district may have two seats, one designated for a Christian and one for a Muslim, regardless of the actual demographic proportions. If the Muslim population in that district is larger, then Muslims, through their votes, will effectively determine who fills both seats, even the Christian seat. This means that, although the parliament may have equal numbers of Christian and Muslim representatives overall, the voting power of the Muslim community can influence the selection of Christian representatives because of the demographic realities and the seat allocation system.

A defining feature of the 1992 elections was the widespread Christian boycott. Major Christian parties, including the Lebanese Forces, the Aounists (General Aoun partisans) and

the Kataeb, refused to participate, citing unfair electoral conditions and lack of guarantees for free political competition. Turnout among Christian voters dropped sharply, with some estimates placing participation below 20% in key districts. As a result, the parliament that emerged from the elections suffered from a crisis of representation, especially in Christian-majority areas. This boycott not only weakened the legitimacy of the legislature but also cast a long shadow over the credibility of the Taëf political settlement itself (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005).

Despite the deeply flawed nature of the 1992 elections, they were successful in restoring a functioning parliament and reactivating the formal structures of the Lebanese state after nearly two decades of constitutional paralysis. The return to legislative life was symbolically important: it marked the end of open hostilities and the reassertion of national institutions, at least on a procedural level. Yet this institutional revival came at a considerable cost to democratic renewal.

A significant share of those elected in 1992 were former militia leaders, wartime strongmen, or figures who had accumulated power through violence, not democratic contestation. Rather than being held accountable for their role in the war, these individuals were rebranded as legitimate political representatives through electoral victories engineered by clientelist networks and foreign sponsorship. For example, Nabih Berri, the wartime leader of Amal, secured his position as speaker of parliament, while Walid Jumblatt, head of the Progressive Socialist Party and a dominant Druze warlord, returned as a major parliamentary player. Elie Hobeika, former leader of the Lebanese Forces, served in several ministerial positions. Other formerly armed actors, including some with direct ties to regional powers, were similarly integrated into the legislative arena (Picard, 1996; El-Khazen, 2000; BBC, 2002).

This pattern reflected what scholars of post-conflict transitions describe as "elite pacting", meaning a negotiated settlement in which peace is secured not by transforming political culture but by ensuring that former belligerents retain a stake in the postwar system (Sisk, 2017). While such arrangements can produce stability, they often do so by deferring justice, freezing pluralism, and entrenching pre-existing power asymmetries. In the Lebanese case, the inclusion of wartime elites in peacetime institutions created a self-reinforcing cycle of political stagnation. These actors had little incentive to pursue structural reforms that might undermine their sectarian or clientelist bases of power.

Crucially, this continuity of personnel signaled to the public that elections were not a mechanism of accountability or transformation, but rather a way to legitimize the postwar order without confronting its violent past. No vetting mechanisms, transitional justice procedures, or reforms were introduced to challenge this dynamic. As a result, the 1992 elections reproduced the war's political logics within peacetime institutions, blurring the line between conflict and post-conflict governance.

From a peacebuilding perspective, this outcome may have contributed to short-term stability, but it undermined the long-term legitimacy and efficacy of democratic institutions. Citizens witnessed the re-emergence of warlords in suits, operating through parliament rather than on the battlefield, but still commanding loyalty through sectarian identity, coercive influence, or material patronage. The result was not a rupture with the past, but a recalibration of its structures under a veneer of electoral legitimacy.

Farid El-Khazen captures the contradictions of this moment by describing the 1992 vote as the beginning of a "democracy without choice." While elections were held and constitutional procedures resumed, the broader context marked by sectarian manipulation, elite collusion, and limited political pluralism, meant that voters were largely deprived of real alternatives. Rather than functioning as a mechanism of change, the elections became a managed performance of democratic formality, legitimizing an exclusionary and stagnant political order (El-Khazen, 2009).

In sum, the 1992 elections were a foundational moment in Lebanon's postwar political development. They symbolized the return of state institutions but also revealed the limits of democratic practice under conditions of elite continuity and structural imbalance. Their contribution to peace lay primarily in reinforcing stability and halting institutional collapse, but not in advancing reconciliation, inclusivity, or systemic reform. In Galtung's terms, the elections helped secure negative peace; the absence of violence, while falling short of positive peace, defined as the presence of justice and participatory governance (Galtung, 1969). While the electoral process successfully prevented a return to armed conflict and maintained institutional stability, it perpetuated structural violence through the exclusion of meaningful opposition, the marginalization of civil society voices, and the preservation of sectarian hierarchies that denied equal political participation to all Lebanese citizens.

### *5.1.1. Historical and Political Context*

The 1992 elections took place in a historically unprecedented context. For twenty years, Lebanon had been without parliamentary elections due to the eruption of the civil war in 1975 and the subsequent breakdown of state institutions. The last legislature, elected in 1972, had remained in place through repeated extensions during wartime. The Taëf Agreement, signed in 1989, mandated a return to constitutional order, including the organization of regular elections as part of Lebanon's post-conflict political reconstruction (Salloukh, 2006). The restoration of electoral institutions was thus seen as both a legal and symbolic marker of peace.

However, the postwar years were not simply a period of reconstruction; they were also marked by the entrenchment of Syrian military and political dominance across Lebanon. Following the Taëf Agreement, Syria was granted a formalized "special role" in Lebanon's stability and security. This role quickly evolved into comprehensive control over Lebanon's internal affairs, executed through a combination of military presence, intelligence penetration, and political brokerage. By 1992, an estimated 35,000 Syrian troops remained stationed in Lebanon, with checkpoints, barracks, and surveillance infrastructure embedded across key regions, particularly in Mount Lebanon, the Bekaa, and the North (Picard, 1996).

In parallel, the postwar period saw the disarmament of most Lebanese militias, in accordance with Taëf provisions. While armed groups like the Lebanese Forces and the Progressive Socialist Party were forced to relinquish their weapons and withdraw from urban centers, Hezbollah was exempted from disarmament under the pretext of "resistance" to Israeli occupation in South Lebanon. This created a dual security structure in the country, with Syrian-backed state institutions on one side, and Hezbollah's armed autonomy on the other, a balance that was reflected in how the 1992 elections were organized and controlled.

In this environment, the electoral process was never intended to foster open political competition. It unfolded in a tightly managed setting, where security agencies closely monitored political activity, dissent was discouraged, and many opposition figures remained in exile or under pressure. Yet despite this restrictive context, there was strong pressure from both domestic elites and international stakeholders to hold elections. For local political actors, particularly those allied with Syria or emerging as postwar powerbrokers, elections were essential to legitimize their new roles within the state apparatus. Holding a vote, however flawed, allowed them to transition from militancy to authority without confronting their wartime records.

Internationally, external actors such as France, the United States, and the Arab League supported the holding of elections as a signal of progress in the postwar normalization process. For them, elections functioned as symbolic markers of peace implementation, even if the substance of democratic reform was absent. The act of holding elections, regardless of fairness, enabled Lebanon to claim international recognition of its recovery, attract foreign aid, and re-engage with multilateral diplomacy.

In this way, the 1992 electoral process became a convergence point for multiple interests: Syrian geopolitical control, Lebanese elite survival, and international peacebuilding optics. What resulted was a formal return to constitutional procedure without the corresponding freedoms or accountability mechanisms that would give elections democratic meaning.

### ***5.1.2. Syrian Oversight and Electoral Engineering***

The organization of the 1992 elections was heavily influenced, and arguably orchestrated, by Syrian authorities. In the immediate postwar period, Syria enjoyed uncontested strategic dominance over Lebanon and treated the elections as an opportunity to consolidate its political architecture. The electoral law, though formally issued by Lebanese institutions, was shaped under the supervision of Syrian intelligence and designed to secure favorable outcomes for Damascus-aligned figures. This was not simply a case of foreign interference; it was systemic electoral engineering, embedded in law, logistics, and candidate management (El-Khazen, 2000).

A central element of this engineering was the strategic redrawing of electoral districts. Instead of aligning districts with coherent geographic or sectarian constituencies, the 1992 law created large, multi-member districts that often combined communities with divergent political orientations. This method was used to fragment the opposition, especially in areas where anti-Syrian sentiment or independent candidates had a strong base. In some cases, districts were designed in such a way that a unified pro-regime list could win all seats with a relative, not absolute, majority, effectively locking out dissenting voices.

The role of the Lebanese security apparatus, particularly the General Security Directorate and Military Intelligence, was also pivotal. These institutions, under de facto Syrian command, acted as gatekeepers, vetting candidates and ensuring that only “acceptable” figures could run. Many potential challengers were pressured to withdraw, denied the necessary approvals, or threatened with administrative and legal harassment. Even within sectarian blocs,

lists were curated to include loyalists and exclude critics of either the Syrian presence or the post-Taëf elite pact (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005).

Electoral lists were often pre-negotiated through backchannel coordination between Lebanese officials, Syrian intelligence officers (notably Ghazi Kanaan<sup>9</sup>), and major political brokers such as Nabih Berri and Michel Murr. These pre-approved slates were then publicly presented as “alliances,” giving the illusion of pluralism while ensuring pre-determined outcomes. In many constituencies, real competition was absent, and voters were effectively asked to ratify decisions made in Damascus or Baabda, rather than choose their own representatives.

This process blurred the line between electoral administration and political choreography. The elections became less about representation and more about managing power distribution among approved actors. Syrian oversight did not merely influence the results, it pre-structured them, reducing the electoral exercise to a performance of legitimacy. As a result, many observers, including Lebanese civil society actors and international analysts, saw the 1992 vote as a technocratic mechanism for elite reproduction, not a genuine democratic opening (Knudsen, 2010).

In sum, the 1992 elections were not simply “postwar elections.” They were the foundational moment in the construction of a Syrian-mediated postwar order, in which the electoral system was used as a tool to cement strategic alliances, neutralize opposition, and institutionalize authoritarian stability under the guise of procedural democracy.

### ***5.1.3. The Christian Boycott and Crisis of Legitimacy***

A defining feature of the 1992 elections was the near-total boycott by major Christian political forces, which inflicted a critical blow to the legitimacy and representativeness of the first postwar parliament. Key Maronite parties such as the Kataeb (also known as Phalange) Party and remnants of the Lebanese Forces, which had been forcibly disarmed and politically marginalized, refused to participate. This rejection was also echoed by significant sectors of the Maronite Church hierarchy, including Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir, who publicly criticized the conditions surrounding the elections. For many within the Christian community,

---

<sup>9</sup> Ghazi Kanaan was a Syrian military officer and intelligence chief who served as Syria's interior minister from 2004 to 2005. He was also the long-time head of Syria's security apparatus in Lebanon from 1982 to 2002.

the vote was not an exercise in sovereignty but a staged event held under foreign occupation and designed to institutionalize their political marginalization (El-Khazen, 2000).

Several grievances motivated the boycott. Chief among them was resentment toward the Syrian occupation, which was perceived not as a peacekeeping presence but as a direct infringement on Lebanese autonomy. Moreover, during this time, the Christian community also experienced direct violence and political repression. Notably, the Syrian Army launched an attack on the Lebanese Presidential Palace in September 1990, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of Lebanese soldiers and civilians and the exile of Michel Aoun, a prominent Christian leader and the then-Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, to France after being ousted from power, despite having substantial support among Christians. These events reinforced to many Christians that they were under attack by a coalition of Syrian forces, whom they regarded as occupiers, and segments of the Muslim community aligned with Syrian interests. Consequently, many Christians perceived the 1992 elections as illegitimate, viewing them as orchestrated under foreign influence and lacking the authenticity needed to represent their community's interests and sovereignty. Additionally, the electoral law was seen as deeply unbalanced, designed to favor loyalist coalitions and reduce Christian political weight by manipulating district boundaries and consolidating Christian-majority regions with Muslim-majority ones. Finally, the redistribution of power under the Taëf Agreement, while nominally balanced, had symbolically and institutionally shifted executive authority away from the presidency (traditionally held by a Christian Maronite) to the cabinet and the Sunni prime minister, a shift many Christians saw as a loss of historical influence.

The result was a dramatic drop in voter turnout in Christian-majority districts, with participation falling to under 20% in places like Jbeil, Keserwan, and parts of Beirut. In some areas, entire communities abstained in protest. This low turnout meant that candidates were often elected with a tiny fraction of the eligible vote, sometimes through default rather than genuine competition. The lack of Christian electoral engagement stripped the resulting parliament of national legitimacy, raising doubts about its representativeness and constitutional standing.

Christian political and religious leaders argued that any legislature elected without significant Christian participation could not credibly claim to express a national consensus. The boycott exposed the deep fractures within Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing system and cast a long shadow over the entire electoral cycle. It also undermined the perception of the Taëf

Agreement as a framework for inclusive peacebuilding, reinforcing the view among many Christians that Taëf had institutionalized their marginalization rather than guaranteeing communal parity (Picard, 1996).

More broadly, the boycott revealed the limits of procedural democracy in deeply divided societies. While elections were held, they failed to forge legitimacy across sectarian lines, a key precondition for sustainable postwar peace. The Christian withdrawal from the electoral process symbolized a crisis of trust in the system itself, which would reverberate in political discourse throughout the 1990s and lay the groundwork for future realignments, including the formation of new Christian opposition currents such as Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement. Table 3 illustrates the scale and geographic variation of the Christian boycott in different districts.

**Table 3** Scale and geographic variation of the Christian boycott

District	Confessional Composition	Approx. Turnout (%)	Notes
Keserwan	Predominantly Maronite	~15–18%	Core of the boycott; minimal electoral activity observed.
Jbeil	Maronite majority with Shia minority	~18–22%	Low participation despite active loyalist candidacies.
Beirut I	Mostly Christian (Ashrafieh area)	< 20%	Highly politicized abstention in response to perceived Syrian control.
Zahle	Mixed, with strong Christian bloc	~25–30%	Some participation, but mostly by pre-aligned pro-regime candidates.
Baabda–Aley	Mixed Maronite–Druze–Shiia	~30–35%	Maronite turnout low; Druze and Shia votes carried the outcome.

Source: Created by author

#### ***5.1.4. Boycotts as Delegitimizing Acts in Post-Conflict Elections***

In post-conflict societies, electoral boycotts are often used by excluded or marginalized actors to challenge the legitimacy of transitional arrangements. As political scientist Andreas Schedler notes, participation in elections is not only about competing for power but also about recognizing the rules of the game. When major actors boycott, they withdraw that recognition, casting doubt on the process and its outcomes (Schedler, 2002).

Similarly, Susan Hyde argues that boycotts can serve as powerful signals to both domestic and international audiences that an election lacks fairness or credibility (Hyde, 2011). In the context of postwar transitions, where institutions are often weak and trust fragile, a

boycott can function as a counter-claim to legitimacy, insisting that peace must be accompanied by justice, not just stability.

In Lebanon's case, the Christian boycott of 1992 was not merely electoral abstention but a political act of protest. It challenged the very legitimacy of the post-Taëf system, highlighting that peace cannot be built on exclusion and foreign tutelage. The boycott exposed a fundamental paradox: elections may signal democratic restoration, but without inclusive participation, they can also entrench new forms of alienation.

### ***5.1.5. Outcomes and Consequences***

The results of the 1992 elections confirmed what many had anticipated: overwhelming dominance by pro-Syrian candidates, many of whom were either former warlords or businessmen tied to the new patronage networks (El-Khazen, 2000). Opposition voices were marginalized, and emerging reformist currents had little chance of winning in the gerrymandered districts. The parliament became an institutional space where the rules of the postwar order were consolidated, not contested.

These elections normalized Syrian influence over Lebanese political life and set the tone for future cycles. The institutionalization of electoral manipulation, from districting to list formation to campaign regulation, became an embedded political practice. In turn, the 1992 elections helped formalize a Syrian-Lebanese security alliance as the backbone of postwar governance (Knudsen, 2010). While these elections fulfilled a procedural obligation and provided short-term stability, they eroded the democratic credibility of Lebanon's institutions and planted the seeds of long-term disillusionment.

From a peacebuilding perspective, the 1992 elections marked a shift toward what Johan Galtung would term negative peace: the absence of open conflict, but without structural transformation or political justice (Galtung, 1969). Although violence had ceased and institutions were restored, the deep sectarian divisions, authoritarian constraints, and exclusionary practices remained intact. As such, the elections served more as tools of postwar containment than as instruments of democratic peace.

### ***5.1.6. Electoral Sovereignty and Occupied Territories***

While the 1992 parliamentary elections marked a return to national voting after two decades of civil war, they were held under conditions of incomplete territorial sovereignty. At the time, Israel continued to occupy a swathe of South Lebanon, known as the "Security Zone,"

established in 1985 and maintained with the support of the South Lebanon Army (SLA). This occupation, which persisted until May 2000, posed significant challenges to the full inclusion of southern constituencies in the electoral process.

In several border areas, electoral administration was either suspended or carried out under exceptional security conditions, with displaced populations unable to vote in their home districts and others effectively disenfranchised due to restricted access or intimidation (Esposito, 1990; El-Khazen 2009). This not only undermined the representativeness of the electoral map, but also raised questions about sovereignty and legitimacy, particularly as the state was unable to guarantee safe and universal suffrage in all of its internationally recognized territory.

The Israeli occupation also shaped electoral dynamics indirectly, by amplifying Hezbollah's legitimacy as both an armed resistance and a political actor. While other parties contested elections under conventional patronage or sectarian umbrellas, Hezbollah leveraged its resistance credentials to claim moral authority over southern representation, even as it operated under Syrian-approved frameworks (Harik, 2004). The elections, therefore, exposed a contradiction in the Lebanese postwar order: an electoral state that could not fully access or administer parts of its territory.

This partial sovereignty not only limited citizen participation, but also complicated the legitimacy of postwar state-building. It reinforced narratives of external threat and internal weakness, themes that would remain politically salient until and beyond the Israeli withdrawal in 2000.

## **5.2. The 1996 Parliamentary Elections**

### ***5.2.1. Political Context and Shifting Alignments***

The 1996 parliamentary elections in Lebanon marked not a rupture from the 1992 cycle, but a deepening of the post-Taëf political settlement under Syrian direction. If the 1992 elections had laid the foundations for elite-controlled governance, the 1996 contest served to institutionalize those practices, transforming temporary arrangements into durable structures of control. By this point, the logic of managed democracy had taken firm root: elections would occur regularly, but under conditions carefully designed to limit competition, fragment dissent, and reinforce the hegemony of approved actors (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005; El-Khazen, 2000).

Syrian political dominance, while less visibly coercive than in 1992, became more sophisticated and normalized. Lebanese security services, which were deeply embedded within the Syrian-Lebanese intelligence nexus, continued to engineer outcomes through candidate vetting, list formation, and indirect pressure on media and civil society (Picard, 1996). The electoral law remained largely unchanged, preserving gerrymandered districts that favored large coalitions aligned with the regime. While some formerly boycotting Christian actors chose to return to the process, their participation did little to alter the structural imbalance of the system.

One of the most significant developments in 1996 was the formal inclusion of Hezbollah into parliamentary politics. Having gained broad legitimacy through its resistance to Israeli occupation, particularly after the “Grapes of Wrath” offensive in April 1996, Hezbollah entered the electoral arena through a carefully negotiated alliance with Amal (Mulhern, 2012). This move reflected a strategic shift in Syrian policy: rather than exclude or suppress potentially disruptive actors, Syria sought to co-opt them into the system, integrating them under strict conditions that ensured their loyalty to the broader postwar order. Hezbollah’s participation thus marked both a tactical success for Syrian mediation and a symbolic expansion of the regime’s pluralist façade.

Yet, this pluralism was tightly choreographed. Electoral competition remained shallow, largely limited to intra-elite rivalry. The formation of electoral lists, especially in contested districts, was orchestrated through backchannel negotiations among local powerbrokers, Syrian officers, and Lebanese intelligence figures (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005). Reformist voices, secular movements, and independent candidates continued to face structural obstacles, from lack of media access to financial exclusion, that made meaningful participation nearly impossible.

From a peacebuilding perspective, the 1996 elections demonstrate the paradox of Lebanon’s transition: stability was preserved not by democratizing the state, but by reproducing the logic of war through institutionalized sectarianism and elite pacts. Elections, far from being engines of reform, became tools of containment, enabling the projection of a democratic image while preventing the emergence of a democratic reality.

### ***5.2.2. Electoral Law and Political Engineering***

The electoral law used in the 1996 parliamentary elections was largely a continuation of the 1992 framework, with only minor technical adjustments. Rather than addressing

demands for reform, such as smaller constituencies, greater representation for independents, or moves toward proportional representation, the law retained the gerrymandered, majoritarian structure that had been instrumental in securing the outcomes of the previous cycle. The preservation of this legal framework ensured the continued marginalization of dissenting voices and reinforced the hegemony of dominant political blocs closely aligned with Syrian interests (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005). By 1996, however, electoral engineering had become more codified and less visibly coercive. There was less reliance on overt threats, and more emphasis on pre-election coordination, administrative filtering, and media manipulation. The Ministry of Interior, operating under Interior Minister Michel Murr and in coordination with security agencies, oversaw districting and electoral logistics in a manner that clearly reflected Syrian political imperatives (Picard, 1996). These arrangements allowed regime-aligned candidates to dominate without open repression.

The preservation of large, multi-member districts enabled dominant coalitions to consolidate votes and marginalize opposition through vote dilution and sectarian fragmentation. In strategic regions like the Bekaa, Baabda–Aley, and South Lebanon, electoral boundaries grouped together constituencies with opposing political tendencies, thereby neutralizing the potential of cohesive reformist blocs (El-Khazen, 2000). Gerrymandering remained central to Lebanon's postwar electoral architecture.

Candidate selection was another site of manipulation. The Syrian–Lebanese security apparatus functioned as a *de facto* gatekeeper, filtering out candidates deemed undesirable and facilitating closed-door negotiations to form unified electoral lists. These negotiations often involved Syrian intelligence officers, Lebanese political leaders, and local *za'ims* (notables), who forged pre-approved electoral slates that left little room for independent campaigning (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005).

A defining feature of the 1996 elections was the integration of a new class of business elites and technocrats, most visibly embodied in Rafic Hariri's parliamentary bloc. Hariri used the election to consolidate a loyal group of businessmen, contractors, and media owners whose political entry was made possible by the fusion of political patronage and capital accumulation (Gaspard, 2003). These actors were not traditional politicians; they were instruments of a new postwar political economy grounded in privatization, reconstruction, and debt-fueled development.

The 1996 electoral law functioned not only as a tool for political containment, but also as an enabler of oligarchic consolidation. The parliament that emerged from this process reflected a hybrid regime, sectarian in form, neoliberal in practice, and authoritarian in control mechanisms. Electoral clientelism was entrenched, campaign finance remained opaque, and access to the media was controlled by incumbent-linked networks. These dynamics institutionalized corruption as a mode of governance.

In short, the 1996 elections did not merely replicate the flaws of 1992; they perfected the mechanisms of control while embedding a new class of financial-political elites within the state. The electoral law, far from promoting reform or participation, functioned as a legal scaffold for elite reproduction, blending sectarian power with market-driven exclusion.

### ***5.2.3. Voter Behavior and Political Participation***

Compared to the 1992 elections, the 1996 parliamentary elections witnessed a modest increase in voter turnout, particularly in Sunni-majority and Shiia-majority regions, where participation exceeded 50% in several districts. This uptick was largely due to increased mobilization efforts by entrenched political elites, notably Rafic Hariri's patronage networks in Beirut and Sidon, and the Hezbollah-Amal alliance in the South and the Bekaa, which utilized both religious legitimacy and grassroots infrastructure to encourage participation (El-Khazen, 2009).

Among Christian constituencies, participation also rose compared to the 1992 boycott, though it remained below pre-war levels, especially in districts where voters perceived the electoral process as manipulated or unrepresentative. The return of some Christian parties, including segments of the Kataeb and individuals previously affiliated with the Lebanese Forces, was driven more by pragmatic concerns over marginalization than by renewed faith in the system's legitimacy (Picard, 1996).

Voter behavior was primarily driven by traditional logics of clientelism, sectarian identity, and local patronage. Political bosses and established families operated vast networks of intermediaries who facilitated logistical support (transportation, cash handouts, and food packages), particularly in rural areas and among lower-income urban communities. In many districts, especially in North Lebanon, the Chouf, and the Bekaa, political loyalty was rewarded through access to services, employment promises, or connections to state contracts. This was a continuation of the prewar za'im system, now adapted to the postwar context (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005).

Despite the appearance of democratic competition, substantive political engagement remained weak. Few candidates presented coherent policy platforms, and electoral campaigns were dominated by personalistic appeals, symbolic gestures, and sectarian narratives. The widespread use of private media channels, particularly partisan television stations such as Future TV and NBN, further reinforced this trend, transforming campaigns into spectacles of name recognition and elite messaging rather than forums for public debate (Gaspard, 2003). This media-driven personalization of politics served to shift the electoral discourse away from issues such as economic reform, social services, or governance accountability and toward questions of individual loyalty, sectarian representation. Evidently, this undermined the deliberative functions that elections serve in a healthy democracy.

Vote-buying was both widespread and normalized, with candidates frequently using campaign budgets to secure bloc votes through intermediaries. This was particularly effective in large multi-member districts, where complex electoral math allowed parties to bargain over seat distribution in advance. In such a context, elections functioned less as expressions of collective will than as negotiated redistributions of influence among well-connected actors.

The structure of the electoral law, especially its winner-takes-all model in oversized constituencies, discouraged the emergence of national, cross-sectarian movements. Reformist and civil society candidates, including those calling for proportional representation, anti-corruption oversight, or secular governance, found themselves sidelined by structural barriers, financial disadvantage, and media exclusion. In the few cases where independent voices gained traction, they were often co-opted into elite alliances, losing their oppositional edge in the process (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005).

In essence, voter behavior in 1996 was less an expression of ideological choice than a reflection of embedded loyalties and transactional incentives. The act of voting was often shaped by immediate socio-economic needs, sectarian solidarity, or strategic alignment with local powerbrokers, rather than a programmatic vision of governance. This pattern would become even more entrenched in subsequent electoral cycles, contributing to the persistent disconnect between electoral participation and democratic accountability

#### ***5.2.4. Outcomes and Political Consequences***

The 1996 elections confirmed the entrenchment of the post-Taëf order, solidifying the elite structures and mechanisms of control that had taken shape in 1992. The outcomes were neither surprising nor politically transformative; rather, they confirmed a trajectory in which

elections served as mechanisms for the reproduction of power rather than instruments of change or accountability.

The results produced a parliament overwhelmingly dominated by pro-Syrian political forces, including long-standing clients of the Syrian regime and new entrants such as Rafic Hariri's technocratic-business bloc. The consolidation of these forces reinforced the strategic alliance between Syria, the Lebanese security establishment, and the emerging class of economic elites. These actors may have differed in origin, former militia commanders, traditional *zu'ama*, or postwar financiers, but they were united by their stake in preserving a system that guaranteed access to resources, contracts, and influence through institutional channels rather than democratic deliberation (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005).

This period also marked the normalization of Syrian influence in Lebanese political life. By 1996, Syrian mediation was no longer framed as temporary or exceptional. It had become embedded in the very functioning of Lebanese state institutions, not just through military presence but through political brokerage, legislative alignment, and executive coordination. Parliamentarians were expected to defer to Syrian preferences on major issues, and the Presidency, Cabinet, and security services all operated within a system of dual sovereignty, in which decisions were coordinated both in Beirut and Damascus.

The institutionalization of electoral manipulation became a defining feature of the system. What had appeared in 1992 as an improvised framework to transition out of war had by 1996 become a durable architecture: large districts, manipulated voter registries, opaque campaign financing, media capture, and the use of public resources for political ends. Elections, while procedurally regular, had become predictable events, scripted in advance through elite pacts and regional pressure. This predictability discouraged political mobilization, especially among youth and independents, and widened the gap between political institutions and public sentiment.

One notable development, however, was the return of some Christian parties and figures to electoral participation after their 1992 boycott. This participation was largely motivated by concerns over marginalization, but it did not result in major institutional shifts. The electoral law remained unbalanced, and Christian representation, though more numerically present, was still largely shaped by the dominant clientelist and sectarian logic of the system. The return of Christian elites thus helped restore some institutional legitimacy but also signaled their absorption into the prevailing rules of the game, rather than their capacity to challenge it.

Perhaps most importantly, the 1996 elections laid the foundations for a deepening crisis of legitimacy. As citizens increasingly recognized that elections produced no meaningful change, disillusionment with formal politics grew. Voter turnout declined in many areas, political debates became increasingly performative, and trust in institutions eroded (Malik, 1996). The idea that electoral politics could be a vehicle for reform or reconciliation began to collapse under the weight of managed outcomes and economic hardship.

This dynamic was further exacerbated by the consolidation of the Hariri economic model, which dominated parliamentary and cabinet agendas during this period. The government's focus on reconstruction through debt-financed infrastructure, privatization, and real estate development, all managed through a parliament packed with allied business figures, accelerated social inequalities and deepened regional disparities. Corruption scandals, clientelist distribution of public goods, and exclusion of civil society actors from decision-making reinforced the perception that elections served elite enrichment, not public interest.

In sum, the 1996 parliamentary elections institutionalized authoritarian practices under a democratic guise. They reinforced sectarianism, embedded foreign influence, empowered oligarchic actors, and transformed elections into tools of elite continuity. While they helped maintain postwar stability, they did so at the cost of democratic legitimacy, social cohesion, and the possibility of peaceful reform through institutional channels.

While the 1996 elections deepened the institutionalization of elite control and Syrian oversight, they also sowed the seeds of political fatigue and social frustration. By the end of the decade, a combination of growing economic hardship, rising public debt, and disillusionment with the political class began to erode the post-Ta'ëf consensus from within. As Lebanon approached the turn of the millennium, calls for change intensified, both from within traditional political circles and from a new generation of actors. The 2000 parliamentary elections would unfold in this altered atmosphere, still under Syrian tutelage, but amid rising pressures for reform, reshuffling of alliances, and emerging cracks in the system's legitimacy.

### **5.3. The 2000 Parliamentary Elections**

By the time Lebanon held its parliamentary elections in summer 2000, the foundations of the postwar order established in 1992 and entrenched in 1996 were beginning to show signs of fatigue, fragmentation, and recalibration (Katrib, 2008). The key features of the earlier cycles, namely the Syrian oversight, clientelist coalition-building, and sectarian balancing,

remained in place, but the system's cohesion and legitimacy had begun to erode under the combined pressures of economic deterioration, elite rivalry, and shifting regional dynamics.

A major factor that defined the context of the 2000 elections was the growing public disillusionment with the Hariri-led economic project. By the late 1990s, the promises of postwar prosperity had faded into a reality of mounting public debt, widening inequality, and spiraling urban speculation. The reconstruction model based on privatization, external borrowing, and real estate-driven growth had benefitted a narrow elite while leaving many sectors of the population, especially rural communities, workers, and middle-class professionals, increasingly marginalized (Gaspard, 2003). This economic crisis translated into political fatigue, especially as parliament and government appeared unresponsive and self-serving.

Simultaneously, cracks emerged within the pro-Syrian alliance that had dominated the previous two parliaments. The alliance between President Emile Lahoud and Prime Minister Rafic Hariri became increasingly strained, reflecting deeper tensions between different wings of the ruling coalition. Lahoud, backed strongly by Damascus, sought to reassert state authority and limit Hariri's economic hegemony, while Hariri's camp resisted encroachment on its control over financial and development policy. These elite rifts spilled into the electoral process, resulting in more contested races and a less uniform loyalist front. For the first time since 1992, elements of real competition began to emerge within the system itself (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005).

Moreover, international and regional pressure on Syrian control of Lebanon had begun to grow. The Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon in May 2000, a development widely credited to Hezbollah's armed resistance, not only reshaped the military equation, but also weakened the primary justification for Syria's continued military presence (Karsh et al., 2010). Calls for sovereignty, reform, and accountability grew louder, voiced by civil society organizations, student movements, and emerging opposition currents. Though the Syrian presence remained unchallenged in formal terms, its political costs had risen, and the margin for internal dissent had slightly widened.

Against this backdrop, the 2000 elections took on a dual character: they were simultaneously a reproduction of the post-Taëf system, still governed by the same rules, the same gerrymandered districts, and the same security filters, and an inflection point in which new alliances, opposition voices, and fractures within the regime began to surface (El-Khazen

et al., 2002). The vote thus functioned both as a reaffirmation of elite power and a precursor to the transformations that would culminate in the Cedar Revolution of 2005.

The following subsections examine the key dynamics of the 2000 elections, beginning with the legal and structural framework, followed by analysis of political alliances, opposition movements, and the evolving role of Hezbollah.

### ***5.3.1. Political Context and Evolving Tensions***

Despite mounting pressure for change and signs of political fluidity, the 2000 parliamentary elections were held under the same electoral law that had governed the 1992 and 1996 cycles. This law, crafted without wide consultation in the early 1990s, retained its majoritarian, winner-takes-all structure based on large, multi-member administrative districts, a system designed to consolidate regime control while preserving sectarian power-sharing (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005).

By 2000, this electoral law had become more than a temporary transitional measure: it was institutionalized as a pillar of the postwar political order, enabling regular elections while ensuring outcomes that favored entrenched elites and Syrian-aligned figures (El-Khazen et al., 2002). Districts were drawn not according to demographic coherence or equal representation but to fragment opposition and consolidate loyalist blocs. The continuation of this legal framework, despite public demands for reform, reflected the regime's unwillingness to cede control over the mechanics of electoral legitimacy.

The most emblematic case of engineered districting in 2000 was the division of Beirut into three electoral districts, a move widely understood as an attempt to dilute Rafic Hariri's popular Sunni support base and force him into political compromises. This gerrymandering strategy supported by President Emile Lahoud and key figures in the security establishment, exemplified how legal manipulation functioned as a form of political containment (Gaspard, 2003). Similar patterns were observed in Baabda–Aley and Zahle, where districts combined communities with divergent voting tendencies to weaken opposition coherence.

Meanwhile, growing calls for reform (including demands for proportional representation, electoral oversight bodies, and greater transparency) were sidelined or co-opted. The Ministry of Interior, which maintained operational control over elections, remained closely tied to the Syrian-Lebanese security apparatus, ensuring that administrative discretion

could still be used to block independent candidates or facilitate loyalist victories (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005).

As in previous cycles, the 2000 elections were shaped by clientelist networks, vote buying, and state patronage, all of which were structurally enabled by the electoral law. Political parties and emerging business elites used the same legal mechanisms to convert financial capital into parliamentary seats, reinforcing a neoliberal clientelist economy in which access to decision-making was purchased rather than contested. The electoral process functioned less as a vehicle of political representation and more as a marketplace for influence and immunity.

Yet the rigidity of the legal framework also exposed the internal contradictions of the regime. The Hariri–Lahoud rivalry, which was emblematic of the growing rift between the economic and security wings of the system, played out within the narrow confines of the same law, revealing its decreasing capacity to enforce cohesion. Rather than suppress all competition, the law became a battleground for elite contestation, further eroding public trust in the system's fairness and representational capacity.

In short, while no reforms were introduced to the electoral law, its unchanged form in 2000 helped reveal the system's underlying instability. It continued to reproduce power, but no longer seamlessly. The disjunction between legal continuity and political fragmentation signaled a turning point: the structure of postwar control was still intact, but its legitimacy was fading.

### ***5.3.2. Electoral Framework and Strategic Engineering***

As mentioned before, the 2000 parliamentary elections operated under an electoral law that was only marginally revised from its 1996 predecessor. While it maintained the majoritarian system and the controversial practice of large, multi-member districts, several key modifications were introduced, primarily in the service of political engineering. In particular, the redistricting of Beirut into three separate electoral zones was widely interpreted as an attempt to fragment Rafic Hariri's political base and limit his sweeping victories witnessed in previous cycles. This strategy diluted Sunni electoral strength across the capital while enabling the accommodation of other influential figures aligned with the Syrian-backed presidency.

Similarly, redistricting efforts in Mount Lebanon and the North were designed with the clear objective of neutralizing areas with growing anti-Syrian sentiment. In Keserwan and

Metn, for example, electoral districts were drawn in ways that diluted the influence of Christian opposition voices by merging strongholds with more controllable constituencies (El-Khazen et al., 2002). This approach echoed earlier gerrymandering tactics used in 1992 and 1996 but also reflected an evolving political calculus, as the Syrian-Lebanese apparatus sought to manage emerging rifts within its own coalition.

Despite these structural manipulations, the 2000 elections featured more dynamic electoral competition than the previous two cycles. Several relatively autonomous coalitions emerged, signaling a degree of fragmentation within the ruling order. Hariri's electoral lists dominated in Beirut and significant portions of the South, reaffirming his status as a central political figure. Meanwhile, Walid Jumblatt led the Progressive Socialist Party to strong results in the Chouf and Aley districts, while Nayla Moawad and other traditional northern leaders challenged the dominance of established networks in Zgharta and Akkar (Salloukh, 2006). These alliances (allied to Syria previously, but opposing it starting 2000), often transcended strict sectarian alignments and were partially responsive to regional discontent with the status quo.

The participation of opposition figures and the visibility of contested races gave the 2000 elections an appearance of greater political vitality. However, the playing field remained uneven. Syrian and Lebanese security services continued to shape outcomes behind the scenes, particularly by influencing candidate list formation, applying pressure through intelligence channels, and orchestrating media coverage favorable to loyalist blocs. As in previous elections, the pre-election period involved opaque negotiations, often conducted in Damascus, to ensure an acceptable distribution of parliamentary seats across allied factions.

What distinguished the 2000 elections from earlier cycles was not a rupture in control but a recalibration. The electoral system remained deeply skewed, but Syrian influence was exercised more cautiously and selectively, in response to growing international attention and internal tensions. This relative loosening of the grip, while far from democratic, created political space that would later prove crucial in building momentum toward the rupture of 2005. In this sense, the 2000 elections simultaneously preserved the mechanisms of managed democracy and exposed the emerging vulnerabilities of the Syrian-Lebanese political order.

### ***5.3.3. Participation, Contestation, and Electoral Shifts***

Voter turnout in the 2000 parliamentary elections was relatively high compared to the previous two cycles, particularly in urban centers such as Beirut, Tripoli, and Zahle (Salloukh,

2006). This surge in participation was driven in part by the perceived competitiveness of the elections, especially amid visible rifts between traditional pro-Syrian factions and emerging challengers.

Christian participation, which had been notably subdued in 1992 and only partially revived in 1996, showed signs of recovery in 2000. This was particularly evident in northern and central Mount Lebanon, where Christian-majority constituencies mobilized behind both established parties and independent candidates. However, despite this improved turnout, traditional Christian parties such as the Kataeb and the Lebanese Forces (then banned from formal politics) remained fragmented, with many of their supporters divided among personalistic and sectarian alliances rather than unified platforms (Salloukh, 2006).

The electoral campaign itself reflected greater media sophistication and the influence of globalized political marketing. Hariri's bloc led the way with well-funded campaigns that included televised ads, slogan-based messaging, and sleek candidate profiles, borrowing techniques from Western-style political branding. A number of emerging independents, particularly in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, also experimented with issue-based discourse, emphasizing economic reform, anti-corruption, and sovereignty. Nonetheless, in most districts, traditional mechanisms of mobilization prevailed, including sectarian loyalty, clientelist service provision, and patronage networks built through familial and geographic ties (Gaspard, 2003).

Despite the more competitive tone of the election, the integrity of the process remained limited by widespread structural manipulation. Vote-buying was openly practiced in several districts, often through intermediaries who distributed money, jobs, and in-kind goods. Local security actors were reported to exert pressure on candidates and activists, particularly in contested constituencies. In addition, last-minute candidate withdrawals, which are sometimes negotiated through pressure or incentives, distorted the balance of some races, particularly where opposition lists had gained momentum.

One of the most important novelties of the 2000 elections was the role played by civil society organizations. Groups such as Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) initiated efforts to observe the voting process and conduct parallel vote tabulation. These efforts, although limited in scale and authority, laid the foundation for future electoral monitoring and gradually introduced concepts of transparency and accountability into public discourse. However, the absence of an independent electoral commission, combined with

opaque campaign finance and restricted access to official tallies, meant that civil society's impact remained mostly symbolic at this stage (Salamey, 2014).

In sum, the 2000 elections witnessed greater participation and visible signs of pluralism. However, the underlying logic of political reproduction remained intact. The elections allowed for selective competition within established boundaries but did not fundamentally challenge the entrenched architecture of elite control and sectarian clientelism.

#### ***5.3.4. Outcomes, Realignments, and Implications for Peace***

The 2000 parliamentary elections produced notable shifts in Lebanon's political landscape, even as they remained embedded within the constraints of sectarianism and Syrian tutelage. Rafic Hariri's political bloc secured major gains, especially in Beirut and Sunni-majority regions, cementing his return to the premiership and signaling a partial consolidation of his economic-political project. Hezbollah, for its part, not only retained its seats in the South but increased its parliamentary presence, solidifying its dual role as an armed resistance force and an institutional actor operating within the formal political system (Salloukh, 2006).

One of the more significant outcomes was the relative decline of some traditional pro-Syrian figures, including candidates associated with the intelligence-security apparatus. This shift suggested an emerging, albeit modest, reconfiguration within the loyalist front. The presence of anti-establishment and independent candidates, especially in the North and parts of Mount Lebanon, pointed to cracks in the system's once-monolithic structure. However, these changes occurred within tightly regulated parameters. The core mechanisms of control, including electoral law, districting, and media influence, remained intact (Knudsen, 2010).

From a peacebuilding perspective, the 2000 elections presented a revealing paradox. On the surface, they reflected a broadening of political participation and a degree of competitive pluralism absent from the 1992 and 1996 cycles. Voters were presented with a wider array of candidates and political platforms, and turnout reflected renewed engagement, particularly among urban youth and reform-minded constituencies. These developments suggested that democratic practices were being gradually normalized (El-Khazen, 2000).

Yet beneath this procedural expansion lay the persistence of deeper structural constraints. The elections continued to operate under the logic of elite pacts, sectarian brokerage, mobilization and foreign oversight. Political actors navigated a system that rewarded loyalty, clientelism, and identity mobilization more than programmatic innovation or

civic inclusion. Reformist movements and secular initiatives were marginalized or co-opted, and the space for genuine opposition remained narrow (Knudsen, 2010).

Applying Johan Galtung's typology, the 2000 elections can also be situated within the paradigm of negative peace: the absence of open conflict, the maintenance of institutional continuity, and the conduct of regular elections. However, the underlying conditions for positive peace, which is defined by justice, equity, and the transformation of structural violence, remained largely unmet. The persistence of sectarian polarization, exclusion of grassroots actors, and the instrumental use of state resources for elite reproduction continued to undermine the foundations for long-term reconciliation and inclusive governance (Galtung, 1969).

The implications of the 2000 elections were therefore double-edged. While they signaled a tentative opening in political space and increased visibility for civil society discourse, they also reaffirmed the durability of Lebanon's postwar political order, an order that prioritized regime survival and regional accommodation over democratic transformation. In this context, the elections served more as a barometer of elite recalibration than as a platform for systemic change. Nonetheless, they planted seeds of dissent and pluralism that would later reemerge in the 2005 protests and post-Syrian era mobilizations.

The 2000 elections would prove to be the last of the post-Ta'ëf trilogy. Their mixed legacy, some openings, but enduring constraints, foreshadowed the tensions that would explode in 2005 with the assassination of Rafiq Hariri and the unraveling of the Syrian-Lebanese order.

### ***5.3.5. Regional and International shifts post-2000***

The 2000 elections also unfolded at the cusp of a major regional and international realignment that would come to define the next phase of Lebanese politics. Most notably, Israel's withdrawal from South Lebanon in May 2000, under pressure from Hezbollah's military campaign, altered the regional security landscape and undermined one of the central justifications for Syria's continued military presence in Lebanon. While Syria initially retained its influence, the legitimacy of its tutelage was increasingly questioned domestically and abroad (Norton, 2007).

Internationally, the post-9/11 global order brought a renewed Western focus on Middle Eastern democratization, governance, and counterterrorism. The 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, though destabilizing, also indirectly emboldened voices in Lebanon calling for reform,

sovereignty, and accountability. European Union initiatives and UN resolutions, especially UNSCR 1559 (2004), placed growing pressure on Syrian withdrawal and the reform of Lebanon's security and electoral institutions (Fakhoury, 2014).

Domestically, these pressures intersected with rising political fatigue and social discontent. Civil society networks, student organizations, and a new generation of opposition figures began challenging the status quo. The 2000 elections, therefore, functioned not only as a moment of elite recalibration, but also as a prelude to the political rupture of 2005, when the assassination of Rafic Hariri and the Cedar Revolution would finally end Syrian military occupation and usher in a new though still fragile, chapter of Lebanese electoral politics.

#### **5.4. Sectarian Districting and Alliance Management (1992- 1996- 2000)**

The following offers a concrete breakdown of how electoral districts were redrawn and manipulated to engineer sectarian balances and reproduce pro-regime alliances, especially in 1996 and 2000 elections.

##### **➤ 1992-1996 Elections**

The 1996 parliamentary elections led to a single significant change in the 1992 election law - three separate districts in the Beqaa region were merged into a single electoral district. This change lessened the Christian vote and weakened Sunni power in the region. At the same time, the middle-sized areas in Mount Lebanon remained unchanged. This was designed to shield Walid Jumblatt's electoral interests in Shouf in addition to Baabda-Aley, and to fit pro-Syrian Christian candidates in Metn.

Given the demographic dominance of Shiia voters in the Beqaa, this new arrangement allowed the Amal-Hezbollah alliance to secure control over the majority of seats in the area. These two parties were close allies in both the South and Beqaa; however, their coalitional strategies for joining with others differed in areas like Baabda-Aley and Beirut, where alternative electoral alliances were formed.

In Baabda-Aley, a strong cross-sectarian and cross-ideological alliance has formed to oppose Hezbollah's ticket. This alliance of Amal (Shiia), the Future Movement (Sunni, led by Rafiq Hariri), the Progressive Socialist Party (Druze, led by Walid Jumblatt), and Maronite politician Elie Hobeika. Hariri and Amal formed a similar pact in Beirut, effectively blocking Hezbollah candidates.

Electoral contests in North Lebanon were intense, with numerous cross-confessional lists competing on a highly fragmented political landscape. In the end, the Syria-backed list uniting popular Sunni, Maronite, and Greek Orthodox leaders prevailed. Despite some defections and internal resistance, this list secured 17 of the 28 available seats in the North (Salloukh, 2006).

**Table 4** Sectarian distribution of Parliamentary seats in 1992 elections

Electoral District	Seats/Districts	Number of seats per sect
Mount Lebanon (6 Districts)	35	
Northern Metn	8	4 Maronite, 2 Greek Orthodox, 1 Greek Catholic, 1 Armenian Orthodox
Shouf	8	3 Maronite, 2 Druze, 2 Sunni, 1 Greek Catholic
Baabda	6	3 Maronite, 2 Shiia, 1 Druze
Alay	5	2 Druze, 2 Maronite, 1 Greek Orthodox
Jbayl	3	2 Maronite, 1 Shiia
Kiserwan-El Frtuh	5	5 Maronite
North (1 District)	28	
Akkar	7	3 Sunni, 1 Maronite, 2 Greek Orthodox, 1 'Alawi
Dennieh	3	3 Sunni
Bshari	2	2 Maronite
Tripoli	8	5 Sunni, 1 Maronite, 2 Greek Orthodox, 1 'Alawi
Zgharta	3	3 Maronite
Batroun	2	2 Maronite
Al-Koura	3	3 Greek Orthodox
Beirut (1 District)	19	
Beirut	19	6 Sunni, 1 Maronite, 2 Greek Orthodox, 1 Greek Catholic, 1 Evangelical, 3 Armenian Orthodox, 1 Druze, 1 Armenian Catholic, 2 Shiia, 1 Minorities
Beqaa (3 Districts)	23	
Baalbek-Hermel	10	6 Shiia, 2 Sunni, 1 Maronite, 1 Greek Catholic
Zahle	7	2 Greek Catholic, 1 Sunni, 1 Maronite, 1 Shiia, 1 Armenian Orthodox, 1 Greek Orthodox
Western Beqaa-Rashaya	6	2 Sunni, 1 Maronite, 1 Greek Orthodox, 1 Shiia, 1 Druze
South (1 District)	23	
Saidon	2	2 Sunni
Al-Zahrani	3	2 Shiia, 1 Greek Catholic
Jejjine	3	2 Maronite, 1 Greek Catholic
Tyre	4	4 Shiia

Nabatiye	3	3 Shiia
Bint Jbayl	3	3 Shiia
Marje'youn	5	2 Shiia, 1 Sunni, 1 Druze, 1 Greek Orthodox

Source: Lebanon's First Postpower Parliamentary Elections, 1993 (El-Khazen et al., 1994).

As in the 1992 elections, the outcome of the 1996 elections was largely shaped by pre-fixed, cross-confessional alliances, which not only pre-determined much of the electoral map but also depoliticized the process (Malik, 1996). Rather than being about issue-based policy matters, the elections were contests about seat distribution and sectarian representation.

**Table 5** Sectarian distribution of Parliamentary seats in 1996 elections

Electoral District	Seats/Districts	Number of seats per district
Beirut	19 seats	1 district: <i>muhafaza</i> basis for voting & seats
Mount Lebanon	35 seats	6 districts: <i>qada'</i> level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aley: 5 seats</li> <li>- Baabda: 6 seats</li> <li>- Chouf: 8 seats</li> <li>- Jbeil: 3 seats</li> <li>- Northern Metn: 8 seats</li> <li>- Kisrwan: 5 seats</li> </ul>
North Lebanon	28 seats	1 voting constituency: <i>muhafaza</i> voting while seats are allocated by 7 <i>qada'</i> units <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Akkar: 7 seats</li> <li>- Dannieh: 3 seats</li> <li>- Bsharri: 2 seats</li> <li>- Tripoli: 8 seats</li> <li>- Zgharta: 3 seats</li> <li>- Batroun: 2 seats</li> <li>- Koura: 3 seats</li> </ul>
Beqaa	23 seats	1 district: Merged <i>muhafaza</i> for voting while seats are allocated by 3 <i>qada'</i> units <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baalbek- Hermel: 10 seats</li> <li>- Zahle: 7 seats</li> <li>- West Beqaa-Rashaya: 6 seats</li> </ul>
South & Nabatiyeh	23 seats	Merged into 1 voting constituency: <i>muhafaza</i> voting while seats are allocated by 7 <i>qada'</i> units <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Saida: 2 seats</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Zahrani: 3 seats</li> <li>- Jezzine: 3 seats</li> <li>- Tyre: 4 seats</li> <li>- Nabatiyeh: 3 seats</li> <li>- Bint Jbeil: 3 seats</li> <li>- Marjayoun: 5 seats</li> </ul>
--	--	--

Source: Created by author

### ➤ 2000 Elections

The Lebanese 2000 parliamentary election was exceptional within the postwar political landscape, conducted under the backdrop of a sharp confrontation between two major blocs. The President Emile Lahoud and his security apparatus, headed by Jamil al-Sayyid, and backed wholly by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his intelligence apparatus in Lebanon, were on the other side. Former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and Druze leader Walid Jumblatt were in opposition to the pro-Syrian establishment.

