

Civil Society Review

Issue 3 - September, 2018

— Social Science for Change —

**UNRAVELING “CIVIL SOCIETY:” POLICY,
DEPENDENCY NETWORKS, AND TAMED DISCONTENT.
REFLECTIONS FROM LEBANON AND PALESTINE.**

Gulf States’ Humanitarian Assistance for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon /
Understanding State Incorporation of The Workers’ Movement in
Early Post-War Lebanon and Its Backlash on Civil Society / Les Pro-
jets Collectifs de Développement en Palestine : Diffusion de La Vulgate
Néolibérale et Normalisation de La Domination / Advocating for
Change in the Arab World: Successes and Failures of Lebanon’s Civil
Society / *Book review* of Civil Society and Political Reform in Lebanon and
Libya: Transition and constraint



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Introduction

ELISABETH LONGUENESSE,
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The articles gathered in this dossier offer insights, based on case studies, into the transformation of the “associative sector” in Lebanon, a sector generally seen to be at the core of an increasingly active civil society. Four of these studies relate to Lebanon, while the fifth brings a welcome comparison with the Palestinian case. The dossier also includes a review of a book that investigates the Lebanese and Libyan contexts.

The reader is likely to be immediately struck by the authors’ differing conceptions of the civil society to which they refer, but also by the absence of precise definitions of the latter.

Although Susanne Schmelter does engage with the associative sector, notably emerging aid economies by focusing on Gulf-funded humanitarian engagement, she does not directly link this back to a definition of civil society. Elie Al-Hindy and his co-authors reflect directly on “civil society”, its successes and failures, and its ability to influence public policy. Still, they do not discuss any more its definition, which is almost synonymous in their view with the term “associative sector”, as put forward in the dossier’s title. For them, “civil society” has an implicitly broad dimension (“*a vibrant civil society nurtures associational life*”) and is above all a cornerstone of

liberal democracy. It represents one of the three sectors of society: the State, the private sector and civil society, according to the neo-liberal norms promoted by the Washington Consensus. They also consider “civil society” to be synonymous with “non-profit sector” – more or less the equivalent to the French concept of “*économie sociale et solidaire* (social, solidarity economy)”, itself distinct from the associative sector, strictly speaking. From one trajectory and from one national context to another, legal categories differ, influencing the structuring of the categories of analysis.

For Carmen Geha, whose book is presented by Laura El Chemali, as well as for Elie Al-Hindy and his co-authors, civil society seems synonymous with the associative sector, here understood as local civil society organisations. These include NGOs (“*non-governmental organisations*”) and community-based organisations that, in Lebanon’s reconstruction phase in the aftermath of the civil war, provided services typically offered by state institutions. It should be noted that their definition includes clan-, family- and confession-based organisations.

In contrast to the previous papers, Lea Bou Khater, without discussing the notion of civil society, looks at trade unions and at labour associations in two sectors where trade unions are prohibited: education

and the civil service. With Bou Khater, we return to an older conception (at least prior to the 1990s and the Washington Consensus) of civil society, at whose core were professional and labour organisations, expanded in the 1980s to include women's, youth, and minority defence organisations.

Sbeih Sbeih's contribution to this dossier deals with Palestine and offers a caustic critique of the instrumentalisation of the notion of civil society by development aid agencies, and more specifically by international donors, in order to impose a model and norms that are foreign to the realities of local society.

Nevertheless, whether the authors adhere to the idea of a positive relationship between civil society, democracy, and development or criticize its mystifying character, they all associate it, in fact, to a contemporary evolution inscribed in globalisation. In their view, NGOs and associations, local and international, play an increasingly important role in economic and social life ("operational" associations, associated to a service or developmental project), and social and political fields ("advocacy" associations aiming at change, at improvement of institutions and the political system). These two types of action are sometimes, if not often, connected within the same organisation (for example

structures aiming to help domestic workers or to defend homosexuals, or environmental associations, not mentioned in this dossier).

How and to what extent do these new civil actors take over from new (and old) social mobilisations? Asking the question in these terms might limit our thinking about advocacy associations. In fact, a revival of mobilisations could be noticed in the Lebanese case during the last years. It took a large variety of forms: in the campaigns concerning violence against women and the transfer of nationality, during the garbage crisis, in the trade unions mobilisations in the 2010s, in the unprecedented workers' struggles by EDL day labourers and Spinneys' employees in 2013-14, not forgetting the mobilisations in solidarity with domestic workers. The emergence of "citizen" lists in the 2016 municipal elections and in the 2018 spring legislative elections indicates an attempt to turn these movements into political ones, even if they struggle to fully take shape in a political system that remains dominated by family and clan allegiances.

The present contributions make little mention of concrete social struggles, and tend to privilege an analysis of association or union elites, their links with political power, their relationship with the State, and their dependence on funders. A future issue

should perhaps go further, and question the anchoring of these organisations in society and their ties with the social groups whose interests they claim to defend.

The driving thesis in this dossier is that the Lebanese “civil society” (formal and informal groups, associations and groupings, whether denominational or not, constituted around one service or advocacy project or another) develops in proportion to deficiencies of the State, but nonetheless remains hampered by the grip of sectarian structures and clientelist practices. Like other studies on the associative movement and collective mobilisations in Lebanon after the civil war and especially since 2005, the articles agree on the lack of effectiveness of what they refer to as “civil society” in its alternative initiatives, advocacy activities, and in its holding the State to account. However, they diverge in an intriguing way when they analyse the causes and modalities of this failure. Firstly, these articles refer to ideal models rather than direct and concrete observations of the Lebanese context. Secondly, in alternatively describing the Lebanese State as “weak” (most often) or “strong” (as in the article by Lea Bou Khater), they search for the key to this failure, but pay little attention to the reality of interactions between State and society.

In Lebanon, the functioning of public life and of the State clearly conflicts with the ideal model of democracy, of responsibility and of citizenship proposed by the theoreticians of civil society. Yet, “international” society, on which the

Lebanese associative world closely depends, refers to this ideal model throughout its documents. Moreover, this international society is more extravagant in terms of norms and procedures than in terms of financial aid, as illustrated through numerous examples in Sbeih Sbeih’s article. How can the labour movement of the past and the associative world of today make themselves the messengers of society when their donors dictate their objectives and strategies?

The studies published here show a submission, if not an adherence, to “international” management criteria that make communication with donors of primary importance. Moreover, there is in Lebanon a tendency towards the professionalisation of associative actors in such a way that they become experts and entrepreneurs, and make their sector one of the most active “industries” in the Lebanese economy. In this way, humanitarian ethos gives way to logic of profitability. Ordinary actors in social life and basic public problems are scarcely mentioned. Interactions between the society and the associative world (humanitarian, developmental or advocacy), especially in terms of a relationship of domination, are little mentioned. An exception is the salutary reference by Susanne Schmelter with regard to humanitarian and sectarian associations taking into account the beliefs and values of the populations they help. However, this raises other questions: When reflecting on civil society, can we include organisations of a religious nature, that could hypothetically speaking contribute to

the fragmentation of society? In addition, are trade unions and associations able to escape the dominant logic of Lebanese society, while the trade union movement itself, traditionally supra denominational, finds itself finally trapped? Here, there is a double demand that the associative activists will have to respond to in order to be able to influence public action: to start again from the field, on one hand, and to think of the civil society as a plural one, on the other hand.

The relationship between civil society organisations and the State is the second point of contention of these studies. To understand it in a dichotomous mode (Strong State - dominated society or weak State - strong society) leads the analysis into a deadlock. Either the civil society is paralyzed, manipulated, and in the best case co-opted by the political class via networks of clientelism and corruption considered legitimate because they are naturalised, and this explains its failures despite the scale of social movements in the 2010s. Or the reform of the State is considered impossible and the mission of substituting itself to a failing political class is assigned to the civil society by the “international society”, and this implies its inextricable dependence. Then arises the question of whether Lebanese society and its institutions are able to go beyond its vertical divisions in favour of the construction of transversal mediation structures and the negotiation of stakes that cut across these divisions.

The shift in analytical perspective put forward by Timothy Mitchell in 1991 and

made explicit ten years later by Joel Migdal via the term “State-in-society” should provide for a reorientation of objectives and modes of action of the associative sector in Lebanon. It would mean abandoning a vertical perspective in which the State is nothing but the reflection of an autonomous society, immobilised by primordial cleavages (sectarian, but also clannish and local). In this perspective, the society is held hostage to the combined interests of political rulers, confined to assigned identities, controlled by networks of power and inexorably undermined by the wheeling and dealing of its leaders. Indeed, many civil society organisations in Lebanon, even those described as secular in these studies, have sectarian origins and even agendas tinged with religious values. However, this does not prevent them from being involved – and even leading – transversal mobilisations and actions to advance various interests and demands of the society, as Laura El Chemali shows in her report. By pivoting the axis of analysis and activism from vertical to horizontal, the associative sector in Lebanon can demonstrate and develop its strength, including in the political sphere.

