Advocating for Change in the Arab World: Successes and Failures of Lebanon's Civil Society

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Abstract

This paper aims at presenting how three selected civil society organisations advocate for change, as well as the tools and skills they utilise. It also attempts to analyse the factors at play in the successes of their campaigns. The paper employs a qualitative method, identifying the different internal and external factors that make some campaigns more effective than others. The paper argues that campaigns were only successful when a number of these factors were present and when the policies put forward did not pose a threat to major political interests.

Introduction

A liberal democracy cannot survive without the existence of a vibrant civil society which nurtures associational life independently from the state. Although its appearance in Lebanon preceded the creation of the modern state, civil society in Lebanon is still in an early phase of development; the context in which its associations' function renders ordinary advocacy tools and techniques, that use public awareness and public pressure to amend policies and laws, somehow extraneous. Politicians in Lebanon draw their power from sectarian, religious, and regional contexts, and seek to hold fast to it through the provision of favours, services, and cultivating strategic relations—far from the democratic approach to serving the constituency. These issues have not, however, prevented civil society in Lebanon from developing; on the contrary, in the absence of certain laws and regulations, its different organisations have found common ground and resolve to work together and cooperate.

In light of the above, various questions arise concerning the advocacy strategies of Lebanese civil society: to what extent are civil society organisations (CSOs) in Lebanon capable of influencing the public policy process? What are the main factors determining the success or failure of Lebanese civil society in achieving better civic engagement and in gaining popular support for their advocacy goals? The main assumption of this paper is that Lebanese civil society was only able to instigate policy changes and a limited number of legislative measures when several internal and external factors were present, and when their propositions did not threaten the major political interests of the ruling parties.

To answer the above questions, this paper will analyse three advocacy campaigns, each one engaging with a different concern within civil society activism: Electoral reform, torture prevention, and the case of migrant domestic workers. The paper is divided into three parts. The first section develops a framework for analysis, beginning with a review of relevant literature assessing civil society's place within the mechanisms of a nation's functioning, and contextualising its advocacy efforts, before going on to introduce the chosen methodology. The second section presents the three case studies selected for examination and uses the framework to analyse them. The final section concludes with the major findings of this research and offers recommendations for future research.

1. Framework for analysis

To properly function, three main sectors should interact in a balanced manner in every society: the state, the market, and civil society.[1] Literature focusing on civil society stresses the importance of cooperation between these three sectors and argues that without one or the other, societies can be considered dysfunctional. Various attempts have been made to understand this complex relationship. Coston[2] proposed a macro-level framework, dividing it into two major strata: The first based on positive cooperation, complementarity, and collaboration, and the second focusing on repression, rivalry, and competition. Coston then used this distinction between positive and negative to analyse the effectiveness of advocacy actions. Najam[3] presented a model bringing together service delivery and advocacy and taking into account the roles played by both the organisation and the government. The model identifies four distinct types of relationship: cooperation, confrontation, complementarity, and co-optation. Young[4] further differentiated between 1) non-profits as supplements to government; 2) non-profits and government as complementing each other; 3) non-profits and government as adversaries. Young argued that these different types of relationship can coexist within the same society.

Many theories have been put forward concerning the role of associations in society: Van Tuijl,[5] defined civil society organisations as falling into two major categories: those that provide services ("operational") and those that lobby the government for change ("advocacy").[6]

While advocacy features heavily in the work of civil society organisations,[7] it has only found legitimacy in academic circles over the last five decades. Cairns[8] even states that advocacy "has never been a subject for scholarly consideration." Furthermore, Gen and Wright[9] identify a gap in the literature concerned with theoretical "linkages between policy advocacy activities by the public, their requisite resources and knowledge, and their expected outcomes." Reid[10] states: "[T]here is no agreement on which activities constitute advocacy, and no one source gives a full account of the many kinds of activities and strategies groups use to leverage influence in the policy process."

Among the scholarship that has emerged on the subject, Andrews and Edwards[11] define an advocacy organisation as one that "[m]ake[s] public interest claims either promoting or resisting social change that, if implemented, would conflict with the social, cultural, political, or economic interests or values of other constituencies or groups," adding that in view "of their distinctive roles and characteristics, advocacy organisations are commonly viewed as a hybrid of social movement organisations (SMOs), non-profits, and public interest groups."

Hopkins[12] presents four different approaches to advocacy to which McCarthy and Castelli[13] add a fifth:

(1) Programmatic advocacy: CSOs taking a stand against public policies that directly affect their work, (2) Legislative advocacy: Lobbying legislators, (3) Political campaign activity: Advocating for or opposing a political candidate, (4) Demonstrating: Calling for public support for a policy, (5) Boycotting: Directed towards business. This policy advocacy is defined as the strategy pursued to influence the decisions of the government. Advocacy strategies vary from one organisation to another.[14] Direct and indirect methods are used, such as direct communication with the government, instructing the public, and working on grassroots mobilisation.[15]

While the literature focused on advocacy organisations is limited, interest in the topic began to increase as of the 1960s.[16] Cairns[17] notes that many attempts were made to analyse the reasons for such a growth inside the United States and globally.[18] These analyses mainly attributed this growth, first of all, to the focus on social instability that led to the appearance of interest groups.[19] Second, growth was attributed to resource mobilisation that led to the appearance of advocacy organisations,[20] and, third, to political opportunity in stable environments.[21] The last factor contributing to growth were cultural values, especially with the shift of such values in industrial societies.[22]

These strategies will be successful only if the environment and the interaction with the government are positive, funds are available, and the internal capacity of the organisation itself is up to the level. In this regards, the governments do play a very important role in this process: government's support of this engagement process is crucial to its success. If the government provides the right environment for these associations and freedom of expression, they will be able to succeed in the advocacy process and even partner with the government to reach success. At the same time, if the government represses these associations, then all their strategies will face many obstacles.