Tensions rose after Lahoud's presidential victory on October 15, 1998, and Hariri's reluctance to join a new government on November 30, claiming unlawful procedures in Lahoud's meetings with parliamentary blocs prior to his nomination as Prime Minister-designate (Rabih, 2023). This institutional clash set the tone for a fiercely contested parliamentary election, in which the electoral code and the nature of nascent political constellations would decide parliamentary outcomes and redefine the game of power inside and outside state institutions.

The electoral law of 2000 altered considerably the districts created under the 1996 electoral law, while simultaneously seeking to reward pro-government allies and deter the opposition forces from opposing the government (Rubin, 2005). Following the previous practice of creating sectors within Beirut, the capital was divided into three electoral districts with an eye on succeeding in weakening Hariri's electoral base and limiting his influence in Parliament. In Mount Lebanon, the number of electoral districts was kept at four to suit the interests of Michel Murr, an honest Syrian ally and close supporter of President Lahoud.

As a further consequence of redistricting, Baabda and Aley were fused into a single district, thus broadening its confessional composition in calculated dilution of Jumblatt's hold in conjunction with an appeal to Christian voters. Similarly, the North was reorganized into two electoral districts to undermine the anti-Syrian Christian opposition in particular, but the Lebanese Forces whose strength concentrated in Bsharri. In undoing so, the restructuring also favored Suleiman Frangieh, a powerful pro-Syrian Maronite politician.

Two electoral districts were carved out in the South, so that a substantial bloc loyal to Speaker Nabih Berri, head of the Amal Movement, and a key Syrian ally could be formed. Meanwhile, the Beqaa was again divided into three districts, just as it had been in 1992. This change, however, hardly affected electoral results; ruling the roost in the area was Syria, and with smart electoral arrangements, particularly in cooperation with Hezbollah, they were able to secure an easy win for the pro-Damascus coalition irrespective of the institutional framework.

This particular electoral engineering round indeed showed how institutional manipulations occurred in an attempt to entrench Syria's influence and manage political competition within Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing system, through redistricting and alliance-building. Table 6 contains the concrete changes that were implemented in the electoral law of 2000 (Parliamentary Chamber, 2000).

**Table 6** Sectarian Distribution of parliamentary Seats in 2000 Elections

Electoral District	Seats/Districts	Number of seats per sect
Mount Lebanon (4 Districts)	35	
Northern Metn	8	4 Maronite, 2 Greek Orthodox, 1 Greek Catholic, 1 Armenian Orthodox
Shouf	8	2 Druze, 3 Maronite, 2 Sunni, 1 Greek Catholic
Baabda- Alay	11	5 Maronite, 2 Shiia, 3 Druze, 1 Greek Orthodox
Kiserwan- Jbayl	8	7 Maronite, 1 Shiia
North (2 Districts)	28	
Akkar-Dennieh-Bshari	11	5 Sunni, 3 Maronite, 2 Greek Orthodox, 1 'Alawi
Tripoli-Meneih-Zgharta-Batroun-Koura	17	6 Sunni, 6 Maronite, 4 Greek Orthodox, 1 'Alawi
Beirut (3 Districts)	19	
Ashrafiyi-Mazraa-Saifi	6	2 Sunni, 1 Maronite, 1 Greek Orthodox, 1 Greek Catholic, 1 Evangelical
Bashora-Msaytbe-Rmayl	6	2 Sunni, 1 Greek Orthodox, 1 Armenian Orthodox, 1 Shiia, 1 Minorities
'Ain el-Mrayse-Mdawwar-Mina al-Hosn-Port-Ras Beirut-Zqaq el-Blat	7	2 Sunni, 2 Armenian Orthodox, 1 Shiia, 1 Druze, 1 Armenian Catholic
Beqaa (3 Districts)		
Baalbek-Hermel	10	6 Shiia, 2 Sunni, 1 Maronite, 1 Greek Catholic

Zahle	7	2 Greek Catholic, 1 Sunni, 1 Maronite, 1 Shiia, 1 Armenian Orthodox, 1 Greek Orthodox
Western Beqaa-Rashaya	6	1 Maronite, 1 Greek Orthodox, 1 Shiia, 1 Druze, 2 Sunni
South (2 Districts)	23	
Bint Jbail-Tyre-Saidon-Zahrani	12	9 Shiia, 2 Sunni, 1 Greek Catholic
Hasbaya-Jezzine-Marje'yon-Nabatiye	11	5 Shiia, 1 Sunni, 1 Druze, 1 Greek Orthodox, 2 Maronite, 1 Greek Catholic

Source: Created by author

## 5.5. Conclusion

The trajectory of Lebanon's postwar parliamentary elections, from the first cycle in 1992 to the contests in 1996 and 2000, reveals a deeply paradoxical political process. While elections returned as regular institutional practices after the Taëf Agreement, their structure, implementation, and outcomes consistently subverted the spirit of democratic renewal they purported to embody.

Across all three cycles, a common pattern emerged: electoral laws were designed to fragment opposition and privilege loyalist blocs; security services intervened directly in candidate selection and list formation; and political elites recycled wartime legitimacy into peacetime representation. This architecture of control, inaugurated in 1992, was not a transitional feature of a post-conflict democracy but a durable mode of governance that persisted and deepened in 1996 and 2000 (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2005; El-Khazen, 2000).

While each election had its particular dynamics, from the Christian boycott in 1992 to the integration of Hezbollah in 1996 and the elite fragmentation in 2000, none disrupted the hegemonic scaffolding underpinning the system. Syrian oversight remained constant in method, if not always in tone. Despite growing voter turnout and signs of contestation in 2000, core mechanisms of manipulation endured, especially through districting, media control, and informal vetting. These patterns confirm the persistence of electoral control across all three cycles and the reproduction of a managed political order.

From a peacebuilding perspective, these elections stabilized the postwar order but failed to democratize it. They secured negative peace, halting armed conflict and restoring institutions, but did little to build positive peace, rooted in accountability, equitable

participation, and reconciliation (Mac Ginty, 2011). Rather than serving as vehicles for reform, elections became instruments for consolidating elite pacts and formalizing external influence.

One of the most politically consequential outcomes of this process was the accumulated frustration within Christian constituencies. Excluded in 1992 and marginalized in the following cycles, many Christian parties and voters internalized a narrative of postwar dispossession and declining status. This frustration would later be channeled into populist discourses of “restoring dignity”, providing future Christian za‘ims with a potent mobilizing tool. Rather than transcending sectarianism, elections often reinforced identity-based grievances and entrenched confessional fault lines.

At the same time, the 1996 and 2000 elections coincided with the rise of a neoliberal governance model led by Rafic Hariri. Characterized by privatization, debt-financed infrastructure, and real estate speculation, this model benefited a narrow elite while exacerbating inequality and marginalizing rural, working-class, and independent constituencies (Gaspard, 2003). Parliament became a site not only of sectarian clientelism but of economic oligarchy, aligning electoral representation with capital accumulation rather than public accountability.

The 2000 elections, though partially more open and contested, took place amid rising economic dissatisfaction and elite rivalry. They introduced new fractures and foreshadowed an impending transformation. Yet the foundational rules of the game remained unchanged. Electoral districts were still gerrymandered, oversight was selectively enforced, and genuine political alternatives were structurally excluded.

As regional and international dynamics shifted, particularly after the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon and growing global scrutiny of Syrian tutelage, the political costs of maintaining this hybrid order began to rise. The ground was being prepared for the rupture of 2005, but the legacy of the postwar electoral cycles would continue to shape Lebanon’s fragile democracy for years to come.

These dynamics place postwar Lebanon squarely within what scholars have termed electoral authoritarianism: systems where elections occur regularly but are structurally manipulated to preserve the ruling order (Schedler, 2002). In such regimes, opposition is tolerated but constrained, media is selectively controlled, and institutions lack meaningful autonomy. Lebanon’s electoral system, while procedurally pluralistic, was built on manipulated districts, clientelist networks, and the pre-approval of candidates through informal

power channels. It preserved sectarian and elite dominance under the guise of democratic renewal.

Others have described this model as a form of managed democracy — a hybrid in which elites orchestrate political competition through informal controls, legal engineering, and strategic co-optation (Bellin, 2004; Ottaway, 2003). In this context, electoral procedures serve more to stabilize power relations than to contest them. Lebanon's post-Taëf elections exemplify this: a ritualized performance of democracy masking a system designed to prevent transformative change.

## **Chapter 6: Lebanon's Post-Syrian Withdrawal Elections (2005, 2009, 2017, 2022): A Continued Display of Systemic Weakness**

As demonstrated in chapter 5, Lebanon's postwar elections between 1992 and 2000 were shaped by Syrian tutelage, sectarian engineering, and elite reproduction. These electoral cycles helped stabilize the immediate postwar order but failed to generate inclusive democratic governance or positive peace. By the year 2000, and after the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, it was anticipated a more flexible and equitable process. However, this wish did not come true, since the institutional fatigue and the political fragmentation were already crystal clear. Chapter 6 proceeds with this analysis by exploring the dynamics that emerged in the aftermath of Syria's military and political withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005. It examines whether the electoral process evolved- or merely adapted- in response to shifting domestic and regional power configurations. In doing so, it evaluates the continuity of electoral authoritarianism, the rise of populist and anti-system currents, and the deepening tension between procedural democracy and systemic collapse.

This chapter examines the nature and evolution of parliamentary elections in Lebanon following the Syrian army's withdrawal. Despite the expectations that the law and the reform of politics and institutions would improve, it was consistently highlighted with results of weakness reflected on the Lebanese political system. This analysis specifically covers the elections held in 2005, 2009, 2017, and 2022.

### **6.1. Overview of the Political Landscape**

Following Elias Hrawi's election as president of the republic in 1990, he proposed appointing Rafic Hariri as Prime Minister. However, the Syrian regime sought to obstruct this appointment, perceiving Hariri as excessively aligned with Saudi interests. Hariri, a wealthy businessman who amassed his fortune in Saudi Arabia, had played a pivotal role in brokering the Taëf Agreement in 1989, which effectively ended the Lebanese Civil War. Despite this, Syria refused to acknowledge Hariri as a Sunni leader with significant political influence. In 1992 and after an economic collapse and a number of protests against the government, Hariri was appointed as prime minister after an agreement with the Syrian authorities where they left political and security decisions under their direct control through their intelligence service and Hezbollah, and Hariri's role was reduced primarily to economic and financial matters (Rabih, 2023).

In November 1998, Emile Lahoud was elected president of Lebanon with the backing of Syria, following Elias Hrawi's presidency. Lahoud was elected president by direct intervention from the Syrian regime and after the amendments of the constitution that forbids the army chief from running to presidency. Since 1992, Rafic Hariri had held the position of Prime Minister. During Lahoud's presidency, tensions between Syria and Saudi Arabia intensified over regional influence which led at the end of 1998, to the appointment of Salim Hoss as Prime Minister, replacing Hariri, who then moved into opposition.

### ***6.1.1. 2000 - 2005: A Pivotal period in Lebanon Political Landscape***

The 2000 parliamentary elections were notably contentious and characterized by gerrymandering, yet Hariri secured a decisive victory, serving as Prime Minister from 2000 to 2004 (Gambill, 2001).

In 2000 also, Bashar al-Assad succeeded his father, Hafez al-Assad, as President of Syria. Bashar's relationship with Hariri was marked by hostility, reflecting broader Syrian concerns about Sunni influence in Lebanon. Lahoud, a close associate of Bashar, exemplified this alignment. The Syrian leadership (Alawite) increasingly viewed Sunni figures like Hariri as potential threats to their regional dominance, which fueled ongoing power struggles among Lebanese political factions and heightened sectarian divisions within Lebanon (Iskandar, 2006).

Another significant development occurred in May 2000, when Israel withdrew its forces from South Lebanon. This withdrawal was in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 (Murden, 2000), which called for Israel's complete withdrawal from Lebanese territory. However, Syria's military presence remained conspicuous, despite its earlier pledge to withdraw within two years of the Taif Agreement. This persistence of Syrian troops fueled growing public protests against Syrian control and influence over Lebanon.

Internationally, attitudes towards Syria also shifted. In 2003, the U.S. Congress passed legislation aimed at curbing Syria's dominance in Lebanon (U.S. Congress, 2003). The following year, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1559 on September 2, 2004. This resolution directly challenged key aspects of Lebanon's post-war arrangements, demanding an immediate withdrawal of Syrian forces, the disarmament of Hezbollah and Palestinian militias, and the deployment of the Lebanese Army along the Israeli border, an area previously under Hezbollah's control. These demands struck at the core of Lebanon's fragile post-war consensus and threatened to destabilize the delicate balance of power. Subsequently,

a wave of targeted assassinations and political violence emerged, which many analysts link to the implementation of Resolution 1559. Syrian authorities perceived Hariri as a principal supporter of this resolution, making him a target of political violence (Blanford, 2009).

In 2004, the presidential term of Emile Lahoud was nearing its end. Despite initial reservations about Lahoud's candidacy, Syria exerted pressure to extend his mandate for an additional three years, which necessitated constitutional amendments. Under Syrian pressure, Hariri voted in favor of this extension, as did the majority of the Lebanese Parliament, thus prolonging Lahoud's presidency until November 2007 (Blanford, 2009). Shortly thereafter, Marwan Hamade, one of the MPs who opposed the extension, was targeted in a car bomb attack but survived narrowly. In the aftermath, Hariri resigned as prime minister and was replaced by a cabinet headed by Omar Karami. The year 2004 marked the end of Hariri's dominant influence in Lebanese politics; he had been a central figure in the post-war era. Although Hariri's retreat from active politics was viewed as temporary, there was widespread expectation that he would participate in the upcoming 2005 parliamentary elections.

Regarding Hezbollah, there was considerable domestic and international debate over its armed status. Many Lebanese and external actors argued that Hezbollah's weapons were unnecessary after Israel's withdrawal in 2000, asserting that Lebanon no longer required an armed resistance movement. Conversely, Hezbollah justified its continued arms possession by citing the ongoing occupation of the Shebaa Farms, which it regards as Lebanese territory. Hezbollah insisted that it must maintain its arms until the last occupied kilometer is liberated. Backed by Syria, Hezbollah's stance created deep divisions within Lebanon; supporters who favored disarmament clashed with those advocating for the militia's right to arms, framing it as a matter of national sovereignty and resistance. This division significantly impacted Lebanon's internal politics and its approach to sovereignty and security.

On 14 February 2005, Lebanon was struck by a devastating political earthquake when Rafik Hariri, along with his close associate Minister Basil Fuleihan and over twenty bodyguards, was killed in a massive bomb blast in central Beirut (Blanford, 2009). This assassination marked a pivotal turning point in Lebanese politics, prompting the most extensive and sophisticated criminal investigation in the country's history. Due to the limitations of the Lebanese police and judiciary, the investigation was entrusted to the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIC). Numerous theories emerged

regarding the motives behind Hariri's murder, with the majority implicating Syrian involvement.

The assassination provoked widespread international condemnation and ignited mass protests across Lebanon, popularly known as the Cedar Revolution. These protests placed intense pressure on Syria, which was widely accused of orchestrating or enabling the attack (Haugbolle, 2006). Under international and domestic pressure, Syria was compelled to comply with UN Security Council Resolution 1559, leading to its withdrawal from Lebanon in late April 2005. Following Hariri's death, the wave of national mourning gradually subsided, and the initial momentum of the protests diminished. Internal divisions deepened, culminating in a contentious debate over the ratification of the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon, established in May 2007 to prosecute those responsible for Hariri's assassination and subsequent political killings (Mugraby, 2008; Shehadi & Wilmshurst, 2007).

The Syrian withdrawal also facilitated the release of key political figures previously detained or exiled by Syrian authorities, notably Samir Geagea, who was released from prison, and Michel Aoun, who returned from exile. Both had been marginalized and removed from the Lebanese political scene under Syrian influence.

### ***6.1.2. The Aftermath: Lebanon's Political Landscape Post-Hariri***

After the assassination of Hariri and the deep division among the Lebanese, 2 major political movements were born: "8 of March" coalition" and "14 of March coalition".

The coalition of "8 of March" was formed on the 8th of March 2005 during a demonstration in response to the anti-Syrian Cedar Revolution demonstrations. The coalition includes mainly Hezbollah (Shiia movement used to be known also as the Islamic resistance movement), the Amal movement (Shiia movement led by Nabih Berri the speaker of the parliament since the Taëf agreement and still ongoing), Marada Movement (a Christian Maronite party lead by Suleiman Franjeh), SSN (a political party that advocates for the establishment of a "Greater Syria") and the Lebanese Democratic Party (LDP) (a Druze political party led by Talal Erslan).

The coalition of "14 of March" emerged as a counter-movement to the demonstration of March 8. It was a mass demonstration on the 14<sup>th</sup> of march 2005 calling for the withdrawal of the Syrian troops from Lebanon and an end to Syria's political meddling. The coalition includes the Future Movement (a Sunni-majority party led by Saad Hariri, son of Rafic Hariri),

the Lebanese Forces (a major Christian party led by Samir Geagea), the Kataeb Party (also known as the Phalange Party) and the PSP (a Druze-majority party led by Walid Jumblatt)

In the wake of Hariri's assassination, the May and June 2005 parliamentary elections resulted in a significant shift in Lebanon's political landscape, bringing an "anti-Syrian" majority to power, led by Saad Hariri, Rafik Hariri's son and political successor (Blanford, 2009).

Although initial prospects for Lebanon appeared promising, the situation rapidly deteriorated. A series of targeted assassinations ensued across the country, resulting in the deaths or attempted murders of approximately twenty individuals. These acts were widely perceived as efforts to obstruct investigations into Hariri's assassination and to silence prominent opposition figures (Blanford, 2009).

### ***6.1.3. The Israeli war on Lebanon***

In 2006, Lebanon was engulfed in a devastating war triggered by Hezbollah's kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers, an act that plunged a country still struggling with the aftermath of previous conflicts into chaos (Norton, 2007). The conflict concluded through international intervention, notably via United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which highlighted Lebanon's inability to enforce sovereignty over its borders. During this period, Hezbollah publicly reaffirmed its close ties with Iran, including receiving financial and military support from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), thereby consolidating its role as a regional proxy and complicating Lebanon's sovereignty (International Crisis Group, 2007).

The power vacuum created by the Syrian withdrawal was quickly filled by Hezbollah's expanding armed presence. The group began to obstruct key national decisions, such as the election of the president, ensuring that only candidates aligned with its interests assumed leadership roles. This pattern of interference contributed to Lebanon's growing alienation from its Arab neighbors and the broader international community, in violation of Lebanon's constitutional commitments to Arab identity and adherence to international charters (Saab, 2019).

Following the 2005 parliamentary elections, Hezbollah's Secretary General, Hassan Nasrallah, publicly declared the group's intention to expand its political influence (Norton, 2007). Hezbollah secured ministerial positions within Prime Minister Fouad Siniora's (Future

Movement) government and employed obstructionist tactics to maintain its dominance. This strategy persisted in subsequent governments, with Hezbollah demanding a “blocking third” in cabinet decision-making, resigning ministers and collapsing governments when its demands were not met (International Crisis Group, 2007).

#### ***6.1.4. May 2008 Mini-War and the Doha Agreement***

As Hezbollah entrenched itself within Lebanese politics, sectarian competition intensified, and corruption among political elites surged. The country’s economy suffered significantly, with soaring public debt and a steep decline in the Lebanese pound’s value, leading to one of the most severe economic crises globally. In May 2008, armed clashes erupted in Beirut and Mount Lebanon between Hezbollah and supporters of the Future Movement and the Lebanese Forces (Saab, 2019). These clashes were triggered by government attempts to dismantle Hezbollah’s telecommunications network and to remove a Hezbollah-aligned security official. In response, Hezbollah turned its weapons against the Lebanese capital, forcing the government to reverse its decisions (Norton, 2007).

The conflict was ultimately resolved through the Doha Agreement, where all parties committed to cease hostilities. The accord called for the immediate cessation of violence, the election of the Lebanese Army commander as president following constitutional amendments, and the formation of a national unity government where all factions agreed not to resign or obstruct government functions (Blanford, 2009). Subsequently, the electoral law was amended to adopt the 1960 law's constituency boundaries, known as the “kaza” system. Michel Suleiman was elected president, and a government of national unity was formed, aiming to stabilize Lebanon’s political landscape.

On 30 September 2008, a new electoral law was adopted in accordance with the Doha Agreement, laying the groundwork for the legislative elections scheduled for May 2009. In March 2009, the Special Tribunal to investigate Hariri’s assassination officially commenced proceedings. This tribunal has since been a focal point of political division, with pro-Syrian parties opposing its legitimacy and anti-Syrian factions supporting it (Mugraby, 2008).

#### ***6.1.5. The Syrian war and its impact on Lebanon***

In 2011, amid the escalating uprising against the Syrian regime, Hezbollah intervened militarily in support of Bashar al-Assad’s government. This intervention marked a significant escalation, plunging Lebanon further into regional polarization and raising questions about

Hezbollah's external alliances particularly with Iran and Syria, and their impact on Lebanese sovereignty (Daher, 2017). Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian conflict intensified sectarian tensions within Lebanon, especially between Sunni and Shiia communities. Hezbollah framed its intervention as part of the broader "Axis of Resistance," targeting what it characterized as an existential threat posed by Sunni extremist groups like ISIS. In a notable speech, Hassan Nasrallah claimed that "ISIS and other radical groups are American creations serving Israel," asserting that their defeat was part of a larger struggle against Western and Israeli interests (Al-Ahed News, 2017).

Between 2013 and 2015, Lebanon experienced numerous terrorist attacks linked to the Syrian conflict and sectarian tensions, including attacks in Tripoli, Dahiyeh, Beirut's predominantly Hezbollah-supporting suburb, and the bombing of the Iranian embassy in Beirut (Norton, 2007).

Since May 2014, the presidential vacancy persisted due to political deadlock, with no agreement among Lebanese factions on a successor. Michel Aoun, backed by Hezbollah, was widely viewed as the most viable candidate; however, opposition parties opposed his election, fearing that his presidency would legitimize Hezbollah's influence. The presidency remained vacant for two years, until October 2016, when Aoun was finally elected following a political agreement with Samir Geagea, a longstanding rival, in which they agreed to share power and include Geagea's party in the government (Blanford, 2009). Despite high hopes that Aoun's term would usher in meaningful change and reforms, the country instead descended further into division, with widespread corruption shared among all political parties. These parties continued to fight over political issues publicly, while behind the scenes, they mutually benefited from clientelistic networks, thus reinforcing the systemic corruption and undermining genuine reform efforts (Hokayem, 2018).

#### ***6.1.6. The 17th of October Revolution***

On 17 October 2019, Lebanon was rocked by widespread protests following the collapse of the economy. The protests were initially triggered by proposed taxes on digital applications such as WhatsApp but quickly expanded to demand broader economic reforms and an end to systemic corruption and sectarianism. The government responded with repression, and Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigned. The protests exposed deep-seated economic and social crises, including high unemployment and deteriorating public services. Despite some leaders publicly supporting the protests, many protesters viewed this as

insufficient, and the movement's momentum waned due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely limited street mobilization (Blanford, 2009).

The pandemic period was exploited by Lebanon's political elite to reinforce sectarian divisions, organizing pandemic-related campaigns through their respective communities rather than through state institutions. This further deepened sectarianism and limited the capacity for national unity, effectively stalling the revolutionary momentum.

On 4 August 2020, a massive explosion at Beirut's port devastated large parts of the capital, causing at least 200 deaths and injuring over 6,500 individuals. The explosion was caused by the detonation of an enormous quantity of improperly stored ammonium nitrate. Following the disaster, Prime Minister Hassan Diab resigned on 10 August amid widespread protests against government negligence. His government continued to serve in a caretaker capacity during negotiations for forming a new government.

The ongoing economic crisis, rooted in mismanagement dating back to Hariri's early policies in the 1990s involving deficit accumulation and debt financing, persists to this day, severely impacting Lebanon's social fabric and economic stability.

## **6.2. Reframing Lebanon's 2005 Parliamentary Elections in the Context of Peacebuilding and Political Transition**

For Four consecutive Sundays from May 29 to June 19 of the year 2005, the Lebanese parliamentary elections took place and they marked new and significant departure of the previous post-civil war elections done in 1992, 1996, and 2000. The new elections were identified by the major return of the anti-Syrian opposition forces on most electoral districts, unlike the previous ones that were altered by Syrian-backed forces. However, opposition rivalry surfaced in several electorates, while Syria's traditional allies secured decisive victories in traditional pro-Syrian regions such as Baalbek and Southern Lebanon, particularly Shia-majority electorates. Though some of the political elites managed to retain their seats, the outcome in Mount Lebanon, Zahle, and the North indicated a significant transformation of Lebanon's political map (Pan, 2005).

### ***6.2.1. Electoral Law, Districting, and Peacebuilding Implications in Post-Syrian Lebanon***

The 2005 elections in Lebanon were initially viewed as a corrective moment, a chance to balance the inherited imbalances done on previous electoral cycles and turn back the political

equilibrium in a country that was always undergoing huge political and social transformation. The purpose of these elections was to reconcile Lebanon's diverse sectarian and political constituencies and democratic rebirth and open the door to elite renewal within the framework of a post-Syrian order. These expectations were significantly undermined by the continued utilization of the disputed electoral law of 2000, an agreement that had been deliberately drafted to favor pro-government, and by extension, pro-Syrian actors.

The events that led to the adoption of the 2005 electoral law were themselves mired in controversy. After universal domestic and international criticism of the unconstitutional three-years prolongation of President Emile Lahoud's term in September 2004, the Lebanese government attempted to ease tensions by submitting an altered electoral law (Llewellyn, 2010). The Lebanese Ministry of Interior reviewed various proposals for reform, one of which was supported by the Maronite Church and other leading Christian political parties (Salloukh, 2006). This proposal encouraged smaller electoral districts, under the 1960 electoral law, which had long established more direct relations between voters and their representatives, a feature of participatory democracy.

Despite its promise, the drafts that aimed to reform failed because of the pressure to ensure the political immobility. This was in part induced by the Syrian external pressure and the interested parties of the pro-Damascus Lebanese actors. The assassination of the former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, was a watershed event that resulted in huge demonstrations against the Syrian dominance on Lebanese land. These demonstrations that led for some meaningful electoral reforms were obstructed by Damascus' determination to preserve its remaining spheres of influence in Lebanon and postpone the elections. Syrian-aligned forces actively blocked a new government formation, thereby pushing the political process to deadlock until constitutional deadlines loomed.

This confrontation was eventually resolved by a Saudi-Syrian agreement in Paris, which yielded the formation of a caretaker government made up of pro-Syrian and opposition-backed technocrats (Sorensen, 2025). Although this government was mandated to administer the elections, it proceeded under the divisive 2000 election law, which suggested a pragmatic yet essentially flawed compromise between Lebanon's principal political actors.

The application of the functions of the 2000 law during the 2005 elections enabled Syria's main allies, including Amal, Hezbollah, the SSNP, and the Ba'ath Party, to remain politically aligned with mainstream opposition leaders, such as Hariri, Walid Jumblatt, and

members of the Qornet Shehwan alliance (mainly composed of Christian opposition) (Roumie, 2020). This unusual broad alignment of interests contributed to greater polarization among other political actors, most notably General Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement, which was systematically excluded from major electoral alliances and denied fair representation as the traditional political party were afraid that Aoun will start a series of reform if he reaches power. It is striking how, despite their deep political divisions and intense rivalry often leading to societal fragmentation, Lebanese political leaders and factions, including those of the 8th of March and 14<sup>th</sup> of March coalitions, are willing to forge alliances when it serves their interests. These alliances are driven by the desire to maintain power, preserve clientelistic networks, and protect economic and political benefits. Parties that initially opposed each other and fueled divisions within Lebanese society were ready to unite again for the elections behind the scenes to secure their share of influence, revealing that, in Lebanon, political conflicts are often secondary to the pursuit of self-interest and the preservation of corrupt networks (Beydoun, 2014).

The geographic and the sectarian design of the Lebanese land was another reason that help distort the democratic representation. For instance, in Beirut, the capital city of Lebanon, the population was intentionally turned into three districts to favor Sunni voters. This allowed Hariri's bloc to dominate the election and capture all 19 seats (Kota, 2010). Also, the merger of South Lebanon and Nabatieh into two large districts effectively guaranteed that Hezbollah and Speaker Nabih Berri would dominate Shiia representation. Moreover, the political representation of Christians was greatly diminished in North Lebanon, where Suleiman Franjeh and other established leaders were ousted. The gerrymandered configuration in the Bekaa Valley strengthened Baalbek-Hermel's Hezbollah dominance while enabling a Hariri-Jumblatt alliance in Western Bekaa. In Mount Lebanon, Jumblatt was guaranteed districting-controlled victory over Aoun-Arslan in Baabda-Aley.

The 2005 elections were supposed to repair the divisions that happened post conflict. However, it made sure to reproduce the exclusionist political institutions and postponed the construction of representative, participatory, and accountable democratic order. Peacebuilding needs more than just stopping any kinds of war; it should also reflect on the regeneration of institutions regarded as just, inclusive, and legitimate in all segments of society. The inability to adopt an equitable electoral law in 2005 was thus a lost opportunity for democratic deepening and undermined Lebanon's overall post-conflict recovery.

### ***6.2.2. Elite Behavior, Sectarianism, and Institutional Breakdown in the 2005 Post-Syrian Political Order***

The conduct of Lebanon's political elites during the entire period of the 2005 elections drew much criticism from both domestic and international media and academic observers alike, focusing on the fundamental undemocratic nature of elite action as well as their detachment from the genuine sentiments of citizens. A more complex trend emerged in the 2005 elections even though for many years the sectarian politics was dominating. Although they continued to engage in customary practices like the formation of ad hoc electoral blocs, which is a defining feature of Lebanon's consociational regime, political elites seemed more receptive to policy priorities and individual interests rather than expressing fixed sectarian animosities.

This political maneuvering typically masked the structural deficits underlying Lebanon's post-war political arrangement. Although party constituencies remained sectarian in nature, party bases failed to correspond always to strict sectarian identities in elite politics. Instead, manipulation techniques working along the electoral alliance always dominated the government rules and legislations. Such political practices hinder the building of a representative political culture, an essential condition for sustained peacebuilding, by consolidating clientelism and undermining the influence of the electorate in shaping the direction of governance.

The composition of the executive after the elections also reveals the deeply rooted nature of confessionalism in Lebanese politics. Parliamentary blocs only claimed to be policy-oriented, however digging deep, it is realized that the cabinet is rooted deeply with the prevailing system of sectarian allocation. Though not officially codified, ministerial positions were distributed in approximate proportion to the parliamentary strength of each sectarian group, as per the principle of confessional parity uncovered by researchers such as Hudson (Hudson, 1997) and Rigby (Rigby, 2000). In doing so, the ruling majority as well as opposition parties were included members in the cabinet, thereby maintaining the illusion of pluralistic government while upholding the sectarian status quo.

One of the most controversial topics throughout the cabinet formation process was whether the opposition would gain one-third of the ministerial posts, known as the blocking third (thulth mu'aṭṭil). This threshold would confer veto power over important decisions. In fact, under Lebanon's constitutional framework, certain critical government decisions require a two-thirds majority in the cabinet to pass. Consequently, controlling one-third of ministerial

positions effectively grants a political bloc the ability to veto such decisions, creating a significant check on executive power. This blocking third principle was often used as a mechanism for political obstruction. In late July 2005, after extensive negotiations, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora's cabinet was accepted by parliament (Macmillan, 2019). The Four Parties Coalition, the largest post-election coalition, won 24 of the 30 cabinet roles, leaving the remaining seats to the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and its supporters (Kota, 2010). This setup resulted in a government that was officially inclusive but substantively lopsided, with the opposition denied the institutional authority required to influence important policy choices.

Remarkably, the executive formation did not replicate the policy-based polarization that had characterized the parliamentary bloc formations. Instead, it replicated the ongoing dynamic of elite-driven sectarian compromise, which, in facilitating short-term political stability, also constrained democratic consolidation and peacebuilding. The absence of institutional provision for constructive opposition participation undermined the legitimacy of governance institutions and obstructed the building of an inclusive political debate.

In this context, Lebanon's 2005 post-Syrian political transition was a time of promise and economizing. Even though the Syrian interference ended with the new election system, in parallel, it attested to the resilience of confessional politics and elite-driven governance. In order for peace to be constructed in such a context, institutional reforms must prioritize inclusive power-sharing, meaningful representation, and the dismantling of patronage structures that obstruct democratic accountability.

In short, the post-Taëf parliaments have failed to accurately represent the broader population due to the parliamentarians' socioeconomic and political characteristics being shaped by substantial political engineering and Syrian interference. However, as mentioned before, the 2005 election resulted in a huge turnover of the big political powers. Both before and after the 2005 elections, Lebanon experienced polarization between the political elites and parties. This was essentially based on differences of vision over political issues, although it is correct to say that these were directly related to their factional interests. Sectarianism was still in effect, but it was not necessarily a determinant factor in such political dynamism.

### ***6.2.3. Consequences of the 2005 Elections: Inclusive Governance and Transitional Peacebuilding***

The parliamentary elections in 2005 were a turning point in Lebanon's post-conflict political process, marking a reconfiguration of elite power that registered a real change in the

level of public tolerance towards pro-Syrian political power. Essentially, the electoral outcome recorded a pronounced popular aversion to the prevailing status quo, specifically the Syrian tutelage tradition. Through the reshaping of Lebanon's politics, the elections uncovered the strength of societal demand for sovereignty, accountability, and institutional change, which are crucial pillars of any durable peacebuilding process.

The turning point was the dismantling of the Syrian domination in the internal agenda of the Lebanese Government. Damascus had a long history of professional manipulation on the sectarian and factional elites. This strategy is designed to always hold the concentration of power and sustain the Syrian dominance. Though this policy remained in the form of indirect influence, through Hezbollah's entrenched position in the South and Bekaa regions, Syria's inability to exert electoral outcomes in the North, a typically strategic region, was a sign of weakening control.

The Future Movement's overwhelming election victory, led by Saad Hariri, with 92 seats of parliament, promised both opportunities and risks (Gade, 2022). On one hand, democratic renewal and policy reform sparked hope in the anti-Syrian government exercising a tightened grip on authority. On the other, such predominance was dangerous to undermine the executive-legislative balance that had been conceived in the Taëf Agreement. Taëf had remade Lebanon's post-conflict governance by redistributing power from the presidency to the Council of Ministers, encouraging a consociational formula for decision-making through the so-called Troika: President (Maronite), Prime Minister (Sunni), and Speaker of Parliament (Shiia) (Nagle & Clancy, 2019). This formula, while seeking to represent Lebanon's diverse composition, relied heavily on consensus. It is an inherently fragile mechanism in periods of greater political polarization.

The presence of Hezbollah as an independent actor outside the remit of state power only added to the complexity. Despite having a legal representation in parliament, Hezbollah's continued military confrontation with Israel, without the approval of the government, posed a direct challenge to state sovereignty. The 2005 policy statement of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora's administration articulated this predicament. It was a diplomatically worded statement of "the achievements of the resistance" while implicitly recognizing Hezbollah's unilateral status about the Shebaa Farms issue; an ambiguous border controversy with territorial dimensions for both Syrian and Lebanese sovereignty. This internal conflict is one of the key

challenges of peacebuilding: how to reconcile armed non-state actors with the imperatives of state-building and monopoly of the use of violence.

Nonetheless, the 2005 elections also yielded positive returns for otherwise marginalized political forces. The re-return of central Christian movements (i.e., the FPM of Michel Aoun and the Lebanese Forces) was a renewal of Christian political life (Helou, 2020). While these movements competed in elections, the bigger win was their re-appearance in the mainstream politics after the exclusion of their voices by the Syrian dominance. This new pluralism was supposed to enhance the representational legitimacy of the Lebanese political system, something that was needed to generate a climate for reconciliation in a nation marked by deep sectarian division.

Perhaps most importantly, the 2005 elections succeeded where earlier post-war elections had failed: they resulted in a legislature more representative of Lebanon's complex political constituencies. In doing so, they contributed to state autonomy and the revitalization of national institutions. Although profound challenges remain, including the ongoing politicization of sectarian identity and external influences, the elections mark a cautious step toward regime change and inclusive governance. Within the context of peacebuilding, these moments of elite renewal and institutional recalibration must occur to break cycles of dependency, impunity, and fragmentation, which are prevalent among post-conflict regimes.

### **6.3. The 2009 Parliamentary Elections**

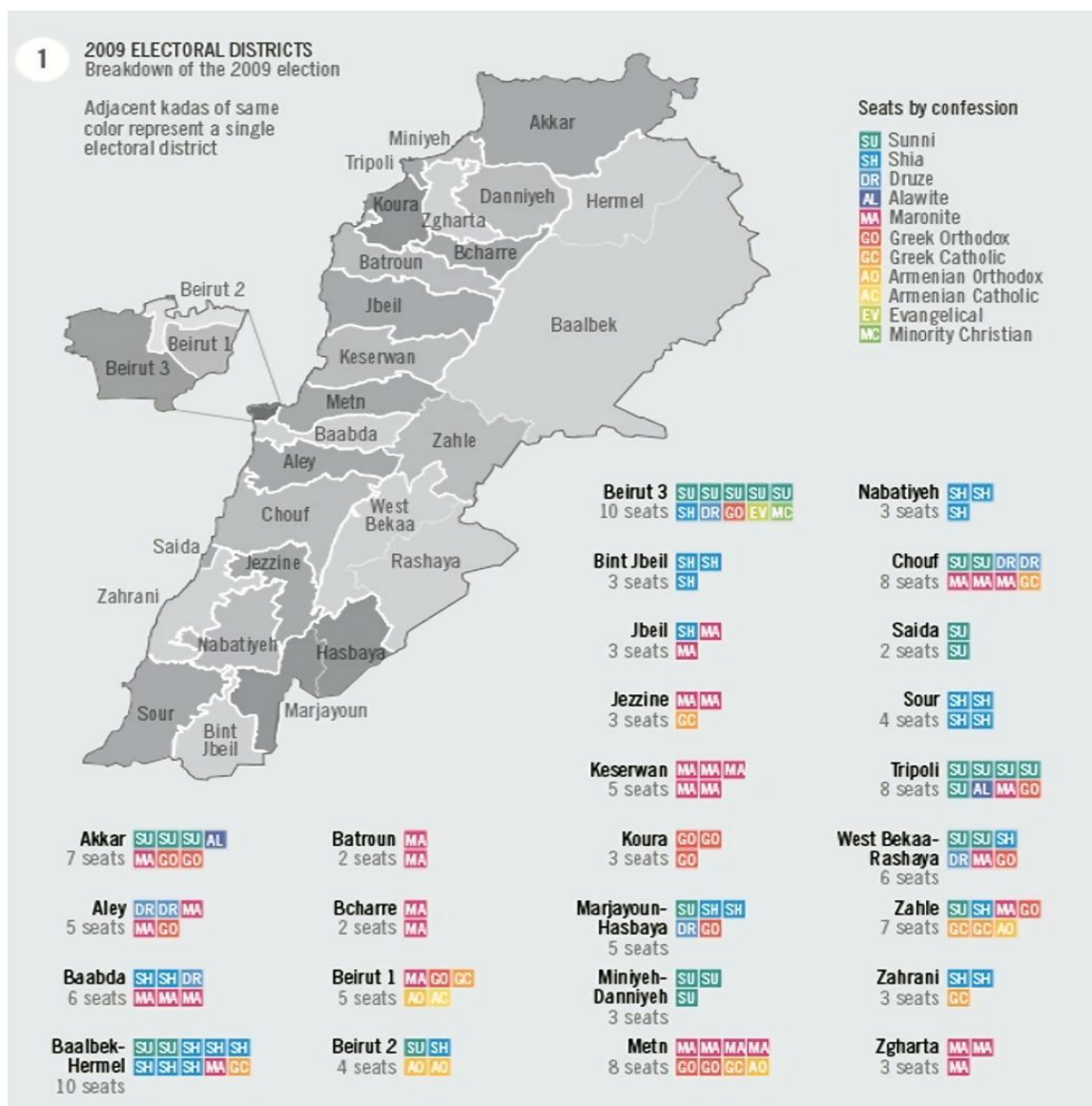
The 2009 Lebanese parliamentary elections took place against the backdrop of deepening polarization between the March 14 and March 8 blocs, a reflection of deep ideological and geopolitical divide. The March 14 coalition, led by the Future Movement and including the Lebanese Forces and Progressive Socialist Party, among other parties, advocated for Western alignment, opposition to Syrian and Iranian influence, and support for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon investigating former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's assassination. Conversely, the March 8 alliance, anchored by Hezbollah, the Amal Movement, and other parties, favored closer ties with Syria and Iran, resistance to Western intervention, and rejection of the tribunal as a tool of foreign interference. This schism extended beyond domestic politics to encompass competing visions of Lebanon's regional orientation and sovereignty.

This polarization, however, rather than weakening the political process, paradoxically underscored the resilience of Lebanon's post- Taëf democratic framework (The Carter Center,

2009). Two significant phenomena emerging from the transition of the peacebuilding and democratic perspective; First, the commitment of both blocs to the democratic process, reflected a political culture that is described with a competition prioritized with violence. Second, the elections marked the strengthening of a quasi-two-party system offering political predictability and coherence heretofore lacking in Lebanon's traditionally fragmented sectarian landscape.

Notably, the elections were conducted with high turnout and in the absence of the breakages of widespread political violence. The peaceful post-election transfer of power and popular acceptance of election results by both the victorious March 14 coalition and the losing March 8 bloc were a welcome exception to an otherwise often conflict-troubled region beset by post-election violence. Here, the 2009 elections should be considered a turning point towards the consolidation of democratic values, even for Lebanon's confessional system.

The distribution of the 2009 election, as shown in Figure 2, reflects Lebanon's confessional political system, which seeks to maintain a delicate equilibrium among the country's religious communities.



*Figure 2* Breakdown of the 2009 election

Source: 2008 Election Law; Ministry of Interior and Municipalities.

### **6.3.1. Electoral Campaign and New Electoral Law**

On June 7, 2009, Lebanon conducted its second parliamentary election after the withdrawal of Syrian forces in 2005. The 2009 elections took place after a severe 20 month economic and political crisis between 2007 and 2008 (Haddad, 2010). This crisis resulted in political division and institutional gridlock. For some context, this crisis had started with the opposition's withdrawal from the cabinet in 2006. The deadlock intensified when the presidential term of Émile Lahoud ended in November 2007 without parliament electing a successor, creating a constitutional vacuum. The paralysis deepened further as the opposition maintained a sit-in protest in downtown Beirut, effectively blocking government functioning.

Unlike the Syrian-imposed pattern of holding elections on four successive Sundays, the 2009 elections took place on a single day across Lebanon, where the government made efforts to ensure that the voting process was free with just minimal breaches. The elections took place between two major parties, March 14 bloc, which aimed to maintain the status quo, and the March 8 alliance, which sought to change the balance of power.

The electoral campaign introduced new dynamics by which elite coordination and the evolving structure of political competition were taking shape. Following the 2008 Doha Accord, a major change in the electoral law was endorsed in October 2008 (UN Peacemaker, 2008). The adoption of the parliamentary electoral law № 25/2008 returned the qada (district) as the electoral unit, a development which shaped coalition strategy and general electoral dynamics (El-Machnouk, 2018). Many changes were made to the electoral legal framework, including holding elections on a single day, organizing electoral media and advertising campaigns, organizing electoral spending, non-resident citizens voting, measures to help people with disabilities vote, and many other procedural changes.

Nonetheless, on May 13, 2013, the Parliament extended its term for one year and five months, despite the fact that general periodic elections were scheduled for June 2013 (Niyi, 2013). The extended term came after the failed attempts to come to an agreement on a new electoral legislation, as well as the fact that the security situation did not support conducting elections. On November 5, 2014, the parliament again extended its term, canceling the parliamentary elections under a statute that went into effect on November 16, of the same year. This is a flagrant breach of the Lebanese Constitution, the international covenants and treaties accepted by Lebanon, and the fundamental foundations of democracy. This resulted in the cancelation of the whole voting process. Following the first and second extensions, Lebanon faced a crucial and hazardous period in its history, since there is no president of the country because deputies failed to elect one. On May 24, 2014, after the end of the mandate of Lebanon's twelfth president, the country entered a period of political and constitutional vacuum from which no one can see a way out, anticipate the time required to exit, or understand all of its repercussions (Mourad, 2014).

Two significant trends characterized the election campaign. First, there was always a clear bipolar contest in each electoral district, with voters broadly aligned with the March 14 or March 8 side, reflecting a newly developed quasi-two-party system. Polarization did not fully eliminate Lebanon's past practice of ad hoc, cross-sectarian alliances, and pragmatic

coalition-building still influenced local elections. For example, in Beirut's Second District, candidates from both blocs formed a joint list (Haddad, 2010). But compared to past elections, political players showed increased policy loyalty and bloc coherence.

Secondly, an initial effort to form a centrist or "third bloc" (*kutla wasatiya*) by President Michel Suleiman represented a new effort at transcending sectarian and ideological divisions. Even if this initiative never gained traction before the elections, the very existence of its incubation suggested a potential movement toward moderation, institutional reform, and transgression of fixed bipolar impasse in the political imagination. As a peacebuilding mechanism, such an effort however short-lived, is a sign of willingness in society to escape zero-sum sectarian politics.

Comparing the 2005 to the 2009 elections, the latter was more coherent in terms of campaigns and it had more ideological fault lines. Some of the major issues that defined electoral competition were the destiny of the Hariri international tribunal, alignment with regional powers (primarily Syria and Iran), defense policy (notably Hezbollah arms), the implementation of the Taëf and Doha Accords, and cabinet reforms targeting corruption and judicial independence.

In spite of some scholars' criticism that the campaign lacked substantive policy debate (Ufheil-Somers, 2009), the indicated reluctance of political elites to shift bloc alliances, contrary to the elections in 2005, demonstrated growing political identity and loyalty. This effectively reduced the space for opportunistic shifting and provided greater legitimacy to the newly formed party blocs in the perception of the electorate. Voters increasingly viewed the March 8-March 14 divide as a defining framework for political participation, thereby solidifying the architecture of Lebanon's evolving party system.

### ***6.3.2. Foreign Influence, Sectarian Fragmentation, and Electoral Engineering***

The 2009 parliamentary elections in Lebanon took place amid a significant outsider participation, sectarian conflict, and questioned democratic legitimacy. As Lebanon's warring political groups sided with various regional and international backers such as the United States, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iran, the elections were generally regarded as a barometer of foreign influence in the country's internal politics. In this regard, the electoral process became a proxy battleground in a larger geopolitical conflict for Lebanon's future direction and regional ties.

The March 14 alliance, funded by Western powers and Gulf states, framed the elections as a critical juncture in determining Lebanon's sovereignty and democratic continuity. Losing the elections, they argued, would not just reflect a shift in the composition of parliament but the conversion of the Lebanese Republic into an Iranian regional project satellite. This existential framing of election risks echoed concerns about Hezbollah's simultaneous military power and incidents of May 7, 2008, when internal conflicts nearly propelled the country to civil war (Rowayheb, 2011). These clashes, exposing weaknesses in state authority, prompted foreign intervention that ended in the Doha Agreement.

The most important step of the Doha agreement, is the installation of a new president, the reaching of a fragile consensus, and the reactivation of public governmental. However, the 2008 Doha Agreement also reinstated the controversial 1960 electoral law on the basis of the qada (caza) districting system (United Nations, 2008), which was widely condemned for perpetuating confessionalism and elite clientelism. Despite reformist aspirations, attempts to apply proportional representation or mixed systems were abandoned in favor of a law that satisfied the political mathematics of most sectarian leaders, especially Christian political forces that needed to benefit from the fact that there were smaller, confessionally homogeneous electoral constituencies in which they enjoyed demographic advantages.

This outcome is a paradigmatic case of post-conflict electoral engineering, where fragile political settlements have a tendency to prioritize elite endorsement and short-term stability over actual democratization and institutional change. The return to the 2008 electoral law that was used in the poll during the period 1960-1972, enabled the continuation of traditional political practices (elite brokerage, patronage politics, and sectarian power-sharing reproduction) (Haddad, 2010). The law was presented with a backlash; it made sure to encourage division and diminished the opportunity for an inclusive government rather than the revival and national reconciliation it was meant to create.

In this context, the elections also became a battleground not only for domination of the state institution but also for Lebanon's future security order, and more specifically for the weapons of Hezbollah and the state monopoly of violence. March 14 bloc embraced state sovereignty and disarmament of non-state actors, while March 8, backed by Syria and Iran, backed the role of "resistance" of Hezbollah and promoted its autonomy from the state institution. The rift was not just political but was existential and deeply rooted in competing visions of Lebanon's identity and alliances.

The coalitional dynamics of 2009 also revealed new practical collaborations that sharpened some political divisions. Hezbollah and Amal, traditional allies, for instance, were joined by the FPM, reflecting a shifting political strategy that accommodated Shiia-Islamist and Christian-nationalist agendas. March 14, on the contrary, formed tactical alliances with former adversary figures such as Michel Murr in Metn and Nazem al-Khury, a figure close to President Michel Suleiman. These coalitions highlight the existence of temporary electoral coalitions which stand out in Lebanese politics where both fosters and limits the process of democratic consolidation.