In any case, the reflections on civil society proposed in this issue of the *Civil Society Review*, in Lebanon as well as in Palestine open up toward further investigations and interrogations. For they not only question the State, its nature and its functions, but politics in a broader sense.

Meet the Authors

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Analyses

Gulf States' Humanitarian Assistance for
Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

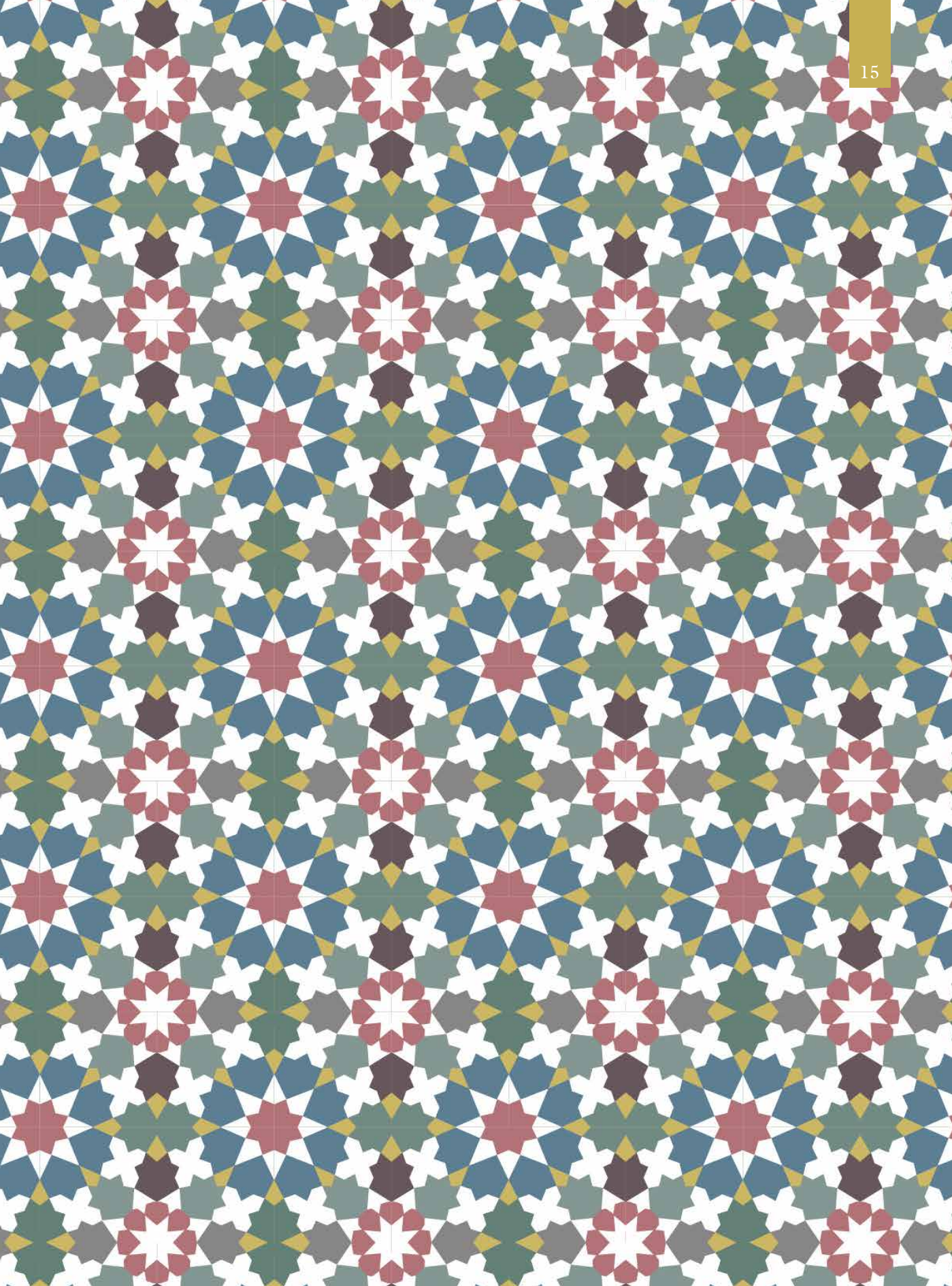
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***Gulf States'
Humanitarian
Assistance for
Syrian Refugees
in Lebanon***

SUSANNE SCHMELTER

ABSTRACT

The humanitarian engagement of Gulf States has globally increased over the last two decades. This trend also manifests itself in Lebanon, where the displacement from Syria has led to an unprecedented growth of Lebanon's diverse humanitarian sector. Due to the weakness of state institutions and the absence of a concerted government strategy, UN-institutions took a leading role in the coordination of international and local NGOs. However, numerous Gulf-funded organisations function largely outside the UN-coordinated response and rely on their own coordination structures. This paper explores these structures and characteristics of humanitarian assistance for Syrians displaced in Lebanon running primarily on Gulf funding. Thereby it focuses particularly on two umbrella organisations, URDA and *I'tilaf*, that are largely Gulf-funded and coordinate the work of numerous faith-based humanitarian organisations. Based on ethnographic field research – which was mainly conducted in 2014 and 2016 – the paper examines positions and negotiations within these humanitarian structures. These ethnographic insights are completed by an analysis of the available data and literature on Islamic charitable giving and funding trends in Lebanon. Coordination among the different humanitarian actors has repeatedly been a matter of complaint and discussion

in both interviews and international reports: The lack of comprehensive coordination structures, the subsequent inefficiency in the use of funds, and the unsatisfying inclusion of local stakeholders are among the main points of critique. Here, Gulf-funded humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees in Lebanon shows alternative models and approaches in regard to operating standards, administrative procedures, planning, reporting, and contact to the local population. Yet, *ad hoc* deliveries with few administrative procedures and a lack of transparency simultaneously expose the Gulf donors also to accusations of the misuse of funds and diminish accountability towards donors, beneficiaries and possible cooperation partners. This, finally, raises questions regarding the possibilities of the multilateral system to provide forums for exchange, efficient coordination, and mediation between conflicting positions.

INTRODUCTION

The “Al-Awda model camp productive village” in the municipality of Bar Elias, Bekaa Valley, is surrounded by fields with a view of the mountain range that separates Lebanon and Syria. The camp was built in 2013 by the Union of Relief and Development Associations (URDA) to provide shelter for refugees from Syria. A sign at the camp’s entrance displays the names and logos of 22 organisations that support the camp: among the first are Qatar Charity, Rahma International (Kuwait), RAF (Foundation Sheikh Thani bin Abdullah for Humanitarian Services, Qatar), etc. – Oxfam and the International Rescue Committee are the only western organisations. URDA receives most of its funding from the Gulf States, and as an umbrella organisation, it coordinates the work of around 100 member associations. URDA also implements its own shelter and health care programmes. The shelter site is quite exceptional, given that the Lebanese government usually strictly opposes the formal establishment of new refugee camps. URDA, however, is legally not in the same position as United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that usually negotiates Memoranda of Understanding with the host government.

The international humanitarian engagement of Gulf States has globally increased over the last two decades.¹ This trend manifests itself also in Lebanon, where more than a million Syrian refugees are registered with the UNHCR. The war in Syria has caused the biggest refugee crisis since the Second World War and has boosted the presence of humanitarian actors throughout the region. One in four persons in Lebanon is believed to be a refugee from Syria.² The Lebanese society is still deeply fragmented along the fault lines of its Civil War (1975-1990) and the sectarian proportional electoral system favours politics of patronage and clientelism.³ Since 2011, these predominantly Sunni Syrian refugees arrived in a state still deeply divided along confessional lines. These divisions continue to solidify due to the conflict in Syria and are reinforced by the regional

1 Andrea Binder, Claudia Meier, and Julia Steets, “Humanitarian Assistance: Truly Universal? A Mapping Study of Non-Western Donors,” Website, *Global Public Policy Institute*, 2010, Vol. 12, available at: http://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2010/Binder_Meier_Steets__2010__Truly_Universal_-_Mapping_Study_GPPi_RP_12.pdf [last accessed 11 May 2017].

2 At the time of writing (2017), around a million Syrian refugees in Lebanon are registered at UNHCR. See: UNHCR, “Lebanon,” Website, *Syria Regional Refugee Response Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal*, 30 June 2017, available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122> [last accessed 11 March 2017]. The government does not adhere to the 1951 Geneva Convention for refugees and does not provide a comparable asylum legislation. An additional 500,000 Syrians are estimated to live without refugee registration and partly on the basis of a sponsorship system in Lebanon. See: Bassam Khawaja, “Lebanon Policy Leaves ‘Second-Class’ Syrians Vulnerable to Return: HRW,” *News Deeply*, 14 March 2017, available at: <https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/community/2017/03/14/lebanon-policy-leaves-second-class-syrians-vulnerable-to-return-hrw-2> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

3 Stephan Rosiny, “A Quarter Century of ‘Transitory Power-Sharing’. Lebanon’s Unfulfilled Ta’if Agreement of 1989 Revisited,” *Civil Wars*, Abingdon, Taylor & Francis, 2015, Vol. 17 (4), p. 485–502.

alliances the Lebanese political parties maintain and heavily depend on. This has created a governmental paralysis in which state institutions fail to deliver adequate services to their citizens and to develop a comprehensive strategy of dealing with the displaced from Syria⁴.