In this regards, Peter Evans, Jack Knight and Henry Farrell argue that effective state institutions should exist to provide a favourable environment for civic-oriented organisations to exist and develop. Knight further argues that to have a civic-oriented movement of collective actions, there is a crucial need of institutionalised and unified political realm; moreover, Evan argues that civic associations can flourish only in the presence of institutionalised state; thus in weak states where the law is not always respected, the ruling regime is directly affecting the state-society relationship. It is the entity deciding who gets what, when, and where. In this regards, civic associations are taking a less universalistic approach to access the state resources and are using different strategies in order to influence public policy.

Most literature on civil society organisations and advocacy to date has either focused on the structural factors affecting advocacy campaigns e.g. size, strategies, and age,[23] such as in the work of Andrews et al.,[24] or on the environment in which these organisations are functioning.[25] The question that remains, however, is how advocacy campaigns might be assessed.

In order to succeed, advocacy needs to be organised inside an organisation; Reid[26] argues that policy advocacy is mainly initiated by citizens through non-profit organisations; this is a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down one. Barkhorn et al.[27] have developed a structured framework that can be used to quantitatively assess the success, or potential for success, of a given advocacy campaign in achieving a change in public policies or laws.[28] Their approach analyses the important elements of a campaign and assesses whether the strategy used will help in the attainment of the stated goals. It is

also designed to analyse why advocacy campaigns succeed and/ or fail. Barkhorn et al. proposed nine indicators against which a campaign can be assessed, where the presence of these indicators would contribute to the success and their absence would lead to the failure of a campaign. These indicators are summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Indicators for assessing advocacy campaigns

Functioning venue(s) for adoption	The relevant legislative, legal, and regulatory institutions are fur sufficiently for advocacy to be effective.
Open policy window	External events or trends spur demand for the solution.
Feasible solution	A feasible solution has been developed and shown to produce t benefits.
Dynamic master plan	A pragmatic and flexible advocacy strategy and communication for execution.
Strong campaign leader(s)	Central advocates can assemble and lead the resources to exe and communications plan.
Influential support coalition	Allies can sway needed decision-makers and help the campaign pursue the solution.
Mobilised public	Relevant public audiences actively support the solution and its principles.
Powerful inside champions	Decision-makers who can overcome the opposition support the underlying principles.
Clear implementation path	The implementing institution has the commitment and the ability solution.

Methodology

This study uses the indicators put forward by Barkhorn et al.[29] to evaluate the state of advocacy efforts within Lebanon. Three associations were chosen from among the most active Lebanese civil society organisations. The three organisations selected represent different fields and issues of advocacy, are recognised as significant contributors to advocacy efforts in that field, and offer good examples of advocacy practices in general. In the case of each, one specific advocacy campaign was identified so as to present specific measurable material for evaluation, although the study is not about the technicalities and the tools of the campaign itself but about the state of advocacy in general and the ability of the NGO to achieve change.

After a general overview, the research moves into identifying factors that affected the work and efficiency of the CSOs in a negative or positive manner. This is carried out through a comparative study of the three cases including a review of their work, their publications (including reports, reviews, evaluations, campaigns, etc.), and an assessment of the internal and external factors affecting their respective campaigns.[30]

To fulfil the aim of the paper, a series of targeted in-depth interviews were conducted in December 2014 with senior figures in these institutions, to discuss and test with them the validity of the factors identified. All three interviews followed a semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix A), developed using

the framework presented by Barkhorn et al. (Table 1) and different perspectives on advocacy work as reviewed in the first section of this paper. Data from the interviews and from the author's observations was cross-compared with each of the nine conditions presented and assessed whether the condition was available or not.

Although Barkhorn's article approaches advocacy from a communications background, the structure of the framework was found to be useful to present the findings of this research. The research, however, was not based strictly on his theory but went further to consider advocacy in Lebanon more generally (as exhibited in the questionnaire).