Moreover, the Doha Agreement dedicated allocations in sensitive and debatable districts such as Aley and Beirut II, shedding the light on the deals set before election to negotiate power and manipulate the electoral setting. Although there were a few exceptions (e.g., combined districts such as Marjeyoun-Hasbaya and Baalbeck-Hermel, and the division of Sidon), the system overall continued to represent sectarian interests rather than national programmatic agendas.

The bottom line is, the elections of 2009 did not overcome Lebanon's structural contradictions. Instead of crafting deeper democracy, the elections reinforced equilibrium that lies on a fine line dictated by external intervention, sectarian negotiations, and elite accommodation. The elections reveal the challenge of consociationalism from the standpoint of peacebuilding and post-conflict democratization: It might facilitate conflict management in the short term, but it can also freeze the process of communal division and nationalist formation behind the artificially constructed power-sharing agreement.

It is important to note that the Lebanese parliament's mandate was to expire in 2013, one year before the presidential term ends, depriving it of one of its primary functions: electing the republic's next president. The election results will thereafter have a significant impact on the establishment of the government (cabinet). The primary goal of the coalitions fighting the election was to win a majority of seats in the next parliament, rather than just retaining a seat for a specific candidate or political party.

### ***6.3.3. From Electoral Triumph to Political Deadlock: The Elections of 2009 and the Limitations of Democratic Consolidation in Lebanon***

The Lebanese parliamentary election of 2009 resulted in a narrow win but symbolically significant victory of the March 14 alliance as shown in Table 7 (69 seats compared to 57 for the March 8 bloc) (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009). Yet, the electoral mandate turned out to

have a superficial power despite the win, considering the confessional and consociational character of Lebanon's political landscape. In the system of conciliation governing Lebanon, election outcomes will barely equate to significant policy shifts or executive authority, particularly where opposition forces possess de facto veto authority anchored in armed influence, most notably with Hezbollah (Cammett, 2009).

**Table 7** Number of Parliamentarians belonging to each political party

<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Number of deputies</b>
FM	25
Independent/March 14 <sup>th</sup>	20
LF	8
Kataeb	5
PSP	5
Hanchak	2
DLM	1
Jamaa Islamiya	1
NLP	1
Ramgavar	1
Majority	69
Independent/Opposition	20
FPM	10
Hizbollah	10
Amal	8
Baath	2
SSNP	2
Tachnak	2
LDP	1
IslmActFrnt	1
Marada	1
Opposition	57
Independents	2

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009)

This reality later unfolded in a long government-formation deadlock. The deep sectarian cleavage along the two dominant political blocs, March 14 and March 8, established a deadlock that solidified the quasi-two-party system, and paradoxically obstructed democratic governance. The PSP leader Walid Jumblatt's withdrawal from the March 14 bloc was a turning realignment, both ideologically and politically. His critique of the campaign of the coalition, more sectarian rejectionism than politically programmatic, dwelled on the persistence of clientelist and communal logics as they intrude on national policymaking.

Jumblatt's departure stripped March 14 of its legitimacy claim to a government majority and undermined its attempt to capitalize on the electoral victory. Meanwhile, the formation of the new cabinet led by Prime Minister Saad Hariri lasted more than five months, an occurrence indicative of the structural inefficiencies in Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing model. The final cabinet formula (15 ministers from March 14, 10 from March 8, and 5 appointed by President Michel Suleiman) was proof of the continued elite consensus against the democratic mandate (BBC News, 2009). As Hezbollah's Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah acknowledged defeat, he noted that cabinet formation was not a matter of electoral arithmetic, but of the sectarian force of the Lebanese constitution (Harnisch, 2009).

Despite nominal consolidation of a bipolar political system, March 14 was unable to exert effective leadership. Its limited ability to recommend institutional or policy reform demonstrated the consociational model's continued hold, in which electoral legitimacy was supplanted by elite-level agreements. As a result, Lebanon entered yet another phase of elite division, institutional impasse, political stagnation, and growing public disappointment.

The post-2009 period has been identified as a hugely missed opportunity, and a democratic failure, for a genuine and fair institutional reform, with bounds on the avenues set for citizen engagement and policy responsiveness. Jumblatt's realignment was symptomatic of a broader phenomenon whereby sectarian calculation outweighed national interest. Yet, his departure also has to be accounted for in the dynamics of elite pragmatism in divided states, where political actors shift allegiances to ensure influence within evolving power structures (International Crisis Group, 2010).

Whereas these pragmatic steps were criticized by March 14 supporters as concessions, they still served to facilitate the revival of minimal policy functionality. Under these circumstances, the actions taken by Hariri and Jumblatt can be explained not only as sectarian maneuvering but as strategic steps in a weak-state context, aimed at reviving stalled governance

mechanisms, even at the expense of democratic norms such as electoral accountability and civic representation.

However, Quasi-two-party system consolidation did not resolve Lebanon's underlying core problem. Instead, it underlined contradictions in seeking to balance majoritarian electoral forces with consociational governance requirements. The emergence of demarcated electoral blocs in 2009 represented an advance on the ad hoc, clientelistic coalitions of 2005. Yet institutionalization of political competition deepened polarization and rendered consensus-building more elusive.

In retrospect, the post-2005 period, marked initially by Syria's withdrawal and the reactivation of Lebanese democratic institutions, yielded a brief window of political rebirth. The 2005 elections, though flawed, represented a significant moment of civic mobilization and regime change. The absence, however, of programmatic political parties and the retention of sectarian patronage's logic limited the scope of democratic deepening. By 2009, political realignments had developed into a quasi-institutionalized bipolarity, yet one that operated in terms of a system inherently opposed to majority rule.

Remarkably, the merge of rival political groups, which was first viewed as a democratic normalization, eventually contradicted with the Lebanese system's dependence on elite pacts and proportionate sectarian representation. The crucial mechanism that was set to protect the diversity eventually became an impediment to an effective and functional government. While leaders such as Hariri and Jumblatt responded pragmatically to current crises, their actions exposed the underlying flaws of Lebanon's mixed political system.

#### ***6.3.4. The Challenge to Peacebuilding and Sectarian Entrenchment***

The parliamentary elections held in Lebanon in 2009 are viewed as a milestone celebratory event Lebanon achieved in regard to democratization and governance. A closer examination of the process, however, revealed that the attempt to hold elections repaired none of the damage Lebanon's sectarian tensions had caused over the years. Instead, the elections entrenched the level of discordant relations based on sects and regions of the country, undermining the chances of sustainable peace and state-building that includes all elements of society.

Despite the symbolic importance of having elections in a post-conflict environment, the political dynamics of 2009 were determined by confessional mobilization, notably among

Sunnite and Shiia populations. Sunni constituents primarily backed the Future Movement led by Saad Hariri, while Shiia voters preferred Amal and Hezbollah. Conversely, Christian voters were sharply divided between Michel Aoun's FPM and the 14 March alliance. This trend represents a zero-sum political culture based on sectarian allegiance rather than cross-sectarian policy platforms or national goals.

Additionally, the 2009 election law undermined the principles of representative democracy. Even though it was designed to divide parliamentary seats in a proportional manner between regions and sects, the law made no notice about the equality of this representation. For instance, most of the Christian parliamentary seats fell in predominantly Muslim constituencies, where the numerical dominance of the Muslim voters often determined the outcome. This demographic imbalance undermined the political influence of Christian communities, challenging the legitimacy and fairness of the electoral process.

Intercommunal cooperation or political reconciliation is not supported by such a system. Rather, it institutionalizes asymmetric dependencies, where one sect becomes electorally dominant and others are subordinated, thereby enforcing sectarian dominance instead of fostering comprehensive governance. For peacebuilding, the implications are profound. Instead of finding common ground, mutual recognition and collaboration to support a peacebuilding agenda the system went into systemically privileging votes based on identity and power-sharing structures at the expense of cross-sectarian representation.

Further compounding these systemic deficiencies is the means through which political elites gain access to power. Parliamentary constituencies are often awarded not through merit, policy development, or legislative effectiveness, but through inherited political capital, clientelism, and sectarian allegiance. This impedes political renewal and excludes the rise of reformist leadership capable of transcending sectarian fragmentation.

The period following the election was characterized by a deepening Sunnite-Shiia divide and reinforced Christian political fragmentation, which resulted in a politic split along sectarian lines. Rather than fostering national unity or enabling reconciliation, the elections entrenched the existing sectarian deadlock. The Lebanese political system, governed by consociational principles, continues to lack the capacity to support meaningful peacebuilding, which is defined here as moving beyond the termination of violence toward authentic reconciliation and transformation of the social and political structures.

Electoral reform here must be conceived not merely as a technical process but as a critical part of peacebuilding. A new electoral system must seek equitable representation, support inter-sectarian political blocs, and incentivize issue-based politics. Absent reform, Lebanon's democratic institutions will lapse into the procedural shell with no capacity to remedy the rooted grievances that persist in driving communal tensions and political instability.

#### **6.4. The 2017 Electoral Reform and the 2018 Lebanese Elections**

In October 2017, Lebanon passed a new electoral law that included, for the first time, elements of proportional representation. The law was widely encouraged by political faces and local media as a win for democracy and a worthy celebration for Lebanese citizens. But this optimism was not universal. Progressive political movements, reform candidates, and civil society actors vehemently objected, arguing that the newly formed electoral constituencies had been intentionally drawn to mirror entrenched sectarian divisions rather than overcome them (Muhanna, 2017).

The pre-reform legislative cycle was paradoxical in nature. After some back and forth, and procrastinations in the perspective of unconstitutionally prolonged parliamentary terms, the rapid adoption of the law raised suspicion among political observers. Although appearing to be a step towards democracy, doubters argued that the hybrid nature of the law, melding proportional representation with majoritarian and sectarian features, would merely re-establish the prevailing power structures.

These concerns were realized following the May 6, 2018, elections, which had been held nearly a decade after the last electoral cycle. Even though there was a huge opportunity for independence and alternative political movements, what happened revealed the absurd domination of Lebanon's veteran sectarian parties. Long-standing political elites retained their seats, while candidates from the civil society movement, some of whom were advocates for national unity and political reform, were largely excluded.

From a peacebuilding perspective, this outcome is deeply problematic. Elections in post-conflict or fragile societies are typically viewed as a means of restructuring the political order and expanding political participation. However, when electoral reforms are implemented in ways that institutionalize elite power-sharing structures and maintain sectarian clientelism, they contribute to undermining the entire foundation of an inclusive government and conflict reduction. Instead of promoting institutional renewal and reconciliation, Lebanon's 2018

elections served to reinforce sectarian cleavages and impede successful peacebuilding processes.

The proportional representation under Lebanon's 2017 electoral law appeared to be a revolutionary departure from the country's historically based majoritarian system. By eliminating the previous regime of 26 relatively small districts and replacing them with 15 larger, newly established electoral districts, the law implemented a system where parliamentary seats would be allocated proportionally to the votes percentage received by each electoral list (Felsch, 2022). In theory, this shift could potentially increase political participation, particularly by non-aligned and civil society actors, who otherwise would lack access to power networks held by confessional elites.

However, the applied practice served to clear all the new potential of a democratic new law. The concept of proportionality was completely destroyed by gerrymandered electoral district boundaries and district structure, together with the ongoing distribution of seats based on rigid sectarian quotas. In addition to maintaining the advantages of established political figures, these maneuvers gave the previous majoritarian system's dynamics a new name.

One extremely restrictive measure was the limitation of preferential voting to the *caza* (sub-district) of the residence of the voter, even when certain *cazas* were merged under one electoral district (The Electoral Knowledge Network, 2017). For example, in Mount Lebanon IV, which merged Shouf and Aley, Shouf voters were unable to cast preferential votes for candidates in Aley. This constraint strongly limited cross-regional voter-candidate links and excluded the rise of intercommunal electoral alliances, which are critical to maintaining inclusive political participation and undermining sectarian boundaries.

The 2018 Lebanese parliamentary electoral map represents a significant restructuring of Lebanon's electoral districts (see Figure 3).



From a peacebuilding point of view, this experience highlights the limitations of institutional reform when it is diverted by elite interests. Electoral laws, specifically those created after conflict and fragile states, usually aim to set rules for democracy and reconciliation. However, when these newly stated laws are executed without any genuine intentions or inclusivity, and when they tend to reinforce rather than restructure the already built sectarian institutions, they can instead consolidate political fragmentation and legitimize exclusionary governance. In Lebanon's case, the elections of 2018 demonstrated how superficial reform, done without transformative intent, can entrench societal divisions, effectively obstructing the pathways to inclusive statehood and sustainable peace.

#### ***6.4.1. The Parliament Election and the Limits of Political Transformation***

On 6 May 2018, Lebanon held its first parliament election in nearly a decade; a moment that, in theory, was a significant step toward institutional renewal after years of political standstill and repeated extensions of parliament mandates (Deets & Skulte-Ouaiss, 2020). Despite following a new electoral, the elections produced limited structural differences in the political system, affirming the dominance of traditional sectarian elites and exposing the weakness of Lebanon's democratic process and ongoing hold of regional geopolitics.

Though the 2018 elections witnessed a record 976 registered candidates, including 113 women, and a historic number of individuals running outside mainstream parties and zaiims (elite) networks, these indicators of political diversity did not translate into a meaningful transfer of power (El-Kak, 2019). The result reaffirmed the position of mainstream sectarian parties, prevailing the persistence of patronage networks and the challenges faced by independent and reforming forces in breaking into Lebanon's sectarian political system.

Notably, the elections were conducted against a background of regional turmoil and domestic crisis. Lebanon has been suffering from profound political stagnation since the previous election in 2009. Parliament had extended its mandate three times in violation of the constitution, absurdly alleging security reasons sparked by the spillover of the Syrian war and Hezbollah's military intervention, the rise of ISIS, and the destabilizing impact of Hezbollah's military intervention. On a national level, a lengthy constitutional crisis exacerbated Lebanon's governance void. From 2014 to 2016, the country lacked a president due to a political stalemate between rival political blocs until an agreement between Christian rivals (LF and FPM) made it possible for Michel Aoun to be elected (Dinu, 2022). Sunni leader Saad Hariri, who had initially opposed the candidacy of Aoun, surrendered to the agreement and returned to the

position of prime minister. The resulting national unity government consisted of almost all significant parties, including Hezbollah, although Hariri opposed its involvement in both local and regional conflicts.

The establishment of this wide-based government and the passage of long-pending reforms, like the new electoral law, might be seen as signs of institutional compromise. What happened was that all the power was centered on the previously existing elites and the sectarian balance was constructed based on the electoral engineering. This obviously weakened the power of the needed reforms. Rather than fostering accountability, transparency, or civic engagement, the process instead reaffirmed the logic of consociational power-sharing and its tendency to prioritize elite consensus over democratic tact.

The 2017 resignation crisis also illustrates the extent to which Lebanon's sovereignty and domestic politics continue to be subject to regional competition, in this instance between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Hariri's surprise resignation while in Saudi Arabia, which was generally assumed to have been arranged by Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman to diminish Hezbollah's role in government, backfired (Reuters, 2017). Instead of isolating Hezbollah, the tragedy sparked national unity, with President Aoun and Hezbollah responding with careful diplomacy. French assistance finally allowed Hariri to return and revoke his resignation. This installment revealed the volatile intersection of internal politics and external interference, under which regional policy is enforced at the expense of Lebanon's fragile internal peace (Reuters, 2017).

Even though, the 2018 elections were the closest yet to bring real and intended reforms and the civil society to center stage, it still had no actual effect on the actual political ground. The consistent abuse of the electoral rules by the sectarian and geographical elites continue to push away all Lebanon's opportunities towards peace and democratic consolidation.

For peacebuilding to take root, Lebanon requires not only technical electoral reform but fundamental political culture reorientation. It must grant people a sense of empowerment as stakeholders in national governance, not sectarian subjects.

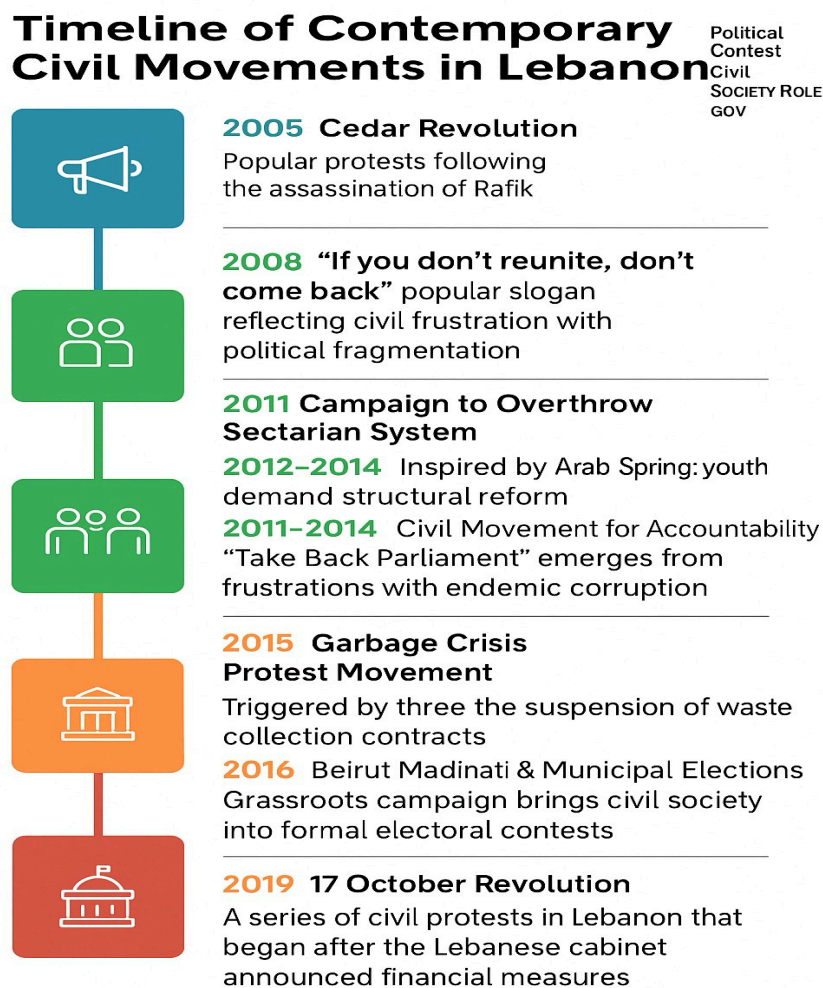
#### ***6.4.2. Civil Society Mobilization***

From 2005 to 2015, the emerging civic movement grew gradually, drawing disappointed partisans from Lebanon's established sectarian parties and solidifying opposing voices from across Lebanon's fragmented political spectrum. Largely disorganized and

ideologically diverse, this shapeless coalition was a significant departure from Lebanon's entrenched confessional politics of privilege. It was evidence of a greater societal desire to redefine political engagement in terms of issue politics, rather than clientelism and sectarian patronage.

The 2015 "You Stink" protests, which were sparked by a garbage management crisis that saw piles of trash accumulating in Beirut and other places, stroked a turning point (Kraidy, 2016). Even though the protests appeared to be superficial and for one defined cause, it merged down from richer and longer tradition of civic mobilization. One of the latter was related to the previous Syrian presence and the dilemmas that was set on earlier reforms. Not only did these protests mobilize a cross-sectarian, cross-generational movement, but signaled the dawn of political awareness rooted in accountability, public service provision, and democracy.

It could be argued that such movements, which are in essence civic and secular and focus on reforms and anti-corruption, are crucial to social reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction. They challenge the prevailing state of sectarian order and promote the conditions under which deliberative democracy could be maintained, making participatory citizenship and political inclusivity a priority. From 2005 to 2018, there were eight phases of civic mobilization (see Figure 4), each prompted by evident failures of government, socio-economic demands, or breaches of constitutional norms which collectively contributed to new political actors. These actors, while missing from the mainstream institutional arenas until recently, increasingly shaped public discourse and policy pressures.



**Figure 4** Timeline of Contemporary civil movements in Lebanon

Source: Created by author

The 2018 parliamentary elections offered these actors a partial institutional opening. The 66 civil society background candidates contested seats in 9 of the 15 electoral districts under the banner of the “Watani Coalition”, in addition to other independent lists (Vértes et al., 2021). While their electoral breakthrough was trimmed by the structural constraints of Lebanon's sectarian electoral system, their participation nonetheless signaled a rupture in the political status quo. Furthermore, the fact that ex-activists are present in the mainstream party lists points toward a shifting political field, in which boundaries between institutional politics and civil society are being renegotiated.

To contribute to sustainable peace in a meaningful way, however, it is important that these emerging actors consolidate their own political identity, define consistent agendas, and move beyond reliance on anti-establishment rhetoric as such. It’s important to bear in mind

that it is crucial to maneuver the way into institutional and political arenas, however while always remembering the ideals and the main objectives of the reforms that include transparency, fairness, and the rights that the civil society upholds. These can set the way for transformed politics in the phase of post- conflict in Lebanon. The role of civil society is neither oppositional, but constructive: to offer visions of alternative political community and social justice that are essential to any sustainable and inclusive peace.

#### ***6.4.3. Results of Parliament Elections and Electoral Reforms***

The 2018 Lebanese parliamentary elections, held under a new electoral law that provided for proportional representation, did not dismantle the sectarian power-sharing arrangements that have long defined the Lebanese political system. Instead, the elections reflected shifting in the parliamentary power amongst the higher power politicians, and the re-design of the existing sectarian alliances. This acts as consolidation rather than it being a transformation of the confessional political order.

The result, however, was a fairly sobering event on several levels. Voter turnout was disappointingly low, dropping to 49% from 54% in 2009 (Abed et al., 2022). Established parties blamed this on the cumbersome new electoral legislation, but there is widespread dissatisfaction with the Lebanese political system: the elections saw 800,000 first-time voters. Similarly, diaspora voting turnout fell short of expectations: of the nearly 4 million Lebanese nationals living abroad, only 83 thousand registered, with little more than half of them voting (Abed et al., 2022).

Although the electoral structure included revisions to improve representative fairness, the election results confirmed the dominance of established sectarian parties, notably those linked with the March 8 alliance. The FPM obtained the largest bloc with 29 seats, while Hezbollah and the Amal Movement won all 27 Shiia-designated seats, indicating complete control over Shiia parliamentary participation (The Electoral Knowledge Network, 2018). The March 8 group, together with their coalition allies, gained a majority in parliament depriving the Western-backed March 14 majority of power which it had held since 2009 (The Electoral Knowledge Network, 2018).

This move is particularly geopolitically significant. The legislative majority not only dictates the composition of the Lebanese cabinet, but it also has an impact on the country's foreign policy orientations, particularly in terms of regional dynamics like Iran's nuclear aspirations, Israel-Iran tensions, and larger Middle Eastern power struggles. The rise of

Hezbollah and its supporters may signify a shift in Lebanon's exterior posture, with ramifications for regional peace and domestic security.

The performance of the parties formerly linked with March 14 was mixed. The PSP retained its position, gaining 6 of the 7 Druze seats, while the LF increased its parliamentary representation from 8 to 15 seats. In contrast, the Phalange Party and the Future Movement experienced significant setbacks (The Electoral Knowledge Network, 2018). Despite receiving the most preference votes, Saad al-Hariri's Future Movement lost 15 seats, falling from 34 to 19. Analysts attribute these losses less to a decline in public support and more to the mechanics of the new electoral system, which reduced cross-sectional vote consolidation and disproportionately harmed politicians with broad national appeal.

The results also showed emerging diversity within the Sunni camp, which reflects a drift away from the centralized support for Hariri that characterized the post-2005 period. Sunni representation fragmentation might be indicative of broader dissatisfaction or a return to pre-2005 political allegiance patterns, where multiple Sunni leaders competed. This decision highlights the complexity of Lebanon's consociational system, which continues to manage political rivalry under strict sectarian quotas. Despite reform efforts, the system has mainly maintained elite-driven power distribution at the expense of democratic responsiveness. Christian political parties, notably the FPM and LF, have long condemned the post-Taëf situation as diminishing Christian agency, advocating for legislation such as the Orthodox plan, which would limit voters to voting representatives from their sect only (Nash, 2017). Elements of that contentious idea are buried in contemporary election legislation, notably through the preferred vote system, which reinforces sectarian entrenchment.

These dynamics show the difficulties of altering a strongly sectarian governmental system. While the reformation of the electoral process sound like a crucial component of the democratization after conflicts, what happened in Lebanon proves that such changes can set stronger boundaries and sectarian clientelism rather than weakening them. True political revolution necessitates not just legislative changes, but also a reinvention of political identity and allegiance that goes beyond communal boundaries. Until then, Lebanon's political environment is likely to remain caught in a cycle of institutional stagnation, elite negotiation, and occasional volatility, eroding the foundations of long-term peace (Deets & Skulte-Ouaiss, 2020).

### **6.5. The 2022 Lebanese Parliamentary Elections: Crisis-Driven Electoral Shifts in a Consociational System**

The 2022 Lebanese parliament elections, which were internally held on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> May for voters outside the country and on the 15<sup>th</sup> May for voters in Lebanon, took place in the context of an extraordinary multi-dimensional crisis. Following the 2019 collapse of the Lebanese Lira, the October 17 uprising, the COVID-19 crisis, and the 2020 port explosion in Beirut, the credibility of Lebanon's political and financial institutions was eroded by citizens. Inflation had hit around 171.2% by late 2022 (Derhally, 2023), and the black-market exchange rate stood significantly different from the official peg, fueling social frustration and rendering basic services such as healthcare, schooling, and electricity exclusively in US dollars. In addition to a collapsing banking sector and continued government paralysis, public anger mounted further.

Thus, widespread anger and disappointment, as well as strong distrust of those in power, speculation that the governing class would find a method to postpone the elections in order to maintain their control became frequent in the run-up to the scheduled election dates. These assumptions were heightened by the political establishment's regular use of election postponements. Further tension emerged across the country's TV stations and social media platforms, as opposing parties shouted their campaigns and residents debated the merits of various parties' arguments (El-Khoury, 2023). Many newfound parties were previously engaged in politics, portraying themselves as alternatives to existing parties, but they rose to prominence as a result of insufficient government responses during periods of instability.

Against this volatile background, the 2022 election witnessed the partial collapse of Lebanon's deeply entrenched consociational order, with the emergence in parliament of 12 reformist, non-confessional MPs from various districts and religious groups succeeded and gained visibility during the rebellion of 2019 (UNDP, 2022). This electoral victory mirrored the general public rejection of the post-Taëf political class and the failure it presented in ensuring the solutions to a huge socio-economic crisis. Candidates that worked in a reformed manner, represented by cross-sectarian lists, were considered part of the protest movement and a collective demand for political responsibility and structure adjustment (Dinu, 2022).

However, while the election of independents to parliament marks a symbolic triumph for civil resistance organizations, it does not imply structural change. The elites remain standing on the top of the political elites. The Hezbollah-led March 8 coalition saw a significant

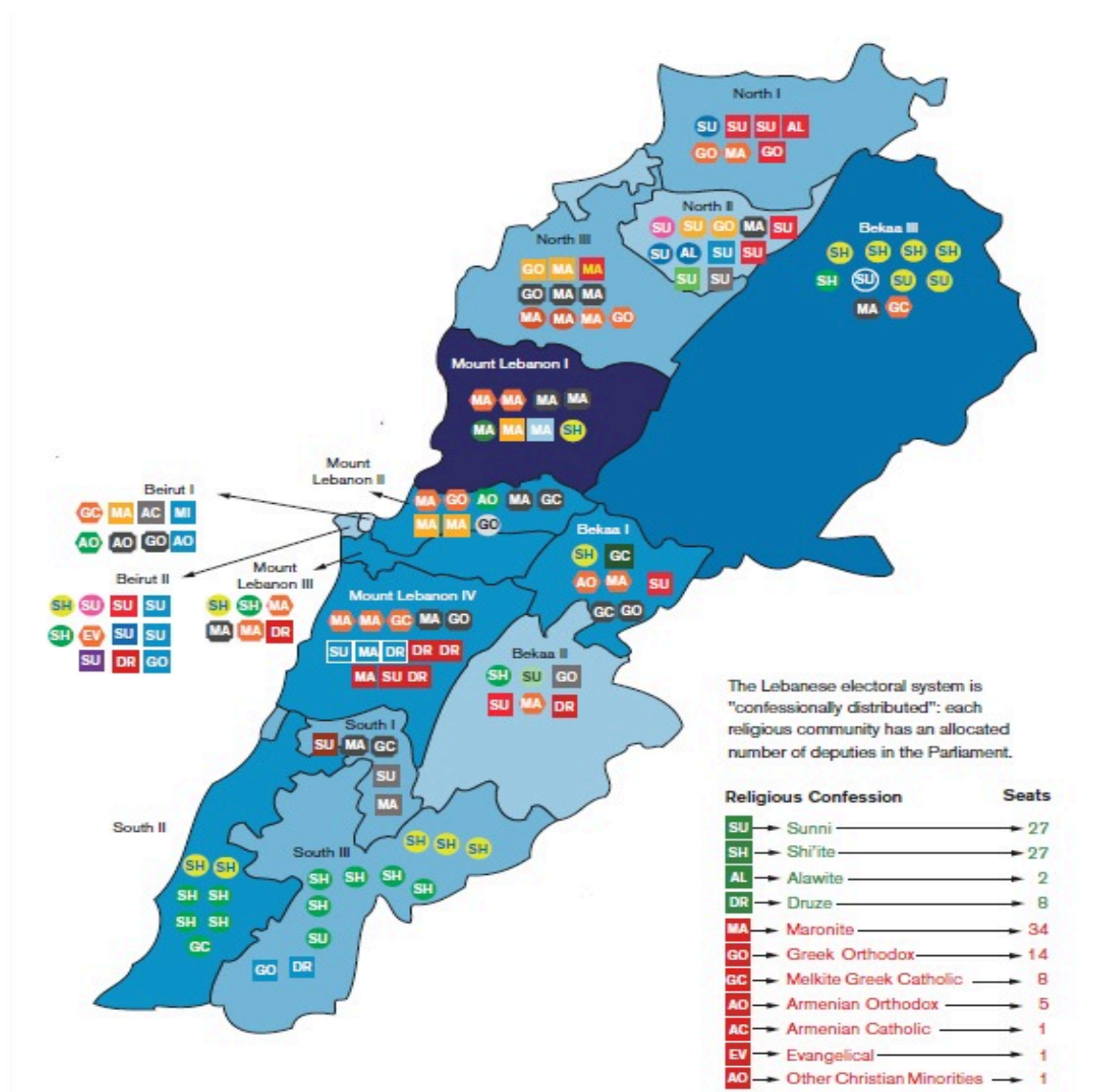
drop in parliamentary power, notably after losing its crucial Christian ally, the FPM, whose parliamentary bloc fell short of the majority threshold of 65 MPs (UNDP, 2022). This balance of power resulted in fragmented coalitions with no obvious unity, paving the way for increased stalemate and hindering decision-making processes, particularly in the establishment of a new government and the election of a president.

For the first time since the civil war, there is a significant group in parliament that is not restricted by sectarian quotas or clientelist networks. These MPs have the potential to advocate for openness, accountability, and structural transformation. Their success, however, is dependent on negotiating entrenched patronage structures, overcoming opposition from established parties, and reacting to crucial national concerns like IMF discussions and economic recovery plans (Deets & Skulte-Ouaiss, 2020).

It is crucial to situate these events within Lebanon's consociational system, prioritizing sectarian balance and elite agreement over democratic accountability. Historically, this has provided stability but also institutionalized paralysis and elite collusion, allowing illegitimacy and public service delivery by the state. The emergence of non-sectarian actors sets a paradox: their electoral legitimacy is premised upon a rejection of consociational malfunction, but their political survival relies upon engaging within it (Sciences Po Paris, 2022).

The 2022 elections are a case study of crisis-induced electoral disruption in post-conflict consociational democracies. The sectarian order did not disappear from the system. However, they introduced a new variable in Lebanon's political equation: a minority, that acts as a reformist, to help support achieving the institutional reform with the help of powerful public pressure and strategic coordination. In this manner, the elections illustrate both the limits of political change within structural boundaries and the persistent aspirations of redefining citizenship beyond confessional structures (Deets & Skulte-Ouaiss, 2020).

Figure 5 provides an overview of Lebanon's confessional electoral system, which allocates parliamentary seats according to religious affiliation.



**Figure 5** Breakdown of 2022 election

Source: Al-Nahar/Elections-2018

### 6.5.1. *The Structural Challenges*

In the lead-up to Lebanon's 2022 parliamentary elections, more than a dozen developing parties offered 2121 candidates across Lebanon, significantly contributing to the growth in the number of electoral lists from 77 in 2018 to 103 in 2022 (Jouhari, 2022). The majority of these parties, traditionally referred to as "alternative" or "reformist" forces, set out to develop reform programs for key sectors, including the economy, healthcare, infrastructure, and education. A mere number of these newly constructed parties took decisions to make changes on the banking sectors, especially after its collapse, and demanded the protection of depositors and reforming the financial restructuring. Remarkably, though, only four of fifteen main alternative lists identified Hezbollah disarmament as an urgent, short-term policy priority, and that suggests a

strategic de-emphasizing of contentious geopolitical issues in favor of domestic socioeconomic reform (Jouhari, 2022).

These parties opposed openly Lebanon's long-standing political elite, criticizing traditional sectarian parties for decades of clientelism and the concentration of power. Their agendas had a tendency to put obvious livelihood issues e.g., access to affordable housing, healthcare, and service delivery on the agenda, positioning themselves as pragmatic actors offering citizen-oriented governance proposals. Yet the ability of these forces to translate reformist rhetoric into electoral support was significantly constrained by structural and systemic obstacles.

One of the main reasons was the deep rooting of the traditional parties in the institutions and amongst citizens. Most of them, were noticed to have a stable and consistent representation in local government institutions, like municipalities and village councils, for more than six decades. This historical embeddedness provided them not just exposure but also infrastructural benefits that opposition parties lacked, especially in underrepresented and rural areas. In other cases, such as in Beirut I and South II electoral districts, opposition party events were met by intimidation and compelled to be canceled following confrontations with political opponents (Chehayeb, 2022). Even when events were permitted, they were modest compared to the large campaign events, banquets, and rallies organized by establishment parties.

The media culture also supported this landscape. In their normal orientation, Lebanese television channels are highly sectarian and politicized (El-Richani, 2013). Thus, it was a limitation for independent candidates to appear in those channels, in addition to the high cost of it, which made them rely heavily on social media channels primarily, an important but yet unequal platform in Lebanese electoral politics.

Another critical barrier to the success of the reformist front was internal disintegration. The inability of substitute forces to put forward united electoral lists originated from divergent ideological stands and strategic differences, most significantly on Hezbollah weapons, the use of support from veteran political parties such as Kataeb, and discussions regarding list composition. As a result, the election scene was overcrowded: in 14 of 15 Lebanese districts, three or more separate lists were competing (Jouhari, 2022). This dilution of the opposition votes greatly jeopardized the overall performance of the reformist camp by preventing opposition votes from being consolidated, which would have earned them more parliamentary seats if unified lists had been formed.

Despite the emergence of reformist parties and their great hope to form a new Lebanese political life, they were diminished by the harsh truth of persistent structural marginalization, resource shortage, media disqualification, and fragmentation within. The continuous failure is a hard proof of the historic durability of Lebanon's sectarian-political machinery and highlight the problems of mobilizing protest energy into organizational electoral strategy within a confessional consociational system.

### ***6.5.2. Shifts in Power***

Lebanese citizens cast their votes on May 15, 2022, to elect 128 Members of Parliament for new four-year terms. To everyone's surprise, the most noticeable outcome of these elections, is that for the first time, Lebanon's largest Christian party in the parliament was claimed by the Lebanese Forces instead of the Free Patriotic Movement, a Hezbollah ally (Jalabi, 2022). This event was a surprise for the usual internal political representation of Christians within parliament. On the Contrary, Hezbollah and its allies lost hold of the parliamentary majority, falling short of the 65-seat threshold to dominate decision-making venues on their own (The National, 2022).

Despite these shifts, the prospects of a unified opposition to determine a legislative agenda or a government are uncertain. Professionals in the field predict that the new parliament shall be hugely divided, making the legislative functionality hard to achieve and limited to pass critical reforms. The fluid nature of parliamentary blocs and the absence of any stable and persistence blocs also contribute to this dilemma, resulting in insufficient direct comparison that happen before elections.

One major change in the electoral environment, was the absence of the Future movement, which was one of the biggest mainstream Sunni political forces that had great effect in past elections. This decision of not participating in the elections was made by the Previous Prime Minister Saad Hariri. This absence and withdrawal essentially reshaped the Sunni political landscape and opened space for other actors to appear (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2022).

The FPM, which had succeeded in the 2018 elections when it had alliances with locally dominant candidates, did not follow the same coalition policy in 2022. Even though the FPM had previously secured 29 seats (see Figure 6), the bloc itself was not secure in its parliamentary behavior, and this lack of policymaking consistency was evident in the latest results.

Party	2018	2022	Seat change
Future Movement*	20	7	↓13
Lebanese Forces + allies	15	21	↑6
Kataeb	3	5	↑2
Progressive Socialist Party + allies	9	8	↓1
Independents	6	15	↑9
Civil society/Opposition	1	13	↑12
Free Patriotic Movement + allies	29	18	↓11
Tachnag**		3	↑3
Marada Movement	6	2	↓4
Amal	17	15	↓2
Pro-Hezbollah independents and allies	15	8	↓7
Hezbollah	13	13	0

**Figure 6** Lebanese Parliament results 2018 vs 2022

Source: The National, 2022

Above all, perhaps, the 2022 elections ushered into parliament a new generation of opposition MPs who are directly connected with the 2019 protest movement. The reformist legislators went to parliament with a mandate to campaign for accountability, which was at the heart of the October 17 uprising. Their presence, although numerically insignificant, is a potential shift towards a more pluralist and citizen-focused legislative discourse, even in a thoroughly consociational and crisis-ridden system.

## 6.6. Conclusion

All in all, Lebanon's post-Syrian withdrawal elections from 2005 to 2022 demonstrate that Syria's departure did not produce the democratic transformation widely anticipated. On each cycle of the elections, it was always revealed that what is maintained is the manipulation in terms of electoral laws, patronage network, and consociational structures. Even significant popular mobilizations or uprisings were limited by institutional barriers that prioritized elite consensus.

This highlights a crucial lesson for post-conflict peacebuilding: elections alone cannot transform divided societies without addressing underlying structural problems. The state of negative peace in Lebanon cannot be surmounted solely through elections. Indeed, Lebanon's electoral processes have served more to legitimize existing arrangements than to enable genuine democratic change. While the 2022 elections brought twelve reformist MPs to parliament, their limited impact suggests that meaningful reform requires more than simple elections; a true infrastructure for peace needs to restructure political institutions and move beyond the patronage systems that sustain sectarian divisions.

## **Chapter 7: Cutting the Levers: A Via Negativa Plan for Elections in Lebanon**

Since the Taëf agreement, Lebanon has experimented with multiple electoral systems: majoritarian, proportional representation, small and large districts, both under Syrian influence and after its withdrawal. However, every time, the political competition was predetermined by the design of maps and procedures, resulting in the same ruling order after each election. The Taëf Accord's consociational framework, while ending the civil war, institutionalized sectarian power-sharing mechanisms that operate as underlying "levers" or control devices beneath any electoral system. These levers, including sectarian quotas, confessional districting, and elite networks that transcend formal electoral rules, were designed to preserve the same political order. Scholars have observed that the electoral evolution that happened post-war mirrored a broader pattern of path dependence, where the institutional reforms are shaped by entrenched sectarian and clientelist logics (Makdisi & El-Khalil, 2013). If an alteration in the election system doesn't affect the results, then the task lies in a different way: identify and remove these deeper structural levers that make any electoral system reproduce identical results. That is the logic of Via Negativa in this chapter. Rather than adding new reforms, it suggests systematically eliminating the hidden mechanisms that predetermine outcomes regardless of surface-level electoral changes. The experiences in divided societies proved that mechanisms of shared powers, while stabilizing conflict initially, result in solidifying the elite dominance unless accompanied by strong accountability institutions (Lijphart, 2008; Reilly, 2001).

### **7.1. Method- Via Negativa in Electoral Design**

Via Negativa is defined by: the designing by subtraction, which means instead of chasing a flawless electoral system, it sheds light on identifying and removing the flaws, distortions, and loopholes that are the main cause of system malfunction. The approach is generated from a wider philosophical lineage emphasizing the value of eliminating what is wrong rather than inventing what is ideal. Many modern thinkers clarified this perspective, among them are: Amartya Sen, Karl Popper, Nassim Nicholas Taleb, and Isaiah Berlin.

For Amartya Sen, justice is achieved by removing clear wrongs. Sen argues that the progression towards justice is not by perfecting systems but by shedding light on concrete injustices visible in the real world (Sen, 2009). Sen contrasts a "realization-focused, comparative" approach with "transcendental institutionalism," the search for a fully just order.

Public reasoning then helps societies decide which concrete injustices to reduce now (Sen, 2009). Following this path, Via Negativa in elections aligns with Sen: we don't need to design the best system to act; instead, we start by subtracting practices that clearly degrade fairness, such as gerrymandering, vote-buying, or unequal campaign access. In Sen's opinion, each society identifies and prioritizes such removals.

For Karl Popper, reforms are done in small and testable steps. Popper warns against grand social redesigns and advocates "piecemeal social engineering": small, reversible changes whose effects can be monitored and corrected. It also can be defined as a utopian social design (Popper, 2012). This logic fits election rules: bright-line bans, short deadlines, and simple procedures are easier to test and enforce than sweeping overhauls of the whole system (Zalta, 2012). The via negative spirit is seen in preferring incremental subtractions of dysfunction over total reinvention.

For Nassim Nicholas Taleb, robustness is created through subtraction. Taleb's "*Antifragile*" theory makes a practical and complex observation: in uncertain systems, you often gain more by removing known sources of harm than by layering on new interventions; Via Negativa. Applying the view on elections, that means cutting the levers that predictably skew competition, like late administrative changes, campaign use of state resources, and security overreach. As result, the system becomes less fragile to manipulation (Taleb, 2012). The aim is to simplify and stabilize the system and not to create perfect complexity.

For Isaiah Berlin the Via Negativa shows in the idea of freedom from interference. To the electoral purpose, Berlin provides a crucial philosophical anchor by differentiating between negative and positive liberty (Berlin, 1969). In this context, what is needed as a first stage is Negative liberty, which is defined by breaking free from interference, particularly that of the state or coercive authorities. In this sense, creating elections by using the method of subtraction aims to be far from interference, manipulation, or portion capture. The objective is quite essential: safeguarding autonomy within the electoral process rather than prescribing an idealized vision of collective self-rule (Zalta, 2012).

Thus, Berlin's differentiation provides a philosophical anchor by clarifying that democratic elections are not only about safeguarding individuals from interference (negative liberty) but also about creating conditions for active participation and self-realization (positive liberty). Recognizing this duality helps in designing and evaluating electoral systems to ensure

they promote both the freedom from coercion and the capacity for meaningful political engagement.

Together, the above-mentioned scholars propose a modest, workable method: focus on clear removals (Sen, 2009), do them in small, checkable steps (Zalta, 2012), expect more robustness from subtraction than addition (Taleb, 2012), and define fairness as freedom from targeted interference (Zalta, 2012). Broadly speaking, this Via Negativa approach prioritizes eliminating identifiable barriers and distortions rather than constructing new institutional mechanisms that might introduce unforeseen complications. Its framework argues that electoral reform should focus on eliminating identifiable distortions, instead of just making up new institutional mechanisms that may be a door to new vulnerabilities. The next paragraphs operationalize this philosophy into “cannot” rules and protective firewalls that take into consideration administration, security media, and other techniques. Whatever Electoral laws Lebanon decides to use, by adopting a Via negative approach, it will function with greater integrity and fairness in practice.

## **7.1. Structural Firewalls: Systemic Subtractions**

We start by noting three separations that any electoral formula needs if it is to behave fairly: the first is to separate money from the state, the second is to separate administration from campaign, and the third is to separate security from politics. These separations prevent the overlapping of power, resources, and coercion that distort electoral competition. As mentioned in Chapters 5 and 6, those lines repeatedly cycled during the Lebanese Elections; here we turn those lessons into short “cannot” rules that can be used to legislate or issue by directive.

### ***7.1.1. Money-state Firewall***

In the post-Taëf cycles, the state-campaign boundary was left open by legal windows, which were periods when ordinary government activity continued without any pre-election freeze. In practice, this meant ministers could still authorize discretionary transfers, procurement variations, hiring/promotions, and project roll-outs right up to election day (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2018). We noted this earlier as the “use of public resources for political ends”, embedded in a broader clientelist economy; the effect was to convert routine administrative discretion into campaign leverage.

This overlap enabled what the researchers define as the use of public resources for political ends. They describe it as a hallmark of the clientelist systems where political elites turn the capacity of the state into a patronage (Leenders, 2012; Cammett, 2014). The 1990s reconstruction push (debt-financed infrastructure, real estate, and public works) supplied a steady stream of ribbon-cuttings and project announcements that doubled as political stages, events covered by loyal media and tied to candidate lists. The Hariri-era economic model amplified this visibility, linking public works to electoral branding; campaigns increasingly ran through television and owned media, which magnified the symbolism of “delivery” before the vote.

On the ground, this blurred line fed an everyday patronage ecology. Networks distributed jobs, contracts, cash, and in-kind goods through intermediaries; vote-buying and service promises were normalized, especially in large multi-member districts where seat-sharing deals were pre-negotiated. We traced how these practices turned elections into a marketplace for influence and immunity, with parliament “packed with allied business figures”. Despite “reform” cycles, Chapter 6 shows their persistence after 2005. After all, those parliamentary seats became the base of the business and sectarian elites who are interdependent on their financial and political resources (El-Husseini, 2015).

After Syria’s withdrawal, the pattern adapted rather than disappeared. The 2017 law’s proportional veneer did not weaken clientelism; 2018 recorded unprecedented candidate numbers but “did not translate into a meaningful transfer of power,” explicitly prevailing the persistence of patronage networks (Salloukh, 2019). In other words, without a ban window and real-time transparency, the same incentives reasserted themselves under new legal packaging.

A robust money-state firewall might have great implications. It can make huge impacts on the incentives that drive the election campaigns. During the election window, anything that used to serve as campaign theater: discretionary transfers, ribbon-cuttings, emergency “variations” to contracts, last-minute hiring and promotions, simply stops. The state still functions (salaries paid, essential services delivered), but the extra steps that turned routine discretion into electoral leverage are off the table. In other words, the same mechanisms we described in earlier chapters (legal windows for spending, highly publicized inaugurations, and everyday patronage) no longer convert public office into an incumbent advantage. That is the point of “quiet periods” used elsewhere. Brazil prohibits candidates from appearing at public works inaugurations in the last three months, with sanctions under the Tribunal Superior

Electoral (Da Ros & Taylor, 2022). Mexico suspends government propaganda during campaigns with narrow health/safety exceptions. Moreover, India's Model Code of Conduct bars ads at public expense and restricts ad-hoc appointments once the code is in force. These modes of strategies create a crystal-clear separation that are both temporal and procedural between the governments and the campaigns, an approach that is not observed in Lebanon's current system.

Practically, by applying the money-state firewall in Lebanon, four things that matter in Lebanon's context could be achieved. First, it interrupts the symbolic economy of elections that was created after the Taëf, and that was used in the 1990s, where the reconstruction cycle made inaugurations and project announcements part of the campaign script. With a ban on window, there is nothing to inaugurate in the final stretch, and the media cannot amplify state-funded spectacle on behalf of candidates. The "delivery" storyline that Chapter 5 links to the Hariri-era model loses its pre-election stagecraft, because it makes campaigns challenge each other in terms of long-term vision rather than to show the short-term services they have to offer for the people (Cammett, 2014; Salloukh, 2019). Second, it narrows the clientelist pipeline because last-minute transfers, jobs, and procurement tweaks are barred, and intermediaries (contractors, local brokers, service notables) have fewer goods to trade for votes. We showed how these exchanges persisted in 1996 and 2000 and then adapted after 2005; the firewall removes the supply that feeds that demand. In the 2018 "reform" cycle, the persistence of patronage networks despite proportional rules is exactly the kind of outcome this subtraction is meant to prevent. A strict spending freeze, done with transparent legislation, targets this continuity directly. Third, it flips the burden of proof. Instead of citizens having to prove an abuse, any discretionary act inside the window becomes presumptively impermissible unless it meets a narrow essential services test and is pre-cleared and published (with reasons) within 24 hours, including justification and documentation. That makes enforcement administratively simple: auditors and observers look for a short, public paper trail rather than chase rumors across ministries. This directly answers the opacity described earlier around transfers and hiring in the run-up to voting. Such a system is bounded by the pre-election transfers and procurements in Lebanon's ministries. Fourth and last implication, the money-state firewall creates measurable compliance. Because the firewall pairs ban with real-time e-disclosure (donations above a low threshold within 48 hours; weekly aggregate spending reports), the public record itself becomes a deterrent. Analysts (and campaigns) can watch the same dashboards and flag anomalies before election day, not months later when remedies are subject

to debate and dispute, as is the case in Lebanon. This corrects the “after-the-fact” problem in prior cycles where finance and state-resource issues surfaced without timely effect. To lower political resistance, the firewall carves out neutral continuity: salaries and already-contracted works continue; emergency exceptions are limited to narrowly defined threats to life, health, and critical infrastructure, certified by the Civil Service Board and post-audited. That balance keeps government running while removing exactly the campaign-use levers Chapters 5 and 6 identify (legal windows; inaugurations; last-mile patronage). Finally, the firewall ties into fast remedies elsewhere in the chapter. If a ministry violates the ban, the Electoral Management Body (EMB) can order immediate equalization (e.g., equivalent neutral airtime or a corrective announcement), refer spending for recovery (International IDEA, 2021).