The diverse Lebanese civil society is very active and experienced in dealing with conflict and displacement. This experience includes traditions of hosting and accommodating displaced persons as well as interactions with international and regional donors for development projects (e.g. concerning Palestinian refugees in Lebanon) and humanitarian programmes (after the July war in 2006/2007 and with Iraqi displacement).⁵ The polarised political environment, along with the laissez-faire approach of the Lebanese government, facilitates the development of different humanitarian approaches and coordination mechanisms. While the UN took a leading role in coordinating international and local NGOs responding to the displacement, numerous Gulf-funded, often Islamic, organisations work largely outside of the UN-coordinated efforts and have established their own coordination structures.

This paper explores these structures and characteristics of mainly Gulf-funded humanitarian assistance for displaced Syrians into Lebanon. It focuses particularly on two umbrella organisations: The Union of Relief and Development Associations (URDA; Arabic short: *Itihad*) and (for the sake of comparison in this paper) *I'tilaf al-Majmuat al-Khairiya* (The Alliance of Charitable Associations; Arabic short: *I'tilaf*). Employing an ethnographic research approach, about 20 semi-structured interviews with individuals working for and with these organisations, as well as field visits, were conducted in 2014 and 2016. Inspired by the methodological approach of the ethnographic regime analysis,⁶ this research focuses on positions and negotiations among different actors. In addition to studies and relevant documents, it strongly builds on statements and positions of persons with connections to Gulf-funded humanitarian engagement or Islamic charities working in assistance to Syrian refugees in Lebanon. As the main research interest revolves around the organisational structures, the paper focuses mainly on representatives and policy frameworks of these organisations and includes the recipients' perspective only occasionally. Exploring the

4 Karim El Mufti, "Official Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon, the Disastrous Policy of No-Policy," *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, 2014, available at: <http://civilsociety-centre.org/paper/official-response-syrian-refugee-crisis-lebanon-disastrous-policy-no-policy> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

5 Estella Carpi, "The Everyday Experience of Humanitarianism in Akkar Villages," *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, 2014, available at: <http://civilsociety-centre.org/paper/everyday-experience-humanitarianism-akkar-villages> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

6 Sabine Hess and Vassilis Tsianos, "Ethnographische Grenzregimeanalyse," in Sabine Hess and Bernd Kasperek (eds.), *Grenzregime: Diskurse, Praktiken, Institutionen* in Europa, Berlin, Assoziation A, 2010, p. 243-264.

recipients' perspective closer was also in practical regards difficult as, for example, opportunities to conduct "independent" interviews with refugees in the URDA run camps were limited. While the main interest lies in operating modes, programmes, and discourses on coordination, matters of representation and perception also influence stances and positions. Thus, also the question of the terminology impacted the research framing, as some of the interviewees deemed the terms Islamic charities or Gulf-funded organisations not necessarily appropriate for their work. Sensitive connotations of these terms are no surprise given that Lebanese politics revolve largely around a fragile sectarian balance with high dependencies on external funding, much of it coming from Gulf States. Moreover, the representation and positioning within Lebanon's humanitarian sector influence funding logic and possible cooperation.

The paper begins with background information on the history, motives, and particularities of humanitarian donorship from the Gulf. It then presents the two umbrella organisations (URDA and *P'tilaf*) and discusses to what extent descriptions like "Islamic charities" or "Gulf-financed" are accurate. URDA has been able to significantly expand its programmes and even runs several shelter sites across the country. The following section takes a closer look on their organisation and their positioning in the Lebanese policy framework. While URDA has been able to establish working agreements and some form of cooperation, an analysis of statements by representatives of URDA and *P'tilaf*, as well as a few of their member organisations in coordination with the UN-led system, underlines the impression that the systems run in parallel rather than in close cooperation. The conclusion reflects on how the Lebanese "laboratory" has been operating and how studying it can contribute to reforms of the international humanitarian system.

GULF-FINANCED INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The plurality of humanitarian actors and the presence of Gulf-financed NGOs in Lebanon reflect a global trend of so-called "emerging"⁷ or "non-Western"⁸ donors engaging internationally in humanitarian assistance. The four most important donor states from the Gulf - Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, and Qatar - share several commonalities: they are conservative monarchies, they have an Arab-Sunni identity, and their economic wealth is based on oil and gas resources.⁹ In the 2000s, they

7 Alain Robyns and Véronique de Geoffroy, "Les Bailleurs Emergents de l'Aide Humanitaire. Le Cas des Pays du Golfe," Plaisians, Groupe URD, 2009, available at: http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/09_10_10_nouveaux_bailleurs_VF.pdf [last accessed 11 May 2017].

8 Andrea Binder, Claudia Meier, and Julia Steets, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

9 Céline Billat, "The Funding of Humanitarian Action by the Gulf States: A Long-Term Commitment," *Humanitarian Aid on the Move*, Plaisians, Groupe URD, 2016, Vol. 17, p. 15-19, available at: http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/17_18_19_nouveaux_bailleurs_VF.pdf

engaged in fiscal support of Palestine, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and in the reconstruction of Lebanon after the Israeli war on Lebanon in July 2006; they channelled their funds bilaterally from government to government, as well as multilaterally via international organisations.¹⁰ Taking into account the humanitarian emergencies in the Middle East, funding by Gulf States has risen sharply. In 2015, contributions reached almost 2.4 billion US dollars, which resulted in an almost 500% increase of their contributions since 2011.¹¹ Yet, these amounts of humanitarian spending are only estimations, which are based on the data of the Financial Tracking Service (FTS). The FTS, run by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), tracks the flow of international humanitarian funds. Yet, it accounts for only a part of the international humanitarian spending, as data sharing with the FTS is not obligatory and is handled differently by the Gulf States donors.¹² The United Arab Emirates is the only Arab state in the Donor Support Group, an advisory council to the OCHA, and usually reports funding accurately. Funding from Qatar, by contrast, is not as transparent. Kuwait, however, gained international recognition by organising three large donor conferences for the UN. In Saudi Arabia, the royal house regularly organises public donation campaigns that allow a quick mobilisation of funds.¹³ Looking at the FTS data of humanitarian engagement of the Gulf States in Lebanon, the financial contributions of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar show strong fluctuations from year to year. Nevertheless, they range among the top 21 humanitarian donors for Lebanon in the years 2011-2014.¹⁴

While this increase of international humanitarian engagement, and maybe also the introduction of a global tracking system for humanitarian funds in 2000, has lead to

urd.org/The-funding-of-humanitarian-action [last accessed 11 May 2017].

10 Andrea Binder and Claudia Meier, "Opportunity Knocks: Why Non-Western Donors Enter Humanitarianism and How to Make the Best of It," *International Review of the Red Cross*, Geneva, International Committee of the Red Cross and Cambridge University Press, 2011, Vol. 93 (884), p. 1142, 1143.

11 Development Initiatives, "Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2016," *Global Humanitarian Assistance*, Bristol, Development Initiatives Ltd, 2016, p. 44, available at: <http://devinit.org/post/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2016/#> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

12 Alain Robyns and Véronique de Geoffroy, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

13 *Ibid.*; Susanne Schmelter and Ann-Kathrin Seidel, "Sanitäter Mit Scheckbuch," *Zenith*, Berlin, Deutscher Levante Verlag, 2015, p. 78-83; Khalid Al Yahya and Nathalie Fußtier, "Saudi Arabia as a Humanitarian Donor: High Potential, Little Institutionalization," Berlin, Global Public Policy Institute, 2011, Vol. 14, available at: http://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2011/al-yahya-fusstier_2011_saudi-arabia-as-humanitarian-donor_gppi.pdf [last accessed 11 May 2017].