2. **Case studies and their analysis**

The three selected associations were the Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform (CCER), Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center (hereafter CLMC) and ALEF - act for human rights (hereafter ALEF), as summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of the three cases

Organisation	Interviewee	Advocacy Issue	Targets
Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform (CCER)	Mr. Samer Abdallah *General Coordinator*	Introducing electoral reforms and adopting a new electoral law	Public Opinion – Civil Parties – Members of Ministry of Interior
ALEF – act for human rights	Ms. Dima Wehbe *Executive Director* Mr. Georges Ghali *Projects Coordinator*	Torture Prevention – Criminalising torture – Creating a National Prevention Mechanism	Public Opinion – Civil Concerned Ministries
CARITAS Lebanon Migrants Center (CLMC)	Ms. Noha Roukoz *Head of Training & Awareness*	Security and Safety of Migrant Domestic Workers	Public Opinion – Con General Security Ford

CCER[31] was founded in 2006, with a broad national coalition of civil society organisations forming a steering committee. The main aim of this coalition is to create a supervisory committee for elections, to propose reforms, and to draft a new electoral law. It has managed to gain great credibility, becoming a reference even for governmental and international bodies. This study focuses on CCER's campaign to reform the electoral law in Lebanon. CCER reached the peak of its influence between 2006 and 2009, but its efforts were seriously hindered by the postponing of parliamentary elections in 2013, and again in 2014.

ALEF[32] was officially registered in 2004 with the main aim of triggering and contributing to a cumulative process of change in values and attitudes that are incompatible with the universal values of human rights. It grew out of a grassroots youth movement that had been active for eight years, and managed

to gain an international reputation and credibility. In recent years, it has made great efforts to translate international human rights standards into the local political, social and cultural context. The advocacy campaign studied targeted torture, aiming at the creation of a fit for purpose national torture prevention mechanism as part of two consecutive projects from 2008 to 2010 and 2010 to 2012. ALEF's campaign came after several years of activity under Syrian and security apparatus control, working on increasing international attention to human rights violations notably in arbitrary detention and torture, through rigorous and professional reporting and working with the security forces, ministries and legislators. Interest in this topic came as a result of ALEF's solid experience in the field of political and civil rights including previous projects/campaigns on human trafficking, rights of detainees, the death penalty, and enforced disappearance. However, ALEF's work is seriously hindered by the increased security tensions, political situation, lack of political will, and terrorism.[33]

Caritas is a faith-based organisation that entered the field of migrant workers' rights and protection (which is outside its initial charitable scope of work), created Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center (CLMC) and has since been hailed as a success story.[34] CLMC works on advocacy and awareness-raising, seeking to highlight the plight of marginalised people, monitor violations, protect from domestic abuse, and put national and international pressure on decision-makers to implement and enforce the law. Recently, CLMC expanded its work to Syria and Jordan, providing training for security forces and capacity building for civil society organisations working in the field. The advocacy campaign studied concerned the security and safety of migrant domestic workers and aimed at changing public perception of the problem and the policies that deal with the workers, notably those applied by the Lebanese General Security. CLMC developed a special relationship with the General Security (GS) and became involved in the operations and monitoring of its detention facilities. These efforts have been put under strain by the large recent influx of Iraqi and Syrian refugees.

2.1 Functioning venue(s) for adoption

The "Functioning venues for adoption" indicator assesses whether the relevant legislative, legal, and regulatory institutions are functioning sufficiently for advocacy to be effective.[35] Lebanon is in a state of political paralysis. This is a result of both regional situations — including the effect of the Arab Spring in general and the Syrian crisis in particular — and of local political divisions and institutional deadlock. Lebanon remained without a president from May 2014 to November 2016, and with a parliament that has extended its own term twice and holds minimal parliamentary sessions that do not enable it to target important agenda items. All these issues negatively impact NGOs' ability to carry through their actions and advocacy plans and to put pressure in the run-up to legislative decision-making.[36] Although NGOs continued to advocate for their respective causes, the main attitude of decision makers in such a critical political timing was procrastination and prioritising other more "vital" issues like the general stability of the country and the so-called "national security" discourse to gain more credibility. Moreover, with the inability of passing new laws or changing existing ones, advocacy campaigns were directly affected by this political situation.

While the three NGOs seemed to agree, although to different extents, that the government institutions are in fact functioning (in their minimum capacity) and thus should be the primary target for lobbying

and pressure, they all agreed that the political context in which they are functioning presents serious challenges to their work, and creates a constant need to revise and adjust the approaches that they were employing. To illustrate the above, according to Mr. Samer Abdallah, the absence of policies, policy-making, and the concept of citizenry challenge the ability of NGOs to apply their principles, which in turn created an ethical dilemma. Ms. Dima Wehbe stressed the importance of putting pressure on legislators through expressing demands as a way to persistently lay the legal ground for grassroot change.

2.2 Open policy window

Barkhorn defines an "open policy window" as the occurrence of an external event or trend, which alters the status quo, and spurs a demand for creating and implementing a direct solution.[37] In Lebanon, it has become clear over the years, and was evident in the responses of the three interviewees, that a "window of opportunity" for reform in Lebanon usually necessitates the presence of three main determinants:

1. International interest and willingness to exert pressure on the Lebanese Government.

A number of Lebanese political, social, or economic problems can draw the attention of foreign governments or international organisations and encourage them to intervene in local affairs. Their intervention might occur directly, through their officials, or indirectly through the Lebanese parties that are allied with them.

2. Political opportunity, favourable momentum, or the personal interest of the concerned figure to achieve and to present him/herself as a reformist.