### ***7.1.2. Administration - Election firewall***

Across the post-Taëf cycles, the administrative core of election management remained close to day-to-day government and to the security apparatus, undermining neutrality and public trust. The Ministry of Interior retained operational control over elections and was entangled with the Syrian-Lebanese security network; this proximity created room to steer logistics, filter candidates, and time procedural tweaks at sensitive moments. For instance, under the Interior Minister Michel Murr, as a routine there were logistical arrangements aligned with political imperatives rather than logic that tend to be administrative (Traboulsi, 2012). The latter is what Chapter 5 discusses; the elections of the year 2000. This particular arrangement paved the way for the ministry to filter independent candidates, privilege pro-Syrian loyalist lists, and coordinate with security agencies to contain dissenting political movements (El-Husseini, 2015). After 2005, the pattern persisted in subtler ways. Chapter 6 shows the Ministry of Interior still at the center of reform drafts and operational decisions, while elections proceeded under inherited frameworks (the 2000 law in 2005), keeping administration politically proximate and reactive to coalition bargains rather than to neutral procedures. Many countries that place election delivery inside a ministry (the “governmental model”) face a higher risk of perceived bias; comparative guidance distinguishes this from the “independent model,” which places operations in an autonomous EMB. The ACE<sup>10</sup> Electoral Knowledge Network spells out these models and why independence matters for trust (ACE project). An example of the independent model is India’s Election Commission which

---

<sup>10</sup> The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network is the world's largest online community and repository of electoral knowledge ([aceproject.org](http://aceproject.org))

enhances the public trust and was able to reduce any political bias and interference (James, 2020; Birch, 2011).

A detailed administration campaign firewall usually is a success because of the alteration done on the incentives, the reduction of manipulation chances, and the detection of violations. Concretely, it can be said that it has three main roles in reinforcement. First, it freezes appointments & transfers. When postings can change mid-stream, neutrality is at risk. India's Election Commission bans transfers/postings of officials connected with elections once the process begins, precisely to keep the administrative chain stable. The Philippines similarly prohibits transfers or details of civil servants during the election period without COMELEC approval (Election Code of the Philippines, n.d.). This is also actively enforced by the COMELEC guidance (Mata, 2025). Similar to what Chapter 4 enclosed, when applying this technique in Lebanon, it will lead to blocking last-minute reshuffles of district administrators, police liaisons, and polling supervisors. Second, such a firewall can freeze core rules. Late procedural alterations are a classic way to tilt the field or sow confusion. The Venice Commission's Code of Good Practice and its 2024 interpretative declaration recommend that the fundamental elements of electoral law not be changed in the year before an election; the well-known "one-year rule" (Venice Commission Council of Europe Strasbourg, 2025). OSCE/ODIHR's legal framework guidance echoes this stability principle (OSCE, 2013). In *Lebanon, this firewall* can take last-minute procedural circulars and "technical fixes" off the table, so operational rules cannot be tuned to current coalitions. Previous chapters show how such discretion interacted with gerrymandered districts to shape outcomes. Another procedure can be adopted, which is publishing the chain of evidence (materials and results). Where every seal number, time stamp, and carrier ID is logged and posted quickly, the value of informal influence collapses. Comparative practice now treats chain evidence as a basic integrity control; see the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's concise best-practice guide (US Election Assistance Commission, 2021). Courts have shown how failures here can be fatal: in Kenya (2017), the Supreme Court annulled the presidential election, citing non-compliance in results transmission and documentation (Form 34A/34B handling), pushing the EMB to tighten custody and verification (Republic of Kenya, 2017).

The impact of this firewall on Lebanon is a transformation into a publicly verified record that can be done by adding digitized, time-stamped custody logs and rapid publication of intermediate tallies after it clearly tended to be an inside domain logistics. In countries where

administrative independence is a baseline, where election bodies are structurally autonomous, these rules are easier to enforce. Mexico's INE is a constitutional autonomous body that runs federal elections<sup>11</sup>, while South Africa's IEC is entrenched in the Constitution as independent and tasked to ensure free and fair elections. These designs institutionalize the firewall we are describing. The history of elections in Lebanon shows how operational discretion, appointments, procedural circulars, and opaque logistics reliably bent competition. The firewall removes those levers: no personnel moves that touch election delivery, no late rule changes and visible custody for materials and results. These are not exotic ideas; they are off-the-shelf standards drawn from comparative practice and international guidance, adapted to Lebanon's specific weak points. The reform path in Lebanon can be staged, beginning with the first step, binding freeze windows, real-time disclosure rules, and a mandated chain of custody protocol. After that, building a fuller EMB autonomy so these rules are enforced by an institutionally insulated actor. This hybrid sequencing reduces political blowback while delivering tangible integrity gains.

### ***7.1.3. Security- Politics firewall***

Across the post-Taëf cycles, election security sat inside a political chain of command. Security and intelligence services vetted candidates, pressured withdrawals, and coordinated list-making with the Ministry of Interior, especially in the 1992 and 1996 elections, where the "security file" functioned as an extension of electoral engineering rather than a neutral safeguard. Chapter 5 traces how General Security and Military Intelligence, under de facto Syrian direction, were actively monitoring the political responses and participations according to their specific loyalties (El-Husseini, 2015; Traboulsi, 2012); it also shows the Ministry of Interior's tight coordination with security agencies to manage districts and logistics. Even when overt tutelage receded, the proximity remained. Chapter 5 notes continued behind-the-scenes pressure by Lebanese-Syrian security channels in 2000; Chapter 6 chronicles that, after 2005, reform drafts still left election operations close to interior and security actors, while intimidation and threats against opposition figures persisted around later cycles. Reports from the LADE and the European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) observed some notable intimidations and threats against opponents in elections during 2009 and 2018. This can be a result of persistent coercive habits beyond the Syrian Direction (EUEOM, 2018; LADE, 2019). Analyzing how this resembles elsewhere, comparative practice warns that when

---

<sup>11</sup> Constitutional autonomous body ran federal elections reforms from IFE to INE in 2014,

policing of elections is operationally or symbolically tied to the government of the day, perceptions of bias spike. International guidance, therefore, stresses neutrality, minimal and clearly delimited presence at polling places, and joint planning with the election authority and not with the ministry in charge of policing (OSCE). On the other hand, some created democracies tend to separate election-related security into independently or jointly managed mechanisms under the authority of an autonomous EMB.

This security firewall works for Lebanon because it builds a vision between public order and political control, which anchors transparency and neutrality in the electoral security. During the Election window (D-30 to E+1)<sup>12</sup>, the firewall comes into operation to align with comparative democracies and recommendations. The measurement related to this firewall includes different steps. One of them is to have perimeter-only policing with no firearms in polling rooms.

Security officers secure the outside perimeter and enter a polling station only at the presiding officer's request (or in an immediate threat), and they carry no firearms inside voting areas. This standard reduces voter intimidation while keeping rapid response one call away. Following is a series of countries that operationalize this with ringed perimeters and clear do/don't lists for officers. One of them is Nigeria, where "On no account" should personnel at the inner ring of polling places be assigned lethal weapons; police at polling units are not to carry firearms (The Nigeria Police Force, 2019). Another example is India, where Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) hold the door/perimeter; if local police must be used, they are positioned out of line-of-sight of the polling room to avoid the appearance of interference. Escorts and strong-room guarding are standardized post-poll (Sadan, 2023). As per OSCE/ODIHR guidance, security must protect rights and not chill assembly, expression, or equal competition; neutrality and proportionality are baseline (OSCE, 2017). Another practice is found in the UK, where Returning Officers plan venue security with police and focus on perimeter checks, threat mitigation, and disruption avoidance, and not a routine police presence inside the polling room (The Electoral Commission, 2021). In Lebanon's case, and in contrast to what was shown in the previous examples, certain policies would break with the legacy of the interior-based deployments as visible reminders of political surveillance that, historically, discouraged participation by opposition voters.

---

<sup>12</sup> D-(number) refers to how many days before elections while E+(number) refers to how many days after

Another measurement related to this firewall includes establishing one chain of command anchored to the election authority. During the window, deployments, movement orders, and incident response routes are jointly planned in advance with the election authority (not the interior minister's office). This cuts opportunities for selective redeployments or orders that favor a slate. OSCE/ODIHR recommends early joint planning with the EMB, clear delineation of responsibilities, and documented chains of command aligned to assigned roles (OSCE, 2017). India and Nigeria publish explicit operational manuals for election duty that define who commands what (e.g., CAPF company commanders or designated ground commanders) and how they interact with election officials (Sadan, 2023). In the Lebanese practice, this underlying legislation prevents the Lebanese "Backchannel" orders from senior officials to redeploy security in strategic districts or delay materials in opposition areas (El-Husseini, 2015).

Another measurement related to this firewall includes having visible documentation, like deployment maps, incident logs, and custody hand-offs. Additionally, a basic public pack should be published online and at D-7, including: lists, station-by-station deployment, hotline numbers, and a simple incident log format. After polls, escorts to strong-rooms and guarding of results centers are logged the same way. Transparency here shrinks the space for rumor and helps observers verify neutrality. The OSCE/ODIHR highlights incident mapping, documentation, and post-election reviews to strengthen trust and accountability (OSCE, 2017). India operationalizes escorting, strong-room guarding, and sector patrols with written checklists and maps (Sadan, 2023). UK materials similarly emphasize venue security plans, perimeters, and liaison, with written checklists for Returning Officers (The Electoral Commission, 2021). In the Lebanese context, the opaque "security file" is transformed into a verifiable chain of actions, shrinking the gray zone where informal influence once thrived.

Being able to apply these three rules in Lebanon will make a change in the local context behavior for different reasons. First, they will remove the signal of partisan force at the place of voting, which previous chapters show has historically amplified perceptions of control and discouraged challengers. They will also make any attempted interference procedurally visible (orders must travel through a published chain with logs), converting soft pressure into verifiable paperwork (OSCE, 2017). And they will allow fast, neutral response to real risks (crowd control, tampering, or violence) without turning security presence into campaign

theater. Comparative experience shows this balance is feasible when roles are mapped, firearms are restricted at the inner ring, and coordination is routinized (The Nigeria Police Force, 2019).

## **7.2. Competition Subtractions**

The field of competition after Taëf rewarded those who could mix public office, business money, and media access, while independents faced high barriers. Chapters 5 and 6 show how this pattern held in the 1990s under tutelage and then adapted after 2005, even under the 2017 PR law and the crowded 2018 ballot, power barely shifted. Furthermore, the redrawing of the borders of a district was able to preserve the sectarian majority and put limitations on the capacity of independent or cross-sectarian candidates to compete effectively (Civil Society Knowledge Centre, 2025.). The approach in this section is subtractive: taking away the levers that make any formula behave the same.

### ***7.2.1. Eligibility and Incompatibilities***

Across the post-Taëf cycles, candidacy rules allowed powerful actors to campaign from inside the state or while controlling media and regulated rents. Chapter 5 traces how a new class of business-political figures, often tied to reconstruction and media ownership, moved into parliament and government, while candidate lists were curated through security-political brokerage; vote-buying, late withdrawals, and list choreography became a normal repertoire. Chapter 6 shows that even the 2017 PR law (15 districts with a caza-bound preferential vote) did not change this logic: 2018 registered record candidacies, including many independents and women, yet produced little transfer of power, with sectarian quotas, district design, and resource asymmetries preserving current advantage. In the case of Lebanon, opacity is still around the political financing, with the observation of huge bias on the media coverage related to ruling blocs (Freedom House, 2018). Putting it simply: when ministers, governors, regulators, security chiefs, judges, and media owners can run without stepping away from those posts, the campaign is conducted on unequal footing. Previous chapters show how this fusion of public office, money, and media visibility repeatedly reproduced the same elite order before and after 2005.

By adopting the same via negative rule that was explained before, three levers that make any electoral formula behave the same can be removed in the Lebanese context. The first one is the continuous incumbency with no pause; the second is running from powerful public posts, and the third is campaigning while controlling media/regulatory hubs. The instrument is a short

set of cooling-off and incompatibility rules that force a clean separation between state power (or media power) and candidacy during the election window.

In order to deal with these levers, some strategies can be used. One of them is cooling-off and term rhythm, which means an MP can run to a two-consecutive-term cap, followed by one full term out before running again, which keeps renewal alive without destabilizing experience. Comparative practice shows that legislative term limits exist in several systems (e.g., historically Mexico prohibited immediate re-election to Congress; the 2014 reform capped consecutive re-election, still a rhythm that prevents indefinite entrenchment), while places like the Philippines limit House members to three consecutive terms. The point is not to copy a model, but to interrupt permanent incumbency that the previous chapters show is reinforced by patronage and media leverage.

Another strategy that can be used is the resign-to-run principle, which means that senior public officials should step down well before nominations. The principle is widely used. Brazil's *desincompatibilização* regime (Complementary Law 64/1990) makes many public agents ineligible unless they resign within set months (often 6 months) before the vote; the Philippines' Omnibus Election Code treats appointive officials as ipso facto resigned upon filing a certificate of candidacy (a doctrine repeatedly upheld by the Supreme Court). These rules exist to stop office-holders from wielding administrative visibility, staff, procurements, or regulatory discretion as campaign assets (Tribunal Superior Eleitora, 1990).

Other principles should take into consideration incompatibilities & conflicts of interest. During the sensitive period, a candidate (or sitting MP) should not simultaneously hold executive or regulatory public office, sit on boards of state-owned or heavily regulated firms, or control licensed broadcasters. Comparative democracies do this in different ways: France, for example, ended the classic *cumul des mandats*, making a deputy's mandate incompatible with executive local office (2014 organic law, in force since 2017); the UK's House of Commons Disqualification Act lists offices whose holders are barred from being MPs. At the level of principles, the OECD's conflict-of-interest guidelines benchmark how to separate private control from public decisions, and OSCE/ODIHR–Venice Commission guidance supports reasonable, non-discriminatory eligibility limits to protect fairness.

Below are some model clauses that can be added to any electoral law:

- Term rhythm: “No person shall serve more than two consecutive terms as Member of Parliament. A full term must elapse before standing again.”
- Resign to run: “The following must resign not later than six (6) months before the close of nominations: Ministers and Deputy-Ministers; Governors, Qaimaqams, and Mayors; Directors-General and heads of public agencies and state-owned enterprises; members of independent commissions and sector regulators; judges and prosecutors; active-duty officers and heads of security and intelligence services.”
- Incompatibilities (while in office): “A sitting MP may not simultaneously hold: (i) any executive/administrative office in central or local government; (ii) a board/management post in a state-owned enterprise or licensed utility; (iii) a party executive office while chairing a parliamentary committee.”
- Media & regulators cooling-off: “Any person who, in the twelve (12) months before nominations, held control in a licensed broadcaster or a decision-making role in a regulator shall be ineligible unless such interests are divested or placed in a blind trust certified by the competent authority.”
- Interests’ transparency: “All candidates shall file a beneficial-ownership and interests statement upon nomination; misrepresentation is grounds for exclusion and criminal referral.”

These subtractions can have a considerable impact on the whole electoral procedure as it lowers the office-based advantage that previous chapters describe. Ministers and senior officials cannot campaign with the megaphone of office; regulators and SOE directors cannot signal favors to donors; media owners cannot command screen time while seeking votes. They also reduce gate-keeping pressure: when security chiefs and governors must step aside months ahead of nominations, the informal influence Chapter 5 documents have fewer levers to pull during list formation. Some of the important research argues that such a period of cooling-off reduces the incumbency advantage, especially in regimes where the resources are often used as weapons for gains in elections (Gandhi et al., 2020).

Comparative experience points the same way. Resign-to-run regimes (Brazil; Philippines) are designed precisely to take administrative discretion off the campaign table. Incompatibility regimes (France’s ban on dual mandates; UK disqualification lists) stop people from wearing two hats in the sensitive period. International guidance (OSCE/ODIHR–Venice Commission; ACE Project) treats reasonable eligibility limits and conflict-of-interest controls

as compatible with the right to stand when they are clear, non-discriminatory, and aimed at protecting equal competition, exactly what we do here (Tribunal Superior Eleitora, 1990). The parallel work done with the global principles of electoral integrity gives strength to the domestic legitimacy and international credibility (Norris, 2014).

Applying these substructions in Lebanon, will have a meaningful impact on the whole electoral process. With early resignation and a short cooling-off, visibility, networks and resources acquired in office are less convertible into campaign advantage. Independents and smaller lists face fewer informal vetos from those who regulate or police them and voters see a clearer line between the state and the race. The core promise of *Via Negativa* is not a perfect design, but fewer levers to manipulate across any electoral formula.

### **7.2.2. Money in politics**

From 1992 onward, electoral campaigns in Lebanon were financed and staged through opaque money, captured media, and state-adjacent resources. By 1996, this was no longer improvisation but a durable architecture: large districts and pre-fixed lists sat alongside opaque campaigns' finance, media capture, and the use of public resources for political ends, a setup that made elections regular but predictable and tilted toward those already wired into power and capital. These patterns can be seen in other regimes, where reconstruction capitals and political authority became mutually reinforcing (Heydemann, 2004; Leenders, 2012).

The postwar reconstruction economy fused business and politics. Chapter 5 shows how a new class of contractors, financiers, and media owners entered parliament, most visibly around the prime minister Hariri's project, converting public procurement, advertising, and TV exposure into electoral reach. Campaigning was professionalized on television, but the access to screens and sponsorship followed ownership and alliances, not parity. The nexus of the media-politics resulted in informational asymmetry, mainly due to outlets acting as partisan amplifiers rather than being watchdogs (Kraidy, 2016). This results in the limitations of media diversity and puts a line between news and political marketing. In parallel, state resources (transfers, hiring, contract variations, ribbon-cuttings) remained available in the run-up to voting, letting officeholders monetize visibility and networks at precisely the sensitive moment. The result was a marketplace for influence and immunity, not a level contest.

Money also moved through clientelist pipelines. The elections of 2000 detail vote-buying via intermediaries, “service” promises, and last-minute withdrawals brokered with pressure or inducements. These were tactics that redistributed funds and favors where margins were tight. Without transparency or enforceable caps, these flows were untraceable to the public and decisive in close districts. After Syria’s withdrawal, the above logic was adapted rather than disappeared. Chapter 5 shows that despite procedural changes (2005, 2009), resource asymmetries persisted, and under the 2017 law, proportionality was undone by district design and quotas so that even a record of 976 candidates in 2018, including 113 women and many non-aligned lists and individuals, did not translate into a meaningful transfer of power. Money, media, and organizational reach are still mapped onto the old networks, confirming that formula change without finance reform leaves outcomes largely intact. Scholars describe the latter as “Formalistic Democratization”, where the institutional engineering can go through without any change in how the campaign is distributed resource-wise or regarding media access (Carothers, 2002).

The previous chapters also note external funding currents shaping narratives and capacities (e.g., Gulf/Western backing on one side, Iran/Syria on the other in 2009), reinforcing the point that source rules matter: without clean-money requirements, foreign or state-linked capital can amplify structural bias rather than widen participation.

Taken together, the record shows that who pays, how fast we see it, and what the state can do during the campaign determine the real field of play. Where donations are hidden, sources are unrestricted, spending is uncapped, and public resources remain in motion, officials and aligned blocs can buy visibility, bargain defections, and drown out challengers, whatever electoral formula sits on paper. Procedural fairness will remain illusory unless a reform happens to make synchronized rules on campaign finance and the use of state resources (Nassmacher, 2009).

### ***7.2.3. Media Symmetry and Access***

After the Taëf, control over television and major outlets became a core electoral resource. Chapter 5 shows how campaigns professionalized on TV: Hariri’s bloc led with polished, well-funded advertising and branding while many independents lacked comparable access. Coverage and messaging power tracked ownership and alliances, not parity, and list choreography often moved in tandem with friendly media narratives. This transformation

mirrored a global tendency to go to more “mediated politics”, where the communication is dependent on the gatekeeping power of private broadcasters (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999). In Lebanon, however, this particular mediation was filtered through a sectarian ownership map, transforming channels into equipment for factional loyalty. This was not just about paid spots. In the period between 1996 and 2000, the broader information environment was repeatedly steered to favor regime-aligned coalitions. Chapter 5 notes “orchestrating media coverage favorable to loyalist blocs,” alongside vote-buying and pressured withdrawals. It was an ecosystem in which screens amplified the same actors who already benefited from district design and security brokerage. The appearance of competition in 2000 coexisted with structural manipulation through media and administration.

Post-2005, the pattern adapted rather than disappeared. Chapter 6 underlines that the media remained affiliated with old sectarian parties by ownership, while the state broadcaster lacked the mandate and capacity to level access. The chapter itself proposes that Tele Liban, the public television, should be obliged to offer equal broadcasts and debates so “voiceless” actors can reach voters, an explicit acknowledgment that unequal reach was blunting the promise of more plural competition. The recurring obstacle in hybrid democracies is seen as one of the weakness points of public broadcasting; Private stations use a technique of selective framing to sustain their patrons (Voltmer, 2013). Even the 2017 proportional law and the crowded 2018 field did not reset visibility. Chapter 6 documents how the design of districts and quotas diluted the democratizing potential of PR; within that structure, screen time and narrative control continued to flow to established lists. The record-high of 976 candidates, again, did not translate into a transfer of power; resource and media asymmetries helped keep outcomes within expected bounds.

By 2022, social media had grown, but television and big outlets still shaped the agenda and credibility of candidates. Chapter 6’s discussion of the turbulent 2019-2022 period shows how legacy media amplified bloc narratives in moments of crisis while many reformist and independent lists struggled to secure consistent exposure on prime channels. This resulted in some breakthrough seats, but no structural change in who commands the megaphones that matter most to undecided voters. Research shows that a new option of participation has opened with the digital platforms; however, this hasn’t replaced the television’s power of changing minds and opinions.

In short, previous chapters depict a stable logic across eras: when airtime, rates, and editorial frames are controlled by aligned owners, and when the public broadcaster is weak, law on paper does little. Without guaranteed minimum access, balanced news rules with teeth, and transparent pricing that others can audit, the media remains a multiplier for the same coalitions that dominate money and administration. That is the media problem that this section suggests to address.

### **7.3. Process and Adjudication Subtractions**

Elections crack when people witness a clear breach, and nothing happens quickly or in public. In Lebanon, the path to high-level review is narrow, reserved for office-holders, and most decisions arrive after the result is already a social fact. Again, this section will not propose to add a new court or another layer; instead, it suggests we apply *via negative* by removing the three things that hollow out remedies. First thing is to remove exclusive standing, which are rules that keep ordinary voters out, goes away for concrete, time-sensitive problems in the last month of the contest (illegal ads, silence breaches, missing finance disclosures, security overreach, or failure by an authority to act). Evidence shows that the procedural fairness of the public guardian decreases when legislations let only candidates or office-holders petition (Elklit & Reynolds, 2005). The second suggestion is to cut open-ended time to a single, short calendar where complaints are filed within forty-eight hours. However, delays are something inevitable and have some weakness; speed of justice remains as decisive for legitimacy as the verdict itself (Norris, 2014). The third suggestion is to remove opacity by a public e-docket that shows every filing, timestamp, order, reason, and compliance note the day it is issued.

The institutions don't change; their behavior does. The presiding officer records and reasons station-level complaints on the spot. The Supervisory Commission for Elections handles media, finance, and silence issues under the new clocks. The Shura Council (Administrative Court) handles administrative and security acts or omissions on the same timetable. And at the end of the chain, the Constitutional Council keeps its lane on constitutionality and seat validity. Same actors, fewer gates, firm clocks, and a visible record so breaches are corrected while they still matter. This is the essence of the credible remedy: timing, openness, and access rather than the new architecture.

### ***7.3.1. Eligibility and Venue for Complaints***

Under Article 19 of the Constitution, only a small circle of people (the President, the Speaker, the Prime Minister, any ten MPs, and the officially recognized religious heads) may challenge the constitutionality of laws before the Constitutional Council (CC). Ordinary voters are excluded from that doorway altogether. The CC's own site repeats this narrow access and confirms its two roles: reviewing constitutionality and deciding election disputes (Constitutional Council, 2004). For seat disputes, the CC acts as the electoral judge, but the petition belongs to candidates; a losing candidate or a declared winner in the same district only. The timeline is tight and post-result: a challenge must be filed within 30 days after official results, the reporting judges may take up to three months to prepare their report, and the CC then has one month to decide. In other words, by design, this lane works after the contest is settled in public view; it cannot halt process-time abuses as they happen (UNDP, 2018). The review after certification reflects what the international observers identify as a remedy gap; the legal challenges validate outcomes retrospectively (Elklit & Reynolds, 2005).

Before the results, complaints are dispersed. The Supervisory Commission for Elections (SCE) receives campaign-period complaints on media and finance; some administrative acts go to the Shura Council; criminal matters go to prosecutors and the Publications Court. This web exists, but it is not a clear, fast route for a voter who sees a silence breach on D-2 or security overreach at a polling place on E-day. International guidance flags exactly these gaps and stresses three requirements for credible Election Dispute Resolution (EDR): accessibility, transparency, and prompt, reasoned decisions (UNDP, 2018).

In this section, we do not suggest adding a new court. Instead, we would remove the rule that bars citizens from fixing process harms while they matter, and we would channel those complaints through bodies that already exist. During the last month of the campaign (D-30 to E+3), any voter or candidate may take a concrete, time-sensitive breach, silence violations, illegal campaigning, unbalanced coverage, missing finance disclosures, security overreach, or a failure by an authority to act, to a single appropriate front door: the SCE when the issue is media/finance/silence, and the Shura Council when the issue is an administrative or security act or omission. The presented structure mirrors jurisdictions that have no specialized electoral courts; however, seek fast correction through existing institutions (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020). At the polling station itself, the presiding officer must receive the complaint, decide it on the spot with a brief reason, and record it in the official minutes; a copy goes to a

public e-docket so the paper trail is visible the same day. This keeps the CC's constitutional and seat-validity lane intact, but removes the gate that kept citizens from stopping practical abuses in real time. It also aligns with OSCE/ODIHR's standards for EDR, open access to complaint mechanisms, visible handling, and timely, reasoned outcomes (Norris, 2014). By doing so, the actors stay the same, including the presiding officer, the SCE, the Shura Council, and, at the end, the CC. However, the exclusion of voters from the process-time lane is lifted, and their complaints are routed clearly and quickly to the body that can act within hours or days, not months. This change can alter Lebanon's EDR framework to a preventive kind after being a reactive one, thus protecting equality before results (Schedler, 2002).

### ***7.3.2. Clocks: Deadlines that Actually Bite***

In elections, time is the lever. A decision that arrives after the moment has passed is not a remedy; it's a post-mortem. Therefore, instead of adding bodies or building new procedures, this section suggests removing open-ended timelines and vague "we'll look into it" discretion, and binding the existing actors to one short, public calendar. The effectiveness of dispute resolution depends not on institutional proliferation but on the synchronization of authority, timing, and visibility (Norris, 2014; Elklit & Reynolds, 2005).

The fast calendar applies only where delay does the damage: process harms that occur between D-30 and E+3, silence breaches, illegal campaigning, unbalanced coverage, missing finance disclosures, and security overreach at or near polling sites. A complaint must be filed within forty-eight hours of the incident, so facts are fresh and no one can stall "until after the vote." Once filed, the authority with jurisdiction (the SCE when it's media/finance/silence, the Shura Council when it's an administrative or security act or omission) must issue an injunction within twenty-four hours, give reasons, and publish the order the same day on the public e-docket. If that twenty-four-hour clock expires without a decision, a narrow default clicks in automatically until a reasoned ruling arrives. In such cases, unlawful content is pulled and equal time granted, police posture reverts to perimeter-only, and the undisclosed donation is published, or ad buys are suspended. In short, inaction no longer pays; the law protects the playing field by default. This structure aligns with the international guidance that emphasizes promptness, reason-giving, and enforceability as the fundamental principles of election dispute resolution (Norris, 2014).

Substance should be decided quickly. The first instance issues a reasoned merits ruling within seven days, and a final decision follows within thirty days, so no dispute lingers past

E+30. An appeal does not wipe out time, and the injunction continues unless the appellate body replaces it with its own reasoned order within twenty-four hours. These clocks aren't theoretical; they reflect what credible systems already do at high stakes (Kenya's Supreme Court decided a nationwide presidential petition in fourteen days in 2017, including annulling the result), showing that short, binding timelines are workable when the law demands them (Weisiko, 2023). Other jurisdictions create a campaign schedule that also reflects an enhanced legitimacy rather than undermining accuracy (IDEA, 2018).

Moreover, when processes are made faster, they do not sacrifice quality or thoroughness. Instead, these quicker procedures are designed to keep the same standards of accuracy and thoroughness, ensuring that speed does not come at the expense of reliability or correctness. For the twenty-four-hour injunction, the standard is modest but real. The person requesting the injunction must show, at least initially, that there is evidence suggesting a breach or violation of rights or obligations. Additionally, the court will consider a "balance of harms" to each side. The court also will favor decisions that help maintain fairness or equality during the legal process, ensuring that one party is not unfairly harmed while the case is ongoing.

For the seven and thirty-day merit rulings, the standard requires that the evidence shows it is more likely than not that the claim or fact is true, that is, over 50% certainty. In addition, the court considers whether the issue or evidence is significant or relevant enough to warrant a remedy. The purpose of combining these standards is to ensure that any remedies or penalties are appropriate and proportionate to the actual issues and evidence in the case.

Materiality is assessed with numbers wherever possible. At a polling station, ask whether the number of affected voters (closure time multiplied by normal throughput, or the count turned away) is at least as large as the station margin; if yes, re-poll within seven days, if not, extend hours and log the violation. For media, if illegal content aired in the last ten days and the net minutes give one list more exposure than the guaranteed floor, order equal time immediately; if equalization cannot finish before E-day, continue to E+7 and quarantine the affected district's tally only where audience reach suggests a potential impact close to the district margin. For finance, a missed disclosure or overspend beyond the set trigger starts a forensic audit right away; if corrected figures would have disqualified a list or altered PR seat allocation, the seat is forfeit after the final ruling. These are predictable outcomes tied to observable thresholds, not ad-hoc improvisations. (International reviewers repeatedly criticize

systems that delay, reject on formalities, or fail to give reasons; the European Court of Human Rights has condemned exactly that pattern in different election cases.

Materiality is checked using numbers whenever possible. For example, at a polling station, the number of voters affected should be counted (like the time the station is closed multiplied by how many people normally vote, or the number turned away). If the number is at least as large as the margin between candidates, then a new poll should be held within seven days. If not, the station should stay open longer, and the violation should be recorded. For media, if illegal content was broadcast in the last ten days and the total minutes give a candidate more exposure than they are supposed to have, then equal time should be given immediately. If this can't be done before Election Day, it should be done within a week after Election Day, and only in districts where the audience size suggests the impact could affect the election margin. For finance, if there is a missed disclosure or overspending above a set limit, a detailed investigation should start right away. If correcting the numbers would change who wins or disqualify a list, then the seat is lost after the final decision. These rules are based on clear, measurable thresholds and are predictable and not made up on the spot. International experts often criticize systems that delay decisions, reject cases based on formalities, or don't give clear reasons. The European Court of Human Rights emphasized that the lack of timeliness and reasoning effectively nullifies the right to an effective remedy under Article 13 of the Convention (ECHR, 2021).

Furthermore, the procedural framework must emphasize accessibility, remediation, and transparency. A timely complaint needs a sworn statement, the time and place, the station or district code (where relevant), and whatever the complainant has at hand (a photo, clip, invoice, rate card, or a screenshot of the finance portal). If something is missing, the filer gets forty-eight hours to cure; officials can no longer bury a case with formalistic rejections. Identical complaints are consolidated under one docket number, so the twenty-four-hour clock runs once, and everyone sees the same orders. Notice to the broadcaster, ministry, or police unit is automatically sent via the e-docket; there's no paper chase that consumes the day. This kind of accessibility, transparency, and prompt reason-giving is precisely what OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission describe as baseline features of a credible election-dispute system that covers all phases of the process, not just results day (OSCE, 2020).

In addition to this, unusual cases don't stop the clock, which means that weekends and holidays don't pause deadlines. The orders can be issued based on written submissions or quick

remote hearings. If there are many violations near the end, the decision-maker might give one overall fix like sharing TV time across channels instead of fixing each problem separately, which could cause more unfairness. In real emergencies that prevent a 24-hour ruling, the default rules apply, and the judge will explain the delay the next day. Every order gives a short deadline in hours. If the deadline is missed, it's made public, starting with a warning and then possibly leading to disciplinary action. The concept behind this procedure is simple: making violations visible helps prevent them.

In this section, the via negative approach was used once again. No venues were added, nor new hierarchies invented. Instead, the two levers that made remedies meaningless were removed, and action on time was forced by the same Lebanese bodies already existent. This is also known as maximal impact for an institutional minimalism, but with certain roundabout deadlines. That is the narrow change that makes the rest of the chapter's fixes enforceable (Norris, 2014).

### ***7.3.3. Remedies: Proportional and Automatic***

This section will try to replace vague, case-by-case responses with a small set of pre-set outcomes that are proportional to the breach and automatic whenever time runs out. The logic of these responses follows international guidance that suggests that dispute bodies should provide prompt, reasoned, and effective redress, not formalistic answers that arrive after the political moment has passed (Norris, 2014).

Starting with the polling place, if a station is closed or disrupted, the goal is to restore voting, not to write reports so what is needed is to extend the voting hours by the amount lost. If the number of affected voters plausibly matches or exceeds the station margin, a re-poll is ordered within the week. That is a proportionate response (repair the exact piece of the process that broke) and it is effective because it protects the equality of the vote in the unit actually harmed. Comparable standards frame this as the essence of election remedies, which is correcting the error at the lowest level that protects rights, and do it fast with reasons on the record (OSCE, 2020).

On another note, media violations require speed and symmetry. If a broadcaster breaches the silence period or tilts coverage in a way that breaks the balance rule, the remedy is on-air correction plus equal time within twenty-four hours. When the breach happens so late that equalization cannot finish before election day, it continues into the first days after the vote, and in very close contests, the affected score can be temporarily quarantined until the

equalization is complete. This approach combines fairness by bringing things into balance instead of just punishing someone unfairly. It also makes sure that there is something real to address or discuss, meaning there is a clear, concrete issue that can be handled or enforced. International practice insists that media and campaign remedies should be timely, reasoned, and visible to the public; otherwise, they are not meaningful (OSCE, 2020).

Regarding the financial breaches, it is suggested that they are handled on two tracks. If a required disclosure is missing or a source rule is broken, the SCE orders publication of the missing entry or suspends further ad buys and starts a forensic audit. If the corrected figures show an overspend or illegal money that would have changed eligibility or seat allocation, the penalty escalates to seat loss. This sequence follows the guidance on party financing, which recommends a fair and proportionate approach to enforcement. It suggests beginning with steps to improve transparency and ensure rules are followed. Only if the violation is serious enough to significantly affect the results or meet legal standards should enforcement escalate to penalties, such as losing a mandate or position. This step-by-step process aims to address issues fairly and only impose harsher measures when truly necessary (OSCE, 2020).

As for the security overreach, it is treated as a reversible posture, not a political question. If police or security services are inside the voting space or visibly influencing voters, the default remedy is a perimeter-only posture with a written log of entry and exit. If the order is ignored, the public docket records non-compliance, and the incident escalates as a disciplinary fault. Again, this is proportionate to the harm and effective because it is immediate and visible. Guidance on dispute resolution stresses that remedies must be practical; they must change conduct, not just declare a principle (Venice Commission, 2020).

What makes these legal remedies effective are two key design choices. The first one is that every court order or decision must explain the facts, the legal rule, and the solution. This requirement ensures transparency and accountability. The European Court of Human Rights has criticized decisions that are made without explanation, especially in election cases, because such decisions take away voters' rights to understand why a decision was made. Requiring that reasons are posted quickly, ideally the same day, directly addresses this problem.

The second factor is that time cannot be used to block the remedy, which means that if an injunction expires after 24 hours, a default process automatically applies, such as restoring content, granting equal time, or publishing/suspending content. This default remains until a detailed, reasoned decision replaces it. This approach ensures that the principles of quick and

effective justice are put into practice, preventing delays from undermining the remedy. This is how the principles of promptness and effectiveness are put into practice (Norris, 2014).

As a result of these procedures, the system corrects what is broken at the point it breaks, in the language voters understand: the station reopens; the minutes are rebalanced on air; the money appears on the portal; the police step back to the perimeter. None of this requires a new court, and none of it drifts into abstraction. It is simply the proportionate fix made automatic when time runs out, delivered by the same bodies Lebanon already has.

#### ***7.3.4. Transparency: An E-docket Accessible to All***

Establishing an e-docket that is managed by the Supreme Council of Elections (SCE), and that has the mission to record every complaint, order, and decision with timestamps and details the day they are filed or made, will ensure there's an official, verifiable record for every rumor.

This transparency isn't just a cosmetic add-on; it aligns with international standards for credible election dispute processes. These standards emphasize accessible complaint channels, prompt handling, and decisions that are clear and reasoned. When these records are public, delays and vague procedures become ineffective tools for manipulation (OSCE, 2020). The e-docket will strengthen accountability by making the process more transparent and limiting misconduct because every action will become visible and traceable.

In practice, the e-docket is a simple interface. Each entry shows who filed the complaint (voter or candidate), the time and the place of the incident, the station or district code where the violation happened, a short issue tag (silence, media balance, finance disclosure, security posture, administrative inaction), the filing time, the twenty-four-hour injunction deadline, the seven-day merits deadline, the text of the order with its reasons, and a compliance note. Attachments, such as clips, photos, invoices, and rate cards, are viewable or downloadable. Redactions protect personal data, but the substance stays visible. This matches what OSCE/ODIHR asks observers to look for: not only that people can complain, but that authorities publish their actions with reasons and on time (OSCE, 2020). This transparency results in more evidence-based citizens, journalists, and candidates who all read from the same public record. Publishing data in a machine-readable form makes the system usable, not just nominally transparent. The portal should allow CSV/JSON export and a light API so media, parties, and NGOs can track clocks and patterns in real time (for example, how often the

twenty-four-hour default kicked in, or which broadcasters needed equalization).<sup>13</sup> International IDEA's guidance on digital disclosure makes the same point: PDFs and summaries are not enough; open data is what lets the public test compliance before Election Day, not months later (Jones, 2017).

Different countries from around the world have applied this model. For example, Brazil's special tribunal for Elections, the TSE runs long-standing public portals where candidate filings and campaign-finance data are posted and accessible (DivulgaCandContas), along with explanatory pages on reporting and deadlines. The same applies to Mexico's tribunal, the TEPJF, which maintains a public, searchable judgment portal so anyone can follow electoral rulings. Two countries, Estonia and Georgia, adopted such dashboards that highlight violations by categories and response time. This practice is encouraged by the OSCE for its tendency to build public trust. In those countries, the needs are not identical to Lebanon's needs, but they show the feasibility of live, public electoral dockets that citizens, journalists, and campaigns actually use (Eleições Municipais, 2024).

On another note, the e-docket also ties the clocks to consequences. Because each filing displays its twenty-four-hour injunction deadline and seven-day merits deadline, anyone can see when a body must act, when a default has kicked in, and when compliance happened. This visibility reinforces the promptness and reason-giving standards set out in OSCE/ODIHR's dispute-resolution materials, and it gives observers a clean way to audit whether authorities met the time limits or fell back on formalistic dismissals (Norris, 2014).

Finally, the e-docket supplies the raw feed for post-election evaluation. Because everything is timestamped and downloadable, the SCE can publish a short dashboard in the

---

<sup>13</sup> CSV (Comma-Separated Values): A file format that stores data in a table-like structure. It's easy to open and use in programs like Excel or Google Sheets.

JSON (JavaScript Object Notation): A lightweight, text-based format for storing and sharing data. It organizes information in key-value pairs, making it easy for computers to read and process. It's commonly used for data exchange between systems.

API (Application Programming Interface): A set of rules that allows different software programs to communicate with each other. It lets external apps access data or functions from a system in a controlled way. For example, media outlets could use an API to automatically fetch and analyze election complaint data in real time.

weeks after the vote: volume and type of complaints, share decided within twenty-four hours, number of defaults, rate of on-air equalizations completed before E-day, and finance audits triggered and resolved. That is how you show, not just assert, that remedies were timely and effective. It is also how you lock in learning for the next cycle, which is exactly what OSCE/ODIHR handbooks urge administrations and reviewers to do (Norris, 2014). Feedback becomes data; each cycle gives an advantage to the upcoming one, reducing the effort to “guess”.

In sum, the e-docket is the transparency subtraction: nothing new is built institutionally, but opacity is removed. The same bodies act, yet they do so on a public clock, with reasons, and in data that the public can use. This brings the most levels of consequences with a minimal reform rate- one platform that is visible to everyone and is easily trackable. That is what makes the rest of this chapter’s clocks and remedies matter.

### ***7.3.5. The Constitutional Council’s Lane***

The approach in this section keeps the CC exactly where the Constitution places it and uses subtraction to make everything before the CC work on time. Under Article 19, the CC reviews the constitutionality of laws and rules on electoral disputes; only the President, the Speaker, the Prime Minister, any ten MPs, and the officially recognized religious heads may seize it on constitutionality; ordinary voters cannot. That elite gate is constitutional, not statutory, and we are not trying to reopen it here (Lebanese Parliament, 1926). The CC’s own materials describe this same twofold mandate (Constitutional Council, 2004).

For parliamentary seat disputes, the lane is also clear and post-result. By law, a losing candidate (or, in defined cases, a declared winner) has 30 days from the official proclamation of results to file a challenge. A reporting member then has up to three months to investigate and prepare a report, after which the CC issues a decision within one month; CC decisions are final and bind all authorities. This timeline is laid down in the CC’s organic law and internal rules; it is not designed to halt process-time violations, but to settle the validity of mandates after the vote (Constitutional Council, 2025). Comparing theory to what’s applicable in Lebanon, the country adopts a “constitutional court plus electoral judge” model, which acts as a decisive cycle rather than being a corrective one (Venice Commission, 2020). Because this lane is constitutional and organic-law based, changing who can seize the CC or how fast it must decide would require a constitutional or organic-level reform, and this is not the goal of this chapter. Instead, the chapter’s Via Negativa logic is to remove the upstream barriers that

prevent citizens from participating effectively, to remove exclusivity in standing, to limit open-ended delays in initial legal venues and to tackle the lack of transparency. These actions will result in fixing many problems before they ever need to reach the CC. This approach encourages lower courts or institutions to act quickly and effectively, reducing the burden on the Constitutional Court. This technique aligns with certain design principles: motivate the lower power to act fast, and make the constitutional review to be acted upon by the apex court. By addressing these problems early, before they reach the CC, many issues can be resolved at lower levels of the system.

The presiding officer, the SCE, and the Shura Council act under short clocks and public reasons; when a case truly affects a seat, it arrives at the CC with a clean, time-stamped record rather than months of rumor and informal bargaining. That division of labor matches international guidance on election-dispute systems: accessible first-instance routes, prompt, reasoned decisions, and a judicial tier that resolves the highest-stakes questions (OSCE, 2020).

In practice, keeping the CC's Lane intact has three payoffs. First, it respects the Constitution and avoids a heavy amendment battle while still protecting voters' rights through fast, visible front-end remedies (Lebanese Parliament, 1926). Second, it lightens the CC's docket and improves the quality of what does reach it: the e-docket, station logs, SCE/Shura injunctions and merits rulings, and media/finance audit files travel as part of the case file, making CC review more evidential and less political (Constitutional Council, 2004). This is also aligned with the fairness requirements that is mentioned under Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which underline the reasoned and reviewable remedies before the highest instance (ECHR, 2021). Third, it protects finality; the CC remains the place that can confirm, correct, or annul a mandate with *res judicata* force; our clocks and default measures upstream preserve parity while the CC's slower, definitive judgment is prepared (Constitutional Council, 2004).

Thus, nothing "new" is built around the CC, and nothing is taken from it. Simply, the path is cleared in front of it because voters can stop concrete abuses during D-30→E+3; and because authorities must act in 24 hours or a narrow default applies, and because the paper trail is public. When a dispute truly belongs in the CC, it gets there faster, cleaner, and with less doubt about what actually happened. This is defined by the institutional continuity through procedural subtractions, which means all files are visible on fixed clocks and fewer gates. That is subtraction serving the Council's constitutional role rather than competing with it. No need

to add architecture, instead obstacles are cut. This section opens a narrow door for citizens and candidates to challenge process-time abuses in the last month of the race, then ties the existing venues (the presiding officer, the SCE, and the Shura Council) to one short public calendar. If any clock is missed, a default fix applies automatically: pull the unlawful spot and grant equal time, move police back to the perimeter, publish the missing donation until a reasoned ruling replaces it. Every filing and decision appear on a live e-docket, so the paper trail is visible as it happens. The Constitutional Council keeps its constitutional lane on laws and seats; it simply receives cleaner, timelier cases. In other words, we remove the gates, the delays and the darkness that kept real-time fixes out of reach, and we make the same Lebanese bodies act on time, in public, with reasons; that's *Via Negativa* in procedure.

## **7.4. Implementation Instruments**

This section turns the “cannot” rules into things the state can actually sign and enforce. It tries to put a strategy for making legal rules more practical and implementable. This approach doesn't involve creating new bodies or institutions but rather it focuses on using the same existing actors and placing each rule where it belongs. Regarding rules that affect rights or penalties, they are incorporated into short and specific laws. In another case when several ministries must act in a coordinated way, a cabinet decree is used. As for other details like formats, schedules, and daily practices, they are decided by relevant bodies such as the SCE, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the Internal Security Forces (ISF) or the media regulator. The goal is to balance speed and durability.

### ***7.4.1. Money-State firewall***

This rule takes the “campaign boost” out of public money and stagecraft. Government keeps delivering services; it just parks anything discretionary or showy in the final stretch. From D-90 to E+1, there are no inaugurations or ribbon-cuttings, no last-minute grants or “social” distributions, no new or tweaked contracts beyond routine work already scheduled, and no hiring, promotions, secondments, or regrading. Public premises, staff time, vehicles, and official accounts are not used to favor a list or a candidate. Hospitals, schools, utilities, and other services continue as normal but the “show” pauses. If something truly cannot wait (life, health, or critical infrastructure) the administration acts quietly and posts a short explanation the next day on a public ledger: what happened, why it could not wait, how much it cost, and who signed. No logos, no speeches, no candidate photos. The ledger sits on the Ministry of

Finance website and lists every sensitive action during the quiet period, with the date, the body, the amount, the legal basis, and a link to the document. It also lists breaches and what was done about them, so the public can follow in real time. We can look at some comparable systems in different countries: Mexico's National Electoral Institute and Brazil's Tribunal Superior Electoral both publish some bulletins that are specified with "restricted-period," which can influence voters, illustrating that visibility itself acts as deterrence (Instituto Nacional Electoral, 2021)

On the ground, this would look relatively simple. A clinic may open on D-20 because patients need it; staff start work without a stage or cameras, and a two-paragraph note appears the next day on the ledger. A municipality cannot create a new cash-aid day on D-15 unless it is part of a pre-scheduled program with published criteria. A ministry does not tack on a quick road extension unless it is routine maintenance already budgeted; if a flood damages a bridge, the repair goes ahead and the exception note is posted within 24 hours.

Enforcement would be direct, and acts that breach the rule would be unacceptable. The Court of Accounts orders recovery of any money spent and names the authorizing official. If state platforms or TV time were used, the SCE orders equal time for affected lists within 24 hours. Repeated breaches flag the agency for an audit after the election. Parliament sets these duties and penalties in a short law; the Council of Ministers issues a decree telling administrations how to apply them day-to-day; and the SCE issues a short decision describing what must be posted online and in what format so the ledger is usable. This approach that includes three laws follows the OSCE guidance that the campaign-period restrictions on public resources are legitimate when they are clear and time-bound.

This firewall matters because the last three months are when voters decide. If state money, cameras and hiring are in motion, the field tilts. A quiet period, a visible register, and simple corrections remove that lever. The register also feeds the e-docket: when a breach gives screen time, the pull-and-equal-time fix is visible the same day. And when a money decision looks like a hidden donation, it triggers the checks on money in politics.

#### ***7.4.2. Administration- Election Firewall***

This rule locks the "how" of the election early and keeps it steady through E-day. It reflects the main principle that electoral rules must be sustained, predictable, and public. No surprise procedures, no last-minute staff shuffles, and a clean chain from warehouse to result sheet. The core is simple; in the year before the vote, no one changes the electoral system,

district lines, or the powers of the election authority unless two-thirds of Parliament agree and give a public reason. From D-90, there are no new forms, tools, or instructions unless it is a force majeure; if an emergency change is truly needed, it is published the same day and sent to parties and observers. From D-180 to E+7, staff already assigned to election work are not moved, rotated, or suspended except for clear cause (illness, conflict of interest, resignation), with a short public note. Predictable staffing is not just administrative; it is a main resource against manipulation, as highlighted in international observation guidance (OSCE, 2017).

On another note, materials and records are handled in a manner that the public can follow. Ballots, result sheets, stamps, and seals are pre-serialized. Every bag travel under dual custody, with seal numbers written on a simple manifest that is signed at dispatch and at arrival. During transportation, seal numbers are communicated via quick SMS or USSD messages to a public system so that everyone can track the process in real-time. On election night, a simple online system displays how many stations have dispatched materials and how many have received them, ensuring transparency. The devices used to transmit results are only offline, producing paper slips that are signed by the presiding officer and agents, with the signed paper result sheet serving as the official legal record. This combination can only mirror the best practices of transparency that can lead to better result management. This is seen in countries such as Ghana and Kenya. The full “Red Binder” of steps, forms, and security features is fixed at D-90; any emergency addendum is a one-page note with red-lined edits and a sunset after E+7.

Practically, the rules would look as follows. A week before the vote, the Interior Ministry cannot swap the results form or change the tabulation spreadsheet. If a warehouse floods at D-5, the move is allowed as an emergency, the new address is posted immediately, and parties and observers get the same notice. If a printer fails at D-15, the ministry activates a pre-qualified backup contracted earlier; no new vendors are brought in after D-30. When a ballot bag arrives at a station, the presiding officer reads the seal numbers aloud, signs the manifest, and sends the arrival ping. If the numbers don't match, the anomaly protocol is simple: take a photo, write the reason, two people countersign, and the SCE gets an alert.

Personnel stability constitutes a fundamental safeguard alongside procedural controls; people are as important as papers. District and station rosters are fixed early. If an officer falls ill at D-20, a pre-cleared reserve takes the slot, and the change appears online with a short reason. Broad reshuffles are off the table. The same faces who trained in October run the

operation in May. This stability is notably seen in countries such as Portugal and South Korea, where subtle shifts in routing access is not present (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2022). This stability is what prevents subtle tilts in access, routing, and counting.