14 *Financial Tracking System*, "Funding to Syrian Crisis 2015," Website, *Financial Tracking System*, 2015, available at: <https://ftsarchive.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=special-syriancrisis&year=2015> [last accessed 11 May 2017]. See also: Susanne Schmelter and Ann-Kathrin Seidel, *op. cit.*

their labelling as emerging donors, Gulf States international humanitarian engagement goes further back in time: Throughout the 1970s and '80s, for example, Saudi Arabia financed humanitarian programmes in Africa and South Asia.¹⁵ Despite histories and traditions of international humanitarian engagement, the Gulf States, along with the BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), are often described as “emerging donors.” This refers to the international system of institutions established after the Second World War: the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) founded in 1960/1961 the Development Assistance Council (DAC) which has 28 member states, ranging from the Americas and Europe to the Pacific region. These DAC states today dominate UN institutions and have agreed upon common directives and control councils. The so-called emerging donors do not feel bound to these directives and are thus – at least in the short term – able to provide “direct” and less bureaucratic assistance.¹⁶ Compared to the DAC-states, the Gulf donors also do significantly fewer evaluations and less reporting on their humanitarian programmes. They are more flexible with implementing institutions on the ground, which tends to favour local ownership over crisis responses. Furthermore, their donations impose less binding conditions, such as governance agreements, democratisation, women’s rights, etc. As this respects the sovereignty of the receiving countries, it might also squander opportunities to exert influence.¹⁷

Analysing the humanitarian engagement of Gulf States in conflict zones like Bosnia-Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, and the occupied Palestinian territories, Sultan Barakat and Steven Zyck describe three main motives. The first is to support stability in and around regions of conflict and enhancing diplomatic relations, “diplomatic” referring to the public perception of the affected communities. The second motive is solidarity with the Palestinian cause, whereby humanitarian engagement also appears as a compensation for failures to take effective political or military action. The last motive stems from genuine humanitarian concerns with strong roots in Islamic traditions. One of the five pillars of Islam is the religious duty of giving *zakat*. It requires Muslims to

15 Sultan Barakat and Steven Zyck, “Gulf State Assistance to Conflict-Affected Environments,” *Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States*, London, The Centre for the Study of Global Governance, 2010, p. 7-9, available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/55240/> [last accessed 11 May 2017]; Leo Barasi, “Saudi Arabia’s Humanitarian Aid a Political Takeover?”, Humanitarian Exchange, London, Humanitarian Practice Network, 2005, Vol. 29, available at: <http://odihpn.org/magazine/saudi-arabia%C2%92s-humanitarian-aid-a-political-takeover/> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

16 Andrea Binder, “Geben Ist Außenpolitik,” *Welternaehrung*, Bonn, Zeitung Welthungerhilfe, 2014, available at: https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Mediathek/Welternaehrung/Welternaehrung-Zeitung-Welthungerhilfe-2-2014.pdf [last accessed 11 March 2017].

17 Sultan Barakat and Steven Zyck, *op. cit.*, p. 33-37.

give around 2.5 percent of one's wealth to the poor and those in need of support. These include in particular orphans, widows, prisoners, unemployed, homeless, victims of natural disasters, and persons in need of medicinal treatment.¹⁸ Besides practical regulations regarding the amount and the time of giving *zakat*, the attitude is also considered important: *Zakat* has the function of reducing social injustice and is informed by a sense of solidarity rather than simple charity. Those giving are supposed to be trusting of and respectful towards the recipients of *zakat*. Other forms of charitable giving include *sadaqa*, voluntary donations, and *waqf*, religious foundations that fund religious institutions and other public services. The opinions of whether Muslims should be prioritised as recipients of *zakat* differ: while it was traditionally more common to help Muslims and persons in the closer environment, the necessity to help all persons in need, indiscriminately of religion, is today widely regarded a necessity. The latter viewpoint has been adopted by most internationally acting (Islamic) humanitarian organisations.¹⁹

Relatively low standards of control and supervision, as well as the limited international possibilities to document the flow of humanitarian funds, make it almost impossible to systematically track and map the humanitarian funding from Gulf donors.²⁰ While the governments' donations are difficult to track, those of non-state actors, such as private persons and foundations transferring significant sums of humanitarian funds abroad, remain even more opaque.²¹ This was reflected in explorative interviews in the Bekaa Valley in November 2015. One Sheikh and NGO director who cooperates with local Islamic charities that receive funding from the Gulf commented: "Besides the official state donations, there are also private donors. But they don't want to talk about this... Better you do research on something else; it would be a pity if you do all this work and after you can only write two pages."²² This difficulty to gain any information about unmonitored funding was also confirmed by a journalist investigating this topic on Lebanon and on the donor side in Qatar.²³

18 Jonathan Benthall and Jérôme Bellion-Jourdan, *The Charitable Crescent: Politics of Aid in the Muslim World*, New York, I.B. Tauris, 2003, p. 10.

19 *Ibid.*

20 Sultan Barakat and Steven Zyck, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

21 Sultan Barakat and Steven Zyck, *op. cit.*

22 Interview by the author with NGO director, Bekaa Valley, 5 December 2015.

23 Conversation between the author and a journalist working in the field, Bekaa Valley, 5 December 2015.

THE UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS: URDA AND I'TILAF

The fact that the majority of refugees from Syria are Sunnis,²⁴ reflects also in the increased presence of Sunni charities. Most of URDA's and I'tilaf member associations feature typical Islamic charitable programmes, such as support to orphans and women-headed households, and distributions during Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr at the end of the fasting month. While these charities receive their funding mainly from the Gulf, Islamic humanitarian organisations and Gulf donorship are not necessarily interrelated and each has specific backgrounds and implications. For example, the UK-based international NGO Islamic Relief, operating in Lebanon and coordinating closely with the UN-led response, promotes the compatibility of international humanitarian standards with policies that are guided by Islamic values.²⁵ In contrast, URDA and I'tilaf receive most of their funding from the Gulf; they have established their own coordination structures that function largely outside of the UN system, and they are also less clear in depicting their organisational profile. Studies suggest that I'tilaf is dominated by Salafi charities and that URDA is a charitable institution founded by the Muslim Brotherhood.²⁶ Both the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis have started from the teachings of Islamic clerics in the beginning of the 20th century and the end of the 19th century, respectively, and have developed into transnational Islamic political movements. While the Muslim Brotherhood typically organises as a party placing a strong emphasis on charitable work and welfare, the Salafis are a rather loose movement whose branches place variable emphasis on political, military, and charitable work.²⁷ Particularly in Northern Lebanon, the Salafis have a considerable base, although they are not organised as a political party.²⁸ The Lebanese branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is called Islamic Group (Jamaa al-Islamiya) is a minor political party in Lebanon²⁹ and is reported to have funded

24 International Crisis Group, "Too Close for Comfort: Syrians in Lebanon," *Middle East Report*, Brussels, International Crisis Group, 2013, Vol. 141, p. 3-4, available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/egypt-syria-lebanon/lebanon/141-too-close-for-comfort-syrians-in-lebanon.aspx> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

25 Interview by the author with the director of Islamic Relief Lebanon, Saida, 1 August 2016; Islamic Relief, Lebanon, Website, *Islamic Relief*, available at: <http://www.islamic-relief.org/category/where-we-work/lebanon/> [last accessed 29 September 2017].

26 Sarah Hasselbarth, *Islamic Charities in the Syrian Context in Jordan and Lebanon*, Beirut, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2014.

27 Gilles Kepel, *Das Schwarzbuch des Dschihad: Aufstieg und Niedergang des Islamismus*, München, Piper, 2002.

28 Hashem Osseiran, "Lebanon's Salafists Poised for Parliamentary Polls?," Website, *The Arab Weekly*, 27 November 2016, available at: <http://www.thearabweekly.com//Opinion/7141/Lebanon-s-Salafists-poised-for-parliamentary-polls?> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

29 Raphaël Lefèvre, "A New Direction for Lebanon's Muslim Brothers," Blog, *Diwan Middle East Insights From Carnegie*, 2 November 2016, available at: <http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/62740?lang=en>

URDA.³⁰ Despite I'tilaf's and URDA's linkages to Islamic political movements, the accounts of the representatives of the two umbrella organisations seem quite careful about establishing such connections.

The following section seeks to outline the organisational profile of I'tilaf and URDA; it provides basic information on the size and outreach of the organisations, as well as their positioning in regard to Islamic charitable work, and their funding sources. Gathering information on these organisations proved to be quite challenging: both were newly established in 2012 and have hardly been subjected to third-party investigations. Moreover, they barely publish any reports that contain transparent data on financial matters in general. Therefore, the insights discussed below stem mainly from interviews and information material provided by I'tilaf and URDA.

I'tilaf³¹ is the smaller of the two coordination networks. The organisation's office is located in the city of Halba, in the northern governorate of Akkar, and has only very basic equipment. It has very little published material, no website, and almost no printed material that would help inform about I'tilaf's work, although they have created a Facebook page. The director, Sheikh Loqman Khodr, comes from Akkar and has been involved in providing support to displaced Syrians since the beginning of the conflict in 2011. He speaks about I'tilaf's development and its projects. I'tilaf is mainly active in northern Lebanon and has around 20 member organisations. Almost all of them were already active in Lebanon before 2011, working, for example, with schools and hospitals. Sheikh Loqman recalls how the local population received arriving refugees and how the initially large sums of funds dried out in recent years:

“From 2011 to 2013 there was a lot of money coming and we could do many projects with the organisations that we trust on the ground. Many of them were very strong; they did not only have money available but also many volunteers (...). Then, in 2016-2014, the funding went down by 80%.”³²

[last accessed 29 September 2019].