Lebanese officials and politicians take advantage of the opportunity of defending a certain cause to improve their public persona and reputation. Their interest in appearing as reformers and rights advocates makes the politicians more willing to listen and cooperate and in certain cases even champion certain civil society causes. Political parties trying to present such an image may also include the issues as part of their election platforms.

3. Credibility, professionalism, and readiness of civil society to seize upon an opportunity.

In case of the presence of such a window of opportunity, only the NGOs that have built enough credibility in their past work, have prepared their files properly and presented the viable alternatives, and have built the proper networks will be able to seize the opportunity and push for tangible results.

The window helps local NGOs working for the same cause to implement their advocacy plan and put pressure on the government to take action. Therefore, it is necessary to take into consideration notably in a situation like Lebanon the complementarity between the local efforts, the political momentum and the international/external factors in building enough pressure to produce change.

CCER seems to have succeeded in seizing upon the presence of the different abovementioned dimensions to apply its advocacy plan. It took advantage of the international pressure that was put in 2008-2009 on the Lebanese government concerning the presidential and parliamentary elections to push, advocate and lobby its electoral reform campaign. Abdallah mentioned that CCER also made the most of an "internal political will" to float its favourable attitude towards a mixed electoral law that blends the majority election and proportional representation systems in such a transitional period. At the time, it was of the opinion that a proportional electoral law [alone] was far from the Lebanese reality because politicians would not accept dividing the regions into a reduced number of large districts. Abdallah emphasised the favourable relations that CCER has developed with the Lebanese Ministry of Interior, coming to be considered as an independent commission that helps organise, manage, and supervise elections. Since CCER is a coalition of various NGOs, it includes a large number of electoral experts, accredited local and international observers, and lawyers who follow and implement international standards.

As part of its campaign against torture, in 2008, ALEF initiated an international lobbying campaign at the United Nations and European Union to exert pressure on the Lebanese government to ratify the Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture (OPCAT). According to Mr. Georges Ghali, ALEF consequently benefited from international pressure on Lebanon, being invited to share findings and evidence of human rights violations in the country with the Committee Against Torture (CAT), and provide it with systematic reports. This international pressure also concerned the death penalty and arbitrary detention, of which ALEF states that it took advantage in order to pressure the government to ratify relevant international treaties and protocols. The presence of an internal political will to polish the government's image in dealing with human rights violations in order to preserve and increase the international support it receives also worked in ALEF's favour. An example given by Ghali is ALEF's success in amending the draft law on abolishing the death penalty. ALEF also looks to build momentum and ready civil society through the promotion of youth activism: encouraging the youth to participate actively in its advocacy campaigns and assist in the policy change process through volunteering.

CLMC has also benefited from international pressure, specifically from the United States, on the issue of human trafficking, according to Ms. Noha Roukos after several incidences of countries banning their citizens from being migrant workers in Lebanon.[38] In 2011, CLMC managed to put national and international pressure on decision-makers to introduce and enforce a law concerning domestic workers. In February 2011, Labour Minister Boutros Harb proposed a draft law to regulate the work of migrant domestic workers that would keep the current *kafala* (sponsorship) system in place, but his draft law was abandoned as a change in government took place.[39] Roukous added that CLMC is also in regular and direct contact with various embassies, providing them with a blacklist of offices that treat migrant workers in a "violent, inhumane, and disrespectful way." Over the years, international donors, EU, embassies, and countries put their trust in CLMC, which enabled it to gain a good reputation and credibility, and to receive international support. Locally, CLMC has worked with reform initiatives within the Security Forces and is cooperating with them and training officials on how to deal with and treat detained migrant workers in a humane way. Concerning political will, Roukos stated that some politicians coordinate with CLMC out of personal interest and/or to improve their image and reputation in the public domain.

2. *Feasible solution and dynamic master plan*

The two indicators will be addressed together since they are closely interconnected. NGOs usually develop feasible solutions rather than ideal ones, because this has proven to offer better chances for effective action.[40] Such solutions require the "pragmatic and flexible advocacy strategy" and dynamic communication plan cited by Barkhorn to be ready for execution. It is noteworthy that the three NGOs have all made significant efforts to adapt international standards to the local context, in a way that makes their propositions for change attainable, without compromising the essence of the standard. They were aware and accepting of the fact that the change they were advocating for might be only partially realised, and that it might need readjustment along the way to adapt to realities on the ground. This does not necessarily mean lowering the standards; rather, implementing those that can be accepted by the Lebanese political and cultural mindset.

CCER works mainly on several reform points based on existing international standards, and in 2011, developed a complete draft law based on these points.[41] At a later stage, it became clear to CCER that only reforms with no potential major political repercussions stood a chance of being adopted. First, CCER made steps to locate a more easily acceptable middle ground rather than proposing a strict adoption of proportional representation. Thus, it proposed alternatives such as a limited proportional or a mixed (proportional–majoritarian) system. Abdallah explained that CCER recently began rethinking its strong attachment to proportional representation as the only acceptable law, especially given the political deadlock within Lebanese institutions. For Abdallah, adapting international standards to the Lebanese system has two advantages: Implementing standards in line with local values, and a possibility to take into consideration local political circumstances. Nevertheless, some standards are basic and clear enough that they do not require adaptation or amendment. Other than the electoral system, two main international standards are being worked on by CCER: the gender quota system and the secrecy of voting. CCER thinks that gender quota is essential in order to help the society enhance the gender equality, and provide fair representation of women. On the other hand, although it is being applied in Lebanon in a minimal way, secrecy of voting needs a lot of strengthening to target electoral "key" people[42] and protect the voters further. However "diminishing the political control is something that the political leadership is not willing to give up easily."