Enforcement would be gentle yet proportionate, ensuring that responses to violations are appropriate to the severity of each case. Any late procedural adjustments that were not emergency measures are reversed to maintain consistency, and unlawful rotations are undone to uphold integrity. Every deviation from established procedures is logged publicly and linked directly to the specific station or warehouse where it occurred, creating transparency. Units and managers who repeatedly exhibit custody anomalies are flagged for targeted audits after the election to address potential issues. These basic guardrails are incorporated into a short law by Parliament, and the Council of Ministers issues a decree to turn them into everyday practice by implementing HR gatekeeping through the Civil Service Board, establishing a straightforward national route and warehouse plan, and setting up a small operations liaison cell for election week. The SCE, MOI, and the ISF then issue concise decisions covering practical details such as form codes, seal ranges, escort protocols, and the format for SMS custody pings. This approach makes sure that the same people and organizations are in charge at every stage of the electoral process, and that they are accountable for their actions. This creates a clear and transparent record of what happens, so it's easy to see who did what and when.

#### ***7.4.3. Security- Politics Firewall***

This rule is about separating security operations from the political process at the polling and counting sites. It translates a global strategy in the world of elections- security without intrusion into a rule that Lebanon can sign and enforce. Security forces keep the outside of the sites safe, but they do not interfere with the actual voting and counting inside. From D-7 to E+1, officers hold the perimeter of the polling or counting centers. They enter the polling room or the counting hall only if the presiding officer asks in writing to restore order or protect people and materials. Every time an officer enters or leaves, they record details such as the time, their unit and ID, why they entered, and what action they took. A photo of this record is uploaded to a public page within two hours, so everyone can see it. If an officer does not record an entry, they are not allowed to go inside. This procedure ensures that security is maintained without interfering with the voting process, and that all actions are transparent and traceable. The same applies for intelligence bodies, which should not have any operational presence at polling or counting centers in this period. They would not run sources, film voters, or “observe” from the

corridor. Uniformed personnel remain neutral: no partisan talk, no gestures, no selfies with candidates, no walking voters to the booth. The buffer outside the entrance is kept clear of campaign activity; any checkpoint sits beyond that buffer and is designed not to scare people away (no routine ID checks for voters, unless there is a specific alert). When important materials are moved, security escorts stay outside the main custody process. They only guard the route but do not touch the bags or forms. They sign only the escort line on the record, and they record with a time stamp if there is any stop, detour, or delay. Military or intelligence forces must not play any active role in the election administration, which brings the value of security outside and process inside. On the ground, this would also appear simple. If the corridor is crowded, officers reshape the queue outside and push campaigners back beyond the buffer and prohibit anyone from stepping into the room. If there's a problem at the door, the presiding officer fills out a short form and calls two officers to go inside, remove the issue to the outside area, and leave. The log and photo of the form are uploaded online within two hours. When results are transported, the presiding officer checks the seal numbers when they arrive. If the numbers don't match, they follow the anomaly procedure on the spot (take a photo, write a short note, get two signatures), and send an alert to the SCE.

Furthermore, the paper trail is crucial because the documentation serves as the primary accountability mechanism. Every inside entry is visible the same day. Repeated entries by the same unit are easy to spot, and so are stations with frequent buffer problems. If an officer or unit ignores the rules, the presiding officer records it, and then the incident is posted, and the command is notified. Unauthorized presence or interference is a disciplinary violation. If the interference is serious, like causing a closure or pressure that affects the results, the polling hours are extended or a new poll is held at that station within a week, as explained earlier.

Parliament writes the non-negotiable rules into a simple law that includes the main principles like: the perimeter-only entry, the intelligence blackout, the neutrality, the logging, and the sanctions. A joint decision by the Ministry of Interior and the ISF turns this into clear practice: a standard perimeter diagram around each site, a call-in slip, scheduled rotations to prevent unfamiliar faces at busy times, simple steps to help with de-escalation, and a short practice simulation before E-day. Countries like Jordan, Ghana, and Indonesia separate election security from the political direction through dictated and detailed rotation procedures (International IDEA, 2021). The same forces and chain of command are involved, but now the rules are clear, the room is calm, and every exception is on the record.

#### ***7.4.4. Eligibility and Incompatibilities***

This rule stops the dual-hat conflict that could usually and unfairly influence the elections. It means that Members of Parliament (MPs) cannot hold a government or leadership position while serving as MPs, and senior officials like ministers, governors, directors-general, judges and prosecutors, security and intelligence chiefs, regulators, and SOE heads, must resign six months before nominations. Additionally, MPs can serve two terms in a row and then must sit out one term before running again. While in Parliament, they also can't be part of a government, run a state-owned company, or lead a party. The goal is to have one clear role at a time, ensuring fair competition in elections, as recommended by international standards (UN and OSCE/ODIHR). This rule draws a clear temporal and institutional line between those who govern and those who compete. The principle behind it is simple: pick one hat at a time. This is described as a main and crucial requirement for genuine competition during elections under article 25 of the ICCPR (UN Human Rights Committee, 1996).

Moreover, media ownership and regulatory conflicts require temporal separation from candidacy. Anyone who recently controlled a licensed broadcaster or had decision-making power in a regulator (media, telecoms, procurement, campaign finance) must step back twelve months before running, by divesting or placing their interest in a certified blind trust, which is a way to keep their involvement anonymous and separate. The word "Control" here means having real influence, such as signing authority, being the chair of a board or CEO, owning at least 25% beneficial interest, or having voting agreements that effectively give control. However, editorial jobs that don't involve ownership or control are not counted, and paid roles related to media, like hosting or on-air positions, end at the time of nomination to prevent ongoing influence during the campaign.

Every candidate files a short, plain beneficial-ownership and interests' statement at nomination, companies, trusts, board seats, public contracts, and major gifts in the last year. The SCE cross-checks that filing against the commercial register, the procurement and tax databases, and the media regulator's license records. If something is missing, the candidate gets 48 hours to fix it. If there's a banned role or a false statement, the SCE issues a short, reasoned decision; the candidate can appeal to the Shura Council, which decides quickly on the same short clocks used elsewhere. Decisions and reasons appear the day they are issued on the public page. Practically, this would look relatively straightforward. A director-general who plans to run steps down six months out; the resignation is published, and that megaphone is

off. A TV majority owner who wants to run, either sells down or parks the shares in a blind trust a year ahead; she no longer controls rate cards or airtime while she is a candidate. An MP offered a seat on an SOE board, declines or leaves the chair they hold in Parliament; no double hat. A candidate who “forgets” to declare a controlled company with a public contract gets flagged; if it isn’t cured, they are excluded before the ballot is final. If a hidden conflict shows up after the vote and it matters, the seat is vacated and any unlawful benefit is recovered by the Court of Accounts.

Parliament writes a simple law with these basic rules. Then, the government creates detailed procedures: a cabinet order allows the SCE to view the needed data without changing it, and the SCE provides a one-page form and shares each eligibility decision publicly. This way, the same institutions work together, conflicts are reduced, choices are clearer, and voters can see who owns what before candidate lists are printed.

#### ***7.4.5. Money in Politics***

This rule helps keep campaign money clean and visible while it still matters. The procedure consists of setting clear spending limits, allowing only legitimate sources of money, and publishing the above information quickly so voters and rivals can see it before voting. Any suspicious or inflated claims are checked fast, and serious cheating has real consequences. This approach follows international best practices like transparency, real-time disclosure, and fair elections (OECD, 2016; Transparency International, 2023). The spending limits are straightforward: a total amount for each district and a per-candidate limit. As for the sources of the funds, they must come from clean sources: no foreign money, no state-controlled funds, no anonymous donations, and no donations from companies with recent public contracts. All campaigns use one bank account. Any donation over a small amount is posted on the SCE website within 48 hours, showing the donor’s name, date, and amount. Each week, campaigns share a simple report of how they spent their money on TV, radio, print, digital, events, and canvassing. The data is open, and anyone can download and compare it.

On another note, broadcasters and platforms should do their part in facilitating transparency. By D-60 they should publish rate cards and then upload each political buy within 48 hours (who bought, what slot, and what price). The SCE’s portal compares campaigns’ reported media spend to what actually aired. If the gap is big, the system flags it, and a forensic audit starts. While the audit runs, the SCE can pause new ad buys or order extra disclosure. If the corrected numbers show overspending or illegal sources that would have changed eligibility

or seat allocation, fines follow and, where the impact is material, the seat is forfeited after the final ruling. This model parallels the UK Electoral Commission's approaches to auditing discrepancies and sanctioning financial misreporting (UK Electoral Commission, 2023). The system should be designed to ensure speed, not paperwork traps. If a campaign files late or leaves a field blank, the SCE gives 48 hours to fix it; if it stays unfixed, the entry is marked "non-compliant," the campaign's ad buys can be suspended, and a fine is issued. Repeated failures mean a deeper audit. Every order and cure show on the same public page, with dates, so delay has no value. Public visibility strengthens the accountability and helps deter intentional non-disclosure (Transparency International, 2023).

Data flows are simple and one-way. The SCE has read-only fed to campaign bank statements, the commercial register (to check beneficial owners), and the media regulator's license records. The portal shows donors and spending without exposing personal bank details. Broadcasters upload slot logs from a basic template; campaigns upload invoices the same way. Nothing fancy, just clean files people can read. This ties back to the other sections. If a public body used its platform in the quiet period, the equal-time fix from §6.5.1 appears as an entry on the portal alongside the campaign's spend. If an illegal ad runs close to E-day, the pull + equal-time order in §6.5.6 sits next to the buy that caused it. Moreover, when someone files a complaint under §6.4, the e-docket links straight to the finance page, so the clock and the money story are in one place. This enforcement and data will make sure that all processes are visible to take into accountability, and connected to real-time (OECD, 2016).

The resulting framework would produce transparent and traceable financial flows. Voters see who paid, when, and how much before they vote. Channels know the numbers must add up. Campaigns know that hiding or overspending won't wait for the post-election silence. Same institutions, clearer rules, quick checks, and a public record that anyone can read. In summary, transparency is the key that sustains electoral fairness before and after the voting process is done.

#### ***7.4.6. Media Symmetry and Access***

This rule makes basic TV access a right, not a favor, and fixes tilts fast enough to matter. Télé Liban (the official public TV) gives each certified list prime-time blocks by lot. The draw is public, the schedule is posted, and the order rotates. This allocation reflects a professional practice for public broadcasters, ensuring that all political competitors have equal media presence and treatment. Private channels keep balanced coverage and publish their rate cards

by D-60. When they sell political ads, they upload each buy within 48 hours, including information like who bought, what slot, and what it cost. A short ad blackout runs just before E-day; news and the free access blocks continue, but paid ads stop. The blackout periods were noticed to have reduced manipulation and upheld the voter reflection period (Transparency International, 2023). If a channel breaks the rules, it airs a short correction and gives equal time within 24 hours. The aim of this procedure is to make sure everyone is seen, and when the table tips, it is leveled quickly and in public.

On the ground, this looks like a weekly grid that anyone can check. Télé Liban's site shows the lot results and the slots for each list; the Audiovisual Council's page shows which private channels have posted rate cards and the buys they've logged. Because media fairness is a crucial step to be verified in media, integrating those datasets is important for civic groups and journalists to keep track of. A small list knows it has two prime-time hits next week and can plan around them. A large list knows it will have to answer if it tries to crowd out rivals late at night. When a silence breach airs on D-2, the SCE orders the pull and equal time; if the order comes late, the default already applies, and the correction runs before the vote. The same record appears on the public portal, so campaigns, journalists, and voters see the breach and the fix, not just rumors. Evidence-based practice showed that public visibility builds trust and reduces disinformation about alleged biases (Transparency International, 2023).

Furthermore, the rate constitutes an essential component of equitable access arrangements. Rate cards posted at D-60 make it harder to hide preferential deals. When a channel uploads a buy at a deep discount for one list but not others, the SCE can ask why, and if there is no fair justification, the remedy is equal time or an adjustment that brings exposure back to balance. If the numbers are far off, the media entries link to the finance page in §6.5.5, and a forensic check can start. Coverage balance is checked in plain ways, too. The Audiovisual Council runs a simple count of minutes by list, split between news, talk shows, and paid spots. Tools that encourage automated content analysis can support this process and reduce disputes about measurements (OECD, 2016). When one list drifts past the agreed band, the channel gets a notice and schedules equal time in the next 24 hours; no long reports, just a visible correction.

It is also important to note that nothing in this procedure stops the functioning of usual journalism tasks. The news keeps running, and the interviews keep happening, and every other aspect of informing the public keeps on working normally. What changes is that free access is guaranteed for all certified lists, ad prices are visible, and tilts are corrected while the campaign

is still alive. Channels keep their editorial line; they just apply the same rules to everyone in the short window that matters. For viewers, this will feel normal; they will be able to notice fewer campaign ads at the very end, a clear slot where each list states its case, and the sense that no one is buying the airwaves unnoticed.

At the same time, enforcement would be immediate and proportionate. A breach triggers a short order: pull the spot, run the correction, schedule equal time, and that order appears the same day on the portal with timestamps. Immediate disclosure of enforcement actions strengthens deterrence and consistency (Transparency International, 2023). If a channel ignores it, the non-compliance shows up on the same page, and the Council can escalate: a fine could be issued, a bigger equal-time block could be allocated, or, in repeat cases, a temporary ban on political ads could be imposed. The SCE and the Council coordinate so that a fix on air also reconciles the finance file.

This ties back to the rest of the chapter. The equal-time and pull orders sit on the e-docket from §6.4, with the same 24h/7d/30d clocks. Late or missing decisions trigger the same defaults. If a public body used its platform in the quiet period, the Télé Liban slot can be used to correct that advantage under §6.5.1. If a paid campaign tries to flood the last 48 hours, the blackout keeps the field steady, and the free blocks still run. The architecture is simple: a guaranteed floor, open prices, quick corrections, and one public page where the schedule, the buys, the breaches, and the fixes live side by side. As a result, the same media landscape is kept but with clearer lines and faster answers.

#### ***7.4.7. Process and Adjudication***

This is the fast door for problems that matter during the campaign. From D-30 to E+3, any voter or candidate can act when they see a silence breach, an illegal ad, tilted coverage, missing finance disclosure, security inside the station, or an administration that just doesn't move. The ultimate practice to protect electoral integrity is by creating a quick-response channel during the critical period of the campaign (OSCE, 2020). Station-level issues are written in the presiding officer's log and decided on the spot. Beyond the station, filings go to the SCE for media/finance/silence matters and to the Shura Council when it's an administrative or security act or a failure to act. The filing is short: who, where, when, what happened, and can include a photo, clip, invoice, or a portal screenshot. If a field is missing, the filer gets 48 hours to fix it.

Time is tight by design. In other words, temporal constraints would operate as deliberate structural features of the enforcement mechanism. A complaint is filed within 48 hours of the incident. The authority issues an injunction within 24 hours, gives a short reason, and posts it the same day on the public page. Deadlines act as specific rights for the complainant, which is an approach used effectively in France's Conseil d'état during election disputes (CSA, 2023). If the clock is missed, a default holds the line until a reasoned ruling arrives: the unlawful spot is pulled and equal time granted; security posture reverts to perimeter-only; the missing donation is published or new ad buys are suspended. The merits are decided in 7 days, and the final decision comes in 30 days. An appeal does not cancel an injunction; it only changes it if the appellate body issues its own reasoned order within 24 hours. Weekends and holidays do not pause time. If there's a real emergency that prevents a 24-hour ruling, the default still applies, and the reason is posted the next day.

The public page (the e-docket) would be the backbone. Every filing shows up with a timestamp, a short tag (silence, media, finance, security, admin), the 24h and 7d deadlines, the order and its reason, and a one-line note on compliance ("pulled at 18:04," "perimeter restored 11:12," "donation posted 09:20"). Identical complaints are consolidated under one number so the 24-hour clock runs once, and everyone reads the same order. Data are downloadable, so campaigns, media, and observers can track patterns in real time, how many defaults kicked in, which districts needed equal time, and where custody problems clustered.

On the ground, this looks relatively straightforward. A D-2 silence breach airs in prime time; a voter files at 21:30; by 21:30 the next day, the SCE has ordered pull + equal time, or the default has already done it. A police unit lingers in a corridor; the presiding officer logs it and asks them to step back; if they don't, a filing at noon brings a perimeter-only order by noon the next day, or the default applies, and the log shows it. A large donation is missing from the portal at D-15; a filing triggers an order to publish or suspend buys within 24 hours and, if the gap is big, a forensic audit that starts before election day, not after. This ensures that the irregularities are corrected while the voter still has time to make a decision (Transparency International, 2023).

Nothing in this process adds a new layer; it just removes the value of delay. The same bodies would be kept; the presiding officer, the SCE, the Shura Council (Administrative Court), and make them work on a clock, in public, with reasons. When a case truly affects a seat, it

still goes to the Constitutional Council with a clean, dated record. Most of the rest is fixed in time for voters to see it, not months later in a report.

#### ***7.4.8. Stability and Districting***

This rule would give people a stable frame and a fair seat weight. No late switches to the system, no quiet map tweaks, and a simple way to keep districts roughly equal in voters. The core promise is predictability: parties prepare under known rules, and voters aren't surprised. It's a crucial step for democratic stability and makes sure no manipulation occurs (Venice Commission, 2020).

In the **year** before E-day, no one changes the electoral system, the district lines, or the powers of the election body, unless two-thirds of Parliament agree and publish a short note explaining the necessity. That freeze is the guardrail that stops last-minute bargaining from becoming law. Outside this period, district boundaries are drawn based on simple rules: districts should be connected, follow existing boundaries when possible, and keep the number of voters in each district within about 10-15% of each other. The goal isn't perfect math but to make sure no vote is worth much more or less than another.

The review process happens regularly and is clear. Every two electoral cycles, or sooner if any district's voter numbers change by 10% or more, the Ministry of Interior releases the basic data (voter counts by area), the rules it will follow, and an initial draft map. This draft includes a one-page table showing the differences for each district, such as seats, voters, voters per seat, and how much it varies from the national average. People, parties, and NGOs have 30 days to comment on this draft. Then, a revised draft is made, with a short response to the main points raised. Parliament then approves the final map by law at least 12 months before the next election, and the freeze starts again. No new agencies are created; it's the same institutions working on a set schedule and being transparent.

On the ground, this is straightforward. Suppose a coastal district grows by +14% while a neighboring inland district shrinks by -9% which triggers a review. The Ministry posts the numbers, a draft that shifts a few municipalities to rebalance, and the variance table showing every seat within the 10–15% band. These tables make all evidence measurable and debatable rather than being all theoretical. Parties argue for or against specific moves, and the final map is voted on and published a year before E-day. If someone tries to slip in a change during the freeze, it simply does not take effect for this cycle, and the Shura Council can strike it down for breaking the timeline.

The process lives on the same public page as the other clocks. The data release, the draft maps, the variance tables, the comments window, and the final law all appear in one place, with dates. People can download the tables and check the math. Nothing here promises a perfect map; it promises a fair, transparent, and early one. Same institutions, clearer steps, a firm freeze, and districts whose weight voters can see and understand. Putting all this into practice, and putting perfection aside, predictability and visibility are what keep the electoral legitimacy equally represented (OECD, 2016; Transparency International, 2023).

## **7.5. Conclusion**

Chapters 5 and 6 showed the same pattern across very different elections: change the formula, keep the levers, get the same outcome. This chapter cuts those levers. We didn't add bodies or promise perfect design; we removed the few things that let timing, money, media, and security bend the race in the last stretch. The fixes are narrow and visible: a quiet period for public resources; no late procedures or shuffles; security at the perimeter; clean eligibility; money that shows up in time; a basic TV floor with quick corrections; and a fast complaint door with clocks and a public record. Same institutions, clearer lines, short clocks. Subtraction clears the field; it does not replace the game. When the upstream tilt is gone, we can adopt the formula that serves inclusion and representation. Taking away the distortions around the procedures to ensure its fairness allows the whole design to focus on representativeness rather than damage control (International IDEA, 2020).

This is also where I4P belongs. The e-docket, the finance portal, the station log, and the call-in slip are not just admin tools; they are peace infrastructure. They turn disputes into data you can see, answer small conflicts before they grow, and lower the value of street pressure. Local mediators and NGOs can watch the same page as parties and officials and nudge problems toward the quick fixes the law already provides. The point is to lower the temperature by taking away the tricks that made the last month feel rigged, and make every remedy happen in time, in public, with reasons. In other words, and to summarize, governments can allow peace and fairness by predictable procedures and not only new powers (Venice Commission, 2020).

## Chapter 8: An I4P Adapted to Lebanon

As explained in previous chapters, the negative peace that has existed for decades in Lebanon is associated with multifaceted complexity, ranging from sectarian violence and corruption to the misuse of power-sharing agreements for individual or group benefits. Given the intricate and multi-layered nature of Lebanon's challenges, any plans or solutions aimed at achieving sustainable peace must be based on a comprehensive and tailored approach, which we will refer to as a "Complexity of Reforms," or a tailored I4P for Lebanon. This approach can be likened to the infrastructure of a building, which comprises various systems designed to ensure that all the needs of the inhabitants are met and their rights are satisfied. Similarly, the I4P for Lebanon should be a complex, multi-component framework that guarantees the fulfilment of diverse needs across social, political, and economic spheres. When these needs are addressed and rights are secured, the foundation for positive peace, where justice and equality become central, can be established.

However, the numerous gaps that currently undermine the effectiveness of the I4P in Lebanon highlight the necessity of exploring context-specific mitigation measures. It requires recalibrating the framework to reflect Lebanon's unique political realities, history, and social dynamics. To be truly effective, Lebanon's peace infrastructure must be locally rooted, using methods aligned with local culture and values. This chapter proposes targeted mitigation strategies engineered to address the gaps across I4P's five core pillars (explained in Chapter 1). These measures aim to create a more adaptive and realistic peacebuilding model that can strengthen the state's legitimacy, empower communities, and lay a sustainable foundation for long-term peace and resilience in Lebanon.

### 8.1. Institutions

#### 8.1.1. Gaps

As we have comprehensively shown in previous chapters, Lebanon's state institutions are characterized by deep structural fragility that significantly impairs their ability to contribute to peacebuilding or serve as pillars of an effective I4P. This fragility stems primarily from the country's post-Taëf governance system, which stresses confessional power-sharing. Although this agreement was initially intended as a transitional arrangement to rebuild Lebanon's state institutions following the civil war, it remains in effect to this day. Indeed, Lebanon's political leaders have taken advantage of this approach and used it for their own benefit, often at the

expense of the wider public and societal well-being (Borgne & Jacobs, 2016). The system that should have encouraged inclusive governance has instead divided the state's institutions into sectarian spheres of influence. This arrangement promotes institutional rivalry rather than cooperation, as stakeholders put the preservation of their power share above the collective decision-making process. Difficulties arise in inter-departmental coordination, and even the implementation of basic policies is subject to political bargaining and obstruction from one another, thus getting delayed or blocked. Consequently, frequent stalemates occur on appointments, policy reforms, and budget allocations. The system is effectively rendering governance paralyzed and producing a culture of inaction, reducing the state's capacity to govern effectively or meet the needs of the citizens.

Rather than building strong institutions or delivering public services, decision makers used aid flows and state resources to distribute favors such as jobs, permits, or services to their sectarian constituencies. This maintains loyalty through patronage rather than performance or merit. This divestment from the public sector means that state institutions are no longer prioritized by decision makers as tools for conflict mediation, inclusive development, or peacebuilding.

The state's ineffective intervention during critical crises (recent examples are the 2020 Beirut Port Explosion, the ongoing economic crisis, and the last war between Israel and Lebanon) has pushed the citizens even further away from the formal government institutions. As a result, when people associate the government institutions with being unresponsive and self-serving, they are less likely to engage with them or see them as a legitimate means for conflict mediation. When interviewed, Carmen Hassoun Abou Jaoudé<sup>14</sup> (personal communication, 2025, April 24), asserted that it is absolutely necessary to reform the electoral process, yet she cautioned that these alone are insufficient. She argued that some changes have been made, but they fall short of achieving the desired outcome. A major area of concern, in Hassoun's view, should be institutional reforms aimed at reducing the power of the traditional politicians over the state bureaucracy. She explained that these powerful actors possess the capacity to undermine any electoral reform efforts, leveraging control over all aspects of the

---

<sup>14</sup> Carmen Hassoun Abou Jaoudé, PhD, is a political scientist and lecturer in transitional justice at Saint-Joseph University of Beirut (USJ), and an associate researcher at the Center for the Study of the Modern Arab World (CEMAM-USJ). Her expertise includes Lebanon's post-war memory, transitional justice, and the issue of the missing persons. She worked with the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) from 2011 to 2015, serving as Head of Program and later as Head of its Lebanon office, managing projects on conflict legacy and political violence. Additionally, she has been a member of Lebanon's National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared since July 2020. I conducted an interview with her on April 22, 2025.

state to actively block progress. Abou Jaoudé believes this control will continue to impede reforms, highlighting the deep-seated resistance to meaningful change, especially given the clientelist nature of the system that they seek to preserve. Therefore, without rebuilding trust in public institutions and decision makers, efforts in Lebanon are unlikely to achieve the legitimacy and public participation needed to sustain long-term peace.

### ***8.1.2. Mitigation Measures***

Scott (1998) highlights that maintaining peaceful states requires addressing the local needs and daily priorities of the population, because to connect citizenry to the state, public preferences must be fulfilled by the latter (Scott, 1998, p. 417). The argument adopted in this section characterizes peacebuilding as initiatives aimed at societal transformations that reduce the likelihood of violence and foster development in societies emerging from conflict (Björkdahl & Höglund, 2013, p. 291), asserting that peacebuilding efforts should be aligned with the everyday needs of the people.

This perspective builds upon the idea that legitimacy is fundamental to positive state–society relations (Brinkerhoff et al., 2012) and that service delivery serves as a route to attain legitimacy (McLoughlin, 2015). Such a framework broadens the understanding of peacebuilding as a process in which the daily management of public goods is an integral component. In her article, Leonardsson (2020) talks about the vertical peace and develop an analytical tool that examines vertical relationships using three key concepts: complementarity, autonomy, and agency (Leonardsson, 2020). These terms likely refer to how different levels of actors work together, maintain independence, or deploy influence within peacebuilding processes. To explain her idea, the author applies this framework to a specific case: how two municipalities in Lebanon have responded to local waste management needs through their relationships with higher levels of government. This case study aims to deepen understanding of how and what kind of local peace is created or maintained through these vertical interactions, emphasizing that peacebuilding isn't only about broad policies but also about local, practical issues like waste management. The idea behind this suggestion is also built on the definition of peacebuilding as efforts aimed at societal transformations that decrease the risk of violence and promote development in post-conflict societies (Björkdahl & Höglund, 2013), arguing that peacebuilding efforts need to connect to the everyday needs of the people. Such a conceptualization opens up for viewing peacebuilding as a process where everyday management of public goods is part of it (Leonardsson, 2020). According to Brinkerhoff,

Wetterberg, and Dunn (2012), service delivery is one way in which post-conflict governments can build legitimacy (Brinkerhoff et al., 2012). The ability of the Lebanese state to address the needs and rights of its citizens is crucial for rebuilding trust in institutions, regaining legitimacy, and dismantling clientelistic networks (Gebara, 2025). A key strategy for achieving this involves empowering local authorities, particularly municipalities and mayors, to exercise the full extent of their legal powers. These elected local bodies are constitutionally mandated to deliver essential services such as waste management, water distribution, medical care, and education, directly impacting citizens' daily lives (CoR, 2025); their mandate can be broadened to include delivering more basic services and responding to more needs that the central state is not able to deliver (one example could be generating electricity through clean energy, a very well needed service that the central government is still unable to deliver). When these local authorities effectively provide services, they strengthen the state's presence and credibility at the grassroots level, which is fundamental for peacebuilding.

Historically, clientelist systems have deliberately obstructed or slowed the functioning of these local institutions, often through delaying elections or blocking financial resources, precisely to maintain control over service provision by political parties (Gërkhani & Schram, 2009).

In post-conflict situations, one aspect of successful public service reforms has been the empowerment of local governance. Re-establishing public services was crucial in the aftermath of war in the cases of Afghanistan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, and Timor-Leste, but often hindered by short-term political pressures that led to the distribution of jobs and pay based on patronage rather than merit (Blum et al., 2018). The cases cited above emphasize that local governments should be empowered and open, and that merit systems should be established. Such measures are necessary to break up the cycle of clientelism, enhance public trust, and create sustainable peace.

A massive and sustained reform of the civil service process, based on the above and as a first step towards reestablishing institutional credibility and improving the public administration's performance in Lebanon, has to be initiated. In this case, the merit-based recruitment should be prioritized, focusing on the qualifications and expertise standards over political loyalty and patronage. This shift must be institutionalized through transparent public service exams, standardized job descriptions, and hiring processes of independent oversight that are free from any interference. After all, the public bodies should establish continuous

professional development programs whereby staff would receive training in conflict sensitivity, negotiation, and inclusive governance. This should initially target the officials working on the front line, like the municipal staff, which includes the municipal police, the ISF, and the public administration employees. It is very important to strengthen the capacities of such individuals because they are the direct point of contact between the citizens and the state. Thus, the government's ability to address the needs of its people would be through creating a strong and responsive first line of public servants. Human resources within state institutions are critical not only for improving service delivery, but also for enabling the state to reclaim its role as a central actor in conflict mediation and peacebuilding.

Based on the above and as a foundational step towards restoring institutional credibility and addressing the deteriorating functionality of Lebanon's public administration, a comprehensive and sustainable civil service reform process must be introduced. This reform should prioritize merit-based recruitment, focusing on the qualifications and expertise standards over political loyalty and patronage (Hatem et al., 2024; Hollyer, 2011). This shift must be institutionalized through transparent public service exams, standardised job descriptions, and independent oversight hiring processes (Kernaghan & Siegel, 1991; Ongaro & Van Thiel, 2018). Once in place, public bodies should establish continuous professional development programmes, including training in conflict sensitivity, negotiation, and inclusive governance. This should first be targeted to frontline officials such as municipal staff, including the municipal police, members of the ISF, and public administration employees. Strengthening the capacities of these individuals is essential, as they represent the primary point of contact between citizens and the state (Haque, 1999). Therefore, creating a robust and responsive first line of public servants would help rebuild trust in the government's ability to address the needs of its people (Zainal-Abidin et al., 2025). Peacebuilding organizations consider human rights as part of a 'legislative framework for establishing strong and accountable state institutions, including security and rule of law institutions' (Shonge, 2017, p. 448).

In addition, performance evaluation systems tied to clear benchmarks and public accountability mechanisms would promote a culture of responsibility and reward effectiveness over patronage and clientelism (Bovens et al., 2008). This might make the public more responsive and engaged in the state's mediation strategies and its national peacebuilding agenda rooted in equity and trust. Simultaneously, it is necessary that a government establishes specialized public administration task forces to work at the central and local levels. It is the responsibility of these task forces to keep the continuity of critical public services through

crises, ensuring that the state is visible and accountable to its people. The interesting part is that this system should allow civil society and NGOs to communicate directly with each other, facilitating a complementary relationship in which CSOs support, instead of taking over its functions. The state should be the main player in the crisis response and should work with civil society organizations to restore its authority, reduce reliance on parallel systems, and gradually gain back the people's trust. Over time, this coordinated approach can lay the groundwork for institutional resilience and reinforce the foundational pillars upon which an effective and tailored I4P framework for Lebanon must rest.

It is also necessary to reinstate the public sector as a political priority to strengthen I4P in Lebanon (Leenders, 2012). The government may consider starting with the creation of a special I4P budget line in the national budget, which, even if modest at first, would institutionalize peacebuilding as a state duty rather than an externally funded add-on. This initiative must be supported by co-financing actions that will motivate the ministries to match donor contributions, either financially or through in-kind commitments. The result will be a stronger institutional ownership and a clear indication of real political engagement. An I4P steering committee could also be created within the Cabinet of Ministers to coordinate peacebuilding efforts, protect them from political interference, and make I4P thinking a part of national policy processes. These measures, if implemented effectively, might be able to reverse the decline of state responsibility, regain the relevance of institutions, and create the political and financial conditions that are conducive to the sustainable peace infrastructure being established in Lebanon. The process of rebuilding institutional legitimacy entails the adoption of measures to restore the social contract between the people and the government.

Furthermore, the government should use existing bodies to mainstream conflict sensitivity and long-term planning into national and sectoral agendas. The Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR) has the capacity to lead institutional reform efforts that place people's needs at the heart of governance (El-Zein & Sims, 2004). It is the central public entity mandated to modernize Lebanon's administration and shift it toward a more citizen-oriented and performance-based model. This would not only rebuild trust between the people and institutions but would also enhance the state's capacity to plan and build a strategic peacebuilding framework. In fact, OMSAR can facilitate joint planning processes among ministries, standardizing public service delivery mechanisms, and ensuring that administrative reforms are informed by citizens' priorities and designed to prevent social fragmentation (El-Zein & Sims, 2004). When existing state structures implement these steps,

they will strengthen institutional coherence and no longer treat peacebuilding as a parallel process but as a core function of governance in Lebanon. This will make the peace infrastructure of the country both resilient and able to respond to and adapt to the country's changing challenges. OMSAR's mandate gives it a unique position to resolve the structural inefficiencies that frequently disable state responses during national emergencies. The government, by enlarging OMSAR's coordination authority and operational reach, can supply public institutions with the necessary tools and digital infrastructure for fast and transparent crisis response. Thus, state institutions will remain functional and responsive to the public even during the unstable periods.

The government should also work on mitigating the issue of overlapping mandates to reduce inefficiencies and delays. First, a comprehensive functional and financial audit of public institutions should be conducted to identify overlapping roles, restructure mandates, and allocate funds based on clear, non-partisan criteria. This process should fall under the Court of Accounts (CoA, *Diwan al Mouhasaba*), which is responsible for drafting an annual report on the results of its auditing of public institutions and suggesting reforms (World Bank, 2005). The role of the CoA should be reactivated and strengthened, ensuring that once its annual reports are published, the evaluated bodies respond to its comments, which has not happened in the past years (Saghieh & Ibrahim, 2025). The CoA also holds a constitutional mandate to oversee public expenditures and ensure financial accountability within Lebanon's state institutions. The court, though underperforming and limited by political factors, still has a lot of potential to play a corrective and preventive role in the overlapping of institutional mandates and deficiencies in institutional performances. The Court could influence the most in areas like infrastructure, urban development, and utility services. Therefore, to empower the court's independence, operational capability, and enforcement authority, it would be able to make binding recommendations, flag inefficiencies, and advocate for the rearrangement of institutional roles based on the public interest. This oversight is critical for a well-structured I4P framework in order to clarify responsibilities and reduce bureaucratic conflict. In turn, institutional coherence will be improved, service delivery delays will be shortened, and citizens' trust in the system will be restored. The CoA could be a body used to hold public institutions and public officials accountable, an essential pillar to fostering long-term stability and social cohesion. The court can act as a guardian of administrative integrity and a facilitator of institutional reform, helping to anchor Lebanon's peace infrastructure within a credible and coordinated governance framework.

## 8.2. Legal Framework

Legal frameworks are a cornerstone for promoting justice, ensuring the rule of law, and facilitating non-violent conflict resolution. In Lebanon, however, these frameworks, while formally comprehensive, remain fragmented, politicised, and unevenly enforced (Stel, 2020; Malaeb, 2018). It often reinforces the country's structures and historical grievances rather than providing a stable foundation for peacebuilding (Richmond, 2013). These gaps hinder the effectiveness of I4P and contribute to ongoing institutional fragility and public mistrust (Sandu, 2025).

### 8.2.1. Gaps

Fair trial and due process standards are among the most important aspects of any legal system, maintaining the rule of law (Fleming, 2011). Within the I4P framework, these principles form the legal backbone for resolving disputes, protecting individuals' rights, and fostering trust between citizens and the state. In practice, Lebanon has legislated these rights and is a part of the main international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966). Basic rights, such as the right to resort to lawsuits, the right to legal counsel, and the right to not be prosecuted twice for the same crime, are present in both the Lebanese Constitution and its Code of Criminal Procedure. Despite this, the gap between law and practice is still huge since the judicial system of Lebanon is more often than not incapable of holding these rights up in the ways of being fair, impartial, and accessible to the public at all times (Dabbous, 2017). This disconnect is particularly evident in the country's persistent use of pre-trial detention, which has become a structural issue within the criminal justice system. Judging by the statistics provided by Frangieh and Swaidan it can be stated that by mid-2024, the pre-trial detainees residing in jails and detention centers for the courts were 65% of all the detainees (Frangieh & Swaidan, 2025). It was mentioned that some of these detainees could be subjected to a very long wait for their trial (up to 8 years in some cases). This is mainly caused by trial postponements, lengthy judicial breaks, and lack of proper management in the legal system. Therefore, the most basic right of a detainee, the presumption of innocence, has been violated. Such delays do not merely point to problems in logistics or procedures, but rather expose a deeper issue of a dysfunctional and politicized legal system in Lebanon. Consequently, the right to a fair trial is perceived as compromised by the Lebanese people.

This view is further aggravated by the functioning of the failed legal system, especially since defendants frequently lose their right to appeal to a court's decision when the issuance of verdicts is delayed beyond the deadline for appeals. Moreover, in the event of wrongful imprisonment by the law, people are entitled to compensation, but these compensatory measures are seldom put into practice, denying the victims of illegal imprisonment the opportunity to undergo rehabilitation. Hence, the population in Lebanon has lost faith in the state's judicial system and legal frameworks. Public mistrust in the Lebanese justice system is deepened by widespread perceptions of nepotism, favouritism, and political connections (Harb, 2019; Merhej, 2021). Further undermining trust in the judiciary are publicly acknowledged instances in which judges have exerted pressure on investigators or overlooked evidence of human rights abuses in detention centres have been publicly acknowledged. These factors are believed to influence legal outcomes, allowing those with connections to evade prosecution entirely, while others face the full weight of an unequal and politicised justice system (Helou, 2019).

These systemic challenges have a direct and detrimental impact on the effectiveness of I4P frameworks in Lebanon. Legal systems grounded in due process are essential to resolve conflict through formal institutional mechanisms (Menkel-Meadow, 2015). The public loses faith in the state's ability to deliver justice fairly, especially when fair trial guarantees are routinely violated, either through prolonged detention, political interference, or lack of impartiality. As a result, individuals and communities may increasingly resort to informal justice mechanisms and sectarian and political networks to express their grievances, bypassing formal legal institutions. This dynamic not only weakens state legitimacy but also deepens social fragmentation, mistrust, and instability, further eroding local peacebuilding processes and the efficiency of I4P frameworks (Richmond, 2013).

Concerns over judicial independence further undermine judicial autonomy and public trust in its decisions. In fact, the Lebanese legal framework stipulates that judges must operate within the bounds of the law and remain impartial; the process by which they are appointed calls this principle into question. Indeed, judges are appointed through government decrees rather than an independent judicial body, leaving the process vulnerable to sectarian quotas and political influence. Judges are formally expected to be independent, yet their appointments are often politically driven, undermining both their impartiality and their legitimacy. As a result, judicial assignments are shaped by loyalty to political elites and not based on merit or competence. This politicisation severely threatens the impartiality of the judiciary and weakens

its ability to hold powerful actors accountable. Therefore, courts are seen as an extension of political powers and are not seen as impartial arbiters of justice. In such cases, legal institutions and legal frameworks lose their capacities to de-escalate tensions and promote social cohesion, rendering peace infrastructure ineffective and illegitimate.

Another critical barrier to the development of an impartial and unified legal system in Lebanon is the existence of exceptional courts. The latter are judicial bodies that operate outside the scope of ordinary law and challenge the notions of fairness, transparency, and equal access to justice. These courts include the Military Tribunal, the Judicial Council, the High Court of Justice, and the Personal Status courts. They represent a parallel justice system that poses serious challenges to judicial independence and violates international standards of a fair trial. For instance, the Military Tribunal regularly exercises jurisdiction over civilians and tries them in closed proceedings, although it was tasked with adjudicating cases involving military personnel and issues related to national security. This is especially problematic, seeing as the judges are appointed by the Ministry of Defense and are not required to have a legal background. The court is, thus, heavily influenced by military and political leadership, frequently violating international standards.

Similarly, the Judicial Council is primarily responsible for handling cases referred to it by the Council of Ministers. Yet this council operates under direct political influence, marking a politicization that not only violates fair trial standards but also reinforces the notion that legal outcomes serve elite interests. The Personal Status Courts also challenge the coherence and inclusivity of Lebanon's legal framework. These courts operate under different religious laws and are not subject to civil judicial review, which means that the Court of Cassation does not oversee their decisions.

On the other hand, the non-implementation of anti-corruption and transparency laws additionally obstructs the peace process. In 2020, the National Anti-Corruption Strategy came into existence, but its performance has been repressed significantly due to the lack of independent monitoring, non-existent political will, and the shortage of administrative ability. The non-enforcement of law and the failure to eliminate corruption and promote transparency in institutions work to destroy citizens' trust in their rulers, weaken the rule of law, and fuel grievances among the already disadvantaged groups. The current legal framework's inability to implement accountability mechanisms, has weakened the peace infrastructure in Lebanon. The persistence of exceptional courts undermines the legitimacy and unifying function of the

judicial system. These courts operate beyond the reach of accountability, reinforce political and sectarian divisions, and deny many Lebanese equal accesses to justice. By sustaining this framework that lacks transparency, impartiality, and recourse, the state weakens its ability to act as a tool for peacebuilding, and a backbone for I4P.

The absence of ADR mechanisms in Lebanon further entrenches the state's ability to be a conflict mediator. Among these are mediation, arbitration, and community-based conflict resolution. They provide disputing parties with easy, cheap, and non-adversarial methods of settling their conflicts, thus lessening the load on formal courts and nurturing a spirit of communication and partnership among the people living in the community. In Lebanon, ADR still lacks development, remains disconnected from the mainstream legal system, and is not extensively used by either the government or the public. This is because the state has made limited institutional efforts to develop structured ADR frameworks, either within or alongside the judicial system. Informal mediation sometimes occurs, but it is quite irregular and is led mainly by religious leaders, political players, or local community figures. It is, however, a very unreliable method because it does not have legal validation or oversight. These informal practices may rather solidify than dismantle the prevailing power structure and thus exclude the voiceless, especially women, minorities, and marginalized groups, from justice. The prevailing legal culture in Lebanon has highly preferred litigation as the means of dispute resolution, and there is no policy or law in place requiring ADR to be the first step in dispute resolution before going to court. This has left courts overburdened and has led to the consequent prolongation of justice, which has turned public opinion even more negative towards the legal frameworks in the country. ADR is very important for local peace processes to gain ownership, to build trust among disputants, and to manage grievances before they become violent (Akintayo et al., 2024). The absence of such 'trusted', 'accessible', and 'impartial' ADR channels will then not help social cohesion, and the state's capability to dispense conflict-sensitive justice would also be impaired. If the ADR were well-regulated and integrated within the broader legal framework, it could be a channel through which communities and the state connect (Steffek et al., 2014). However, without a reliable alternative to formal litigation, citizens remain without options that they can consider viable for dealing with grievances, which leads to a greater likelihood of disputes escalating into armed clashes and violence.

The neglect to include transitional justice, after the Lebanese civil war, is another crucial gap in the Lebanese legal framework. In fact, the country emerged from its 15-year civil

war without any formal reconciliation process or accountability plan for war crimes. Instead, the political settlement that followed the war, enshrined in the 1990 Taëf Agreement, was accompanied by a general amnesty in 1991, which shielded former warlords and militias from prosecution. Many of these individuals later re-entered public life as political leaders, effectively entrenching a culture of impunity. When interviewed by the author, Abi Allam<sup>15</sup> stated that the absence of truth commissions, memorialization efforts, or reparative measures has left profound historical wounds unaddressed (Abi Allam, personal communication, 2025). The generation that lived through the war did not have access to a formal channel to seek justice or recognition, and they have transmitted their grievances to their children, creating a vicious cycle of tensions and identity-driven divisions. On the other hand, Abou Jaoude Hassoun asserted that the lack of transitional justice had a direct and lasting impact on Lebanon's peace infrastructure (Abou Jaoude Hassoun, personal communication, 2025). In the absence of accountability, mistrust between communities persists, and grievances continue to intensify.

Not recognizing and dealing with the past violence results in a weak and divided social identity, which hampers the creation of a common vision for the future. Such a situation has driven people to hold even tighter to their sectarian identities as the main source of belonging and safety, thus diminishing the shared national identity. This identification reinforces the splits and increases the social fragmentation. Rather than fostering inter-communal solidarity, this has preserved the wartime status quo: people continue to perceive Lebanon through its civil war structure and drawing the distinction between West and East Beirut. The conditions for dialogue, reconciliation, and trust-building are, hence, weakened as people define themselves primary in opposition to others, with the past officially unspoken of yet socially present. Transitional justice mechanisms are foundational tools for repairing the social contract and creating the conditions for sustainable peace (Fischer, 2011; Robins et al., 2022). As a result of their absence, Lebanon remains vulnerable to cycles of violence, as unresolved grievances are passed through generations, and the absence of justice continues to breed resentment and instability.

### **8.2.2. *Mitigation Measures***

The legal frameworks are the essential parts of any sustainable peace infrastructure as they define the rules, rights, and mechanisms for societies to manage conflicts, hold offenders

---

<sup>15</sup> Fadi Abi Allam a peace activist, and the founder of the Permanent peace Movement one of the 1<sup>st</sup> pioneer NGOs in the field of peacebuilding in Lebanon. I interviewed him on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025.

accountable, and protect the rights of all citizens with dignity. The next part of the report suggests some measures to improve the justice system and to create a strong base for lasting peace by assuring fairness, independence, and accessibility.

It is crucial to acknowledge the role of electoral law as a foundational element of legal frameworks that support peace. In Lebanon, the frequent amendment of electoral laws in line with shifting political interests undermines both institutional continuity and citizens' trust in the democratic process. A standardized and inclusive electoral framework that remains consistent across cycles and is not subject to political manipulation is essential to ensuring fair representation, legal stability, and long-term conflict prevention. While this issue lies at the intersection of law and governance, its implications for peacebuilding are significant. As such, the opportunities related to electoral law reform will be addressed in detail in the following chapter.

#### **8.2.2.1. Court Level Mitigation**

The right to a fair trial is one of the most basic elements of justice and the mainstay of any peace structure that is based on the rule of law (Joseph & Castan, 2013). To address the problem of fair trial that Lebanon is experiencing, the government should set a definite limit for pre-trial detention, and that should be the case up to the moment of the trial itself, and this should be done by the National Human Rights Commission and other independent organizations that will oversee the process. At the same time, all prisoners should be given the right to have a lawyer of their choice immediately and privately from the time of their arrest, and special attention should be given to the most disadvantaged sections of the population, making sure that translation is provided in case it is needed. The courts should also work on improving the management of cases and simplifying court processes to cut down on the time taken and the number of people held in detention waiting for trial. These changes will not only help Lebanon to meet its legal commitments but will also be a big step towards rebuilding confidence among the public in the state's ability to administer justice fairly. Consequently, this will allow the government's social institutions to behave like legitimate peace makers, thus decreasing the attraction of informal sectarian alternatives and nurturing a culture of accountability, inclusion, and peaceful resolution of disputes.

The continued existence and broad jurisdiction of exceptional courts in Lebanon, particularly the Military Court, pose a serious challenge to the integrity of the legal system (Arab Lawyers Union, n.d.). Lebanon should take concrete steps to limit the jurisdiction of the

Military Court strictly to cases involving military personnel and to transfer all civilian cases to the regular judicial system. Legislative amendments to the Military Justice Code are needed to align the court's function with international norms and limit its broad jurisdiction. This will eliminate systemic ambiguity that currently enables judicial overreach. Dismantling the use of exceptional courts for civilian matters is essential to ensuring equal access to justice and preventing the weaponization of the legal system for political purposes. It also affirms the state's commitment to fairness, accountability, and the rule of law, encompassing the foundations for durable peace.

#### **8.2.2.2. Designing an Efficient Alternative Dispute Resolution System with Emphasis on Local Peace Mechanisms**

The ADR underdevelopment issue in Lebanon will not be solved unless accessible, culturally sensitive, and neutral conflict resolution mechanisms are adopted. Despite Lebanon's legal framework for arbitration being in place, it is mainly used for commercial and contractual disputes. There is a significant lack of community-oriented and ADR mechanisms that can be used in resolving social conflicts and disputes at the community level. Therefore, national legislation should be enacted that institutionalizes a comprehensive ADR framework that encompasses more than just commercial arbitration. This will be a framework that will delineate the processes for community mediation, family dispute resolution, and local arbitration while at the same time ensuring the process's transparency and neutrality.

Second, the establishment of community-level ADR centers, by municipalities, civil society actors, and local leaders, would make non-violent conflict resolution available at the grassroots level in neutral places. These centers would be settling disputes early and locally, thereby making it harder for larger sectarian or political tensions, especially in rural areas, to arise (International Crisis Group, 2016). In the end, the formal judicial system will incorporate ADR processes so they can further institutionalize their use. In the case of selected civil, community, and familial disputes, courts could rule that ADR should be the first step before litigation continues. This would make it easier to cope with the already congested judiciary system, as lessening case backlogs would also be one of the benefits, and ultimately, timely and culturally appropriate resolutions would be the result. In fact, when designing and implementing ADR mechanisms, it is essential to utilize Lebanon's rich cultural traditions that value dialogue, consensus-building, and hospitality.

Despite the country's history of political violence, Lebanese society retains deep-rooted norms that favor peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and strong community ties. These values are often expressed through practices like reconciliation, solidarity during struggles and tragedies, communal gatherings, and the social role of elders and respected figures in mediating disputes. Such customs demonstrate the indigenous inclination toward non-violent conflict resolution, which can be harnessed and formalized in the development of community-based ADR models. For instance, during periods of heightened sectarian tensions, such as the Jabal Mohsen and Tebbeneh conflict (in the region of Tripoli, Northern Lebanon), community leaders and religious figures often stepped in to broker peace informally between rival neighborhoods. In the Chouf (In Mount Lebanon) region, formal civil war rivals from the Druze and Christian communities have engaged in cross-sectarian dialogues supported by cultural rituals of reconciliation, such as shared meals, symbolic visits, and mutual hosting. These gestures, rooted in hospitality and respect, have served as confidence-building measures in communities. Furthermore, the practice of mutual aid, seen during crises such as the Beirut Blast and the 2024 displacement crisis during the Israeli war on Lebanon, demonstrates how social solidarity transcends sectarian lines when channelled through familial networks, neighborhood associations, and diaspora-supported initiatives. In fact, many people have opened their own houses to individuals who were affected by the blast or were displaced from the South, Bekaa, or Beirut.