30 Abd el-Rahman Arabi, “Ikhawan' lubnan yantakhibun murshdhn... alkalimat lilshuyukh 'am lilshabab?”, Website, *Alaraby*, 20 December 2015, available at: <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/2015/12/19/> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

31 The information and quotes in this section rely, if not otherwise indicated, on an interview by the author with director of the I'tilaf Sheikh Loqman Khodr, at his office in Halba, Akkar 18 August 2016.

32 Interview by the author with Sheikh Loqman Khodr, at his office in Halba, Akkar 18 August 2016.

I'tilaf's main donors come from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain but also from within Lebanon and, from charitable organisations in western countries.³³

I'tilaf itself works mainly in relief activities by distributing staple goods and running a bakery (*furn al-khair*), and its work in the health sector includes the treatment of wounded persons coming from Syria. Through these projects, *I'tilaf* currently serves around 4000 beneficiaries. Young, single men are excluded from this as “they should be working.”³⁴ According to Sheikh Loqman, the recent decrease of funding could also be due to the increase of emergencies in other countries like in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and the situations in Turkey and Jordan, which demand constant funds. Even so, the modes of funding have changed for *I'tilaf*:

*“We don’t have anymore money to invest or to distribute. Everything comes now as in-kind donations and is channelled via associations... Even the bank accounts of some of the organisations were shut down. This is to better control the money and to prevent that it is used for terrorism.”*³⁵

The accusation of funding terrorism is a recurring concern regarding how funds are used and channeled, and hard to disprove due to the lack of transparency and documentation. Moreover, the conception of humanitarian action in Islam and its role in a wider picture suggest that the solidarity, which is connected to charitable giving, also penetrates the political and military realms. While several studies provide a careful analysis of motives of the Islamic charity work and its context,³⁶ others are more explicit about the possible linkages to militant projects.³⁷ In regard to their work in Northern Lebanon where the border with Syria was very porous, Sheikh Loqman explains further:

“It happened that some organisations mixed humanitarian and military engagement. Our work, however, is strictly humanitarian and if we find out that someone does something else, we stop the cooperation. Now, we work according to our possibilities – we don’t have a long-term plan and

33 As an example, Sheikh Loqman mentions the US-based charitable organisation.

34 Interview by the author with Sheikh Loqman Khodr, at his office in Halba, Akkar 18 August 2016.

35 Interview by the author with Sheikh Loqman Khodr, at his office in Halba, Akkar 18 August 2016.

36 Jonathan Benthall and Jérôme Bellion-Jourdan, *op. cit.*; Mohammed Kroessin and Abdulfatah Mohamed, “Saudi Arabian NGOs in Somalia: ‘Wahabi’ Da’wah or Humanitarian Aid?”, in Gerard Clarke and Michael Jennings (eds.) *Development, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 187-213.

37 Abdel-Rahman Ghandour, “L’humanitaire Au Service de L’islam,” Website, *L’Express*, 24 October 2002, available at: http://www.lexpress.fr/culture/livre/l-humanitaire-au-service-de-l-islam_818277.html [last accessed 11 May 2017].

we don't have fixed employees. We work seasonally for example when the winter comes, during Ramadan and so on."³⁸

Sheikh Loqman describes *I'tilaf*'s mission as being guided by humanitarian concerns and religious beliefs, seeking to help everybody in need. A colleague of the Sheikh who works equally in the humanitarian field in Akkar explains later on: "The Muslim Brotherhood might appear moderate, modern, and open-minded, but they are organised as a party and they look if you belong to them or not – by contrary this is not the case with the Salafis who work with everyone."³⁹ In this sense he, as well as Sheikh Loqman, talk of URDA as "the party" (*hizb*). *I'tilaf* does not coordinate with URDA and has a rather critical position to it: "The party" is described to be quite dominant by opening field offices across the country and controlling the work of its member organisations. *I'tilaf* by contrast avoids interfering in the work of its member organisations on the ground. "They have all regular registrations from the state and Dar el-Fatwa [a governmental institution in charge with rulings specific to Lebanon's Sunni community]," explains Sheikh Loqman. He adds, "We trust our member organisations that they know best what is needed on the ground, if we would interfere we might actually ruin their work. We basically coordinate to avoid the duplication of services."⁴⁰

URDA, the Union for Relief and Development, has expanded its activities rapidly since its establishment in 2012. Today, it has more than 100 humanitarian and development member associations that operate across the country. The majority of them display an Islamic (Sunni) orientation in their names and logos, but there are also secular organisations as members. These organisations work in different sectors such as relief, development (e.g. livelihood and microfinance programmes, vocational training, bakeries), shelter, healthcare, sponsorships (e.g. as monthly support for orphans and chronic patients), psychosocial support, and education.⁴¹ The coordinating role of URDA often includes supervision and control. In the education sector, for example, the running of the schools and the teaching contents are the responsibility of the implementing member organisations. URDA, however, has a committee that supervises the schools, ensures certain criteria, and approves programmes of the member organisations and

38 Interview by the author with Sheikh Loqman Khodr, at his office in Halba, Akkar 18 August 2016.

39 Interview by the author with the director of the Lebanon branch office of the international charitable organisation IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, Akkar 18 August 2017.

40 Interview by the author with Sheikh Loqman Khodr, at his office in Halba, Akkar 18 August 2016.

41 See: Union of Relief and Development Associations, "Members and Partners," Website, *URDA Union of Relief & Development Associations*, available at: <http://urda.org.lb/members.aspx> [last accessed 29 September 2017].

demands regular reports.⁴² In addition to that, URDA cooperates with a wide range of organisations and independently implements programmes in the sectors of health and shelter. A strong emphasis on “secondary healthcare” provides particularly support for treatment and medication costs that are not covered by UNHCR.

URDA's main office is located in Hamra, west Beirut. Around 40 employees work in office rooms that have a new and modern set up, with a calligraphic design at the wall in the public relations department.⁴³ In contrast to *I'tilaf* or also Islamic Relief, URDA representatives are very explicit about not being called an “Islamic” organisation, even though the majority of their member associations display a Sunni Islamic profile. An URDA representative explains, “We are not an Islamic organisation, we provide certain services simply because the big majority of refugees from Syria are Muslim. If they would be Christians we would build them a church, if they would be Jews we would build them a synagogue,” and adds that URDA receives funding “not because of doing Islamic charity activities, but because of our mediating role that enables coordination between international, regional, and local organisations.”⁴⁴

Also URDA's director Sheikh Hosam al-Ghali highlights, “We are open for every initiative that wants to work with us,” and that their aim is to serve everybody in need, “regardless which ethnic or political background the person has.”⁴⁵ URDA places a particular emphasis on widows who have to take care of their families and orphans in its programming. It counts over 800,000 beneficiaries in 2015.⁴⁶

URDA receives funding from a wide range of donors, mainly from the Gulf, whereby Qatar seems to be the main donor country. According to a list provided by URDA in 2014 the organisation receives 70 percent of its funds from the Gulf States: between 2012 and 2014, it received nearly 14 million US dollars of bilateral funds, which were not channelled through the UN system. The NGO Qatar Charity as the main donor granted 4.5 million US dollars; four Kuwaiti donors gave a total of six million US dollars; twelve other regional donors donated amounts from 200,000 to 1.5 million US dollars. Among the Western donor organisations are only mentioned the Danish Red Crescent

42 Telephone interview by the author with URDA official in Beirut, 5 September 2016.

43 Interview by the author, URDA office, Beirut, 02 August 2016.

44 Telephone interview by the author with URDA official in Beirut, 5 September 2016;

45 Quotes in Susanne Schmelter and Ann-Kathrin Seidel, *op. cit.*

46 URDA in Lebanon, “Annual Report of the Achievements of URDA - Lebanon. A Comprehensive Humanitarian Response,” Beirut, URDA, 2015.

and Human Care, an Australian prosthesis producer. URDA uses the humanitarian funds immediately and directly on the ground, reassures director Sheikh Hosam Ghali. The administrative council, which consists of twelve department managers, is responsible for the other 90 percent and Sheikh Ghali himself administers 10 percent for fast emergency relief.⁴⁷ URDA holds an annual conference in Turkey that provides a forum to exchange, market, acquire funds, and formulate advocacy goals.

As umbrella organisations *I'tilaf* and URDA seek to integrate and coordinate the work of a variety of member associations and also negotiate their positioning towards the international system. Despite a lack of comprehensive overviews on the funding situations of URDA and *I'tilaf*, the available data strongly suggests that they are largely driven by Gulf funds. Examining the work of URDA and *I'tilaf* might thus provides insights into what kind of relief mechanisms are fostered by Gulf donors in Lebanon and how these examples relate to wider, global dynamics of humanitarian donorship from the Gulf.