In ALEF's case, it understood that changing laws in order to criminalise torture was not currently possible, and as such it shifted its attention to urging ministries to adopt new policies and encouraging the Internal Security Forces (ISF) to set up an internal torture prevention office and related code of conduct. Different methods were used to address these issues.[43] A roundtable was organised which included discussion of Article 401 in the penal code; it included well-known figures that had helped in advocating the issue. Regarding efforts on a parliamentary level, a coalition of NGOs was set up and led by ALEF. Ghali explained that ALEF worked on lobbying in the parliament for six months and on discussing the inputs of different stakeholders. The drafts produced by civil society actors were then discussed and amended by the Commission on Administration and Justice. At the time of writing, they had not yet been sent to the parliament. The executive branch, on the other hand, more specifically the Ministry of Interior, picked up the issue and pushed for the prevention of torture in the Lebanese Security Forces, as Ghali clarified. In these aspects, the project of Criminalisation of Torture can be considered as one of ALEF's most successful projects.

For the CLMC, however, a "feasible solution" for reform was less anchored in legal or policy amendments; it has rather been able to bring about change through an informal and direct interaction with the Lebanese General Security in which it does advocacy by putting solutions into practice, and leading by example. Roukos explained that the CLMC is currently working with only administrative approval from the director of General Security rather than a legally-binding agreement. A steering committee meets to work to improve the situation, and provides reports about GS violations that require attention. Because no laws have been achieved, it is important to note the feasible solution and procedures as described by Roukos: when a migrant worker reaches the Lebanese border, the GS receives them and provides them with materials that include a linguistic guide for communication, a booklet of rights and responsibilities, a booklet with important phone numbers, and their passport. The employer should arrive at the airport within twenty-four hours to accompany the worker. In case of any violations of the worker's rights, Caritas' lawyers write a report and send it to the GS for investigation. The worker in certain cases is then sent to a secret shelter for protection; the locations of these shelters are known only to a few CLMC officers and the GS. These shelters have been criticised by some human rights organisations for being masked prison working at the GS's behest in order to clear their image and compensate for the bad reputation that their prison have been accused of. Roukos acknowledged these criticisms and explained that workers can be given the freedom to leave the shelters, but that they must then accept liability in case they violate Lebanese laws, and may face a prison term. CLMC presents the shelters as a clear example of a "feasible solution," or compromise that serves its ethical objectives of protection within the existing limitations of Lebanese laws and realities.

2.4 Strong campaign leader(s)

A strong campaign leader is a central advocate within one of the NGOs who can assemble and lead efforts to execute strategies and communication plans.[44] In their respective interviews, all three organisations gave significant importance to interpersonal relations with policymakers and their circles of advisors, and considered this one-on-one approach and mutually beneficial relationship to be the most effective in promoting aspired change. This, of course, entails a risk of Lebanese civil society organisations falling into the trap of public relations and shifting their focus and efforts predominantly to it as the most effective advocacy tool, at the expense of other lobbying and advocacy tools. The limits of such cooperation should be clearly set within the norms of ethical behaviour and its conformity with the organisations' set of values. The organisations indeed benefit from the policy-makers, advisors, or government officials that help them to formulate draft laws, include issues in agenda setting, and/or to pressure the government to take action in the implementation process. At the same time, such leaders or central advocates gained a lot from their relations with civil society, since they are able to promote their image and reputation as supporters of certain causes or popular demands, or even as reformers.

Whilst strong campaign leaders were not necessarily present in all three organisations, relations with key individuals that were convinced of the cause and demonstrated a certain level of credibility and professionalism, were developed over the years within these organisations. For instance, while CCER benefited at times from a main advocate who took public office, all three organisations made the most of the reputation and credibility of their founding members and managed to establish professional

relationships and networks pushing forward their advocacy and lobbying.

To illustrate this point, Ziad Baroud, as a central advocate, along with other prominent figures, founded CCER and remained as one of its main advisors. When Baroud took up the post of Minister of Interior, CCER's campaigns and advocacy strategies became more significant and more accepted because one of its prominent leaders was the minister directly in charge of the laws and policies that CCER sought to introduce, advocate, or amend. It should be noted, however, that the successive leaders who took over the campaigns enjoyed a high level of respect and professionalism that allowed them to build on the founders' stature. The arrival of Baroud to power was a mutually beneficial context, as he gained from representing the values CCER upholds. In explaining CCER's success, Abdallah, however, stressed the importance of the general public's readiness for change, whilst acknowledging that political momentum helped to move things along.