Similarly, everyday language use in Lebanon also reflects these peace-oriented norms. The common Arabic greeting "Assalam Alaykom", meaning "Peace be upon you," is not just a polite formality; it carries a deep cultural expectation of goodwill, non-aggression, and mutual respect. The word "salam" (peace) is embedded in daily interactions, emphasizing the cultural value placed on nonviolence and harmonious social relations. Expressions like "ahlan wa sahlan" (used for welcoming people, meaning: you have arrived to your family and to your house), which derive from the idea of making one feel at home and at ease, speak to the deeply ingrained hospitality ethic. Equally meaningful are expressions like "sahha" and "sahtein", traditionally said when someone is eating or drinking. "Sahha" literally means "health", and "sahtein" is the dual form, meaning "double health", are used to wish someone wellness. These phrases, through casual, reflect a culture deeply attuned to communal well-being, generosity, and the joy of sharing. These linguistic and cultural practices are powerful tools for reducing social tensions: a kind word goes a long way. The acts of sharing a meal, a symbolic visit, or collaborative rebuilding efforts are grounded in cultural expressions of care and respect, and

function as everyday peacebuilding rituals. By incorporating these culturally embedded norms into formal peace infrastructure, through ADR centres, Lebanon can build a peace architecture that reflects its people's lived values. This approach increases legitimacy, promotes local ownership, and ensures that peacebuilding is not seen as a foreign imposition, but as a natural extension of the Lebanese culture (Sciences Po Paris, 2022).

As part of a broader I4P framework, the institutionalization of ADR mechanisms would help foster a culture of dialogue, reinforce state-society trust, and decentralize conflict resolution capacities. ADR offers citizens peaceful pathways to resolve grievances, which is critical in a context like Lebanon where formal state structures often lack legitimacy, capacity, and neutrality. It can serve as an effective interface between the state and its citizens, contributing significantly to long-term peace infrastructure enshrined in the local culture (Makram Oueiss<sup>16</sup>, personal communication, during a conference in LAU, Lebanon 50 years on – Bridging Divides A dialogue for positive Peace, conference).

### **8.2.2.3. Transitional Justice**

Transitional justice is a comprehensive framework encompassing processes and mechanisms designed to help societies confront the legacies of large-scale human rights abuses, mass atrocities, or severe social trauma, such as civil war. It involves a combination of complementary judicial and non-judicial strategies to build a more democratic, just, and peaceful future. At its core, transitional justice is about addressing past wrongs to ensure accountability, serve justice, and achieve reconciliation. It focuses on the rights and dignity of victims, seeking acknowledgment, accountability, and redress for the harms they suffered.

The implementation of transitional justice mechanisms is crucial for societies emerging from periods of widespread violence, as it offers a structured approach to deal with the extensive human rights violations that often characterize such times. While often focused on criminal justice initially, the field has broadened to include restorative and reparative justice, recognizing that societal reconstruction and reconciliation require more than just punishment.

---

<sup>16</sup> Makram Oueiss is Executive Director of the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS). Before joining the center, Oueiss was a professor of political science and international affairs, with a specialization in conflict analysis and resolution, at the Lebanese American University for nearly 15 years. He is the author of a number of articles and studies on the topics of civil peace, elections, religion and politics, and democratization. He has served as Senior Advisor for Elections to different Ministries and different NGOs and INGOs. He has served on the board of several civil society organizations working on civil peace, national dialogue, democracy-strengthening, and election observation. Oueiss holds a PhD from the School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University.

Historically, transitional justice has manifested in various forms around the world, demonstrating its potential for fostering peace and justice. For instance, the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa in 1995 served as a pivotal mechanism to address past human rights crimes. Similarly, in Latin America, countries like Argentina and Chile utilized truth-seeking efforts, such as the Argentine National Commission on the Disappearance of People (1983) and the Chilean Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1990), alongside reparations to victims, to expand the possibilities of comprehensive justice during their transitions. These examples underscore how tailored approaches to transitional justice can contribute to accountability and national healing.

In the Lebanese context, it is transitional justice that prepares the ground for genuine reconciliation, as it is driven not by retaliation or revenge but by deep necessity. The intention is not only to stop the fighting but also to create a situation in which people and society can have a positive talk about the now and learn from the past in order to make a hatred-free common future (Bonnem, 2024). As highlighted in an interview with Fadi Abi Allam on March 28, 2025, a prominent peacebuilder and political scientist, enlightening that in Lebanon, the focus is on understanding the roots of past conflicts and tackling the chronic structural issues that have fostered division. Their approach will not only ensure the non-recurrence of past traumas but also help to possess the trust roots and form a common national identity instead of letting the historical grievances grow, decay, and be exploited. This can clearly be seen as a shift from the reactive stance usually associated with peacebuilding to one that is proactive; it is taking the latter stance when it comes to anticipating conflicts and hence, a recognition that stability and security are only the by-products of a community's collective reckoning with history and a mutual agreement to live side by side.

Lebanon's history is punctuated by recurring episodes of violence, including internal conflicts, armed clashes, and assassinations. The Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) and the subsequent post-war period led to countless human rights violations, many of which remain unaddressed to this day. A staggering estimated 17,000 civilians were kidnapped or forcibly disappeared during the civil war, their fates still unknown. This unresolved trauma continues to haunt Lebanese society, creating a deep-seated need for truth and accountability.

However, rather than confronting these painful memories, the Lebanese state and society have largely favored an approach of "amnesia over truth seeking" (Jaquemet, 2008). This has resulted in the marginalization of victims, particularly the families of the missing and

forcibly disappeared, who have consistently struggled to find answers and justice (Jaquemot, 2008). This state-sponsored amnesia was formalized through a general amnesty law for war crimes, issued in 1991, which effectively exempted the majority of civil war protagonists from prosecution and legal liabilities. This blanket amnesty, while intended to promote disarmament and immediate stability, has left a profound legacy of impunity, contributing to a "negative peace" characterized by the mere absence of overt violence but without genuine reconciliation.

The shortcomings of this approach are evident in Lebanon's continued vulnerability to conflict recurrence. As observed by scholars, the failure of Lebanese governments to integrate genuine reforms and reconciliation efforts after the 1975-1990 civil war contributed to cycles of renewed violence and sporadic armed conflicts between 2005 and 2015. This indicates that unless the root causes of conflict are addressed through comprehensive reforms and reconciliation, conflicts can recur, often with greater intensity, and deepen existing societal divides.

The Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), established by UN Security Council Resolution 1757 (2007) to prosecute those responsible for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and other politically motivated attacks, further highlighted the selective nature of justice in Lebanon (Wierda et al., 2007). While intended to address specific crimes, its narrow jurisdiction fuelled perceptions of selective justice, exacerbating existing challenges to its legitimacy amidst a politically deadlocked Lebanese government (Wierda et al., 2007). Such selective justice, coupled with fears that the STL could be an instrument for foreign powers, undermined its potential to foster broader peace and stability (Wierda et al., 2007).

Therefore, transitional justice in Lebanon is not just about retributive punishment, but about addressing the systemic dysfunctions, endemic corruption, and mismanagement that have plagued the country for decades. It is about dismantling the "cold civil peace" that has allowed deep-seated grievances to fester, preventing the establishment of genuine reconciliation and a shared national narrative. The experience of Colombia's transitional justice process, with its gradual approach to international standards and focus on a legal framework that guarantees the permanence of measures, democratic participation, and victim empowerment, offers valuable guiding elements for Lebanon.

The crucial importance of transitional justice in Lebanon lies in its potential to break the cycle of impunity and foster a society where human rights are respected, and accountability is upheld. It aims to transform a "negative peace", defined as the mere absence of violence,

into a "positive peace" by addressing the structural and cultural forms of violence that underpin societal divisions. This means not only seeking truth for the missing and providing redress for victims, but also initiating institutional reforms that strengthen democratic participation and empower marginalized communities. Without such a comprehensive approach, Lebanon remains susceptible to future conflicts, as the unresolved issues of the past continue to cast a long shadow over its present and future. Lebanon's failure to implement transitional justice following the civil war has created a long-standing void in its peacebuilding infrastructure. The absence of transitional justice has deepened intergenerational trauma, fragmented collective memory, and reinforced sectarian and identity narratives.

Lebanon's young people continue to grow up in an environment where the civil war is rarely, if ever, discussed in formal settings. In schools, children still study the Phoenicians and the global wars, while the country's own modern history, including the 1975-1990 civil war and subsequent political crises, remains deliberately excluded from the curriculum with the excuse that narrating the history of the war could create future conflicts. This has created a vacuum in historical consciousness and left new generations to learn about these events informally from their parents, relatives, and community members. They often tend to absorb narratives shaped by sectarian bias. As a result, and even after three decades following the civil war, each generation inherits a partial and politicized version of history, reinforcing collective grievances and deepening social divides. The development of a unified history textbook that has all the narratives in it is, therefore, crucial to include Lebanon's modern history, covering the civil war and post-war political violence. Such a textbook, designed through cross-sectarian academic collaboration and vetted by independent historians, would provide young people with a balanced, inclusive, and factual understanding of their country's past. It would also help counter sectarian indoctrination, promote empathy and critical thinking, encourage the idea of being exposed to different narratives, and break cycles of inherited blame and division. Integrating transitional justice education, through both formal curricula and public awareness campaigns, into Lebanon's I4P framework would serve as a long-term investment in peace. It would empower new generations to move beyond the silence and distortions of the past and lay the groundwork for a more unified and resilient society. Lebanon will remain trapped in cycles of denial, division, and potential relapse into violence without a deliberate effort to confront the past and support national healing through truth, education, and reparative justice.

To further address this foundational gap, Lebanon must establish a National Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate past violence, record testimonies, and publicly

acknowledge wrongdoings. Even in the absence of prosecution, truth-telling is a vital first step in restoring dignity, validating victim experiences, and building a shared historical record. Such a commission would fill a critical void in Lebanon's post-war recovery, offering a structure, state-supported process for memory and reconciliation, which have not occurred through formal mechanisms to date. The commission's mandate should be tailored to Lebanon, with a primary focus on truth-seeking and moral acknowledgment rather than criminal prosecution (Dima de Clerck<sup>17</sup>, personal communication, 2 June 2025). Its objects would include documenting civil war-era and post-war violations such as massacres and forced disappearances. It should also collect and archive testimonies from victims, survivors, and even former combatants. The commission could also be responsible for establishing a shared, inclusive historical record of the conflict, making sure it highlights struggles faced by all parties, and this, in turn, can feed into the development of a unified history book. To ensure legitimacy, the commission should be established by a parliamentary legislation and should include a diverse panel of commissioners representing Lebanon's various regions, sects, and social groups, and ensure it functions independently. This commission should be a core pillar of I4P in Lebanon, acting as a moral and institutional anchor for national reconciliation and social cohesion. It would contribute to strengthening trust between communities and between the public and the state. The National Truth and Reconciliation Commission would lay the foundation for a new social contract based not on denial and fragmentation, but rather on shared memory, dignity, and non-repetition by breaking the silence around past violence (Hayner, 2010).

In this context, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, alongside the renewed ADR system, will not be viewed as separate activities but rather as interlinked elements that tackle conflict from different aspects and together strengthen the society to be more peaceful and just (Minow, 1998). The commission's work will therefore serve to heal the wounds of the past by reconstructing the historical narrative and creating trust between the parties and the state, whereas the ADR mechanisms will provide a ray of hope by delivering practical, accessible,

---

<sup>17</sup> Dima de Clerck holds a doctorate in History from the Université Panthéon-Sorbonne, with a focus on Druze-Christian relations and issues of memory and reconciliation. She is currently an associate researcher at the French Institute for the Near East (IFPO), a recurring visiting professor at Universities in France, and teaches at universities in both France and Lebanon. The author of numerous articles and the award-winning book *Le Liban en guerre* (2020, reissued in paperback in 2025, by Gallimard-Folio Histoire), she has co-edited two collective volumes: *1860, History and Memory of a Conflict* and *Liban 1975-1990: La guerre dans le rétroviseur*, and continues her research on wars in the Middle East. I interviewed her on 2 June, 2025.

and non-adversarial justice that gradually wins the trust of the individuals and communities. In this regard, the commission's results will not only be a source of information for the application of ADR initiatives but also a factor that strengthens the latter. To illustrate, the areas that the truth commission has pointed out as places where there has been trauma in the past could be given first priority in the establishment of community-based mediation or dialogue forums. Testimonies gathered by the commission can help shape the types of conflicts to be anticipated, the language to be used in dialogue facilitation, and the cultural sensitivities that must be respected. This can also contribute greatly to early warning systems, to strengthen conflict prevention. Together, these mechanisms would be grounded in the values that Lebanese society already holds (hospitality, dialogue, respect for the elders, and mutual aid), and articulated in a language that resonates with the population. Thus, establishing a localized I4P rich with cultural sensitivities, and in accordance with the local context. This is because an I4P framework that links the national with the local, the structural with the cultural, and the historical with everyday life will not only address Lebanon's past but also build the institutional and societal resilience needed to face future challenges. As such, the country can finally begin to replace silence with dialogue, fragmentation with cohesion, and impunity with recognition, laying the groundwork for a peace that is both sustainable and authentically Lebanese.

#### **8.2.2.4. Reconciliation and Dealing with the Past**

Dima de Clerck emphasizes that genuine reconciliation in Lebanon requires more than top-down initiatives; it must be a bottom-up process rooted in the people's own experiences and memories (de Clerck, personal communication, 2 June 2025). "A reconciliation of substance is needed, not just from the authorities or elites, but from the people themselves," she states. Dealing with the past is a crucial ongoing effort, one that involves a continuous process of memory and acknowledgment. The goal is not to deny or forget the past, but to confront it openly to prevent the repetition of destructive patterns.

On another note, de Clerck says that the way history is written holds significant importance. In her and Stephan Malsagne's recent book "*Le Liban en guerre*", they chose a thematic approach rather than a strictly chronological one. This method highlights shared suffering, common problems, and collective experiences across Lebanon's turbulent history. "All militias fought the war in similar brutal ways, using the same atrocities, and civilians suffered alike," she explains. By focusing on commonalities rather than divergence, this approach seeks to build understanding and healing. It is important to state that De Clerck and

Malsagne were pioneers in adopting this thematic methodology in history writing for Lebanon, aiming to uncover the shared aspects of Lebanese history, both the bad and the good, outside of ideological or propagandistic narratives.

On the issue of Truth and Accountability, de Clerck notes in one of her articles<sup>18</sup> that people no longer seek accountability, instead, what they truly desire is the truth. In the same direction, Wadad Halawani<sup>19</sup> the founder of the Committee for the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon, clarify that the parents and families of the disappeared want to know what happened to their loved ones, their goal is not accountability, their goal is just to reach their right to know the truth (Halawani, personal communication, 23 April 2025). Their primary demand is transparency and a sincere, honest apology. She believes that uncovering the truth is more powerful than accountability measures alone and plays a crucial role in the healing process.

In this thesis, it is acknowledged that, after all these years, almost 34 years since the war ended, many of those who committed atrocities are now either too old or have already passed away. The goal of the Truth and Reconciliation process, as well as the writing of history, is not to "open tombs" (a phrase often used in Lebanon to refer to digging into the past and disturbing the dead<sup>20</sup>), but rather to seek the Truth because it restores partially the rights of the victims and serves as an educational tool for future generations to learn from the past's mistakes and preventing falling into the same circles of violence again. Knowing the truth provides acknowledgment and justice for those who suffered, and it helps prevent the repetition of such horrors. While it may be too late to hold many war participants criminally accountable through justice systems, it is essential that impunity does not persist. "We need to ensure that such a system of impunity doesn't repeat itself," (de Clerck, personal communication, 2 June 2025).

---

<sup>18</sup> Dima de Clerck. *La Montagne : un espace de partage et de ruptures*. Institut Français du Proche-Orient. Liban : espaces partagés et pratiques de rencontre., Institut Français du Proche-Orient, pp.43-83, 2008, Les Cahiers de l'IFPO. (halshs-00326892)

<sup>19</sup> Wadad Halawani is a civil activist and founder of the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Missing in Lebanon. She has also been appointed a member of the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons in Lebanon which was established by law 105/1980. As a result of Lebanon's 1975-1990 Civil War, it is estimated that over 17,000 people, over 90 percent of which were men, were missing or forcibly disappeared. Most were never heard of again, including Wadad's husband, who went missing in 1982. Since his disappearance, Wadad has made it her mission to unite, amplify, and advocate for the voices of women, families, and victims of the kidnapped and missing from across Lebanon. In November 2028 and after 36 years of struggle, Law 105/2018 was ratified, granting families the "right to know." This law mandated the formation of an independent national commission to clarify the whereabouts of the missing and disappeared during the years of conflict in Lebanon. (<https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/stories/in-the-words-of/2024/02/in-the-words-of-wadad-halawani-we-are-women-of-peace-we-fight-for-the-truth>). I interviewed her on 23 April 2025

<sup>20</sup> Nabsh Al Kubur – نبش القبور

At the same time, this approach differs significantly from the one adopted immediately after the civil war, when two amnesty laws were enacted and the prevailing slogan was “God has forgiven what has passed<sup>21</sup>.” In contrast, this approach emphasizes the importance of acknowledging all the horrors that the Lebanese, have committed against one another, collectively and personally, and recognizing the pain endured as a result. It is about facing the truth, not to perpetuate impunity, but to understand and confront the shared history. Only through this acknowledgment the Lebanese people can plan together for a better, shared future.

This approach is specifically valid for the period of the civil war and until 1991; it is not at all a call to apply impunity to violations committed after 1991. Rather, it underscores the necessity of justice and accountability for all subsequent violations. Those responsible for crimes committed after the war must be held accountable, and no violation should go unexamined or unpunished. The pursuit of truth is fundamental, not only for justice but also for healing, reconciliation, and the construction of a collective memory that respects the suffering of victims and educates future generations about the devastating consequences of violence and division.

### **8.3. Civil Society Engagement**

Civil society in Lebanon has assumed an increasingly prominent role, as the government has been facing protracted political deadlock, economic collapse, and widespread institutional failure. While its contribution has been indispensable during the protracted crises plaguing the country, it has also revealed structural gaps that affect I4P frameworks.

#### **8.3.1. Gaps**

In the early 1990’s after the end of the war, the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon, in the wake of the 2019 economic collapse, the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Beirut port explosion, and the most recent Israeli war and displacement crisis in 2024, and many other crises between 1991 and 2024, civil society actors emerged as de facto substitutes for the absent state. In fact, the government remained largely absent from social protection planning and failed to roll out meaningful economic relief when faced with the financial crisis, the devaluation of the Lebanese pound, and rapid inflation. Public institutions struggled to function as state revenues shrank, and political elites remained locked in a cycle of blame and inaction.

---

<sup>21</sup> عفى الله عن ما مضى – Aafa Allah aan ma mada

Amid this institutional vacuum, civil society actors rapidly mobilized to provide essential services: distributing food parcels, hygiene kits, delivering medicine and oxygen supplies. Countless community-led initiatives filled the void left by the state, offering both immediate relief and a sense of solidarity. In doing so, civil society took on functions typically reserved for public institutions, setting a precedent for non-state actors becoming primary service providers during national emergencies. In all of these crises, the government's response was delayed, disorganized, and largely symbolic; Public institutions offered no coordinated relief, and victims received little support from the state. In contrast, Lebanese civil society stepped in instantly and comprehensively, taking charge of the emergency response and becoming the country's first responders, filling the humanitarian vacuum left by the state and deepening the gap between the state and the citizens.

However, this wave of mobilization also triggered the emergence of numerous new and untested NGOs. Many of them appeared in the aftermath of the crisis, primarily to access the surge of international aid and donor funding, only to cease operations months or a year later. While some of these initiatives were well-intentioned and impactful, others lacked transparency, accountability, credibility, and long-term plans. This has had serious implications for the civil society sector, as it blurred the line between genuine grassroots mobilization and opportunistic aid entrepreneurship.

Beyond immediate relief, NGOs and INGOs have been instrumental in fostering long-term development initiatives, building local capacity, and implementing projects related directly to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. However, this prominent role of NGOs also raises critical questions about their alignment with donor objectives, their potential to create a "parallel economy," and the ultimate implications for the Lebanese state's sovereignty and institutional development (Edward & Hulme, 1996). The "NGOization" of aid, while filling critical gaps, can inadvertently normalize a system where citizens function without a state, potentially entrenching existing power structures and clientelism rather than fostering genuine state-building.

This, in some instances, weakened the credibility of civil society as a peace actor and undermined its potential to serve as a reliable, long-term partner in peacebuilding efforts. As civil society repeatedly assumes responsibilities typically handled by the state, its role becomes less supplementary and more structural and integral. This shift undermines the state's legitimacy as a central actor in peacebuilding and social protection, while placing increasing pressure on civil society to fill the void. Individuals have come to place significant expectations on civil society organizations, particularly NGOs, regarding aid distribution, service provision,

and community support. When these expectations are not met, whether due to limited capacity, coordination challenges, or donor constraints, public trust in CSOs begins to erode drastically. As a result, NGOs are perceived as ineffective or self-serving, accused of collecting funds and personal data without offering tangible returns. This perception damages the credibility of civil society and weakens its ability to engage communities in meaningful peace dialogue and peacebuilding initiatives (Annan et al., 2021).

A very important issue and challenge that civil society has to face constantly in Lebanon is the lack of coordination among the different organizations. Even though they have the most active presence and play the most important role during emergencies, civil society actors often work separately, without any major strategic alignment. The result of this has been the duplication of efforts in the emergency response areas, which turned out to be very frustrating for the beneficiaries and caused the decline of trust in the CSOs even more. Uncoordinated actions make it harder for civil society to support a unified policy advocacy or institutional reform and thus limit the sector in its area of national peace infrastructure. Furthermore, the drawback is that communities see CSOs only as service and aid providers, thus other very important aspects of CSOs' work, like advocacy, awareness-building, and policy reforms, which usually are the indirect beneficiaries of the mentioned dimensions, go unnoticed or even dismissed.

This dynamic has been reinforced in Lebanon by years of crisis-driven programming, when NGOs were primarily funded and mobilized around humanitarian response rather than long-term peacebuilding. As a result, civil society's efforts to promote rights-based reform, foster inclusive governance, and push for accountability are frequently met with indifference, or even scepticism, by communities who expect direct material and financial assistance rather than structural change. This narrow perception constrains the civic space in which CSOs operate and further reduces their ability to engage citizens in processes of political dialogue, institutional reform, or social cohesion. This disconnect poses a significant barrier to I4P, as the latter is not limited to service provision, but rather requires a civil society capable of shaping policy, challenging unjust systems, and building trust between citizens and institutions (World Bank Group, 2005). The transformative role civil society plays in conflict prevention, mediation, and accountability diminishes when they are reduced to humanitarian actors. Thus, the development of a resilient peace infrastructure rooted in civic participation, inclusive dialogue, and shared responsibility for national recovery and reform is hindered.

Another major limitation facing civil society organizations in Lebanon is the dominance of short-term, donor-driven programming. Most NGOs depend heavily on external funding, which is often tied to rigid project cycles, predefined objectives, and shifting international priorities and agendas. This support has been crucial in sustaining humanitarian responses during crises, but at the same time, it has constrained organizations' ability to design and implement long-term, locally rooted, and Lebanon-tailored peacebuilding strategies. Moreover, most projects are bound by strict timeframes, which forces organizations to complete their activities within the limited duration of the funding cycle. This dynamic has fostered a project-based culture, where the success of civil society is measured by deliverables and deadlines rather than structural transformation, long-term impact, and sustained engagement. In fact, many beneficiaries have observed that some projects are launched but discontinued once funding ends, rendering them unsustainable.

The issue is exacerbated when donor agendas do not align with local priorities. In many cases, funding focuses on visible and externally prioritized outputs that do not always focus on the deeper work of institutional reform, social healing, or inclusive governance. A disconnect between the communities and the civil society actors is created and this is especially true when the programs look like they are imposed from outside or are not in contact with the ground realities and the needs of the communities. The short-termism affects the continuity, coherence, and legitimacy of the peacebuilding efforts as some initiatives are not able to deal with the root causes of the conflict or contribute in a meaningful way to national reconciliation and institutional strengthening. The programs that are designed externally, formed by the governments' agendas, tend to foster peacebuilding methods that are based on the external models which are not only hard to apply but also poorly suited to the country's culture, society, and political realities. Instead of emerging from the Lebanese communities, such interventions are imported as pre-packaged solutions with scant consideration of local values. The adoption of these external models not only diminishes local ownership but also fails to effectively tackle the root causes of conflicts in a contextually meaningful way. Sustainable peace cannot, in fact, be engineered through imported institutional blueprints; it has to be based on the society it wants to change from lived experiences, to traditions and political awareness (Funk & Said, 2010). Therefore, peacebuilding risks becoming superficial and not being able to support the stability and unity in Lebanon in the long run. Peacebuilding that bypasses the local strategies may end up fostering dependence, undermining local institutions, and neglecting local mediation mechanisms.

### ***8.3.2. Mitigation Measures***

As civil society organizations are increasingly taking on responsibilities traditionally reserved for public institutions, the boundaries between civil engagement and state functions have become dangerously blurred. This substitutional dynamic, coupled with fragmented coordination and donor-driven programming, has undermined both the legitimacy of the state and the effectiveness of civil society as a transformative peace actor. To strengthen civil society's contribution to Lebanon's I4P, there is a pressing need to shift away from emergency-driven, externally defined programmes toward more strategic, coordinated, and locally rooted engagements. This section will outline mitigation measures to address the key gaps previously identified to strengthen and localize this pillar of I4P.

Civil society should first be repositioned as a strategic partner in peacebuilding, rather than a substitute for public institutions. The government should establish delineated frameworks that define the respective responsibilities of the state and civil society within a national recovery and peace infrastructure. These frameworks should be solidified through state-CSO coordination platforms, whether at the municipal or national level, allowing both actors to align on priorities, avoid duplication, and co-develop response strategies without displacing one another. This would allow civil society to play a supportive, not structural, role in service provision, particularly during emergencies. Moreover, public communication efforts are needed to lower inflated expectations of NGOs, reinforcing that CSOs are not alternatives to state institutions but rather contributors to peacebuilding. At the same time, it is essential to broaden public understanding of the diverse roles civil society can play. While many NGOs are responsible for service delivery and humanitarian response, this comprises only one dimension of civil society's work. Many organizations are equally engaged in advocacy, rights-based reform, and long-term policy change: areas that are less visible but equally important to peacebuilding. This shift from humanitarian substitution to political co-production would allow civil society to strengthen the state, rather than replace it. It would also help rebuild trust in public institutions while anchoring peace in local participation.

Additionally, the rigid structures and donor-driven programming constrain organizations' ability to adapt to evolving local needs and invest in long-term relationship building (Leonardsson, 2020). As a result, civil society is often reduced to a subcontracting entity, executing externally designed interventions that may be technically sound but socially disconnected. Peacebuilding in Lebanon must then be reoriented toward greater local

ownership, sustainability, and cultural resonance. First, donors should be encouraged to offer more flexible, multi-year funding that prioritizes impact over output and allows organizations to plan beyond short-term project cycles. This ensures that CSOs can maintain a consistent presence and evolve with the communities they serve. A shift in program design processes is equally important to have peacebuilding interventions emerging from participatory, community-led diagnostics that stem from local needs and values rather than applying a one-size-fits-all model (Merhej, 2021). Civil society should not merely be implementers of donor agendas but should rather be political and cultural agents of transformation whose insights and strategies are essential for building a resilient, locally grounded I4P framework. This would recognize that effective peace cannot be engineered from the outside but must be cultivated from within, by those who are most affected. Civil society's strength lies in its proximity to communities, its adaptability, and its ability to articulate grievances that are often invisible to formal institutions. Therefore, CSOs should support inclusive local peace processes, amplify marginalized voices, and monitor the responsiveness of state institutions to social tensions. To formalize this role, Lebanon should create institutional entry points for CSOs within governmental bodies. This will allow civil society to contribute to the design, implementation, and monitoring of peace-related policies while preserving its independence.

In parallel to formal ADR mechanisms and the National Truth Commission, civil society can play an integral role in civic education, truth-telling, and countering disinformation. Rather than being confined to service delivery or isolated advocacy work, CSOs should be institutionally integrated into the country's peace infrastructure. They can work in tandem with state institutions, academic bodies, media, and traditional actors to build a shared vision for peace. Civil society can be the first contributor to a locally founded I4P strategy due to its connection and close work with community members. In fact, many of these organizations operate in direct contact with citizens, listening to their concerns, mediating community tensions, and responding to evolving needs. This proximity gives CSOs a unique access to the informal networks and relational dynamics that shape social cohesion or fracture it. Their work, especially with youth, women, and entire neighbourhoods, often provides the earliest signs of social unrest or emerging fault lines. This makes civil society an invaluable source of insight for the design of peace initiatives that reflect the realities on the ground rather than imported models or abstract institutional frameworks. This not only can be leveraged to formulate early warning systems and prevent conflict, but it can also enhance I4P strategies by anchoring them to grassroots work and realities. Lebanon can, therefore, develop a peace infrastructure that is

both credible and contextually meaningful, one that resonates with people's lived experiences and aspirations.

## **8.4. Capacity Building**

International and civil society actors have notably been the main contributors of capacity-building efforts in Lebanon that have been implemented in various ways; nevertheless, there are still some areas and factors limiting and affecting the sustainability, inclusiveness, and long-term impact of such initiatives. This lack of sustainability stems from trainings, particularly those that are related to peacebuilding and governance, being held as isolated workshops with no means for follow-up, institutional embedding, or providing participants with a chance to use the skills acquired through the training. Conflict resolution, negotiation, and empowerment of youth workshops may be successful at raising awareness and passing on knowledge; nonetheless, the absence of continuity and practice causes their impact to be at most shallow and limited. Therefore, the goal of building the capacity that can lead to sustainable peace has not been achieved. In the case of Lebanon, sometimes the training programmes are merely a symbolic act, thus, fulfilling the donor's requirements but not resulting in any significant and lasting change.

### **8.4.1. Gaps**

Training programmes have mainly targeted community individuals across sectors, yet rarely do sessions aim to enhance public servants' capacities. The effectiveness of public institutions is contingent on the technical knowledge and commitment of employees. This has been the main issue in Lebanese institutions, as many suffer not only from underfunding but also a shortage of technical expertise and institutional know-how. As a result of this gap, donor investments in public sector reform have generated limited structural change. Public employees often struggle to understand, implement, or sustain donor-funded reforms because they do not receive proper training and operational support (Haase, 2017). This lack of internal capacity frequently leads to delayed timelines, limited commitment, and poor long-term outcomes, even with projects being realistically designed. This not only restricts the ability of public institutions to function as credible and autonomous actors in conflict resolution and governance but also impacts the effectiveness of civil society. In the absence of capable and cooperative public institutions and public servants, NGOs face barriers to aid the government in implementing reforms, policy dialogue, and peace initiatives. This resulting vacuum forces civil society organizations to take on state responsibilities, blurring institutional roles and

straining their own resources and credibility. These dysfunctional dynamic fragments peacebuilding efforts, not only by overburdening civil society, but also by creating disjointed responses in the absence of skilled public servants able to engage, collaborate, and understand institutional responsibility. This weakens I4P in Lebanon and limits the coherence of peacebuilding frameworks.

#### **8.4.2. *Mitigation Measures***

Capacity building in I4P refers not only to the technical training of individuals, but also to the development of resilient institutions, responsive systems, and a broader societal capacity to manage conflict peacefully. The lack of capacity building to all social groups and the absence of capacity strengthening to public servants have reinforced a divide between state and society, where the tools and knowledge required for conflict-sensitive governance are not uniformly distributed.

The absence of peace education, whether in schools, universities, or community spaces, has exacerbated this problem (Makram Oueiss, conference at LAU, Lebanon 50 years on - Bridging Divides: A dialogue for positive Peace, 23 April 2025). Generations of Lebanese youth continue to grow up without the critical tools, values, and narratives necessary for reconciliation, coexistence, and shared national identity. Indeed, many schools in Lebanon teach the catechism of their own religion but fail to provide education related to religious literacy or diversity, which would promote coexistence and facilitate the development of a shared identity among different sectarian groups. In this context, capacity building must be reimagined not as a technical activity or donor deliverable, but as a long-term, inclusive, and contextually grounded process that spans both institutional reform and societal transformation.

Dr. Nemer Freyha observes that the public school has not fulfilled its intended duty of reinforcing national identity and enhancing citizens' sense of belonging to the state (Freyha, 2003). Rather, it has frequently become a symbol of Lebanon's complex and multifaceted sectarian and political tensions.

Freyha points out that civic education can only succeed if the public school is designed as an inclusive institution that works towards building citizens, not merely educating students. Nevertheless, since its inception, the Lebanese public school has never been the product of a cohesive national educational policy. Instead, it has frequently been a victim of Lebanon's confessional and sectarian political climate. This has made it incapable of constructing an integral national consciousness because it lacks unified curricula recounting the same narrative

of a shared history and a school environment that promotes citizenship values and belonging to the nation rather than to sect or political party identification.

One of the most compelling indications that the state has not managed to build a shared national identity through education is the ongoing controversy over a shared history textbook. This failure is not a technical failure but rather an indication of the Lebanese state's failure to unite the collective memory of its people. Adnan El-Amin argues that the absence of an inclusive historical narrative provides generations with no collective understanding of their history; thus, cannot all concur on what the present ought to be and move toward a shared future (El-Amin, 1994).

Additionally, the currently adopted curricula do not contribute to constructing civic awareness, as they emphasize technical and theoretical knowledge rather than placing values like responsibility, justice, human rights, and civic belonging. This shortcoming cannot be attributed solely to weak educational vision, but also to the direct intervention of political and sectarian powers intent on preserving their own histories.

Both Freyha and El-Amin argue that the Lebanese state has also neglected public schools in budgetary provision, logistical support, and human resources, leading to their low quality and diminishing ability to attract students. In contrast, private schools, most of the times sponsored by sectarian or religious institutions, have prospered, typically offering curricula that reinforce communal rather than national identities.

Therefore, schools are no longer serving the function of being institutions for forging a common national identity; instead, they have become spaces that reinforce fragmented loyalties. Rather than unifying Lebanese children under one national roof, the education system allows them to grow up in isolated spaces where they learn divergent historical narratives.

One of the main arguments raised by Freyha is that the root cause of the failure of the state to form a public school system that reflects national identity is the absence of genuine political will. The sectarian power-sharing system does not aim to build citizens, but aims to maintain clientelism and loyalty to sectarian forces, thereby diminishing any effort to establish an integrated national project. El-Amin also underlines that civic education is not a school subject to be taught in the curriculum but rather a comprehensive system of values and practices reflected in styles of teaching, the ethos of life in school, relations between students, administration, and students' awareness of their role as citizens.

Capacity building should primarily stop being treated as a finite event and start being considered a process, so that it can contribute meaningfully to the development of a durable, locally embedded I4P. Trainings should be intentionally linked to practical, real-life opportunities for participants to apply and reinforce the skills they acquire. For instance, young people who receive training in conflict resolution or dialogue facilitation could be supported to launch peer mediation initiatives in their schools or universities, where students are empowered to resolve interpersonal disputes peacefully and cultivate a culture of listening and nonviolence. These school-based programs not only provide participants with leadership roles but also normalize peaceful conflict management among their peers from an early age.

At the community level, trained individuals could be mobilized to assist in local reconciliation processes, particularly in areas with historical tensions or recent incidents of violence. They might start by identifying community tensions in certain areas and thinking of areas of intervention. Additionally, with proper mentoring from experts, they can act as intermediaries between different segments of society and be considered as neutral entities. In doing so, their training becomes a resource for the community, and peacebuilding becomes more embedded in public life. Similarly, participants in civic engagement or advocacy trainings could be encouraged to launch civic action projects tied to the priorities of their own neighbourhoods. This could mean organizing intergroup dialogues, addressing local sources of tension such as shared public spaces, raising awareness about social justice issues, or being active in the municipalities of their areas.

Furthermore, follow-up mechanisms are essential in ensuring continuity, fostering a sense of accountability, and avoiding the short-lived impact of standalone trainings. Mentorship programs can bridge the gap between knowledge acquisition and confident application. New trainees can be paired with more experienced practitioners, whether civil society actors, social workers, or municipal officials. This way participants gain guidance, and a living example of how peacebuilding can be practiced effectively. Mentorship helps reinforce technical skills, and cultivates leadership, professionalism, and emotional resilience, which are critical in conflict-sensitive environments.

Another method to ensure that training participants have tangible, structured platforms to apply their knowledge is forming strategic partnerships with municipalities, schools, and local institutions. These act as entry points into local communities, and represent stable, visible sites of public life where peacebuilding practices can take root and influence broader social

norms. For instance, municipalities can serve as hosts for community dialogue forums, participatory planning initiatives, or early warning committees led by trained local actors. When these efforts are institutionally supported, their impact becomes more sustainable and integrated into local governance structures, rather than isolated from them. In schools, partnerships could allow trained educators and youth leaders to embed peace education principles in classroom discussions, extracurricular activities, or peer clubs.

Schools are critical environments for instilling habits of dialogue, empathy, and cooperation, especially in a country like Lebanon, where sectarian division and political fragmentation often begin with youth specialization. Turning schools into active sites of peace practice, these partnerships create ripple effects that extend far beyond the immediate training. This shift from knowledge transmission to experiential peace learning enhances the effectiveness of training and contributes to a broader culture of peace at the community level.

Capacity building should also be systematically extended to the public sector, not as an afterthought but as a central component of a national I4P strategy. This means designing tailored training tracks for government employees at both national and municipal levels, with a focus on ministries directly linked to peace and governance, such as Justice, Education, Social Affairs, Interior, and Local Administration. These trainings should be embedded in the professional development system of the public sector, linked to promotions and performance evaluations, and accompanied by mentoring, peer exchange, and operational toolkits. The Ministry of Justice could receive training on conflict-sensitive legal frameworks, restorative justice practices, and the institutionalization of ADR. The Ministry of Education could integrate peace education into curriculum development and teacher training programs. Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) should also contribute to the creation of a unified history book for schools. The Ministry of Social Affairs should provide training on community mediation, trauma-informed service delivery, and protection-sensitive case management. Municipalities and public administrations could benefit from training in participatory governance, local dialogue facilitation, and inclusive service provision. To ensure sustainability, these training programs should be embedded within public sector human resources systems and should be directly linked to civil servants' career advancement, performance evaluation, and promotion criteria. In doing so, peacebuilding competencies would not be treated as external or optional skills, but as core qualifications for effective public service (Fadi Abi Allam, private communication). This model shifts the culture of the public sector from passive administration toward proactive, citizen-centred governance. It ensures that

technical staff and mid-level bureaucrats, who are often the backbone of institutional functioning, have not only the tools but also the incentives to operationalize peace-sensitive approaches in their daily work. This would help transform Lebanese state institutions into more responsive, trustworthy, and capable actors within a broader I4P.

In addition, peace education indirectly contributes to Lebanon's I4P framework by creating a generation that can support peace through difficult times and interventions by donors. It integrates the idea of prevention of conflict into the social fabric, thereby bringing about the gradual change of norms from division and zero-sum thinking to negotiation and mutual respect. The educational approach to peace is an academic reform strategy and a long-term investment in social cohesion, political literacy, and resilience. Thus, the next generations will be empowered to face and change the conflict legacies of Lebanon constructively. This is especially important in a context like Lebanon, where unresolved disagreements, unmentioned histories, and divided communities' discourse still define how people see themselves and others. These narratives, if not addressed, become part of people's beliefs and gradually contribute to the division of society and mistrust among communities. Thus, peace education simply creates a disruption in the cycle of conflict. It provides a careful area where the young ones can be taught the causes of past violence, think about the negative impact of sectarian narrative, and start to think of the differences and "the Other" in alternative, nonviolent ways. It also provides the young with the power: the opportunity and conviction to oppose the prevalent views with their own, to act as the peacemakers where no one is willing, and to participate in such activities as the government proposing or enforcing that are based on cooperation and justice. These are the exact competencies and characteristics that together make the I4P foundation and support a community that is composed of the people who can lower tensions before they blow up, take part in the institutions' processes instead of using violence or just being silent, and who comprehend peace not as war's absence (negative peace) but temperance, inclusive, and the like's presence.

## **8.5. Economy**

### **8.5.1. Gaps**

Lebanon's post-war political economy is a warning on how the combination of neoliberal reconstruction and sectarian power-sharing can slowly but surely dismantle the foundations of sustainable peace. Since the civil war ceased in 1990, the economic model of Lebanon has been shaped by giving precedence to private wealth accumulation, rent-seeking,

and clientelism rather than to inclusive development and institutional reform. The initial portrayal of this trajectory as modernization turned out to be social inequality deepening, corruption flourishing, and the steepening of the path leading to one of the most severe economic crises of the twenty-first century.

After the Taëf, Lebanon sought to rebuild its war-torn infrastructure through liberalization, privatization, and market integration. This strategy, which was driven by Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, was a reflection of the global neoliberal trends of the 1990s and approved by international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank (Mintchev et al., 2019). The government was going to allow foreign investment, reduce market regulations, and service sector to grow. Initially, these measures generated optimism and attracted capital inflows, positioning Beirut as a center of finance and trade. However, the successful-looking façade concealed serious structural weaknesses: a hollowed productive base, escalating debt, and an economy dependent on foreign remittances and speculative investment rather than sustainable growth.

By the early 2000s, Lebanon's economy was a rentier-financial hybrid model. Remittances from diaspora and Gulf capital inflows accounted for nearly 20% of GDP, and the trade deficit was between 25% and 35% of GDP, the highest globally (Baz et al., 2025). The fixed exchange rate policy, intended to stabilize the national currency, further intensified financial dependency. Dollar interest rates were run high to lure in dollar deposits, profiting the banks instead of productive investment. GDP growth remained stagnant while public debt ballooned to \$92 billion in 2019, or 170% of GDP (Al-Estiklal Newspaper, 2021).

These economic measures were deeply integrated into Lebanon's sectarian political structure. The Taëf Agreement's consociational framework entrenched elite control in all aspects, directing state resources through sectarian patronage networks (Salloukh, 2024). As Salloukh observes, this system made the state an instrument for elite accumulation rather than public welfare (Salloukh, 2024). The intertwining of political and economic power not only prevented institutional reform but also promoted inequality and corruption, eliminating social cohesion.

The neoliberal reconstruction model was epitomized by the urban megaprojects such as Solidere, a company granted exclusive rights to rebuild downtown Beirut. Solidere's operations symbolized widespread dispossession, where many property owners were expropriated at undervalued prices to allow upscale developments (Lorens et al., 2022). At the

same time, austerity measures and privatization of government-owned utilities such as telecommunication and electricity extended socioeconomic disparities (Kostanian, 2021).

By the 2010s, structural weaknesses of this economic system had become increasingly visible. Both gross debt and total net debt to GDP ratios have been on a steady decline due to sustained economic growth with a real GDP growth estimated at 8.1% in 2009 and 6.3% in 2010 (Jad, 2012). By 2018, 0.8% of bank accounts controlled 51.8% of deposits, while 60.5% of accounts controlled only 0.5% of deposits (Abdo et al., 2020).

The 2019 financial meltdown was thus an unavoidable result of decades of economic incompetence and elite domination. The Central Bank's policy of attracting deposits through high interest rates, effectively a "Ponzi scheme", failed when inflows slowed. Lebanon had its first default on international debt in 2020. The Lebanese pound lost nearly 95% of its value, inflation has exceeded 200%, and poverty rate had nearly doubled from 42% in 2019 to 82% in 2021 (Sabaghi, 2022). The recent Israeli war on Lebanon exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, resulting in widespread physical loss and migration. Losses are estimated to be around \$10 billion in direct damages and economic losses for Lebanon according to some expert assessments (no official numbers are out yet). In addition to that, it is estimated that around 100,000 housing units were damaged and 166,000 jobs lost (Newsdesk, 2024).

The nexus between the political and economic elites further deepened these structural problems. As stated in Chapter 3, the oligarchy, comprising powerful families often holding high-ranking positions in banking, commerce, and government, benefited immensely from privatization schemes and clientelist allocations of state contracts.

Experts widely link this crisis to neoliberal policies initiated following the civil war. Joseph Daher argues that the policies, supported by ruling elites, regional and international investors, implemented a highly financialized economy that accentuated spatial and social inequalities (Daher, 2019). Toufic Gaspard addressed how illiberal policies carried out in reconstruction, public finances, and monetary policy joined forces with record levels of corruption, contributing to the nation's predicament (Gaspard, 2003). Fatiha Jellou argued that this crisis is rooted in the very political economy of sectarianism and neoliberal policies that place the financial industry's interests above economic diversification and social equality (Kostanian, 2021). The crisis not only destroyed livelihoods but also eroded Lebanon's precarious post-war peace. Galtung's structural violence theory is an applicable model of analysis: institutionalized inequality and exclusion were the economic model's signature, and

invisible violence kept the instability in place (Degortes, 2024). The failure to implement social justice and equitable reforms meant that peace was merely superficial.

### ***8.5.2. Mitigation Measures***

Lebanon's persistent economic crisis underscores that traditional interventions rooted in neoliberalism and sectarian patronage are insufficient for fostering genuine peace and social equity. To forge a path toward sustainable stability, Lebanon must embrace out-of-the-box, transformative approaches that intricately link economic fairness with peacebuilding.

A fundamental shift from a rentier-financial hybrid model to a productive, diversified economy is paramount. Instead of perpetually courting foreign capital that often exacerbates existing inequalities, a deliberate policy of localized, green investments must be pursued. This entails channelling resources into underutilized domestic sectors, particularly agriculture and small-scale manufacturing, which historically faced neglect in favor of the service industry and imports as showed in Chapter 3 when analyzing the economic context during the French mandate, after the independence and before the civil war. This section tries discuss some interconnected, new strategies that pivot from conventional reform paradigms to catalyze social cohesion and equitable development.

As shown before, the centralized, elite-controlled economic governance structure has demonstrably failed Lebanon, channelling resources through sectarian patronage networks and impeding genuine reform. A radical departure from the traditional model necessitates the decentralization of economic decision-making and the empowerment of local actors. Municipalities and local actors who usually have a good grasp of the needs and the interactions within the community must be the main players in the economic growth process. Rather than bypassing the state entirely, which might further incapacitate it, international and national aid should cooperate with these local partners in a strategic manner. This includes increasing direct funding to municipalities, cooperatives, and local actors, and their technical capabilities are being developed, not only in their involvement in the designing, implementing, and monitoring of aid programs, but also in their involvement throughout the whole process. George Corm, a Lebanese economist who served as Finance Minister for a short time, has repeatedly recommended measures that would strengthen the free market and make it in line with Arab economic ties, thus giving a wider area perspective on the concept of economic self-sufficiency, which can be achieved through the empowerment of local actors (Corm, 2001).

This approach transforms beneficiaries from passive recipients into active participants in their own economic recovery, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability. It also directly challenges monopolistic control of the oligarchy over key economic sectors by diversifying pathways for economic opportunity and development. Toufic Gaspard, in his analysis of Lebanon's economic development, stresses that policy matters and that laissez-faire approaches do not inherently promote capitalism or deliver equitable outcomes, implicitly supporting the need for directed, decentralized intervention (Gaspard, 2003). This creates a grassroots-driven, inclusive economic development model that can effectively address the persistent social and geographic inequalities that have historically fueled resentment and instability.

One of the strategies that can be adopted is the establishment of a community-embedded, green economic ecosystem that gives Lebanon's underutilized sectors more potential for inclusive growth (sectors like agriculture, crafts, small-scale manufacturing, etc.) This entails creating localized eco-industrial clusters driven by participatory governance models, where communities co-design sustainable practices aligned with their socio-cultural contexts (Nahas, 2020). Moreover, prioritizing "green" initiatives within these sectors, such as promoting sustainable agricultural practices and renewable energy, not only addresses the nation's energy crisis but also aligns with global sustainability goals, potentially attracting impact-driven investments that prioritize social and environmental returns alongside financial ones. This strategy directly counters the "hollowing out of the state" by fostering local economic resilience and reducing external dependence, a point echoed by Charbel Nahas, a former minister and an economist, in his calls for a new political economic system to prevent the consumption of Lebanon's resources (Nahas, 2020).

Other local economists and politicians also emphasized the same principle of decentralization. For instance, Georges Corm emphasis on economic regional sovereignty that would result in decentralizing resource management. Gaspard discusses how empowering municipalities and local cooperatives to oversee renewable energy projects, water conservation, and organic agriculture creates resilient local economies less vulnerable to external shocks (Gaspard, 2003).

Another major change that can be implemented in the new economic policies is the integration of social justice into green investments by prioritizing marginalized communities and refugee populations. This can happen by providing land rights, technical training, and

microfinancing for eco-friendly enterprises, which will foster economic agency and reduce marginalization (Dib, 2025; Nahas, 2020). Instead of merely providing humanitarian aid, which, while necessary, can foster dependence, the focus should be on creating sustainable livelihoods that generate local capital and reduce vulnerabilities. For instance, incentives could be offered to landowners and employers to recruit individuals from marginalized Lebanese communities and refugee populations, coupled with technical support, capacity building, and small loans.

Another level of this ecosystem can be adopted by developing a participatory certification system that enables communities to access global markets through eco-labeling and fair-trade certifications, ensuring local benefits and reinforcing social cohesion (Dib, 2025). This ecosystem also finds eco with Kamal's Dib call for rethinking Lebanon's economic DNA, by moving from rentier dependencies to productive community-driven development cohesion (Dib, 2025). Such localized green hubs serve as peacebuilding nodes, reducing inequalities and fostering shared identities and interests.

On another note, as Lebanon's crisis is deeply rooted in intergenerational inequity, like debt burdens and unequal access to services, which threaten social cohesion (Nahas, 2020). A transformative policy would be the establishment of a "Social Contract Investment Fund" (SCIF) designed as a sovereign wealth vehicle that can accomplish many functions. One of the functions of SCIF could be to use a portion of the central reserves and the international aid to fund social justice projects cohesion (Dib, 2025; Corm, 2001). Another function of the SCIF could be to fund public education, healthcare, and affordable housing, especially in neglected regions, targeting marginalized groups and youth, creating pathways for upward mobility and reducing resentment. This SCIF will operate with transparency and participatory governance, echoing Nahas' advocacy for a fair distribution of risks and benefits, but also innovates by institutionalizing a long-term, intergenerational stewardship mechanism (Nahas, 2020) it shifts the focus from short-term relief to building social capital, where social investments reduce grievances caused by inequality and foster a shared sense of ownership and hope.