LEBANESE CONTEXT AND CAMPS

The Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) has deepened societal and political divisions. Even today, the country's political system is not only organised along a sectarian proportional election system but also along regional alliances which support and finance the respective parties and pursue their interests in Lebanon. This reflects also on the welfare sector⁴⁸ as well as in current and previous emergency relief programmes. In the aftermath of the Israeli war in July 2006, donors from the Gulf financed the reconstruction more generously, faster and efficiently than Western donors. At the time, Iran was also a prominent donor and channelled its funds mainly through the militant and Iran-backed Shi'a party, Hizbollah,⁴⁹ while the donor states Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar channelled their funds via government institutions and local organisations. Thus, Iran and the Gulf donors channelled their funds in accordance with their alliances with Lebanon's political parties. Thereby, they also joined a competition revolving around the

47 Susanne Schmelter and Ann-Kathrin Seidel, *op. cit.*

48 Melani Claire Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2014.

49 On Hizbollah as a provider of emergency relief see: Mona Harb, "Faith-Based Organizations as Effective Development Partners? Hezbollah and Post-War Reconstruction in Lebanon," in Gerard Clarke and Michael Jennings (eds.), *Development, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 214–239, available at: http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9780230371262_10 [last accessed 11 May 2017]; Estella Carpi, "Politics of Care and Social Responses in the July 2006 War: A Special Focus on Local Faith-Based Organisations," *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, 2016, available at: <http://civilsociety-centre.org/paper/politics-care-and-social-responses-july-2006-war-special-focus-local-faith-based-organisations> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

ideological rationale of who is providing the best support and backup for the Lebanese population affected by the war.⁵⁰

The support for Syrian refugees happens against the backdrop of other ideological stakes. In 2005, the so-called Cedar Revolution led to the withdrawal of the Syrian occupying forces. These events gave rise to an alliance of political parties known as the 14 March Alliance. Having felt oppressed by the Syrian occupation for almost 40 years, the movement's parties could easily generate a sense of solidarity with the cause of the displaced Syrians, who mainly fled the regime's repression. Internally, the 14 March movement is opposed by the parties of the 8 March Alliance, which supports the Syrian regime and is dominated by Hizbollah. With Hizbollah, the Assad regime has a strong and loyal ally in Lebanon's society and political system. While Iran and Hizbollah are among the Syrian regime's most important allies, the Gulf States oppose the Syrian regime and its regional alliances.⁵¹ As regional powers are aligned with the Lebanese parties, the Syrian conflict has fuelled and catalysed tensions in Lebanon. Hizbollah has been openly fighting on the side of the Syrian army since May 2013 and has significantly altered the power balance inside Syria.⁵²

The course of the war in Syria directly impacts the political dynamics in Lebanon. The threat of Sunni extremism that became virulent through the offences by Da'esh in 2014, for example, has triggered more security cooperation between Hizbollah and members of the March 14 movement with their respective international allies in establishing new security plans and securing the Syrian-Lebanese border.⁵³ Since the beginning of 2015 new visa and residence regulations⁵⁴ led to the majority of Syrians

50 Christine Hamieh and Roger Mac Ginty, "A Very Political Reconstruction: Governance and Reconstruction in Lebanon after the 2006 War," *Disasters*, Hoboken, Wiley-Blackwell for the Overseas Development Institute, 2010, Vol. 34, p. 103–123; Sultan Barakat and Steven Zyck, *op. cit.*

51 Erik Mohns and André Bank, "Syrian Revolt Fallout: End of the Resistance Axis?", *Middle East Policy*, Hoboken, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, Vol. 19 (3), p. 15–25.

52 International Crisis Group, "Lebanon's Self-Defeating Survival Strategies," *Middle East Report*, Brussels, International Crisis Group, 2015, Vol. 160, available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/syria-lebanon/lebanon/160-lebanon-s-self-defeating-survival-strategies.aspx> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

53 Aaron Zelin, "Jihadism in Lebanon after the Syrian Uprising," in Maximilian Felsch and Martin Wählisch (eds.), *Lebanon and the Arab Uprisings: In the Eye of the Hurricane*, New York, Routledge, 2016, p. 50–69.

54 Lebanon Support, "Formal Informality, Brokering Mechanisms, and Illegality. The Impact of the Lebanese State's Policies on Syrian Refugees' Daily Lives," *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, 2016, available at: <http://civilsociety-centre.org/resource/formal-informality-brokering-mechanisms-and-illegality-impact-lebanese-state%E2%80%99s-policies> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

in Lebanon to lose their regular residency status and access to basic rights.⁵⁵ On the 31st of October, 2016, Lebanon's 29-month-long political vacuum was resolved with the election of Michel Aoun as president, who also was Hizbollah's preferred candidate. This happened while the Syrian regime and its allies, among them Hizbollah, militarily won the battle of Aleppo.⁵⁶

In this geopolitical context and against the background of the government's specific shelter policies, URDA has established its own relations within the Lebanese political landscape. The most outstanding aspect is probably that URDA has settled arrangements with Lebanese municipalities to formally establish camps for the refugees from Syria. Due to the experience with the Palestinian refugees and also in view of the labour market's requirements, the Lebanese government has generally not allowed the formal establishment of new camps for the refugees from Syria.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, agglomerations of makeshift tents and huts have grown close to agricultural sides and villages across the country; often they have started from previous housing facilities of Syrian seasonal workers. These "informal tented settlements," as they are called in official jargon, are not centrally managed, and only after their set up do local and international organisations reach out to provide services such as sanitary facilities, support for rent, medical services, educational programmes, etc.⁵⁸

Countrywide, URDA runs 45 shelter sites encompassing apartment complexes, tent settlements, and so called "model productive villages." Agreements on the set-up of shelter sites are usually negotiated with local municipalities. The national government – that was from 2014 to 2016 without a president – accepts the settlements without

55 Lebanon Support, "Syrian Refugees' Livelihoods. The impact of constraining legislations and increased informality on Syrians' Daily Lives," *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, 2016, available at: <http://civilsociety-centre.org/resource/syrian-refugees-livelihoods-impact-progressively-constrained-legislations-and-increased> [last accessed 11 May 2017]; Lebanon Support, "Access to Healthcare for Syrian Refugees. The Impact of Fragmented Service Provision on Syrians' Daily Lives," *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, 2016, available at: <http://civilsociety-centre.org/resource/access-healthcare-syrian-refugees-impact-fragmented-service-provision-syrians%E2%80%99-daily-lives> [last accessed 11 May 2017]; Bassam Khawaja, *op. cit.*

56 International Crisis Group, "Hizbollah's Syria Conundrum," *Middle East Report*, Brussels, International Crisis Group, 2017, Vol. 175, available at: <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/175-hizbollah-s-syria-conundrum.pdf> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

57 Lewis Turner, "Explaining the (Non-)Encampment of Syrian Refugees: Security, Class and the Labour Market in Lebanon and Jordan," *Mediterranean Politics*, Abingdon, Taylor & Francis, 2015, Vol. 20, p. 1-19.

58 AUB and UN Habitat, "No Place to Stay? Reflections on the Syrian Refugee Shelter Policy in Lebanon," Beirut, American University of Beirut and UN Habitat, 2015, available at: https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/publications/Documents/research_reports/20150907_noplacetostay.pdf [last accessed 11 May 2017]; Interview by the author with UNHCR shelter expert, Beirut, 22 July 2014.

officially approving them on a legal level. An official of URDA's PR department in Beirut explains:

*"These agreements are good for both sides: for the refugees and for the local Lebanese population who appreciates that the refugee settlements are not coming up wildly close to their living areas. They are managed and well organised and projects as for example waste management bring benefits for both sides."*⁵⁹

And concerning the state's non-camp policy he continues: "We are legally not in the same position as the UNHCR and we can work around these government regulations."⁶⁰ Officially, the Lebanese government has the right to close down the camps at anytime, but, depending on the area, it is largely in favour of them. As the camps were planned, each of them has a uniform type of housing units, which stand in orderly rows and have access to regular electricity. Moreover, each of the URDA shelter sites is supervised by a director who is usually from outside the camp and Lebanese. "If we would take someone from inside the community, there would be a risk that when there are conflicts, he might give advantages to someone in the camp."⁶¹ Beyond the provision of practical services, URDA officials emphasise the role of social cohesion and an intact community life in the camps.

In Ar-Rahman camp in Talabaya,⁶² for example, there are 140 tents that mainly house women headed families from Ghouta, rural Damascus in Syria. An URDA official at the camp explains: "Of course the people don't live anymore in their houses and in the same environment. But at least they find similar social structures (...)." URDA has also built a mosque and employs a sheikh, a person trained to give Islamic guidance, as camp director. Sheikh Khaled works in one of URDA's member organisations in the Bekaa, as camp director he is also the director of the camp's school and on Fridays he preaches in the camp's mosque.