With the founders of ALEF leaving operations to a new generation of professional activists, ALEF's new advocates could build on previous credibility. Wehbe explained that the founders continue to support the advocacy campaigns from their respective positions in domestic politics, international organisations, educational institutions, and research centres. Wehbe also highlighted some cases in which ALEF had worked to create interest in a subject, obtaining a stakeholder analysis, and highlighting benefits, which had led to political actors putting the issue on their agendas, and thus becoming "ad hoc central advocates."

Although CLMC largely takes its credibility from its position as part of the church and the larger international organisation, it seems that it is the closest of the three organisations to having one strong campaign leader, the founder of the Migrant Centre, who remained in its direct management for 20 years and managed to successfully build a strong personal relationship of trust and mutual benefit with officials. However, in 2014 the founder left the centre, but remained part of Caritas. Roukos said that the handover to the current leadership was well-managed. Concerning political will, CLMC agrees that some politicians look to serve their personal interests by becoming advocates of Caritas' cause.

2.5 Influential support coalition

Gathering a large number of NGOs into a coalition serves two purposes. The first purpose is to maximise the outreach of an advocacy campaign to cover a larger public over different regions. The second purpose is to increase the pressure on policymakers and present demands to them. In addition, a coalition is more capable of inferring that responding to its demands and needs is also in the interest of the targeted official.

However, working in coalition presents its own complications. Creating a coalition is usually for a short-term period with a project-oriented purpose, which therefore results in a lack of sustainability and follow-up on activities. Secondly, coalitions are usually driven and encouraged by non-Lebanese entities (donors, the UN, embassies, etc.), and in some cases, are donor-driven and lacking in engagement from specialists. This results in a lack of professionalism and credibility. Furthermore, because the coalition is required to implement the conditions and requirements set by the initiator/donor, it is

sometimes difficult for such coalition to give due focus to affecting public opinion. A third problem that can arise is associated with longer term coalitions that tend to be centred on the work of one main NGO, thereby disregarding the importance and role of other organisations. A final obstacle observed is a general pronounced weakness in networking and partnerships within some organisations' practice.

CCER is itself a coalition of 80 NGOs distributed over the Lebanese territory. LADE[45] took the lead in this coalition, a move which was accepted, to a large extent, by the different partners. This resulted in some difficulty distinguishing between CCER and LADE, as the same leaders, public figures, and activists were representing both organisations. The 80 NGOs that make up CCER are not all specifically working on elections and electoral reforms; most provide support to the coalition but do not engage in its steering. As Abdullah explained, through drawing into the coalition NGOs working on a broad spectrum of issues (including disability rights, women's rights, transparency, skills, and media), CCER consolidates stakeholders' support to put pressure on politicians.

According to ALEF's programmes manager, the organisation has frequently joined thematic coalitions of NGOs working on the same issues and causes. The two main long-standing coalitions they are working with are the coalition reporting to the Universal Periodic Review of Lebanon and a coalition working for the prevention of torture. For the former, around 55 NGOs contribute to a joint report that is submitted to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR). Some of the topics and issues that are tackled concern the right to work, right to social security, child labour, the right to life, torture, arbitrary detention, etc. (Civil Society Drafting Reports, 2015).[46] The latter coalition includes roughly seven Lebanese NGOs that are working collectively on torture, arbitrary detention, and unfair trials (Coalition on Preventing Torture, 2015).[47] Ghali argues that the lack of cooperation and coordination between NGOs is limiting their effectiveness in achieving their goals and that this is due to several internal and external factors. He indicates that few coalitions are being formed, with the examples above among the exceptions.

CLMC meanwhile has worked within several coalitions related to migrant workers, torture, and domestic violence. Roukos believes that forming a coalition of NGOs and partnering with stakeholders has been effective, whilst maintaining that the main achievements in the field have been due to work by individual NGOs, rather than coalitions. Coalitions work on communication, services, and advocacy; within which each NGO has its own interests and strengths. Each NGO, therefore, contributes to a coalition in line with its expertise. Regarding cooperation within the MENA region, Roukos stated that Lebanese NGOs have an excellent reputation for their advocacy work.

2.6 Mobilised public

Public campaigns are a routine tool used by NGOs, with several aims. The first aim is to convince the public of the urgency of an issue. The second purpose is to challenge perceptions and raise awareness, shaking up cultural and political mindsets and, resulting in changed behaviour on an individual level. The last, and most difficult aim to achieve, is the mobilisation of the general public in order to pressure politicians. However, in the three cases examined, public actions have not proven to be effective in enacting change in policy or legislation, and public involvement in civic action and in

demonstrations has not been forthcoming.

Abdallah explained that CCER looks to mobilise the public in three main ways, depending on the political situation, which are: demonstrations, press releases, and flash mobs. It has extensively utilised different media, billboards, etc. for advocacy and public campaigns. Abdallah went on to explain that strong campaigns were created post-2008, and several workshops were organised to take some steps forward with all the political parties. CCER looked to the media to shed light on its work and react to its press releases. CCER also uses the monitoring of different elections as a way to reach a wider public. The CCER works with different components of the society such as municipalities and universities to monitor their elections. Moreover, it includes working groups of volunteers in every region to support the campaigns and election monitoring. These volunteers are considered as focal points and satellites to ensure the promotion of campaigns and causes. However, CCER's public mobilisations and demonstrations seem to have failed to involve large numbers of participants or initiate any perceptible change in the positions of political parties. Even when political parties happen to agree with CCER on the electoral system, their position is not due to popular pressure but based on their political interest.