Additionally, this section suggests institutionalizing a "Peace Dividend" through local economic autonomy. As peacebuilding literature underscores the importance of tangible economic benefits in consolidating peace (Galtung, 1969), we see that Lebanon's reliance on external inflows perpetuates fragility. Some mechanisms could help change the situation. One mechanism would be to create local peace dividend zones where selected districts receive

autonomous fiscal and administrative powers based on peace and social cohesion indicators (Gaspard, 2003; Nahas, 2020). This mechanism is also linked to another mechanism where Community-Driven Development (CDD) models, including local communities (rather than sectarian elites), manage funds for infrastructure, social programs, and economic empowerment with oversight from a national peace council (Dib, 2025; Galtung, 1969). These mechanisms can result in creating a peace-earnings link (Galtung, 1969) that relates directly to economic autonomy with peace monitoring.

On another level, the current fiscal framework in Lebanon, characterized by regressive policies and minimal social protection, has exacerbated economic disparities. A truly transformative approach requires comprehensive fiscal reforms that prioritize equity and social justice. This includes implementing progressive tax reforms, strengthening social safety nets, and investing heavily in public services. Charbel Nahas, explicitly calls for a financial, economic, and social correction plan based on a fair distribution of risks and losses, and a strong, secular state political project (Nahas, 2020). His analysis underscores the urgency of addressing the “structural deficit” and the unbearable burden of debt service and taxes on citizens. A robust, rights-based social protection system is no longer a luxury but a fundamental necessity for stability (Nahas, 2020).

Beyond basic safety nets, fiscal policy can be utilized to promote economic inclusion more broadly. For example, rather than merely relying on international aid, the government could explore innovative financing mechanisms for local businesses, such as a national investment fund specifically dedicated to supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in productive sectors, offering low-interest loans and grants. This directly counters the tendency for capital to be concentrated in the hands of a few and democratizes access to financial resources. Furthermore, investing in quality public education and healthcare, particularly in underserved regions, is crucial for human capital development and reducing long-term inequalities. Georges Corm has also highlighted the importance of transparency and efficient governance in public spending and taxation systems as key reform goals. These measures, while politically challenging in a system entrenched by entrusted interests, are non-negotiable for building a society where all citizens have fair opportunities for a sustainable livelihood and can accumulate assets securely, thus fostering a shared stake in peace (Corm, 2001). The current tax system, heavily reliant on indirect taxation, disproportionately burdens the poorest, making direct, progressive taxation a critical component of any reform (Assouad, 2021). Nahas further suggests that the state has been hiding the losses by worsening them,

emphasizing the need for political courage to achieve a clear and fair reallocation of losses (Nahas, 2020). This would involve measures such as increasing top marginal tax rates and implementing wealth taxes, as proposed in analyses of Lebanon's extreme inequality (Assouad, 2021).

Many economists and scholars highlight the importance of re-evaluating the banking sector's dominance, which historically undermined other productive areas. Kamal Dib, a prominent Lebanese economist, critically examines the historical role of Lebanon's banking sector in shaping the country's fragile economic landscape. For decades, Lebanon's economy has been heavily reliant on the banking sector's dominance, which has not only facilitated a rentier economy but also marginalized productive sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, and technology (Dib, 2025). This over-reliance on financial flows has created a distorted economic architecture, where the pursuit of short-term profits within the banking system often overshadows investments in real, sustainable productive activities.

This dominance of the banking system was reinforced by policies that prioritized attracting dollar deposits through high interest rates, which, in essence, functioned as a form of financial rent-seeking (Dib, 2025). While initially fueling liquidity and financial stability, this model became unsustainable as it fostered a "financial bubble," disconnected from the real economy.

Recent economic developments, particularly the devaluation of the Lebanese pound and the decline of foreign inflows, have inadvertently begun to challenge this status quo. As imported goods become prohibitively expensive, local producers, ranging from small farmers to artisans, are experiencing a natural market-driven shift toward domestic production. This organic movement, while initially driven by crisis, presents a unique opportunity to reorient Lebanon's economic structure.

It is important to implement policies that limit the banks' dominance in credit allocation, favouring instead the development of credit lines directly targeted at productive sectors. This could involve establishing specialized development banks or cooperative financial institutions that prioritize real economy investments over speculative activities (Dib, 2025).

In addition to that, incentivize banks to channel a portion of their assets into local enterprises through favourable lending terms, equity participation, or public-private partnership models. This could be supported by government guarantees or risk-sharing

mechanisms, reducing the perceived risk for banks while promoting productive investments (Nahas, 2020). Other practices can be taken like, strengthening regulatory oversight to prevent banks from engaging in rent-seeking behaviours that drain resources away from productive sectors, in addition to enforcing transparency and accountability in banking operations, discouraging the use of public deposits for speculative gains rather than national development (Gaspard, 2003). To support access to affordable finance through microcredit schemes is another strategy, especially for marginalized communities and refugees, thus fostering social inclusion and economic resilience (Pistelli, 2019).

After the last economic crisis and all of the instability that it has generated, it is crucial also to reassess macroeconomic policies that favor financial stability over productive capacity. For example, moving away from fixed exchange rates and high-interest deposit policies that incentivize capital flight and speculative behaviour (Gaspard, 2003).

Re-evaluating the banking sector's dominance is not merely an economic adjustment but a strategic move toward social justice and peace. By redirecting financial resources from rent-seeking to productive sectors, Lebanon can generate sustainable employment, reduce economic disparities, and foster social cohesion. This transition addresses the root causes of social resentment rooted in economic marginalization, a key factor undermining durable peace (Galtung, 1969).

The persistent crisis in Lebanon serves as a poignant reminder that economic policy is not a neutral endeavour; it is inherently political and can either perpetuate structural violence or lay the groundwork for positive peace. The conventional, neoliberal reconstruction model, exacerbated by sectarian capture, has demonstrably led to widespread inequality, pervasive corruption, and a societal unravelling. Moving forward, Lebanon requires an "out-of-the-box" economic strategy, one that is locally grounded, inclusive, and fundamentally reorients economic activity towards social justice.

## **8.6. Communication Channels**

Communication channels serve an integral role in information exchange and conflict resolution, especially in deeply divided societies. However, if these platforms are harnessed irresponsibly, they reinforce the already present structural, societal, and identity-based divisions. This is precisely what most Lebanese channels accomplish. In fact, Lebanon's

communication landscape is plagued by a politicized and elite-based environment, particularly among mainstream television channels.

### **8.6.1. Gaps**

The local television stations are directly affiliated with political parties or elite families. For example, the station Al-Manar is run by Hezbollah (Shiia), Future TV was long associated with Hariri and Future political bloc (Sunni), OTV belonged to the Free Patriotic Movement (Christians), Al Jadeed was in close relationships with left and populist groups, whereas LBCI and MTV have marked their territory within different factions of Christian political parties. To a great extent, these stations rely on party funding and sponsorship networks, which impact the ideas they express. The audience might doubt the fairness of the media since it blurs the boundary between journalism and propaganda, where the coverage would mainly focus on politics and serve the interests of the political groups, promote sectarian and identity narratives, and discredit the opposing voice. The problem is exacerbated by the tendency of people and communities to consume media that expresses their political and sectarian affiliations, reinforcing stereotypes of the “Other” and escalating the existing divisions, along with the unresolved issues. Such a scenario poses serious concerns for the I4P framework in Lebanon.

Media outlets in Lebanon frequently heighten polarization and frame events through partisan lenses, instead of serving as a space for informed public dialogue or inclusive debate (Cochrane, 2007). Media narratives tend to escalate tensions rather than de-escalate them, focusing on blame, identity-division, or zero-sum rhetoric, especially during political crises or national emergencies. In such a fragmented environment, communication fails to act as a bridge between communities or between the public and state institutions, deteriorating the very foundation of I4P.

In this context of highly polarized media narratives, the absence of clear, timely, and transparent communication from the state becomes even more problematic. Government institutions rarely provide consistent public messaging or accessible updates on national matters during economic crises, health emergencies, or political deadlock (Makhoul et al., 2021). They even rarely use the state’s only public television station, Télé Liban (TL), which has suffered from chronic underfunding and severe mismanagement (Kostanian, 2021). Its weakened presence and limited outreach have rendered it largely irrelevant, and people scarcely resort to it. Thus, the public was compelled to rely on private and politically affiliated channels. The state’s inability to revitalize TL represents a missed opportunity to create an

institutional communication channel that could promote national cohesion, transparency, and inclusive dialogue. This has widened the gap between citizens and institutions destabilizing the I4P foundations in the country due to the erosion of peaceful dialogue. Citizens' reliance on partisan media led to the collapse of collective problem-solving, trust-building, and early conflict prevention processes (Khneisser, 2018; Kozman et al., 2022). Lebanon's peace infrastructure remains deeply impaired and unable to function as a space for constructive engagement or as a means to mitigate rising tensions before they escalate (Ghosn & Khoury, 2011).

Over the past few years, social media networks have assumed a prominent role in political discussions, campaigns, and the expression of opinions in Lebanon, particularly among young people (Saud et al., 2020). Although these virtual platforms have made information accessible to the public and made quick responses possible in times of crisis, they have also become places of increasing fragmentation, polarization, and hostility (Vera-Revilla et al., 2025). Social media, unlike dialogue partners with a structure or a regulated media, works mostly without restrictions, with little editorial oversight and fact-checking, and minimal accountability. The algorithms that promote engagement at the cost of subtlety make this situation worse by spotlighting the provocative posts. Indeed, online discussions often turn into quarrels where people feel they must choose a side, support their sect or political group, and delegitimize the "Other." Social media is not encouraging dialogue; instead, it is nurturing a cognitive battleground, a stark "us versus them" mindset that not only reflects but also reinforces the sectarian thinking and identity-based political system in Lebanon. In such situations, the voices calling for reform, development, and unity are often silenced or ignored due to the prevailing polarised discourse and cyber harassment. For instance, the 2022 Parliamentary elections saw social media platforms flooded with disinformation campaigns and accusations against independent candidates and reformist groups, all of which are targeted at creating a negative perception of them. This left many users with no choice but to defend their political parties, as silence or neutrality is often equated with a lack of loyalty. The pressure to choose a side further intensified polarized narratives and made dialogue even more difficult.

Social media became saturated with aggravating rhetoric, sectarian slurs, and calls for retribution (Siegel & Badaan, 2020). This has further amplified zero-sum thinking and deepened mistrust between communities. Digital platforms, hence, often replicate the societal divides and confrontations, further heightening tensions. Moreover, disinformation spreads

quickly on social media platforms, particularly during elections, protests, or violent escalations, further destabilizing the public sphere and undermining trust in institutions. This is especially concerning as users do not even bother to fact-check the information they are consuming, but are readily absorbing and believing it. This method is exacerbating social divisions and weakening prospects for reconciliation in Lebanon, and hinders the development of a shared and constructive discourse essential to sustainable peacebuilding. Social media use in Lebanon continues to threaten social cohesion and reinforce identity-based divisions.

### **8.6.2. *Mitigation Measures***

Communication channels are not just platforms for information-sharing; they are active participants in the country's political, social, and conflict dynamics. They can reinforce identity divisions and accelerate polarization when politicized and unchecked (Karmila & Yuningsih, 2025). However, when leveraged responsibly and strategically, communication becomes a powerful tool for conflict prevention, early warning, and inclusive dialogue. A reform plan for these channels must be implemented to establish a more cohesive public sphere, promote narratives of solidarity and coexistence.

One of the most urgent and transformative interventions within Lebanon's politicized media environment is the promotion of conflict sensitive reporting across mainstream and local media platforms. Conflict-sensitive reporting offers an alternative approach, one that trains journalists to recognize how their framing choices, language, and coverage priorities can either escalate or de-escalate tensions. It encourages the media to shift from dramatized headlines and selective storytelling to more nuanced, inclusive narratives that reflect diverse perspectives and emphasize shared social cohesion. To institutionalize this practice, media training programs rooted in peace journalism principles should be introduced in both journalism schools and professional development settings (Youngblood, 2016). Training should focus on addressing unconscious bias, rumour control, and strategies for interviewing across lines of division. Journalists who are equipped with the skills needed to report responsibly in polarized environments, can contribute to reframing public discourse away from antagonism and toward dialogue. This allows communication channels to be used as means of building long-term societal trust.

Furthermore, to break the cycle of sectarian echo chambers and politicized media consumption in Lebanon, media literacy and critical thinking education must become central

to any sustainable peacebuilding strategy. These tools are powerful to disrupt passive absorption of information and promote active, and informed engagement (Harb, 2024).

It is necessary to teach the citizens, especially the youth, the critical analyzing of the sources, question framing, bias detection, and the verification of facts as a method of resisting manipulation and promoting independent thinking. Individuals equipped to do the critical assessment of the media through the devices they use are less prone to absorbing the divisive narratives, being the targets of disinformation, or uncritically repeating the viewpoints of their sectarian group. It is important to enlighten the students regarding the political economy of media in Lebanon, who owns media outlets, the interests determining the coverage, and how the language can shape the perceptions and identities of the people. It creates a ground for a more knowledgeable and united public sphere. Media literacy is a conflict prevention tool that empowers citizens to be resistant to manipulation, rumour-mongering, and to be active participants in national dialogue through non-violent means.

Simultaneously, revitalizing TL should not be treated as a cultural luxury, but rather as a strategic peacebuilding investment. A reformed TL can serve as a neutral, national communication channel, committed to inclusive representation, conflict-sensitive journalism, and civic education. It could offer programming that gives voice to underrepresented groups and provides accurate and timely information during crises. The station needs structural reforms that ensure editorial independence, modernize its operations, and recruit staff trained in ethical and peace journalism. This way, the state can begin to rebuild public trust and reclaim its role as a unifying actor. A revitalized public broadcaster becomes a key component of early warning and social cohesion systems, capable of countering disinformation, de-escalating tensions, and fostering a shared national narrative rooted in dignity and coexistence.

Social media platforms in Lebanon have enabled unprecedented access to information, grassroots mobilization, and youth expression, yet they have also become breeding grounds for polarization, disinformation, and sectarian hostility. To counter this trend, digital literacy programs must be established in schools, youth groups (such as scouts), and community centers (Ashfaq, 2025).

This will help users identify misinformation, understand the impact of online hate speech, and engage constructively with opposing views. Moreover, the development of fact-checking initiatives, run by civil society actors or independent media watchdogs, can serve as

a real-time buffer against false narratives during moments of heightened tensions and emergencies.

On the other hand, content creators, influencers, and activists should leverage their platforms in collaboration with peacebuilding organizations to share inclusive messaging and community success stories. Online platforms can begin to shift from accelerants of division to facilitators of social healing if used and monitored responsibly. Beyond being a platform for expression and mobilization, social media can play a pivotal role in conflict prevention by functioning as an informal yet powerful early warning system. In this digital age, social media are often the first places where signs of unrest surface (Mishler et al., 2017). These include sudden spikes in hate speech, the spread of inciteful rumours, coordinated digital harassment campaigns, or the mobilization of users around sectarian slogans. If systematically monitored, these digital signals can provide valuable real-time indicators of rising tensions or community-level discontent. The government should invest in digital monitoring units, hosted within independent research centres, civil society coalitions, or relevant state institutions, to track public sentiments online. These units can use natural language processing tools, keyword tracking, and sentiment analysis to identify emerging trends. In case a surge in triggering content is detected, the relevant authority can be alerted to initiate its interventions to reduce tensions. In this way, social media becomes not only a platform of expression but also a first line of defense in conflict prevention, constituting a cornerstone for Lebanon's I4P framework.

## **8.7. Conclusion**

This thesis aimed to deepen the understanding of the impact of electoral laws on the peacebuilding process in Lebanon, illustrating that electoral reform alone, within such a complex socio-political context, is insufficient to establish sustainable peace. The findings demonstrate that policy initiatives focused solely on electoral engineering must be complemented by a broader, systemic effort to develop what can be termed the “infrastructure of peace” (I4P). Building this infrastructure involves establishing resilient institutional, social, and physical structures capable of addressing both immediate challenges and fostering long-term societal cohesion.

The comprehensive analysis presented throughout this thesis underscores the profound complexity of Lebanon's ongoing pursuit of stability. From its historical roots of conflict and war to the detailed examination of power-sharing arrangements and the implementation of the Taëf Agreement, Lebanon's journey reveals that peacebuilding is a deeply multifaceted

process. Superficial political agreements or mere economic reconstruction were shown to be inadequate without an underlying foundation rooted in social justice, inclusive governance, and institutional capacity. These elements are critical to prevent relapse into violence and to build a durable peace.

Chapter 1 highlighted the fundamental importance of infrastructure for peace, demonstrating that sustainable peace depends on establishing strong institutional, social, and physical structures, such as fair and representative political systems, inclusive public spaces, and an effective security apparatus that fosters dialogue, trust, and cooperation among Lebanon's diverse communities. As the thesis explores Lebanon's history, examining the origins of the civil war, the conflict itself, and subsequent political arrangements, it becomes evident that without a solid foundation of social justice, fair representation, and inclusive governance, peace remains fragile and vulnerable. The structural weaknesses that have persisted over decades continue to fuel cycles of conflict, making it clear that peace is not merely the absence of violence but a condition built on social cohesion, justice, and equitable participation.

The analysis of electoral processes from 1992 through the early 2000s reveals how electoral laws, rather than fostering democratization, have often reinforced sectarian divides and entrenched the power of oligarchic warlords, known locally as "zaim." These elites have leveraged electoral mechanisms to legitimize their influence, transforming from militia leaders during the war to legitimate political authorities, thereby perpetuating a cycle of exclusion and societal fragmentation. While electoral reform proposals aim to address these issues, they must be carefully designed to prevent the further entrenchment of these powers. A "via negativa" approach focusing on removing the most harmful elements serves as a pragmatic step-by-step method to promote more equitable and representative electoral systems.

Building upon this, the thesis emphasized that comprehensive peacebuilding in Lebanon requires multifaceted strategies beyond electoral reform alone. Chapter 8 advocates for a holistic approach, including reforming the media to serve as agents of peace rather than division, restructuring political parties toward transparency and accountability, and fostering inclusive urban planning. The reconstruction of Beirut's downtown, for example, illustrates how post-conflict urban development can either reinforce social exclusion or promote social cohesion. Creating shared civic spaces that encourage cross-communal interaction is vital for fostering reconciliation. Addressing security challenges is equally critical; this involves

establishing a unified defense strategy, enforcing arms control under state authority, and reintegrating former fighters into social and political life to transform potential sources of violence into stabilizing forces.

The lessons from Lebanon's post-war history extend beyond national borders, offering insights applicable to other post-conflict societies. Peacebuilding cannot be limited solely to economic recovery or the cessation of violence; it must confront the deeper roots of conflict, namely exclusion, inequality, and the persistence of pre-war power hierarchies. Without dismantling these systemic issues through equitable redistribution, inclusive governance, and accountable institutions, efforts at rebuilding risk reproducing old divisions under new guises. Economic and political reconstruction should promote social justice, fairness, and the inclusion of marginalized groups in decision-making processes.

The thesis also highlighted the importance of including marginalized groups such as women and youth in peace processes, as their participation fundamentally alters the dynamics and strategies of peacebuilding, leading to more inclusive and durable outcomes. International frameworks underscore their importance, yet translating these principles into effective action remains a challenge. Additionally, managing arms and weapons, particularly controlling non-state armed groups, is vital. Lebanon's history, marked by militias and the flow of arms during conflicts, exemplifies how access to weapons escalates violence and obstructs conflict resolution. Developing a unified national strategy on arms control, security, and the monopoly of force is thus essential to peace.

Lebanon's internal fragility is also deeply intertwined with regional conflicts. The country has repeatedly served as a proxy battleground for broader Middle Eastern tensions, with external crises spilling over into domestic politics, exacerbating divisions, inflaming sectarian identities, and undermining reconciliation efforts. A comprehensive peace infrastructure must, therefore, incorporate regional considerations and foster a unified, coherent stance on external conflicts. This includes establishing a clear foreign policy that balances neutrality, alignment, or strategic engagement, recognizing that regional dynamics profoundly influence Lebanon's internal stability.

Urban planning and civil spatial organization are also pivotal; how Lebanon reconstructs its cities and neighborhoods impacts social integration and collective memory. The controversial reconstruction of Beirut's downtown exemplifies how urban development can either reinforce social exclusion or foster social cohesion. Rebuilding efforts should aim to

create inclusive public spaces that promote interaction among diverse communities, thus supporting social reconciliation and collective identity.

Finally, the legal framework governing personal status, marriage, divorce, inheritance, and related family laws remains a core institutional challenge. Religion-based personal status laws produce inequalities across confessional and gender lines, hindering social cohesion. Reforming these laws toward a civil or harmonized legal system is a vital component of a peace infrastructure agenda, ensuring equality and social justice.

The lessons derived from Lebanon's post-war history and the analysis of electoral laws demonstrate that peacebuilding requires a systemic approach, one that addresses political, social, economic, security, urban, and legal dimensions in an integrated manner. The development of a tailored, context-specific I4P is essential for Lebanon's future stability. While this thesis cannot exhaustively elaborate on all aspects of such an infrastructure, it emphasizes that sustained, multidimensional efforts, focused on removing systemic flaws, fostering inclusion, and building resilient institutions, are necessary to break Lebanon's cycle of crises.

The journey toward peace is complex and challenging, but the potential for a peaceful, just, and inclusive Lebanon remains within reach. Effective implementation of these comprehensive strategies can transform Lebanon into a resilient society capable of managing conflicts non-violently and sustainably. Only through persistent, coordinated efforts across all sectors, guided by an inclusive, context-sensitive infrastructure, can Lebanon hope to transcend its history of violence and establish a durable peace grounded in social justice, political stability, and national reconciliation.



## References

- Abdo, N., Abed, D., & Ayoub, B. (2020). *The IMF and Lebanon: The long road ahead* | *Oxfam International*. Oxfam International. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/imf-and-lebanon-long-road-ahead>
- Abed, D., Sawaya, R., & Tabbal, N. (2022). Analyzing Voter Turnout in Lebanon: Political Change in Times of Crisis. *OXFAM*. <https://doi.org/10.21201/2022.8823>
- Abou Jaoude, T. (2021). Chehabism revisited: the consequences of reform in Lebanon. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 57(5), 810–832. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2021.1891891>
- Abouaoun, E. H. (2016). *How Syria orchestrates Lebanon's elections*. Abouaoun.com. <https://abouaoun.com/how-syria-orchestrates-lebanons-elections/>
- ACE Electoral Knowledge Network. (2020). *Electoral management*. Aceproject.org. <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/em/emd/emd02/default>
- Adams, S., & Asante, W. (2020). The judiciary and post-election conflict resolution and democratic consolidation in Ghana's Fourth Republic. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 38(2), 243–256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2020.1758639>
- Aggrawal, S., & Magana, A. J. (2024). Teamwork Conflict Management Training and Conflict Resolution Practice via Large Language Models. *Future Internet*, 16(5), 177–177. MDPI. <https://doi.org/10.3390/fi16050177>
- Ajao, T., & Wielenga, C. (2017). Citizen Journalism and Conflict Transformation. *Matatu*, 49(2), 467–486. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18757421-04902012>
- Akintayo, O. D., Ifeanyi, C. N., & Onunka, O. (2024). *Enhancing domestic peace through effective community-based ADR programs*. Global Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews. <https://gsjournals.com/gjarr/content/enhancing-domestic-peace-through-effective-community-based-adr-programs>

- Al-Tahhan, Z. (2018). *More than a Century on: The Balfour Declaration Explained*.  
Aljazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/11/2/more-than-a-century-on-the-balfour-declaration-explained>
- Al-Ahed News. (2017). *Sayyed Nasrallah's Full Speech after Liberating the Outskirts from Daesh, August 28, 2017*. Alahednews.news.  
<https://english.alahednews.news/39978/593>
- Al-Estiklal Newspaper. (2024). *The Economic Crisis in Lebanon; Causes and Effects - Al-Estiklal Newspaper*. Alestiklal.net. <https://www.alestiklal.net/en/article/the-economic-crisis-in-lebanon-causes-and-effects>
- Al-Khawand, M. (1994). *Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia [الموسوعة التاريخية الجغرافية]*.  
Dār Rawwād al-Nahḍah al-Ṭab‘ah.
- Al-Khawand, M. (2001). *Contemporary Lebanon - A Historical and Political Landscape [لبنان المعاصر: مشهد تاريخي وسياسي عام]*. Dar Al-Jeel for Printing.
- Al-Majdal. (2025). *Al-Majdal*. BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights. <https://badil.org/publications/al-majdal/issues/items/1351.html>
- Ali, N. (2025). Saudi Arabia-Iran Rivalry and the Impact on Lebanon. *Social Sciences Spectrum*, 4(1), 53–64.  
<https://socialsciencesspectrum.com/index.php/sss/article/view/106>
- Anderson, D., & Lochery, E. (2008). Violence and Exodus in Kenya's Rift Valley, 2008: Predictable and Preventable? *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 2(2), 328–343.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17531050802095536>
- Annan, N., Beseng, M., Crawford, G., & Kewir, J. K. (2021). Civil society, peacebuilding from below and shrinking civic space: the case of Cameroon's "Anglophone" conflict. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 21(6), 697–725.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2021.1997454>

Aoun, M. (2007). *Une certaine vision du Liban*. Fayard.

Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies. (2022). *Lebanon 2022 Parliamentary Elections: Implications for the Country's Economic and Political Crisis*. Dohainstitute.org.  
<https://www.dohainstitute.org/en/PoliticalStudies/Pages/the-lebanese-parliamentary-elections-2022.aspx>

Arab Lawyers Union. (n.d.). "Promoting the Rule of Law and Integrity in the Arab Countries" Project Regional Conference.  
[https://www.arabruloflaw.org/Files/PDF/Judiciary/English/P3/ConceptPaperP3\\_En.pdf](https://www.arabruloflaw.org/Files/PDF/Judiciary/English/P3/ConceptPaperP3_En.pdf)

Ashfaq, M. S. (2025). Peace Pedagogy in the Digital Classroom: Tools for a Just Future. *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies*, 3(2), 1967–1982.  
<https://doi.org/10.59075/x3g31v31>

Assouad, L. (2021). *Lebanon's Political Economy: From Predatory to Self-Devouring*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.  
<https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2021/03/lebanons-political-economy-from-predatory-to-self-devouring?lang=en>

Atack, I. (2009). *Peace studies and social change: The role of ethics and human agency* | *Development Education Review*. Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review.

Atuobi, S. M. (2019). *Report of the African Union Election Observation Mission to the 21 May 2019 Tripartite Elections in the Republic of Malawi* | African Union. Au.int.  
<https://au.int/en/documents/20190520/report-african-union-election-observation-mission-21-may-2019-tripartite>

Avruch, K., & Vejarano, B. (2002). Truth and Reconciliation Commissions: A Review Essay and Annotated Bibliography. *The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict*

*Resolution*, 37–76.

Bågenholm, A., & Charron, N. (2020). Accountable or Untouchable? Electoral accountability in Romanian local elections. *Electoral Studies*, 66, 102183.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2020.102183>

Bahout, J. (2016). *The Unraveling of Lebanon's Taif Agreement: Limits of Sect-Based Power Sharing*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

[https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2016/05/the-unraveling-of-lebanons-taif-agreement-limits-of-sect-based-power-sharing?lang=en&utm\\_](https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2016/05/the-unraveling-of-lebanons-taif-agreement-limits-of-sect-based-power-sharing?lang=en&utm_)

Baz, S., Cathcart, L., & Michaelides, A. (2025). Lebanon: From Dollars to Lollars.

*International Finance*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/infi.12459>

BBC. (2002). *Profile: Elie Hobeika*. Bbc.co.uk.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/1779321.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1779321.stm)

BBC News. (2009). *Lebanon finally forms government*. Bbc.co.uk; BBC.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8351651.stm>

Bellamy, A. J., Williams, P. D., & Griffin, S. (2010). *Understanding Peacekeeping*. Polity Press.

Bellin, E. (2004). The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective. *Comparative Politics*, 36(2), 139–157.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/4150140>

Bengio, O. & Ben-Dor, G. (1999). *Minorities and the state in the Arab world*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Berlin, I. (1969). *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Bernauer, J., Giger, N., & Rosset, J. (2013). Mind the gap: Do proportional electoral systems foster a more equal representation of women and men, poor and rich? *International Political Science Review*, 36(1), 78–98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512113498830>

Beydoun, K. (2014). Lebanon's Political Economy: Patronage, Corruption, and the State.

*Middle Eastern Report.*

Beyhum, N. (1991). Reconstruire Beyrouth. Les paris sur le possible. *Persee.fr*, 5(1).

[https://www.persee.fr/issue/mom\\_0295-6950\\_1991\\_act\\_5\\_1](https://www.persee.fr/issue/mom_0295-6950_1991_act_5_1)

Bidayat. (2025). من تاريخ الأوليغارشية اللبنانية / بدَايات. Bidayatmag.com.

<https://bidayatmag.com/taxonomy/term/150>

Birch, S. (2011). *Electoral malpractice*. Oxford University Press.

Björkdahl, A., & Höglund, K. (2013). Precarious peacebuilding: friction in global–local encounters. *Peacebuilding*, 1(3), 289–299.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2013.813170>

Blanford, N. (2009). *Killing Mr Lebanon: The Assassination of Rafik Hariri and Its Impact on the Middle East*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Blum, J. R., Ferreiro-Rodríguez, M., & Srivastava, V. (2018). *Paths between Peace and Public Service*. World Bank Publications.

Blumler, J. G., & Kavanagh, D. (1999). The Third Age of Political Communication: Influences and Features. *Political Communication*, 16(3), 209–230.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/105846099198596>

Boege, V., Brown, A., Clements, K., & Nolan, A. (2009). *On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: State Formation in the Context of "Fragility."* Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management. [https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/boege\\_etal\\_handbook.pdf](https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/boege_etal_handbook.pdf)

Bonnem, S. (2024). Amnesty, amnesia, and accountability: memory as transitional justice in post-Taif Lebanon. *Knowledge UChicago*. <https://doi.org/10.6082/uchicago.14211>

Borgne, E. L., & Jacobs, T. J. (2016). Lebanon: Promoting Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity. In *World Bank, Washington, DC eBooks*. World Bank Group.

<https://doi.org/10.1596/k8478>

Bourgey, A. (1985). La guerre et ses conséquences géographiques au Liban. *Annales de Géographie*, 94(521), 1–37. JSTOR. <https://doi.org/10.2307/23451064>

Boutros-Ghali, B. (1992). An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping. *International Relations*, 11(3), 201–218.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/004711789201100302>

Bovens, M., Schillemans, T., & Hart, P.'T. (2008). Does Public Accountability Work? An Assessment Tool. *Public Administration*, 86(1), 225–242.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2008.00716.x>

Brancati, D., & Snyder, J. L. (2011). Rushing to the Polls: The Causes of Premature Postconflict Elections. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 55(3), 469–492.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002711400863>

Brinkerhoff, D. W., Wetterberg, A., & Dunn, S. (2012). Service Delivery and Legitimacy in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States. *Public Management Review*, 14(2), 273–293.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2012.657958>

Cammett, M. (2009). *Democracy, Lebanese-Style*. The New Dark Age.

<https://williambowles.info/2009/08/19/democracy-lebanese-style-by-melani-cammett/>

Cammett, M. (2014). *Compassionate communalism: welfare and sectarianism in Lebanon*.

Cornell University Press.

Carey, J. M., & Hix, S. (2011). The Electoral Sweet Spot: Low-Magnitude Proportional Electoral Systems. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(2), 383–397.

Carey, J. M., & Shugart, M. S. (1995). Incentives to cultivate a personal vote: A rank ordering of electoral formulas. *Electoral Studies*, 14(4), 417–439.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-3794\(94\)00035-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-3794(94)00035-2)

Carothers, T. (2002). The End of the Transition Paradigm. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(1), 5–

21.

- Carothers, T. (2004). *Critical Mission Essays on Democracy Promotion*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Casal Bértoa, F., Heapy-Silander, A., & Lynge, H. (2024). Can financial transparency help parties institutionalize and save democracy? *Policy Studies*, 1–23.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2024.2435380>
- Chaib, K. (2009). Les identités chiites au Liban-Sud. *Vingtième Siècle. Revue D'histoire*, 103(3), 149. <https://doi.org/10.3917/ving.103.0149>
- Chehayeb, K. (2022). *Lebanese opposition election candidates face threats and attacks*. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/23/lebanon-opposition-election-candidates-threats-attacks>
- Civil Society Knowledge Centre. (2025). *Robustness of sectarian politics: Reflections on the 2018 elections in Lebanon*. <https://civilsociety-centre.org/paper/robustness-sectarian-politics-lebanon-reflections-2018-elections/1000>
- Cobban, H. (2019). *The Making of Modern Lebanon*. In *Routledge eBooks*. Informa.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429312465>
- Cochrane, P. (2007). *Lebanon's Media Sectarianism*. Arab Media & Society.  
<https://www.arabmediasociety.com/lebanons-media-sectarianism/>
- Collelo, T. (1989). *Lebanon, a Country Study*. Library of Congress. Federal Research Division.
- Collier, P. (2009). *Wars, guns and votes: democracy in dangerous places*. Vintage.
- Constitutional Council. (2004). *The Constitution*. <https://www.cc.gov.lb/en/constitution>
- Constitutional Council. (2025). *The Constitution*. Cc.gov.lb. <https://cc.gov.lb/en/>
- CoR. (2025). *Lebanon Introduction*. Europa.eu.  
[https://portal.cor.europa.eu/divisionpowers/Pages/Lebanon-Introduction.aspx?utm\\_](https://portal.cor.europa.eu/divisionpowers/Pages/Lebanon-Introduction.aspx?utm_)

- Corm, G. (2001). *The lost opportunity in financial reform in Lebanon* [الفرصة الضائعة في الإصلاح المالي في لبنان]. Publications Distribution and Publishing Company.
- Cox, G. W. (1997). *Making votes count: strategic coordination in the world's electoral systems*. Cambridge Univ. Press.
- CSA. (2023). *A year in review: Conseil d'État 2023 Activity Report*.
- Da Ros, L., & Taylor, M. M. (2022). Brazilian Politics on Trial: Corruption & Reform Under Democracy. *Galileu – Revista de Direito E Economia*, 22.  
<https://doi.org/10.26619/2184%E2%80%911845.XXIII.1/2.01>
- Dabbous, D. (2017). *Legal Reform and Women's Rights in Lebanese Personal Status Laws*.  
[https://pu.edu.lb/sites/default/files/publications/publications\\_Legal%20Reform%20and%20Women%E2%80%99s%20Rights%20in%20Lebanese%20Personal%20Status%20Laws.pdf](https://pu.edu.lb/sites/default/files/publications/publications_Legal%20Reform%20and%20Women%E2%80%99s%20Rights%20in%20Lebanese%20Personal%20Status%20Laws.pdf)
- Daher, J. (2017). *Hezbollah's Military Intervention in Syria: Consequences for Lebanon and the Regional Balance*.  
<https://www.frstrategie.org/sites/default/files/documents/programmes/observatoire-du-monde-arabo-musulman-et-du-sahel/publications/en/20.pdf>
- Daher, J. (2019). *Syria after the uprisings: the political economy of state resilience*. Haymarket Books.
- Dajani, N. (2013). *The Myth of Media Freedom in Lebanon*. 18, 1–15.
- Dakhli, L., & Wieland, K. (2024). *The Cultural Memory of the Lebanese Civil War—Revisited*. BRILL.
- Dalton, R. J. (2004). *Democratic challenges, democratic choices: the erosion of political support in advanced industrial democracies*. Oxford University Press.
- Daoud, D. (2022). *Lebanon just had an election. Its result? Curb the optimism*. Atlantic Council. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/lebanon-just-had-an->

election-its-result-curb-the-optimism/

- Darnolf, S., & Smith, S. S. (2019). *Breaking, Not Bending: Afghan Elections Require Institutional Reform*. US Institute of Peace.
- Deets, S., & Skulte-Ouaiss, J. (2020). Breaking into a Consociational System: Civic Parties in Lebanon's 2018 Parliamentary Election. *Ethnopolitics*, 20(2), 1–29.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2020.1761655>
- Degortes, E. (2024). Interweaving Theory and Practice. The significance of Galtung's editorials. *Revista de Cultura de Paz*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.58508/cultpaz.v8.224>
- Derhally, M. A. (2023). *Lebanon inflation rate at highest since 1987 at 171%*. The National. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/business/economy/2023/01/24/lebanon-inflation-rate-at-highest-since-1987-at-171/>
- Diamond, L. (2008). *The spirit of democracy: the struggle to build free societies throughout the world*. Times Books.
- Diamond, L. J., & Morlino, L. (2005). *Assessing the quality of democracy*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Dib, kamal. (2025). *Dib, Kamal* | *Encyclopedia.com*. Encyclopedia.com.  
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/educational-magazines/dib-kamal>
- Dima de Clerck, & Stéphane Malsagne. (2020). *Le Liban en guerre*. Folio.
- Dinu, E.-C. (2022). Consociationalism in Lebanon after the Cedar Revolution: External Threats, Political Instability, and Macrosecuritizations. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 28(3), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2022.2092959>
- Dreef, S., & Wagner, W. (2013). *Designing elections in conflict-prone divided societies: the case of South Sudan* (p. 37). PRIF.
- Dubar, C., & Nasr, S. (1976). *Les classes sociales au Liban*. Les Presses de Sciences Po.
- Duignan, B. (2025). Gerrymandering. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/gerrymandering>

ECHR. (2021). *Guide on Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights Right to an effective remedy*. [https://ks.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr-ks/guide\\_art\\_13\\_eng](https://ks.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr-ks/guide_art_13_eng)

Edwards, M., & Hulme, D. (1996). Too close for comfort? the impact of official aid on nongovernmental organizations. *World Development*, 24(6), 961–973.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750x\(96\)00019-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750x(96)00019-8)

Eisenstadt, S. N., & Roniger, L. (1980). *Patron-client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange* (1st ed., Vol. 22). Comparative Studies in Society and History.

Ekwenye, Z. O., & Iteyo, C. (2023). *Effectiveness of Peace-Building Strategies used in the Management of Electoral Conflict in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya*. Effectiveness of Peace-Building Strategies Used in the Management of Electoral Conflict in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. <https://www.greatjourns.com/publishedjournal/2023/45>

El-Amine, A. (1994). *Education in Lebanon: Angles and Scenes [التعليم في لبنان زوايا ومشاهد]*. Dar El Jadid.

El-Husseini, R. (2015). *Pax Syriana: Elite politics in postwar Lebanon*. Syracuse University Press.

El-Kak, N. (2019). *A Path for Political Change in Lebanon? Lessons and Narratives from the 2018 Elections*. Arab Reform Initiative.

[https://www.academia.edu/40239671/A\\_Path\\_for\\_Political\\_Change\\_in\\_Lebanon\\_Lessons\\_and\\_Narratives\\_from\\_the\\_2018\\_Elections](https://www.academia.edu/40239671/A_Path_for_Political_Change_in_Lebanon_Lessons_and_Narratives_from_the_2018_Elections)

El-Khazen, F. (2000). *Parliamentary elections in postwar Lebanon: Democracy with no choice* ٢٠٠٠، ١٩٩٦، ١٩٩٢، *انتخابات لبنان ما بعد الحرب*. Dar al-Nahar.

El-Khazen, F. (2004). Ending conflict in wartime Lebanon: reform, sovereignty and power, 1976–88. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40(1), 65–84.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00263200412331301897>

- El-Khazen, F. (2009). *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967–1976*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- El-Khazen, F., Assaf, G., Baydoun, A., Salem, P., Sleiman, I., Chaoul, M., Ghossein, A., Kabbara, N., & Kiwan, F. (1994). Lebanon's First Postpower Parliamentary Elections, 1993. *Middle East Policy*, 3(1), 120–136. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4967.1994.tb00101.x>
- El-Khazen, F., Echtay, C., El-Hajj, H., Helou, M., Khayyat, T., Rizk, H., Chaoul, M., & Nasr, S. (2002). *The Legislative Elections 2000: Between Reproduction and Change*. The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.
- El-Khoury, A. K. (2023). *Political Elite Rhetoric on Popular Uprisings*. <https://trepo.tuni.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/145563/El-KhouryAnna.pdf?sequence=2>
- El-Machnouk, S. (2018). Electoral System Reform in Lebanon: Dilemmas of a Consociational State. *Ethnopolitics*, 17(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2017.1303161>
- El-Richani, S. (2013). The Lebanese Broadcasting System: A Battle between Political Parallelism, Commercialization and De-facto Liberalism. *Palgrave Macmillan UK EBooks*, 69–82. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137301932\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137301932_6)
- El-Zein, F., & Sims, H. (2004). Reforming war's administrative rubble in Lebanon. *Public Administration and Development*, 24(4), 279–288. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.327>
- Election Code of the Philippines. (n.d.). *List of Prohibited Acts During the Election Period*. [https://aceproject.org/main/samples/ei/eix\\_c055.pdf](https://aceproject.org/main/samples/ei/eix_c055.pdf)
- Eleições Municipais. (2024). *Divulgação de Candidaturas e Contas Eleitorais*. Tse.jus.br. <https://divulgacandcontas.tse.jus.br/divulga/#/home>
- Elghossain, A. (2017). *One Step Forward for Lebanon's Elections*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/2017/07/one-step-forward->

for-lebanons-elections?lang=en

- Elias, T. (2022). *Sectarianism and education in Lebanon: Historical roots and modern implications*. Beirut: Lebanese University Press.
- Elklit, J., & Reynolds, A. (2005). A framework for the systematic study of election quality. *Democratization*, 12(2), 147–162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340500069204>
- Elklit, J., & Svensson, P. (1997). What Makes Elections Free and Fair? *Journal of Democracy*, 8(3), 32–46. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1997.0041>
- Elsharkawy, A. (2024). *Peace-Building and Stability After Civil Wars: The Cases of Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. The American University in Cairo (Egypt).  
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/f91242bc9e4bef41f5168b374fc540cc/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026366&diss=y>
- Emmaus International. (2015). *Grégoire Haddad: the passing of a rebel*. Emmaus-International.org. <https://www.emmaus-international.org/en/news/gregoire-haddad-the-passing-of-a-rebel/>
- Esposito, J. L. (1990). *The Iranian revolution: its global impact*. Florida International University Press.
- European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM). (2018). *Lebanon parliamentary elections 2018: Final report*.  
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/212517/Lebanon-parliamentary-elections\\_6-May-2018\\_EU-EOM-report.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/212517/Lebanon-parliamentary-elections_6-May-2018_EU-EOM-report.pdf)
- Fakhoury, T., & Aitken, M. (2024). *Rethinking Power-Sharing in Post-War Lebanon: The Case for a Pluralist and Multi-Level Research Agenda*. Brill; Middle East Law and Governance. [https://brill.com/view/journals/melg/16/2/article-p216\\_006.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/melg/16/2/article-p216_006.xml)
- Fakhoury, T. (2014). Do Power-Sharing Systems Behave Differently amid Regional

- Uprisings? Lebanon in the Arab Protest Wave. *Lau.edu.lb*, 68(4), 505–520.  
<https://doi.org/0026-3206>
- Fala, A. (2018). *Elections and Democratization: A New Assessment*.  
[https://www.democracy.uci.edu/files/docs/conferences/grad/Adil%20O.Fala\\_Elections%20and%20Democratization.pdf](https://www.democracy.uci.edu/files/docs/conferences/grad/Adil%20O.Fala_Elections%20and%20Democratization.pdf)
- Felsch, M. (2022). Electoral Reform in Lebanon. *Zeitschrift Für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, 16(3), 427–446. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12286-022-00547-3>
- Finkel, S. E. (2003). Can Democracy Be Taught? *Journal of Democracy*, 14(4), 137–151.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2003.0073>
- Fischer, M. (2011). *Transitional Justice and Reconciliation: Theory and Practice*. Gmu.edu; Berghof Foundation. <https://mars.gmu.edu/items/ce7ec41a-241f-468f-ae88-2d526e53e41f>
- Fleming, J. E. (2011). *Getting to the rule of law*. New York University Press.
- Fouad Chehab Foundation. (2024). *The IRFED Mission*.  
[https://fouadchehab.org/presidency/?utm\\_](https://fouadchehab.org/presidency/?utm_)
- Frangieh, G., & Swaidan, A. (2025). “Pre-trial Detention” Management: Post-crisis Challenges in Lebanon - Legal Agenda. Legal Agenda. <https://english.legal-agenda.com/pre-trial-detention-management-post-crisis-challenges-in-lebanon/>
- Frayha, N. (2003). Education and social cohesion in Lebanon. *Prospects*, 33(1), 77–88.  
<https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1022664415479>
- Freedom House. (2018). *Freedom in the World 2018 - Lebanon*. Refworld.  
<https://www.refworld.org/reference/annualreport/freehou/2018/en/121008>
- Freyha, N. (2002). *The Effectiveness of the School in Citizen Education: A Field Study [فعالية المدرسة في التربية المدنية دراسة ميدانية]*. Publications Company for Distribution and Publishing.

- Powell. (2000), G. B. *Elections as instruments of democracy: majoritarian and proportional visions*. Yale University Press, Cop.
- Gade, T. (2022). *Sunni City Tripoli from Islamist Utopia to the Lebanese “Revolution”* (pp. 140–174). Cambridge University Press.
- Galtung, J. (1964). An Editorial. *Journal of Peace Research*, 1(1), 1–4.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336900600301>
- Galtung, J. (1985). Twenty-Five Years of Peace Research: Ten Challenges and Some Responses. *Journal of Peace Research*, 22(2), 141–158. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234338502200205>
- Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural Violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(3), 291–305. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022343390027003005>
- Galtung, J., & Fischer, D. (2013). Positive and Negative Peace. *Johan Galtung*, 5, 173–178. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-32481-9\\_17](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-32481-9_17)
- Gambill, G. C. (2001). *Lebanon’s 2000 elections: An overview*. Middle East Journal.
- Gandhi, J., Noble, B., & Svolik, M. (2020). Legislatures and Legislative Politics Without Democracy. *Comparative Political Studies*, 53(9), 001041402091993. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414020919930>
- Gaspard, T. (2003). *A Political Economy of Lebanon, 1948-2002*. BRILL.
- Gbowee, L., & Mithers, C. (2011). *Mighty be our powers: how sisterhood, prayer, and sex changed a nation at war: a memoir*. Beast Books.
- Gebara, K. (2025). *Empowering Lebanon’s Municipalities Amid Crisis*. Arab Reform Initiative. <https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/empowering-lebanons-municipalities-amid-crisis/>
- Geha , C., Clark, J. A., & Volpi, F. (2019). *Network Mobilization Dynamics in Uncertain*

*Times in the Middle East and North Africa*. Routledge.

Gërkhani, K., & Schram, A. (2009). Clientelism and polarized voting: empirical evidence.

*Public Choice*, 141(3-4), 305–317. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-009-9453-8>

Ghaddar, H. (2023). *Saudi Arabia and Lebanon: A Love-Hate Relationship*. The Washington

Institute. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/saudi-arabia-and-lebanon-love-hate-relationship>

Ghara, N. (2023). Decolonization and Its Aftermath: A Study of Socio-Political Shifts from

Colonial to Post-Colonial Era. *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Scientific Research*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.31426/ijamsr.2023.6.5.6318>

Ghosn, F., & Khoury, A. (2011). Lebanon after the Civil War: Peace or the Illusion of Peace?

*The Middle East Journal*, 65(3), 381–397. <https://doi.org/10.3751/65.3.12>

Giessmann, H. (2016). *Embedded Peace Infrastructure for Peace: Approaches and Lessons*

*Learned*. [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/Berghof-UNDP\\_EmbeddedPeaceI4P\\_2016.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/Berghof-UNDP_EmbeddedPeaceI4P_2016.pdf)

Giliomee, H., & Simkins, C. (1999). *The awkward embrace: One-party domination and*

*democracy*. Harwood Academic Publishers.

Gilley, B. (2006). The meaning and measure of state legitimacy: Results for 72 countries.

*European Journal of Political Research*, 45(3), 499–525.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00307.x>

Grimm, S., & Leininger, J. (2012). Not all good things go together: conflicting objectives in

democracy promotion. *Democratization*, 19(3), 391–414.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2012.674355>

Grofman, B. (1982). *Representation and Redistricting Issues*. Lexingtonbooks D.C. Heath.

Haase, T. W. (2017). A Challenging State of Affairs: Public Administration in the Republic

of Lebanon. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 41(10), 792–806.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2017.1387148>

Habib, K. (2009). *Consociationalism and the Continuous Crisis in the Lebanese System*.

Majd.

Haddad, S. (2002). The Relevance of Political Trust in Postwar Lebanon. *Citizenship Studies*, 6(2), 201–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621020220142978>

Haddad, S. (2010). The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws in Fragmented Societies: Lebanon's 2009 Elections. *Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies*, 35(1).

Handley, L. (2007). *Boundary delimitation and distortion in post-conflict elections*.

<https://www.ifes.org/publications/boundary-delimitation>

Haque, M. S. (1999). Relationship between Citizenship and Public Administration: A Reconfiguration. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 65(3), 309–325.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852399653002>

Harb, N. N. (2019). *The Lack of Independence of the Judiciary in Lebanon: Vulnerability of the System and Political Readiness to Interfere*.

<https://ruor.uottawa.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/8127be3e-d090-47c1-8d13-6092b95b2c00/content>

Harb, M. (2007). *Le chehabisme ou les limites d'une experience de modernisation politique au Liban*. Université Saint-Joseph, Institut des sciences politiques.

Harb, Z. (2024). Lebanon. *Media Compass*, 360–369.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394196272.ch34>

Harik, J. P. (2004). *Hezbollah: the changing face of terrorism*. I.B. Tauris.

Harnisch, C. (2009). *2009 Lebanese Parliamentary Elections*. Critical Threats.