In the school Syrian women volunteer as teachers, the curriculum follows the Syrian curriculum but replaced the Ba'hist secular national education by Islamic education. The school is financed by a Kuwaiti initiative and another poster in the camp highlights the donations of Qatar Charity. A widow and mother of twelve children who lives in

59 Interview by the author with URDA official, Beirut, 2 August 2016.

60 Interview by the author, URDA office, Beirut, 2 August 2016.

61 Interview by the author, URDA office, Beirut, 2 August 2016.

62 Field visit by Ann-Kathrin Seidel and the author, November 2014; See also: Susanne Schmelter and Ann-Kathrin Seidel, *op. cit.*

the camp reports that these community structures also help her in looking for a husband for her daughter, as she finds it much more difficult to know about possible candidates in their Lebanese exile.

“Al-Awda productive village”⁶³ lies also in the Bekaa Valley and is one of URDA’s exemplary projects. The camp has 400 caravans and containers, and is the biggest URDA run “productive village.” It has a medical centre, a mosque, and a market with a bakery, a butcher, a grocery store, and a tailor. It also has an education centre, which provides education programmes for children and vocational training for adults. URDA provides for shelter, electricity and medical services; other organisations contribute to the setup and maintenance of the camp. Promotional videos feature the names of the organisations and their contributions to the camp.⁶⁴ In addition to the camp set-up, visits and lines of communication seem to be thoroughly organised: journalists and other visitors need to arrange their visits and rights to photograph via the office in Beirut. A separate and well-equipped container provides the possibility to stay overnight for visitors. Uncoordinated visits, specifically service deliveries of non-member organisations, are similarly not possible without prior consultation with the head office.

URDA employs the director and three security guards in al-Awda camp. The director has his office container in the camp’s entrance area. He hails from the nearby village and his job involves communication with visitors, authorities and the URDA office, as well as social work. Every now and then someone comes into his office for paperwork or problems with the electricity, among other issues. He explains: “They bring all kinds of problems to me and we help as good as we can [...] And these cases are not yet marriage problems. There was for example a couple with marriage problems (...). Finally we brought a sheikh who helped them settle their dispute.”⁶⁵ Moreover the question of legal status papers requires counselling and advocacy: “Once, we called a lawyer to come to the camp in order to help with questions around the legal status [...]. We protect the people. This includes also that we find agreements with the authorities. Everybody is registered with the municipality and the police enters the camp only if someone is wanted.”⁶⁶ Also the community life within the camp is organised: a committee of eight members, who are part of the refugee community, takes care of needs and concerns

63 Field visit with conversations and interviews by the author, Bekaa Valley, 16 August 2016.

64 URDA in Lebanon, “Productive villages projects,” Online video, *Youtube*, 2 February 2016, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEUQRTr9kkg> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

65 Interview by the author with the camp’s director, Bar Elias, 16 August 2017.

66 Interview by the author with the camp’s director, Bar Elias, 16 August 2017.

of the camp residents. The committee members (*lajne*) are each responsible for a part of the families. The families consult with him and he does some of the communication with the camp director.

Abu Ziad⁶⁷ is one of the committee members. He is in his mid-forties and gives a tour at the camp and arranges meetings with other camp residents. Abu Hamza has lived for a year and a half with his wife and three school-aged children in al-Awda camp. Asked on the presence of journalists in the camp, Abu Hamza explains that he would be glad to talk to visitors, and that this would also be a nice opportunity for him to see Abu Ziad who is usually so busy with his shop and his work as a committee member. However, sometimes he finds it tiring when journalists come with the mentality that the refugees might all be terrorists because they come from this war in Syria. The social relations and the atmosphere at the camp are conspicuously friendly. While there have not been severe security incidents, Abu Hamza praises the fact that there are 50 cameras installed in the camp to monitor all the streets. “This is good for all of us. Like this we feel safe. My door is always open, I never lock it at night time.” Asked if there are any specific rules or codes of conduct for the life in the camp, Abu Hamza answers that there are none, except for the basic rule to treat each other with mutual respect. While he and other camp residents expressed their appreciation of having found shelter in al-Awda productive village, they also expressed their wish to go back to Syria once the circumstances allow.

Matters in the camp appeared organised and functioning. The residents of Ar-Rahman camp and Al-Awda productive village who were presented by URDA as interviewee partners expressed their appreciation of the camps organisation and social structures. These would help them to engage positively in the community life and to bring back some sense of order and stability to their lives that were uprooted by the war in Syria. However, conversations during the camp visits were arranged by the URDA office and accompanied by an URDA employee or a committee member. Thus, it remains unclear how these camp structures leave room for dissent, a heterogeneous community life, and the criteria used to determine one’s access to shelter. While not all of the Syrian refugee community may wish to live in such a conservative setting, many might find receiving charitable donations more acceptable if connected to moral religious values and communal solidarity, than along the equalising standards of humanitarian assistance by international organisations.⁶⁸

67 Fictive name.

68 See for further discussion on faith-based approaches in contexts of forced displacement: Elena

Despite URDA having successfully established working agreements with the local municipalities, the possibility that refugee camps could turn into permanent settlements and bring security risks remain a concern for the government. In autumn 2016, one of URDA's establishments, 'Al-Rihaniya Shelter Center' in the region of Bibneen, Akkar (North Lebanon), consisting of 300 tents was threatened to be closed. A security official from the region delivered word that the camp should be evacuated. A written order for the evacuation was not issued and the reasons were not specified any further, though security concerns were considered as likely.⁶⁹ In response, URDA issued press releases, videos, and launched a Facebook page ("A Camp is Not a Threat"), a campaign which explained the situation and stressed that there is no security risk coming from the camp population consisting mainly of women, children, and elderly people and that the evacuation of the camp would cause a humanitarian emergency.⁷⁰ The conflict seems to have been settled silently, as the camp is still mentioned among the different shelter sites on URDA's website and observers in the North report equally from the camp's continuity. The Facebook page has been removed and no follow-up press releases were published.

URDA representatives have repeatedly depicted the relations with the state's authorities as positive and cooperation as beneficial for the refugee population. For example, an URDA representative mentions cooperation with government authorities when URDA decided "to move in, not to keep standing at the sideline" when Syrian refugees "were trapped"⁷¹ between the fighting that had erupted between militant factions from Syria, mainly Da'esh and Jabhat al-Nusra, and the Lebanese Armed Forces in the Lebanese border town of Aarsal in 2014.⁷² This underlines that despite the precarious security balance in the country, URDA is able to cooperate with the Lebanese Security Forces and has more flexibility than the UN to operate situations of conflict. While Gulf donors support multilateral agencies and therewith UNHCR-run refugee camps, they also run

Fiddian-Qasbiyeh, "Introduction: Faith-Based Humanitarianism in Contexts of Forced Displacement," *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, Vol. 24 (3), p. 429-439.

69 Caroline Akoum, "300 Syrian Families Asked to Evacuate North Lebanon Encampment," *Asharq al-Awsat*, 14 November 2016, available at: <http://english.aawsat.com/2016/11/article55362093/300-syrian-families-asked-evacuate-north-lebanon-encampment> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

70 URDA in Lebanon, "On the Request Notice to Evacuate Al-Rihaniya Shelter for Syrian Refugees," Beirut, URDA, 19 November 2016, available at: <http://urda.org.lb/en/details.aspx?ID=1724> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

71 Interview by the author, URDA office, Beirut, 2 August 2016.

72 Lebanon Support, "Aarsal Conflict (Starting August 2, 2014)," *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, 2015, available at: <http://civilsociety-centre.org/security-timeline/aarsal-conflict-starting-august-2-2014> [last accessed 11 March 2017].

their own institutions and organisations on national and regional levels. Establishing their own institutions allows for “direct” deliveries to beneficiaries and URDA’s shelter programmes, as well as alternative examples for the organisation and management of refugee camps and opportunities for bilateral cooperation with national governments and local stakeholders. In the meantime, however, the bypassing of the UN-led multilateral system and international humanitarian coordination structures raises questions in regard to hindrances and chances for better coordination.

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN LEBANON

Coordination of humanitarian assistance aims to provide an overview of who is working in which areas to close protection gaps, bundle financial resources, and to operate efficiently. The Lebanese government, however, has not developed comprehensive coordination structures and leaves this to the different organisations working with Syrian refugees.⁷³ In this situation, UNHCR has a lead in coordinating international NGOs and local partners.⁷⁴ Lebanese observers have repeatedly critiqued the UN-led crisis response for taking “ownership” of the crisis and for an unsatisfying inclusion of local stakeholders, for spending immorally high amounts of money on their administrations, and for the production of assessments and reports on matters that are evident for the people on the ground.⁷⁵ The critique voiced by representatives from URDA, *I’tilaf*, and Islamic NGOs working in the Bekaa on humanitarian initiatives is similar. However, as they have their own funding sources and coordination mechanisms, they seem generally less bothered by questions of acknowledgment and funding barriers by the UN.