ALEF, on the other hand, is clear in its rejection of popular mobilisations or demonstrations, believing them ineffective and lacking in controllable results. Public campaigns are used regularly within three different frameworks: to help design projects based on public opinion tendencies, on a case by case criteria after analysing the utility of such mobilisation, and to ensure that enough highlight is given to the rights-based approach of politically sensitive issues. ALEF's awareness-raising activities include innovative methods such as mock events in universities, pubs, and in the streets. Wehbe stressed that campaigns are not used to gain exposure because ALEF considers itself a results-oriented organisation. Case by case assessment is used to judge if there is a benefit, interest and/or need to go public in promoting a cause or issue. Ghali added that most campaigns are targeted to a specific group rather than the public at large, because the latter kind can have a negative effect, as highlighting a specific issue may trigger governmental reactions that could be detrimental to the cause in general or the willingness to cooperate with this specific NGO on the matter. For ALEF, media coverage is a continuous need for public campaigns; however, achieving desired results requires a lot of efforts and resources which may not always be available. Moreover, ALEF views that the media as well as public opinion are mainly interested in scoops and exclusivity. Whilst acknowledging the exposure it can provide for the cause in question and the NGO, Wehbe argues that it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of media exposure and reach. On the other hand, social media such as Facebook represents a more useful tool that is regularly employed as it enables the NGO to monitor visitor/viewer numbers.

CLMC has recourse to popular mobilisation for carefully selected and restricted events, and with the aim of raising awareness rather than directly pressuring politicians for change. CLMC uses the media to raise awareness of its causes and objectives as well as of violations. Roukos observed that some media channels tend to be more cooperative than others, whilst acknowledging that it may also depend on the topic raised. CLMC has launched public campaigns around the issues of human trafficking of women and children, slavery, equal rights for Lebanese and migrant workers, and for an intergovernmental task force on migrant workers and human trafficking. It also created a consortium with four other NGOs for a campaign called "Fi Chi Ghalat" (Something's wrong). CLMC states that, thanks to its partnerships, its campaigns take into consideration to actively interact with schools and

universities and with the concerned government agencies.

2.7 Powerful inside champions

The Barkhorn et al. indicators describe powerful inside champions as decision-makers within the government, who can overcome opposition and support a solution and its underlying principles. In the three cases, this proved to be the most effective factor in achieving change in practices, policies and legislation. Finding such a champion and convincing him or her to take on the aspired change is a key feature of Lebanese NGO work. The acknowledged risk is that these champions will reap the political credit for this work. This risk seems to be accepted by NGOs as long as it remains within their ethical limits, as previously discussed.

CCER is a special case since its founder became interior minister and was able to become himself the inside champion. This is one of the very rare instances in Lebanese history of a figure from the civil society being chosen to head a key ministry. It is debatable as to how much CCER would have achieved without Ziad Baroud's appointment. The champion's effectiveness was, however, limited to technical reforms of no major political significance. Despite the support of the Minister of Interior and a majority of Lebanese public opinion, the electoral law adopted in 2008 included only some technical reforms, that whilst in themselves a major step forward, still fall short of having a significant, game-changing effect on the political scene.

ALEF was able to foster successful cooperation with key members of the security forces, ministries and parliament. According to Ghali, it contributed to and influenced several actions taken by these key "champions" such as members of parliament, the Internal Security Forces (ISF) human rights officer, and several other key consultants and advisors to ministries. ALEF is recognised as a reference on the issue of torture and was consequently invited by the secretary of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights to participate in most discussions and works reviewing the different drafts and reports. With the ISF human rights officer, ALEF was able to clarify some of the vagueness in the Code of Conduct issued with the assistance of the UN, and to push for a more human rights-based understanding and application of the code as a major tool for preventing torture and holding violators accountable. ALEF is still following the same cooperative approach with the security forces notably in its newest project, Establishing the Primacy of Human Rights in Security Sector Reform in Lebanon.[48]

CLMC was able to cooperate with the consecutive General Security (GS) directors to act as champions within their institution and to take progressive steps in partnering with civil society, according to Roukos, who clarified that CLMC was established in 1994 to work with migrant workers because the Lebanese Law, specifically Article 7, does not ensure rights for migrant workers. It started working with Sudanese, Somali, then with Iraqi and recently Syrian refugees. CLMC believes that it has developed an acknowledged expertise and credibility in training security personnel in a rights-based approach and treatment of migrant workers and refugees. CLMC's credibility and cooperation with three consecutive GS directors gave it access to every GS prison, to provide detainees with legal assistance and medical treatment. Furthermore, CLMC was able to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the current director, allowing it to manage its own shelters/safe houses hosting migrant workers, notably

abused domestic workers whose cases and legal status do not require them to be in prison.[49]

2.8 Clear implementation path

The clear implementation path means that the implementing institution has the commitment and the ability to execute the solution. This indicator is insignificant to a certain degree to the three cases at hand due to the nature of advocacy, the complexities mentioned throughout the paper, and the fact that the paper covered general advocacy strategies rather than a specific campaign.