<https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/2009-lebanese-parliamentary-elections>

Harris, D. (2006). Liberia 2005: an unusual African post-conflict election. *The Journal of*

*Modern African Studies*, 44(3), 375–395. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022278x06001819>

- Harris, P., & Reilly, B. (1998). *Democracy and deep-rooted conflict options for negotiators*. International Idea Publications.
- Harris, W. (1985). *Syria in Lebanon - MERIP*. Middle East Research and Information Project. [https://www.merip.org/1985/07/syria-in-lebanon/?utm\\_](https://www.merip.org/1985/07/syria-in-lebanon/?utm_)
- Harris, W. W. (2015). *Lebanon a history, 600-2011*. Oxford Oxford Univ. Press.
- Hartlyn, J., McCoy, J., & Mustillo, T. M. (2007). Electoral Governance Matters. *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(1), 73–98.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414007301701>
- Hartzell, C., & Hoddie, M. (2003). Institutionalizing Peace: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(2), 318–332.
- Hatem, S., Bissat, L. M., & Rihan, C. (2024). *Lebanon's Experiment with Installing Competitive Recruitment* (p. 43).  
<https://institutdesfinances.gov.lb/sites/default/files/2024-06/15-Lebanons-Experiment-with-Installing-Competitive-Recruitment-Lamia-Moubayed-Bissat-Sabine-Hatem-Carl-Rihan.pdf>
- Haugbolle, S. (2006). The Cedar Revolution: Lebanon's mass protests and the quest for sovereignty. *Journal of Middle East Politics*, 8(3), 45–62.
- Hayner, P. B. (2010). *Unspeakable Truths*. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203867822>
- Helou, A.-M. (2019). *Whose Government and What Law? A Political Sociological Investigation of Corruption in Lebanon and Its Effect on Government, Legality, and the People*.
- Helou, C. (1995). *Life in Memories [حياة في ذكريات]*. Dar El Nahar.
- Helou, J. P. (2020). *Activism, Change and Sectarianism in the Free Patriotic Movement in Lebanon*. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030->

25704-0

- Heydemann, S. (2004). *Networks of privilege in the Middle East : the politics of economic reform revisited*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Höglund, K. (2009). Electoral Violence in Conflict-Ridden Societies: Concepts, Causes, and Consequences. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 21(3), 412–427.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550902950290>
- Hokayem, E. (2014). *Sectarianism and the politics of identity in Lebanon*. New York: Routledge.
- Hokayem, E. (2018). Lebanon's Political System and Corruption: An Analysis of Clientelism. *Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy*.
- Hollyer, J. R. (2011). Merit Recruitment in 19th and Early 20th Century European Bureaucracies. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1861469>
- Horowitz, D. L. (1985). *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. University Of California Press.
- Hottinger, A. (1961). *The Middle East Journal* (2nd ed., Vol. 15, pp. 127–140). Middle East Journal.
- Hourani, N. (2010). Transnational Pathways and Politico-economic Power: Globalisation and the Lebanese Civil War. *Geopolitics*, 15(2), 290–311.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040903486934>
- Hudson. (1997). Trying Again: Power-Sharing in Post-Civil War Lebanon. *International Negotiation*, 2(1), 103–122. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718069720847889>
- Hudson, M. C. (1978). The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War. *Middle East Journal*, 32(3), 261–278. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4325767>
- Hyde, S. D. (2011). *The Pseudo-Democrat's Dilemma*. Cornell University Press.
- Ibrahim, A. (2025). *الجامعة اللبنانية من تأسيس حتى قيام الجمهورية الثانية للمدة ١٩٥١\_١٩٨٩. العلوم القانونية والإنسانية. في مواكبة المتغيرات الاجتماعية*

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/391392651\\_aljamt\\_allbnanyt\\_mn\\_tasys\\_hyt\\_qyam\\_aljmhwyrt\\_althanyt\\_llmdt\\_1951\\_1989](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/391392651_aljamt_allbnanyt_mn_tasys_hyt_qyam_aljmhwyrt_althanyt_llmdt_1951_1989)

IDEA. (2018). *Electoral Justice: The International IDEA Handbook*. Wwww.idea.int.

<https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/electoral-justice-international-idea-handbook>

IFES. (2009). *The Lebanese Electoral System*. IFES Lebanon.

[https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/migrate/ifes\\_lebanon\\_esb\\_paper030209\\_0.pdf](https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/migrate/ifes_lebanon_esb_paper030209_0.pdf)

Ingrid van Biezen. (2003). *Political Parties in New Democracies*. Springer.

Instituto Nacional Electoral. (2021). *Lineamientos sobre la propaganda gubernamental durante los procesos electorales*. Mexico City: INE.

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2009). *IPU PARLINE database: LEBANON (Majlis Al-Nuwwab), Last ELECTIONS IN 2009*. Ipu.org. [http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2179\\_09.htm](http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2179_09.htm)

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. (1966). *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. Refworld.

<https://www.refworld.org/legal/agreements/unga/1966/en/17703>

International Crisis Group. (2007). *Lebanon's Post-War Politics: The Challenges Ahead*.

Middle East Report No. 66. *International Crisis Group*.

International Crisis Group. (2010). *Lebanon's Politics: The Sunni Community and Hariri's Future Current*.

<https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/116648/96%20Lebanons%20Politics%20-%20The%20Sunni%20Community%20and%20Hariris%20Future%20Current.pdf>

International Crisis Group. (2014). *Lebanon's Self-Defeating Survival Strategies Middle East Report N°160* |. International Crisis Group.

International Crisis Group. (2016). *Arsal in the Crosshairs: The Predicament of a Small*

- Lebanese Border Town* | *International Crisis Group*. Crisisgroup.org.  
<https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/lebanon/b046-arsal-crosshairs-predicament-small-lebanese-border-town>
- International Foundation for Electoral Systems. (2018). *Election assessment: Lebanon 2018 parliamentary elections*. IFES.
- International IDEA. (2021). *The Global State of Democracy 2021: Building Resilience in a Pandemic Era*. Idea.int. <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/global-state-democracy-2021-building-resilience-pandemic-era>
- Isaac. (2023). Effectiveness of peace-building strategies in the management of national general electoral conflicts in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. *89.195.24*. <http://ir-library.mmust.ac.ke:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/2760>
- Iskandar, M. (2006). *Rafiq Hariri and the fate of Lebanon*. Saqi.
- Jalabi, R. (2022). *Lebanon's Hizbollah and allies lose majority in election*. @FinancialTimes; Financial Times. <https://www.ft.com/content/09d79aad-95fd-4c61-b661-567de126c77c>
- James, T. S. (2020). *Comparative Electoral Management: Performance, networks and instruments*. Routledge.
- Jaquemet, I. (2008). Fighting Amnesia: Ways to Uncover the Truth about Lebanon's Missing. *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 3(1), 69–90.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ijtj/ijn019>
- Jones, S. (2017). *Digital Solutions for Political Finance Reporting and Disclosure: A Practical Guide*. Idea.int. <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/digital-solutions-political-finance-reporting-and-disclosure-practical-guide>
- Joseph, S., & Castan, M. (2013). Right to a Fair Trial—Article 14. *OUP Academic*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/law/9780199641949.003.0014>

- Jouhari, I. (2022). Expatriates-voting-analysis-ibrahim jouhari. *American University of Beirut, 2022 Elections Voting Trends Analysis*.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371103295\\_Expatriates-voting-analysis-ibrahim\\_jouhari](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371103295_Expatriates-voting-analysis-ibrahim_jouhari)
- Juha, S. (1995). *The Battle for Lebanon's Fate under the French Mandate, 1918-1946* [معركة ١٩٤٦ – ١٩١٨، مصير لبنان في عهد الانتداب الفرنسي]. Dar El Machreq.
- Jumblatt, K. (1982). *I speak for Lebanon*. Zed Press; Westport, Conn.
- Juon, A., & Bochsler, D. (2021). The two faces of power-sharing. *Journal of Peace Research*, 59(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433211037244>
- Kalout, H. (2022). The irreplaceable piece. *Manchester University Press EBooks*.  
<https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526150844.00011>
- Kalyvas, S. N. (2006). *The logic of violence in civil war*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kammerud, L. (2012). *An Integrated Approach to Election and Conflict*. IFES.
- Karam, K. (2012). *Reconciliation, reform and resilience: Positive peace for Lebanon*. C-R.org. <https://www.c-r.org/accord/lebanon/taif-agreement>
- Karam, K., & Catusse, M. (2010). *Reforms at a Standstill for the Taef Government of Lebanon*. Arab Reform Initiative. <https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/reforms-at-a-standstill-for-the-taef-government-of-lebanon/>
- Karmila, L., & Yuningsih, A. (2025). The Dynamics of Political Identity in the Digital Era: The Role of Social Media, Polarization, And Challenges to Democracy. *TOPLAMA*, 2(2), 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.61397/tla.v2i2.306>
- Karsh, E., Kerr, M., & Miller, R. (2010). *Conflict, Diplomacy and Society in Israeli-Lebanese Relations*. Routledge.
- Karvonen, L. (2004). Preferential Voting: Incidence and Effects. *International Political Science Review*, 25(2), 203–226. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512104041283>

- kashar, S. (2023). *التغيير السياسي في مجتمع تعددي - تجربة فؤاد شهاب*. Dar Babilion.
- Kassir, S. (1994). *La guerre du Liban. De la dissension nationale au conflit régional*. Persée.
- Kassir, V. (1984). *L'Etat libanais au miroir de la guerre civile*. 8–28.
- Katrib, J.-P. (2008). *Ending (or Deepening) the Crisis in Lebanon: The Role of Electoral Reform*. The Washington Institute. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/ending-or-deepening-crisis-lebanon-role-electoral-reform>
- Katrin Voltmer. (2013). *The media in transitional democracies*. Polity.
- Khandagale, A. B. (2024). Empowering Marginalized Communities Through Social Work: Case Studies of Grassroots Movements. *ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, 5(7). <https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i7.2024.2187>
- Khashan, H. (1992). *Inside the Lebanese Confessional Mind*. University Press of America.
- Khneisser, M. (2018). The marketing of protest and antinomies of collective organization in Lebanon. *Critical Sociology*, 45(7-8), 1111–1132. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920518792069>
- Khuri-Makdisi, I. (2013). *The Eastern Mediterranean and the making of global radicalism, 1860-1914*. University Of California Press.
- Kingston, P., & Ochsenwald, W. L. (2018). Lebanese Civil War | Lebanese history. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Lebanese-Civil-War>
- Kireyev, A. (2025). *Macroeconomic Stability as a Precondition for Peace*. Alexeikireyev.com.
- Klug, H. (2000). *Constituting democracy: Law, globalism and South Africa's political reconstruction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Knudsen, A. (2010). Acquiescence to Assassinations in Post-Civil War Lebanon? *Mediterranean Politics*, 15(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629391003644611>
- Kodjo, T. (2018). *The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)-African Union - Peace*

- and Security Department. African Union, Peace and Security Department.*  
<https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/the-continental-early-warning-system>
- Kostanian, A. (2021). *The Lebanese economic crisis: reality and repercussions* [الأزمة الاقتصادية اللبنانية: الواقع والتداعيات]. Ens-Lyon.fr. <https://cle.ens-lyon.fr/arabe/civilisation/monde-arabe/question-dactualite-al-azma-al-lubnaniyya-alwaqie-wa-ltadaiyyat>
- Kota, S. (2010). *Undemocratic Lebanon? The Power*. *Ritsumeikan University*.
- Kozman, C., So, C. Y. K., Salim, S. K., Movahedian, M., El Amin, J., & Melki, J. (2022). Social media behavior during uprisings: selective sharing and avoidance in the China (Hong Kong), Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon protests. *Online Media and Global Communication*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1515/omgc-2022-0053>
- Kraidy, M. M. (2016). Trashing the sectarian system? Lebanon's "You Stink" movement and the making of affective publics. *Communication and the Public*, 1(1), 19–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2057047315617943>
- Krook, M. L. (2009). *Quotas for women in politics: gender and candidate selection reform worldwide*. Oxford University Press.
- Kumar, K. (1998). *Postconflict Elections, Democratization, and International Assistance Assistance*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Labaki, B., & Rjeily, K. A. (1993). *Bilan des guerres du Liban, 1975-1990*. L'harmattan.
- Larché, J., Fauchon, P., Jolibois, C., Rufin, M., & Mahéas, J. (1996). *Quel avenir pour le Liban?* Commission des lois.
- LCPS. (2018). *Electoral reform in Lebanon: Opportunities and obstacles*. Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.
- Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE). (2019). *Observation Mission of 2018 Parliamentary Elections*.

[https://lb.boell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2018/05/180507\\_prelimreport\\_overview\\_en.pdf](https://lb.boell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2018/05/180507_prelimreport_overview_en.pdf)

Lebanese Parliament. (1926). The Lebanese Constitution. In

<https://lp.gov.lb/backoffice/uploads/files/Lebanese%20%20Constitution-%20En.pdf>.

Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*.

United States Institute of Peace Press.

Lederach, J. P. (2003). *The little book of conflict transformation*. Good Books.

Lederach, J. P. (2012). The Origins and Evolution of Infrastructure for Peace: A Personal Reflection. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 7(3), 8–13.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15423166.2013.767604>

Leenders, R. (2004). *In Search of the State: The Politics of Corruption in Post-War Lebanon*.

[https://www.academia.edu/1540452/In\\_Search\\_of\\_the\\_State\\_The\\_Politics\\_of\\_Corruption\\_in\\_Post\\_War\\_Lebanon](https://www.academia.edu/1540452/In_Search_of_the_State_The_Politics_of_Corruption_in_Post_War_Lebanon)

Leenders, R. (2012). *Spoils of truce: corruption and state-building in postwar Lebanon*.

Cornell University Press.

Lemon, A. (2016). *Conflict Analysis and Conflict Mapping for Peacebuilding | Peace Infrastructure*. Peace Infrastructure.

<https://www.peaceInfrastructure.org/documents/conflict-analysis-and-conflict-mapping-peacebuilding>

Leonardsson, H. (2020). Vertical Relationships and Local Peacebuilding in Lebanon: The Case of Responsive Waste Management. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 15(2), 219–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1542316620926106>

Levin, D. H. (2016). *Meddling in the Ballot Box: The Causes and Effects of Partisan Electoral Interventions*. IERES. <https://ieres.elliott.gwu.edu/project/meddling-in-the-ballot-box-the-causes-and-effects-of-partisan-electoral-interventions/>

- Lijphart, A. (1987). *Democracy in plural societies: a comparative exploration*. Popular Prakashan.
- Lijphart, A. (1994). *Electoral systems and party systems: a study of twenty-seven democracies 1945-1990*. Oxford University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (2004). *Constitutional design for divided societies*. Journal of Democracy.
- Lijphart, A. (2008). *Thinking about democracy: Power sharing and majority rule in theory and practice*. Routledge.
- Lindberg, S. I. (2009). *Democratization by elections: a new mode of transition*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Linebarger, C., & Salehyan, I. (2020). Electoral Integrity and Election-Related Conflict. *Democracy and Security*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2020.1787158>
- Llewellyn, T. (2010). *Spirit of the Phoenix* (pp. 1–288). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Longuenesse, É. (2007). *Professions et société au Proche-Orient Déclin des élites, crise des classes moyennes* (p. 256). Res publica.
- Lorens, P., Wojtowicz-Jankowska, D., & Bou Kalfouni, B. (2022). Redesigning Informal Beirut: Shaping the Sustainable Transformation Strategies. *Urban Planning*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v7i1.4776>
- Lynch, J., & McGoldrick, A. (2005). *Peace Journalism*. Hawthorn Press.
- Mabon, S., & Wastnidge, E. (2022). *Saudi Arabia and Iran: The struggle to shape the Middle East*. Manchester University Press.
- Mac Ginty, R. (2011). Hybrid Governance: Lebanon. *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance*, 158–182. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230307032\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230307032_8)
- Macmillan, P. (2019). *Siniora, Fouad (Lebanon): In the Statesman's Yearbook Companion* (pp. 363–363). Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-349-95839-9\\_725](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-349-95839-9_725)
- Mahmalat, M. (2020). *Balancing access to the state: how Lebanon's system of sectarian*

- governance became too costly to sustain.* The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.
- Mahmoud, Y., & Ó Súilleabháin, A. (2020). Improvising Peace: Towards New Social Contracts in Tunisia. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 14(1), 101–118.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2019.1629377>
- Mahmoudian, A. (2024). *The Cooperation of Russia and Iran-led Shia Axis: Its Nature and Implications for the U.S. Strategy in the Middle East.* Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/etd/10818/>
- Makdisi, S. (2000). The Lebanese University: A missed opportunity? *Beirut: Lebanese University Press.*, 45–67.
- Makdisi, S. A., & El-Khalil, Y. (2013). *Lebanon: The legacy of sectarian consociationalism and the transition to a fully-fledged democracy.* The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.
- Makdisi, S., & Sadaka, R. (2005). *World Bank Report Part Title: The Lebanese Civil War, 1975-90 Report Title: UNDERSTANDING CIVIL WAR Report Subtitle: Evidence and Analysis World Bank (2005).*  
[https://is.muni.cz/el/fss/podzim2023/IREb2012/um/readings/The\\_Lebanese\\_Civil\\_War\\_\\_1975-90.pdf](https://is.muni.cz/el/fss/podzim2023/IREb2012/um/readings/The_Lebanese_Civil_War__1975-90.pdf)
- Makhoul, J., Kabakian-Khasholian, T., & Chaiban, L. (2021). Analyzing the social context of health information and misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic: a case of emerging inequities in Lebanon. *Global Health Promotion*, 175797592098417.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1757975920984178>
- Malaeb, B. (2018). *State fragility in Lebanon: Proximate causes and sources of resilience.* International Growth Centre. <https://www.theigc.org/publications/state-fragility-lebanon-proximate-causes-and-sources-resilience>
- Malik, H. (1996). *Parliamentary Elections in Lebanon: An Early Assessment.* The

- Washington Institute. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/parliamentary-elections-lebanon-early-assessment#main-content>
- Mallat, C. (1993). *The renewal of sectarianism in Lebanon: The political economy of confessionalism* (2nd ed., Vol. 15, pp. 1–16). Arab Studies Quarterly.
- Malley, M. (2018). *The Lebanese Civil War and the Taif Accord: Conflict and Compromise Engendered by Institutionalized Sectarianism*.  
[https://www.societyforhistoryeducation.org/pdfs/N18\\_Malley.pdf](https://www.societyforhistoryeducation.org/pdfs/N18_Malley.pdf)
- Manning, C. (2008). *The making of democrats: Elections and party development in postwar Bosnia, El Salvador, and Mozambique*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Manning, C., Smith, I. O., & Gurlek, O. T. (2023). *Parties, Politics, Peace Electoral Inclusion as Peacebuilding*. Taylor & Francis.
- Maru, M. (2016). *Conflict Early Warning and the Response Nexus: The Case of the African Union-Continental Early Warning System*. Kennesaw State University.  
[https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/incmdoc\\_etd/3/](https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/incmdoc_etd/3/)
- Mata, J. M. (2025). *CSC enforces election period personnel restrictions*. Csc.gov.ph.  
<https://csc.gov.ph/csc-enforces-election-period-personnel-restrictions>
- Matanock, A. M. (2017). Electing peace. From civil conflict to political participation, by. *Democratization*, 25(6), 1069–1070. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2017.1391220>
- Mavengano, E., & Chirongoma, S. (2023). *Electoral Politics in Zimbabwe, Volume I*. Springer Nature.
- Mayoral, L., & Mueller, H. (2025). *Institutions as engines of peace: Pathways to stability in an era of democratic decline*. VoxDev. <https://voxdev.org/topic/institutions-political-economy/institutions-engines-peace-pathways-stability-era-democratic>
- Mcloughlin, C. (2015). When Does Service Delivery Improve the Legitimacy of a Fragile or Conflict-Affected State? *Governance*, 28(3), 341–356.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12091>

Meierrieks, D., Krieger, T., & Klotzbücher, V. (2021). Class Warfare: Political Exclusion of the Poor and the Roots of Social-Revolutionary Terrorism, 1860-1950. *Defence and Peace Economics*, 32(6), 681–697. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10242694.2021.1940456>

Menkel-Meadow, C. (2015). Process Pluralism in Transitional-Restorative Justice. *The International Journal of Conflict Engagement and Resolution*, 3(1), 3–32.

<https://doi.org/10.5553/ijcer/221199652015003001001>

Merhej, K. (2021). *Towards an Independent Judicial Branch in Lebanon? Part 1: The Civil Judiciary*. The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy -

[https://timep.org/2021/10/26/towards-an-independent-judicial-branch-in-lebanon-part-1-the-civil-judiciary/?utm\\_](https://timep.org/2021/10/26/towards-an-independent-judicial-branch-in-lebanon-part-1-the-civil-judiciary/?utm_)

Metzl, J. F. (1997). Information Intervention: When Switching Channels Isn't Enough.

*Foreign Affairs*, 76(6), 15. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20048273>

Michelitch, K. (2015). Does Electoral Competition Exacerbate Interethnic or Interpartisan Economic Discrimination? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Market Price Bargaining. *American Political Science Review*, 109(1), 43–61.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055414000628>

Minow, M. (1998). *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: facing history after genocide and mass violence*. Beacon Press.

Mintchev, N., Baumann, H., Moore, H., Rigon, A., & Dabaj, J. (2019). Towards a shared prosperity: co-designing solutions in Lebanon's spaces of displacement -UCL

Discovery. *Ucl.ac.uk*. <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10079597/1/JBA-7s2-05-Mintchev-Baumann-Moore-Rigon-Dabaj.pdf>

Mishler, A., Wonu, K., Chambers, W., & Bloodgood, M. (2017). *Filtering Tweets for Social Unrest*. IEEE Xplore. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICSC.2017.75>

- Moore, C. H. (1983). Le système bancaire libanais. *Maghreb - Machrek*, N° 99(1), 30–46.  
<https://doi.org/10.3917/machr1.099.0030>
- Mourad, A. (2014). *Caught between constitution and politics: the presidential vacuum in Lebanon*. Heinrich Böll Stiftung Middle East.  
<https://lb.boell.org/en/2014/07/04/caught-between-constitution-and-politics-presidential-vacuum-lebanon>
- Mross, K. (2018). First Peace, then Democracy? Evaluating Strategies of International Support at Critical Junctures after Civil War. *International Peacekeeping*, 26(2), 190–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2018.1557052>
- Mugraby, M. (2008). The Special Tribunal for Lebanon: Justice and Politics. *Lebanese Political Science Review*, 13(2), 101–118.
- Muhanna, E. (2017). *Is Lebanon's New Electoral System a Path Out of Sectarianism?* The New Yorker. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/is-lebanons-new-electoral-system-a-path-out-of-sectarianism>
- Mulhern, S. K. (2012). *An analysis of Hezbollah's use of irregular warfare*. The University of Texas at El Paso.
- Murden, S. (2000). Understanding Israel's Long Conflict in Lebanon: The Search for an Alternative Approach to Security During the Peace Process. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 27(1), 25–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530190050010976>
- Nagle, J., & Clancy, M.-A. (2019). Power-sharing after Civil War: Thirty Years since Lebanon's Taif Agreement. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 25(1), 1–8.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2019.1565171>
- Nahas, C. (2020). *An Economy and a State for Lebanon*. Riad el-Rayyes Books.
- Nash, M. (2017). *How to have a fair election*. Executive Magazine. <https://www.executive-magazine.com/economics-policy/how-to-have-a-fair-election>

- Nasr, S. (1978). *Backdrop to Civil War: The Crisis of Lebanese Capitalism*. Middle East Research and Information Project.
- Nassmacher, K. (2009). *The Funding of Party Competition*. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft Mbh & Company.
- Nesterova, Y., & Kim, E.-J. A. (2024). Peace as Social Cohesion, Equity, and Democracy: Local Peacebuilders' Conceptualizations of Peace. *Peace Review*, 36(3), 531–544. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2024.2377773>
- Newsdesk, N. (2024). *War costs Lebanon \$5 billion in losses, damages 100,000 homes*. Naharnet. <https://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/309240>
- Nicolaysen, L. G. N. (2008). Consociationalism and segmented cleavages: The case of Lebanon. *Munin.uit.no*. <https://munin.uit.no/handle/10037/1546>
- Niyi. (2013). *Lebanese Parliament Extends Its Term By 17 Months - Information Nigeria*. Information Nigeria. <https://www.informationng.com/2013/05/lebanese-parliament-extends-its-term-by-17-months.html>
- Norton, A. R. (1985). Changing Actors and Leadership among the Shiites of Lebanon. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 482(1), 109–121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716285482001007>
- Norton, A. R. (1987). *Amal and the Shi'A: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*. University of Texas Press.
- Norton, A. R. (2007). *Hezbollah: A short history*. Princeton University Press.
- O'Neill, B. E. (2019). Armed Struggle in Palestine: A Political-Military Analysis. In *Routledge eBooks*. Informa. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429047909>
- Obel Hansen, T. (2013). Transitional justice theories: An introduction. *Transitional Justice Theories*, 13–28. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203465738-7>
- Oduro, F. (2020). The Changing Nature of Elections in Africa: Impact on Peacebuilding. *The*

*State of Peacebuilding in Africa*, 163–180. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46636-7\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46636-7_10)

Ongaro, E., & Van Thiel, S. (2018). *The Palgrave handbook of public administration and management in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan.

OECD. (2016). *OECD Public Governance Reviews Financing Democracy Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns and the Risk of Policy Capture*. OECD Publishing.

OECD. (2025). States of Fragility 2025. In *States of fragility*. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. <https://doi.org/10.1787/81982370-en>

OSCE. (2013). *Guidelines for reviewing a legal framework for elections*. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/f/8/104573.pdf>

OSCE. (2017). *Guidelines for Public Security Providers in Elections*. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/5/339581.pdf>

OSCE. (2020). *Guidelines on Political Party Regulation*. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/1/538473.pdf>

OSCE. (2023). *Recommendations on Judicial Independence and Accountability (Warsaw Recommendations), 2023*. Osce.org. <https://www.osce.org/odihr/552718>

OSCE, & ODIHR. (2005). *Election Observation Handbook Election Observation Handbook*. <https://www.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/e/b/14348.pdf>

Ottaway, M. (2003). Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism. In *JSTOR*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1mtz6c5>

Pan, E. (2005). *Lebanon: Election Results*. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/background/lebanon-election-results>

Paris, R. (1997). Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism. *International*

- Security*, 22(2), 54. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539367>
- Paris, R. (2004). *At war's end: building peace after civil conflict*. Cambridge University Press.
- Parkinson, B. R. (2007). Israel's Lebanon War: Ariel Sharon And "Operation Peace for Galilee." *Journal of Third World Studies*, 24(2), 63–84. JSTOR. <https://doi.org/10.2307/45198862>
- Parliamentary Chamber. (2000). *LEBANON: parliamentary elections Majlis Al-Nuwwab, 2000*. Ipu.org. [http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2179\\_00.htm](http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2179_00.htm)
- Perthes, V., & El-Husseini, R. (2004). *Arab elites: negotiating the politics of change*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Picard, E. (1996). *Lebanon, a Shattered Country*. Holmes & Meier Publishers.
- Picard, E., & Ramsbotham, A. (2012). *Reconciliation, reform and resilience Positive peace for Lebanon*. <https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00741581/document>
- Pillay, S., & Scanlon, H. (2008). *Peace Versus Justice? Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and War Crimes Tribunals in Africa*. Centre for Conflict Resolution.
- Pistelli, M. (2019). *How to Include Refugee Entrepreneurs in Microfinance - Center for Financial Inclusion*. Center for Financial Inclusion. <https://www.centerforfinancialinclusion.org/how-to-include-refugee-entrepreneurs-in-microfinance/?utm>
- Popper, K. (2012). *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Routledge.
- Rabih, M. (2023). *Emile Lahoud: The beginning of the end for Damascus in Lebanon*. L'Orient Today. <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1333683/emile-lahoud-the-beginning-of-the-end-for-damascus-in-lebanon.html>
- Rabil, R. (2005). *Syria and the Polarization of Lebanese Politics*. The Washington Institute. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/syria-and-polarization-lebanese->

politics

- Rabinovich, I. (1985). *The war for Lebanon: 1970-1985*. Cornell University Press, (Various Printings).
- Reilly, B. (2001). *Democracy in divided societies: electoral engineering for conflict management*. Cambridge University Press.
- Reilly, B., & Reynolds, A. (1999). *Electoral systems and conflict in divided societies*. National Academy Press.
- Reiter, D. (2017). *Is democracy a cause of peace?* Oxford University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.287>
- Republic of Kenya. (2017). *Presidential Petition No. 1 of 2017*.  
[https://www.kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/2017ElectionPetition/Presidential\\_Petition\\_1\\_of\\_2017.pdf](https://www.kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/2017ElectionPetition/Presidential_Petition_1_of_2017.pdf)
- Reuters. (2017). Lebanon's Hariri signals may withdraw resignation next week - statement. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/lebanons-hariri-signals-may-withdraw-resignation-next-week-statement-idUSKBN1DT13O/>
- Reynolds, A. (2006). *Electoral systems and the protection and participation of minorities*. Minority Rights Group International.
- Reynolds, A. (2011). *Designing democracy in a dangerous world*. Oxford University Press.
- Richmond, O. P. (2013). Peace Formation and Local Infrastructure for Peace. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 38(4), 271–287. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0304375413512100>
- Richmond, O. (2014). *Failed statebuilding: Intervention, the state, and the dynamics of peace formation*. Yale University Press.
- Rickards, J. (2020). *Crisis in Lebanon: Anatomy of a Financial Collapse*. FDD Press.
- Rigby, A. (2000). *Lebanon: Patterns of confessional politics*. *Parliamentary Affairs* v. 53, No. 1.

- [https://www.academia.edu/38259736/Lebanon\\_Patterns\\_of\\_confessional\\_politics](https://www.academia.edu/38259736/Lebanon_Patterns_of_confessional_politics)
- Rizkallah, A. (2015). *The Electoral Legacies of War*. Middle East Initiative.
- [https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/pantheon\\_files/files/publication/2016-02-MEI\\_RFWP\\_Rizkallah\\_0.pdf](https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/pantheon_files/files/publication/2016-02-MEI_RFWP_Rizkallah_0.pdf)
- Robins, S., Gready, P., Aloui, A., Andrieu, K., Ben Hamza, H., & Ferchichi, W. (2022). Transitional justice from the margins: Collective reparations and Tunisia's Truth and Dignity Commission. *Political Geography*, 94, 102565.
- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102565>
- Romaniuc, R. (2012). *Political Clientelism: Using Public Resources As "Carrots"?* Expert-Grup. [https://www.expert-grup.org/media/k2/attachments/Political\\_clientelism\\_using\\_public\\_resources\\_as\\_carrots.pdf](https://www.expert-grup.org/media/k2/attachments/Political_clientelism_using_public_resources_as_carrots.pdf)
- Rotich, J. (2017). Ushahidi: Empowering Citizens through Crowdsourcing and Digital Data Collection. *Field Actions Science Reports. The Journal of Field Actions, Special Issue 16*, 36–38. <https://journals.openedition.org/factsreports/4316>
- Roumie, N. (2020). *Consociationalism and State-Society Relations in Lebanon*. <https://doi.org/10.20381/ruor-24512>
- Rowayheb, M. G. (2011). Political Change and the Outbreak of Civil War: The Case of Lebanon. *Civil Wars*, 13(4), 414–436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2011.629871>
- Rubin, M. (2005). *Lebanon's Tenuous Transformation*. Middle East Forum. <https://www.meforum.org/lebanons-tenuous-transformation>
- Saab, B. (2019). Lebanon's Political Economy: Crisis and Resilience. *Middle East Policy*, 26(2), 23–36.
- Saad, N. (2017). *Sectarianism and the politics of education in Lebanon*. Beirut: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.

- Sabaghi, D. (2022). *Lebanese exchange rate chaos causes economic hardship – DW – 10/13/2022*. Dw.com. <https://www.dw.com/en/lebanons-currency-crisis-new-exchange-rate-policy-to-cause-massive-hardship/a-63420096>
- Sadan, N. (2023). *A Manual on Force Deployment in Elections 2023 Edition 2*. <https://ceogoa.nic.in/pdf/ImportantDocs/Manual%20on%20Force%20Deployment.pdf>
- Saghieh, N., & Ibrahim, F. (2025). *Lebanon's Court of Accounts: Losing Sight of Institutional and Social Oversight - Legal Agenda*. Legal Agenda. <https://english.legal-agenda.com/lebanons-court-of-accounts-losing-sight-of-institutional-and-social-oversight/>
- Salam, N. (1998). *Beyond Taif [أبعد من الطائف]*. Dar El Jadid.
- Salamey, I. (2014). *The government and politics of Lebanon*. Routledge.
- Salem, E., & Khouri, R. G. (2004). *The sectarian divide and its impact on Lebanese education. In Lebanese Social Cohesion and Education* (pp. 45–70). Beirut: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.
- Salem, Y. (1998). *50 Years with People [كتاب 50 سنة مع الناس]*. Dar El Nahar.
- Saliba, L. (2024). *فؤاد شهاب، ماله وما عليه: قراءة في تجربة حكم رائدة في تاريخ لبنان المعاصر*. Dar Bibilion.
- Salibi, K. S. (1987). *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*. I.B.Tauris.
- Salibi, K. S. (1988). *Crossroads to civil war: Lebanon, 1958-1976*. Caravan Books.
- Salloukh, B. (2005). *Syria and Lebanon: A Brotherhood Transformed - MERIP*. Middle East Research and Information Project. <https://www.merip.org/2005/09/syria-and-lebanon-a-brotherhood-transformed/>
- Salloukh, B. F. (2006). The Limits of Electoral Engineering in Divided Societies: Elections in Postwar Lebanon. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 39(3), 635–655.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0008423906060185>

Salloukh, B. F. (2019). Taif and the Lebanese State: The Political Economy of a Very Sectarian Public Sector. *Power-Sharing after Civil War*, 43–60.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003229766-4>

Salloukh, B. F. (2024). The State of Consociationalism in Lebanon. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 30(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2023.2187970>

Salti, N., & Chaaban, J. (2010). The Role of Sectarianism in The Allocation of Public Expenditure in Postwar Lebanon. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 42(4), 637–655. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020743810000851>

Samir Khalaf. (2002). *Civil and uncivil violence in Lebanon: a history of the internationalization of communal conflict in Lebanon*. Columbia University Press.

Samir Makdisi. (2004). *The Lessons of Lebanon*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Sandu, D. (2025). Where does the distrust in public institutions come from? *ResearchGate*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.18431.73126>

Saud, M., El Hariri, D. B., & Ashfaq, A. (2020). The role of social media in promoting political participation: The Lebanon experience. *Masyarakat, Kebudayaan Dan Politik*, 33(3), 248. <https://doi.org/10.20473/mkp.v33i32020.248-255>

Scarrow, S. E. (2007). Political Finance in Comparative Perspective. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10(1), 193–210.

<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.080505.100115>

Schalk, B., Auriacombe, C. J., & Brynard, D. J. (2005). Successes and failures of the organisation of African unity: lessons for the future of the African Union. *Journal of Public Administration*, 40(2). <https://journals.co.za/doi/10.10520/EJC51414>

Schedler, A. (2002). Elections without Democracy: The Menu of Manipulation. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2), 36–50.

- Sciences Po Paris. (2022). *Revisiting the Politics of Sectarianism Amidst Lebanon's Concomitant Crises*. Sciences Po Paris. <https://www.sciencespo.fr/kuwait-program/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/kfas-lebanon-roundtable-roundtable-summary-booklet-june-2022.pdf>
- Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Yale University Press.
- Sela, A. (2002). *The Continuum political encyclopedia of the Middle East*. Continuum.
- Sen, A. (2009). *The idea of justice*. Cambridge, Mass. Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press.
- Sharp, D. N. (2014). *Addressing Dilemmas of the Global and the Local in Transitional Justice*. Emory Law Scholarly Commons. <https://scholarlycommons.law.emory.edu/eilr/vol29/iss1/3/>
- Shehadi, M., & Wilmschurst, T. (2007). The Hariri assassination and Lebanon's fragile peace. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 39(4), 611–629.
- Shehadi, N., & Harney, B. (1989). *Politics and the Economy in Lebanon*. Centre for Lebanese Studies / Centre of Near & Middle Eastern Studies, SOAS, 1989.
- Shonge, M. S. (2017). Spinning the Web: Grassroots Human Rights Work Inspired by Peacebuilding Approaches. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 9(3), 447–456. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/hux028>
- Shugart, M. S. (2005). *The politics of electoral systems* (M. Gallagher & P. Mitchell, Eds.). Oxford University Press.
- Shugart, M. S., & Wattenberg, M. P. (2001). *Mixed-member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both worlds?* Oxford University Press.
- Siachiwena, H., & Saunders, C. (2021). Elections, Legitimacy, and Democratic Consolidation in Southern Africa Lessons from Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi. *Journal of African Elections*, 20(1), 67–89. <https://doi.org/10.20940/jae/2021/v20i1a4>

- Siddiqui, N. (2025). Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Commercial Disputes: Effectiveness and Challenges. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.  
<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5197398>
- Siegel, A. A., & Badaan, V. (2020). Experimental Approaches to Reducing Sectarian Hate Speech Online. *American Political Science Review*, 114(3), 837–855.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055420000283>
- Siegel, D., & Kernaghan, K. (1991). *Public administration in Canada: A text*.  
<https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1970304959944002865>
- Siklawi, R. (2014). The Social and Political Identities of the Shi'i Community in Lebanon. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 36(4), 278. <https://doi.org/10.13169/arabstudquar.36.4.0278>
- Sindakis, S. (2024). *The Role of Employment in Economic Growth: A Comprehensive Analysis - Academia World News*. Academia World News; Employment & Economic Growth. <https://academiaworldnews.com/the-role-of-employment-in-economic-growth-a-comprehensive-analysis/>
- Sisk, T. D. (2017). *Elections, Electoral Systems and Party Systems A Resource Guide*.  
<https://www.idea.int/gsod-2017/files/IDEA-GSOD-2017-RESOURCE-GUIDE-ELECTIONS.pdf>
- Snyder, J. L. (2000). *From voting to violence: democratization and nationalist conflict*. Norton.
- Sorensen, K. (2025). *Lebanon Reborn? How Saudi Reengagement Can Restore Lebanese Sovereignty and Purge Hezbollah*.  
[https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/Sorensen\\_LebanonReborn\\_web-250602.pdf](https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/Sorensen_LebanonReborn_web-250602.pdf)
- Sriram, C. L., & Zahar, M.-J. (2009). The Perils of Power-Sharing: Africa and Beyond. *Africa Spectrum*, 44(3), 11–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000203970904400302>

- Stedem, K. A. (2011). *Syria and Saudi Arabia in post-Ta'if Lebanon*. Tdl.org.  
<https://hdl.handle.net/2152/ETD-UT-2011-05-3381>
- Steffek, F., Unberath, H., Genn, H., Greger, R., & Menkel-Meadow, C. (2014). *Regulating dispute resolution: ADR and access to justice at the crossroads*. Hart Publishing.
- Stel, N. (2020). Hybrid Political Order and the Politics of Uncertainty. In *OAPEN (The OAPEN Foundation)*. OAPEN. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429434716>
- Stokes, S. C., Nazareno, M., & Brusco, V. (2013). *Brokers, voters, and clientelism: the puzzle of distributive politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Taleb, N. N. (2012). *Antifragile: things that gain from disorder*. Random House.
- Tapoko, G. C. (2017). Election observation and the question of state sovereignty in Africa. *Journal of African Elections*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.20940/jae/2017/v16i1a3>
- The Carter Center. (2009). *Lebanon*. The Carter Center.  
<https://www.cartercenter.org/countries/lebanon.html>
- The Electoral Commission. (2021). *Providing information on key election processes*.  
 Electoralcommission.org.uk.
- The Electoral Knowledge Network. (2017). *Lebanon, Law No.44, Parliamentary Elections, (2017)*. Aceproject.org. <https://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/mideast/LB/lebanon-law-no.44-parliamentary-elections-2017/view>
- The Electoral Knowledge Network. (2018). *Lebanon: 2018 Lebanese Parliamentary Elections: Results and Figures (2018)*. Aceproject.org. <https://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/mideast/LB/lebanon-2018-lebanese-parliamentary-elections/view>
- The National. (2022). *Lebanon election results 2022 in full: which candidates and parties won? | The National*. The National.  
<https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/lebanon/2022/05/17/lebanon-election-results-2022-in-full-which-candidates-and-parties-won/>

- The Nigeria Police Force. (2019). *Standard Operational Guidelines Rules for Police Officers on Electoral Duty*. <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/STANDARD-OPERATIONAL-GUIDELINES-RULES-FOR-POLICE-OFFICERS-ON-ELECTORAL-DUTY.pdf>
- Tongeren, P. V. (2011). Interès creixent en les infraestructures per a la pau. *Journal of Conflictology*, 2(2), 5. <https://doi.org/10.7238/joc.v2i2.1230>
- Traboulsi, F. (1993). *Identités et solidarités croisées dans les conflits du Liban contemporain*. Paris 8.
- Traboulsi, F. (2012). *A History of Modern Lebanon*. Pluto Press.
- Traboulsi, F. (2014). *Social Classes and Political Power in Lebanon*. <https://lb.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/social-classes-in-lebanon-en-2014-.pdf>
- Trantidis, A. (2025). *Clientelism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Transparency International. (2023). *Transparency of the funding of candidates and political parties*. Transparency.org. <https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/transparency-of-funding-candidates-and-political-parties>
- Tribunal Superior Eleitoral. (1990). *Lei de Inelegibilidade – Lei Complementar nº 64, de 18 de maio de 1990*. Justiça Eleitoral. <https://www.tse.jus.br/legislacao/codigo-eleitoral/lei-de-inelegibilidade/lei-de-inelegibilidade-lei-complementar-nb0-64-de-18-de-maio-de-1990>
- Tufaro, R. (2023). “Workers do not liberate themselves other than with their own hands”—The Political Experience of Workers’ Committees in the Industrial District of Beirut (1970–1975). *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 104, 143–163. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0147547923000224>
- Turnuklu, A., Kacmaz, T., Gurler, S., Turk, F., Kalender, A., Zengin, F., & Sevkin, B.

- (2008). The effects of conflict resolution and peer mediation training on Turkish elementary school students' conflict resolution strategies. *Journal of Peace Education*, 7(1), 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17400200903370928>
- Tvedten, I. (1997). *Angola: struggle for peace and reconstruction*. Westview Press.
- U.S. Congress. (2003). *Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act Of 2003*. <https://www.congress.gov/108/plaws/publ175/PLAW-108publ175.pdf>
- Ufheil-Somers, A. (2009). *Democracy, Lebanese-Style - MERIP*. MERIP. <https://merip.org/2009/08/democracy-lebanese-style/>
- UK Electoral Commission. (2023). *Investigations*. [Electoralcommission.org.uk](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk). <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/political-registration-and-regulation/our-enforcement-work/investigations>
- UN Human Rights Committee. (1996). *CCPR General Comment No. 25: Article 25 (Participation in Public Affairs and the Right to Vote), The Right to Participate in Public Affairs, Voting Rights and the Right of Equal Access to Public Service*. Refworld. <https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/hrc/1996/en/28176>
- UN Peacemaker. (2008). *Doha Agreement “On the Results of the Lebanese National Dialogue Conference”*. <https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/default/files/document/files/2024/05/lebanondohaagreement2008engl.pdf>
- UN Women. (2019). *Statement: Peace Hut Women of Liberia wins 2019 UN Population Award*. UN Women – Headquarters. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2019/6/statement-ed-phumzile-peace-hut-women-of-liberia-wins-2019-un-population-award>
- UNDP. (2010). *“Infrastructure for Peace”: Latest Developments*. <https://www.undp.org/publications/issue-brief-infrastructure-peace>

- UNDP. (2016). *Infrastructure for Peace: Approaches and Lessons Learned*. UNDP.  
<https://www.undp.org/publications/Infrastructure-peace-approaches-and-lessons-learned>
- UNDP. (2018). *Complaints And Challenges Related to Parliamentary Elections 2018 Guide To*. <https://files.acquia.undp.org/public/migration/lb/Final-EDR-2018-ENGLISH.pdf>
- UNDP. (2022a). *2022 Lebanese Parliamentary Elections: Key Results*. UNDP.  
<https://www.undp.org/lebanon/publications/2022-lebanese-parliamentary-elections-key-results>
- UNDP. (2022b). *What is UNDP's role? | United Nations Development Programme*. UNDP.  
<https://www.undp.org/sdg-accelerator/what-undps-role>
- Unger, B., Lundström, S., Planta, K., & Austin, B. (2013). *Peace Infrastructure – Assessing concept and practice*. *Berghof Foundation, 1*. [https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/dialogue10\\_peaceInfrastructure\\_complete.pdf](https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/dialogue10_peaceInfrastructure_complete.pdf)
- United Nations. (1945). *United Nations Charter*. United Nations.  
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>
- United Nations. (2008). *Letter dated 22 May 2008 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council*. United Nations Digital Library System; UN.  
<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/632576?v=pdf>
- United Nations. (2019). *FIRST UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCY FORCE (UNEF I) - Background (Full text)*. Un.org.  
<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/past/unef1backgr2.html>
- United Nations. (2020). *History of the United Nations | United Nations*. United Nations.  
<https://www.unonline.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un.html>
- United Nations. (2024a). *“Break the cycle of violence” through prevention and*

*peacebuilding, Security Council told.* UN News.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/08/1153416>

United Nations. (2024b). *What Is Peacekeeping.* United Nations Peacekeeping.

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-is-peacekeeping>

United Nations. (2025). *UNTSO.* United Nations Peacekeeping.

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/untso>

UNOY. (2016). *Youth participation in peacebuilding: A practice note.* United Network of

Young Peacebuilders. <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-07/undp-youth-participation-to-sustain-peace-during-electoral-processes.pdf>

US Election Assistance Commission. (2021). *Chain of Custody: Best Practices.*

[https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/bestpractices/Chain\\_of\\_Custody\\_Best\\_Practices.pdf](https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/bestpractices/Chain_of_Custody_Best_Practices.pdf)

Venice Commission. (2020). *Code Of Good Practice in Electoral Matters.*

[https://www.venice.coe.int/files/Code%20de%20conduite\\_GBR%202025\\_WEB\\_A5.pdf](https://www.venice.coe.int/files/Code%20de%20conduite_GBR%202025_WEB_A5.pdf)

Venice Commission Council of Europe Strasbourg. (2025). *Code of good practice in electoral matters.* Council of Europe.

Vera-Revilla, C. Y., Grundy-López, R. E., & Zegarra-Florez, G. (2025). Affective Polarization and Social Media: Theories, Models, and Contemporary Dynamics.

*Science of Law*, 2025(2), 86–94. <https://doi.org/10.55284/5zcgk20>

Verdeil, E. (2003). *Methodological and Political Issues in the Lebanese Planning*

*Experiences Eric Verdeil.* The Lebanese National Master Plan, City Debates.

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00002801v1/file/f4-verdeil-revised2.pdf>

Vértes, S., van der Borgh, C., & Buyse, A. (2021). Negotiating civic space in Lebanon: The potential of non-sectarian movements. *Journal of Civil Society*, 17(3-4), 256–276.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17448689.2021.1994202>

Waldman, M. R., & Zeghal, M. (2025). Islamic world. *Britannica*.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islamic-world/Islamist-movements-from-the-1960s>

Walid Phares. (1995). *Lebanese Christian nationalism: the rise and fall of an ethnic resistance*. Rienner.

Weisiko, C. M. (2023). Implementing the Right to Public Participation in the Legislative Process in Kenya. *Uonbi.ac.ke*. <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/163925>

Wierda, M., Nassar, H., & Maalouf, L. (2007). Early Reflections on Local Perceptions, Legitimacy and Legacy of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, 5(5), 1065–1081. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jicj/mqm072>

Wilson, D. N. (2002). *The Eisenhower Doctrine and its implementation in Lebanon - 1958*. The University of Texas at Austin.

Wilson, R. (2001). *The politics of truth and reconciliation in South Africa: legitimizing the post-apartheid state*. Cambridge University Press.

Winslow, C. (1996). *Lebanon: war and politics in a fragmented society*. Routledge.

Wojkowska, E. (2006). *Doing justice: How informal justice systems can contribute*. UNDP Oslo Governance Centre.

World Bank. (2005). *Republic of Lebanon: Country Financial Accountability Assessment*.

World Bank Publications - Reports; The World Bank Group.

<https://ideas.repec.org//p/wbk/wboper/8774.html>

World Bank. (2025). *Welcome To Zscaler Directory Authentication*. Worldbank.org.

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/822561468142505821>

Yaghi, Z. (2024). *Planning National Disunity: Modernization and Development in Rural Lebanon 1958-1970*. Escholarship.org. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3qq115gj>

Yerkes, S., & Muasher, M. (2017). *Tunisia's Corruption Contagion: A Transition at Risk*.

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2017/10/tunisia-corruption-contagion-a-transition-at-risk?lang=en>

Young, M. (2010). *The ghosts of Martyrs Square: an eyewitness account of Lebanon's life struggle*. Simon & Schuster.

Youngblood, S. (2016). *Peace Journalism Principles and Practices*. Taylor & Francis.

Zahar, M.-J. (2005). *Power Sharing in Lebanon: Foreign Protectors, Domestic Peace, and Democratic Failure*.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308345107\\_Power\\_Sharing\\_in\\_Lebanon\\_Foreign\\_Protectors\\_Domestic\\_Peace\\_and\\_Democratic\\_Failure](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308345107_Power_Sharing_in_Lebanon_Foreign_Protectors_Domestic_Peace_and_Democratic_Failure)

Zainal-Abidin, N. Z., Ramli, S. I., Sirat, N. I. M., & Manshor, N. M. (2025). Tenacity of Accountability in Local Government to Achieve Public Trust. *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal*, 8(SI13), 65–71. <https://doi.org/10.21834/e-bpj.v8isi13.5042>

Zalta, E. N. (2012). Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. *Reference Reviews*, 15(6), 9–9. <https://doi.org/10.1108/rr.2001.15.6.9.311>

Ziadeh, H. (2006). *Sectarianism and Intercommunal Nation-building in Lebanon*. Hurst & Company.

Zisser, E. (2000). *Lebanon: The challenge of independence* (p. 297). Bloomsbury Publishing.