In short, the reforms advocated for by the CCER were partially accepted as mentioned and incorporated in the electoral law of 2008, which made their implementation path clear and legally binding to the government. Lately in the 2017 electoral law, another significant set of reforms was adopted including a kind of proportional representation and printed ballot.[50] CCER is still pushing for a proper implementation of the adopted reforms and further improvements in the electoral process.

As for the Torture Prevention campaign, the efforts done have led to the adoption of the draft law by the relevant Parliamentary Committees and eventually passed by the General Assembly on October 2016 to establish the National Human Rights Institute including the incorporation of the National Prevention Mechanism.[51] Further efforts are being exerted by the coalition to pass the law on "Criminalizing Torture."[52]

With regards to the CLMC efforts, the established mechanisms and agreement with the General Security are still being carried out, making a difference on a daily basis.[53] In addition to the fact that CLMC has done little effort to formalise this work into a law, its other attempts to change the *kafala* system, allow migrant workers to enjoy labour law guarantees or establish a union, have been repeatedly aborted.[54]

Table 3: Summary review of the three cases

	CCER: *Electoral Reform*	ALEF: *Torture Prevention*	CLMC: *Migrant Work*
Functioning venue(s) for adoption	Government is functioning in its minimal capacity – Campaign targets govt. officials, but does not rely on them	Government is functioning in its minimal capacity – Campaign targets Gov. officials, but does not rely on them	Government is minimal capac targets Gov. o not rely on the
Open policy window	*International interest:* Very high between 2006-2009	*International interest:* High pre-2011, until the Arab Spring	*International i* Very High (no states and sta Migrant Worke

	Favourable momentum: 2009 Parliament Elections – new President *Credibility & readiness:* Strong, but not willing to compromise	*Favourable momentum:* Lebanon signing OPCAT *Credibility & readiness:* Accumulation of expertise – Strong networking	*Favourable m* Good for advo limited politica *Credibility & re* International o record of profe
Feasible solution & dynamic master plan	-Focus on achievable technical reforms -Forced to show more flexibility on proportional electoral system	-Law to criminalise torture drafted but difficult to pass. -Focus on internal ISF policy & on diminishing public acceptance	-Focus on GS signing MOU, training and a centres
Strong campaign leader(s)	Credible founding members including Minister of Interior	Credible founding members in key positions offer support & good network	Credible inter strong & credi Migrant Centre
Influential support coalition	Is itself a coalition of 80 NGOs not all of which are specialised in elections, but are rallied when needed	Coalition on Universal Periodic Review (45 NGOs) & coalition on the Prevention of Torture (7 specialised NGOs)	Part of severa Torture, etc… achievements individual effo
Mobilised public	Extensive usage of media campaigns and visibility; numbers involved in demonstrations remained limited	Reject public mobilisation, but use public awareness campaigns whose effects are difficult to measure	-Very selective mobilisation, n awareness. -O damage estab partnerships
Powerful inside champions	Co-founder became Minister of Interior & carried the cause forward	Key back-bench politicians convinced & played the role of champions	Consecutive C directors on b partnership & agenda
Clear Implementation Path	Several reforms have been adopted; efforts to ensure proper implementation and more improvements are being done.	National Prevention Mechanism has been adopted; further efforts to form it and to "Criminalise Torture" are being done.	Established m working well; e the *kafala* syst labour rights f umdergoing

Conclusion

Close examination of the three cases has demonstrated that Lebanon's civil society is a very active one, that has learned to adapt and alter the tools it uses to achieve its goals. The three cases showed that some success can be achieved even in a volatile political situation like Lebanon's if the civil

society is pragmatic, credible and professional enough to steer its way through. Each of the Barkhorn et al. indicators against which the campaigns were assessed revealed the serious challenges faced by civil society in Lebanon, some easier to overcome than others, some of which are common to civil societies around the world, and some of which are unique to the Lebanese context. The three campaigns managed to find ways to tackle the points targeted by the indicators in a way that allowed them to achieve some results. However, it also became clear from this research that the Lebanese polity is strong enough to resist certain reforms, and that only when the different campaigns were pragmatic and realistic according to the polity's expectations would it support these. This clearly falls short of what is needed and concedes to the political will of power players in order for them to preserve their balance of power and existing networks.

Beyond Barkhorn's indicators, several factors remain to be considered. The effects of the deteriorating political situation, not only on any further achievements but also on preserving what has been already achieved, must be considered. The importance of internal professionalism and the credibility of the institution also deserve further study. Lastly, good donor–civil society relations that we know to be essential to any successful campaign also have their own dynamics and variables that are worth studying.

Finally, even if only non-politically contentious changes are achieved, these are important and significant enough, because they make a huge difference to the lives of the people directly affected. Moreover, they set a benchmark that is difficult to retract, and a precedence that can be referred to by civil society institutions in future advocacy campaigns, eventually making it easier to achieve reforms of real political significance at the right moment and when conditions are more favourable.

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