One of the aspects that representatives of Gulf-financed organisations present as their strengths is the presumably closer connections and engagement with the affected communities. The office director of one of URDA’s member organisations in the Bekaa,

73 Karim El Mufti, *op. cit.*

74 Dalya Mitri, “Challenges of Aid Coordination in a Complex Crisis: An Overview of Funding Policies and Conditions Regarding Aid Provision to Syrian Refugees in Lebanon,” *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, 2014, available at: <http://civilsociety-centre.org/paper/challenges-aid-coordination-complex-crisis> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

75 Leila Zakharia and Sonya Knox, “The International Aid Community and Local Actors: Experiences and Testimonies from the Ground,” *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, 2014, available at: <http://civilsociety-centre.org/paper/international-aid-community-and-local-actors-experiences-and-testimonies-ground> [last accessed 11 May 2017]. See also: Susanne Schmelter, “The Question of Governing Syrian Refugees: An Ethnography of Lebanon’s Humanitarian Regime,” in Natalia Ribas-Mateos (ed.), *Migration, Mobilities and the Arab Spring: Spaces of Refugee Flight in the Eastern Mediterranean*, Northampton, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016, p. 174-187.

al-Abrar Islamic Charitable Organisation, explains⁷⁶ that his association has a network of volunteers who are connected to the communities and are quickly available to assist in supporting the communities. His organisation also sends the imam and camp school director to the nearby ar-Rahman camp. Volunteers at the camp include Syrian women who teach at the camp school. URDA's employment of camp directors from nearby villages supports the inclusion of local stakeholders and social cohesion. Nevertheless, a representative of one of *P'tilaf's* member organisations in the Bekaa Valley also expresses a lack of recognition when he reports how his organisation received the first refugees in Wadi Khaled (north Lebanon) in late 2011:

*"We were working already before 2011 with the Lebanese population. When the refugees from Syria started to come, we were among the first to be there and we registered their names. Later UNHCR came and asked for the lists of beneficiaries and we gave it to them (...) but they didn't come back to work more with us."*⁷⁷

The claim to be better connected to the affected communities through working on the ground, having volunteers, and taking religious orientation into consideration appears often to be discursively set against the formal and equalising standards of the UN-led international humanitarian system. Moreover, *ad hoc* deliveries from the Gulf States seem to expose the UN's lengthy bureaucratic restrictions and costs of administration procedures. URDA's director criticises: "UNHCR does not work on the ground, and does not know what the people really need. Moreover, UNHCR spends 30 to 40 percent of its funds on its own bureaucracy. We spend maximum 10 percent."⁷⁸ The actual spending on URDA's administrative costs is, however, hardly verifiable as the respective data is not public. Actors explain that fast and non-bureaucratic delivery of humanitarian assistance may achieve immediate impact and reduce costs in the short-term. This was also reported from other emergency contexts; for example, during the reconstruction of Lebanon in 2006/2007, Gulf donors facilitated the building of a bridge while USAID was still busy completing an assessment for reconstructing the very same bridge.⁷⁹

Though the humanitarian funds from the Gulf are not only faster, they are less regular. This hinders refugees' abilities to rely on these distributions and for possible coordination

76 Interview by the author with the office director of Al Abrar Islamic Charitable Foundation in Chtaura, Bekaa Valley, 13 February 2014.

77 Interview by the author with the office director of Ishrak Al Noor, Chtaura, Bekaa Valley, 13 February 2014.

78 Cited in Susanne Schmelter and Ann-Kathrin Seidel, *op. cit.*

79 Sultan Barakat and Steven Zyck, *op. cit.*, p. 40; Andrea Binder and Claudia Meier, *op. cit.*, p. 1135-1149.

partners to plan with certain deliveries. The al-Abrar office director, with the network of volunteers, concedes that these donations and distributions are not provided on a regular basis: “If we have something we go and deliver. If we have nothing , we don’t go.”⁸⁰ Refugees in a “standard” (i.e. non-URDA-run) camp in the central Bekaa confirm this course of action. While they expressed a lot of confusion on how to access UN services, they said about Islamic associations: “Yes, they come too, but we don’t know when and where.”⁸¹ Such irregularities obstruct long-term planning and pose practical hindrances to cooperation. In 2014, the director of an Islamic, Bekaa-based NGO talked about the lack of coordination among the humanitarian actors in the crisis response and gave the example of a family who received four heaters (*sobia*), but no fuel.⁸² But while he said that they would like to cooperate more with the international system, he and his colleagues make equally clear that they are not willing to meet the UN-requirements for implementing partners, which they perceive as too bureaucratic and too focused on report-writing. He concluded that “the coordination with the UN refugee agency could be better; but the needs of the refugees from Syria are so huge, that we can virtually start everywhere.”⁸³

However, the pressure on some of the Islamic and Gulf-backed organisations to enhance cooperation with UN-led interventions seems to have increased, as funding irregularities from the Gulf caused short-noted halts of on-going projects. Rapprochements to the international system seem to happen directly by applying for funds or indirectly by stressing the compatibility with international standards. In this sense, the interviewed URDA officials seem to perform a balancing act: on the one hand, they distinguish themselves as being ready to “step in” during critical situations, to “bridge gaps” by providing services, such as secondary health care, and “working around” government regulations in finding solutions for the precarious shelter situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. On the other hand, they highlight their adherence to international standards of professional assistance and neutrality as well as their cooperation with international NGOs and the UN. For example, an URDA official made clear: “We have procedures in place for everything, for proposals, project implementation and reporting. We do our

80 Interview by the author with the office director of Al Abrar Islamic Charitable Foundation in Chtaura, Bekaa Valley, 13 February 2014.

81 Camp visit by the author, Bekaa Valley, 31 January 2014.

82 Interview by the author with director of local relief and development NGO, Chtaura, Bekaa Valley, 30 January 2014.

83 Interview by the author with director of local relief and development NGO, Chtaura, Bekaa Valley, 30 January 2014.

budgetary planning for the period of one year.”⁸⁴ Projects with Oxfam were repeatedly mentioned as example for a cooperation partner, even though the majority of cooperating organisations come from the Gulf States. This, along with the insistence not to be described as an “Islamic” organisation - although the language used addresses a Sunni Syrian focal population - might be with an eye towards possible western funders and cooperation partners.

Occasional conversations with staff from the UN, non-Islamic NGOs, and international institutions suggest a rather rudimentary knowledge of the work of Islamic relief organisations in Lebanon: An UNHCR person responsible for Inter-Agency coordination explained, “There are internationally recognised principles for humanitarian aid such as neutrality and impartiality. This is for us a basic condition, which obstructs the collaboration with Islamic organisations.”⁸⁵ Additionally, a Lebanese academic working on relief mechanisms and coordination between the different humanitarian stakeholders in Lebanon, commented that it would be courageous to meet representatives of Islamic faith-based organisations in this area as they would mainly be extremists.⁸⁶ Low standards of transparency and a lack of publicly available evaluations and reports make it indeed hard to exclude the diversion of funds from their proclaimed use. In this sense, the allegation of funding militant armed groups inside Syria has resulted in severe financial restrictions for *I'tilaf*. In 2016, *I'tilaf*'s director stated that coordination with the UN is good, but that it basically does not go beyond avoiding the duplication of services. Despite risks of a supposed misuse of funds, organisations often seem to hide behind the alleged principles of neutrality and impartiality, as they sweepingly blame Islamic and Gulf-funded organisations of supporting terrorism. This, of course, is detrimental to exploring grounds for more coordination and cooperation. Given the high density of organisations working on the displacement in Lebanon and the remarkable outreach that Gulf-driven humanitarian organisations have, points of contact between the different humanitarian systems are so far surprisingly infrequent.

CONCLUSION

In the context of the Syrian emergency, the Gulf States channel parts of their humanitarian funds for the “Syria response” via international organisations such as the UN. At the same time, they support intermediate agencies such as *I'tilaf* and particularly URDA,

84 Interview by the author with URDA official, Beirut, 2 August 2016.

85 Conversation by the author with UNHCR official for inter-agency coordination, Beirut, 21 March 2014.

86 Conversation by the author with academic working on inter-agency coordination in Lebanon, 20 April 2014.

along with their member associations. The trend of Gulf donors pursuing a double strategy, as they engage in both the international system and their own institutions on national and regional levels, is also observed on a more global scale.⁸⁷

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in Istanbul in May 2016 was so far the largest event of its kind and intended to bring humanitarian stakeholders from different regions and political contexts together.⁸⁸ As a result, the “great bargain” is intended to reduce bureaucratic red tape by harmonising reporting requirements, reducing management costs, giving more money directly to “frontline responders,” and other assorted functions. The conveners of the different topics are almost exclusively of members of the Development Assistance Council (DAC).⁸⁹ The summit was moreover an opportunity to exchange, and brought differences to light: representatives from DAC-countries showed interest in accessing the funds from the Gulf mobilised via the *Zakat* system, while showing little awareness of the approaches and traditions of Gulf-funded humanitarian assistance.⁹⁰ In contrast, representatives from the Gulf States refuse to simply pay into the existing international system and rather demand acknowledgement of their traditions and approaches.⁹¹ Their strategic interest is not just directed to fitting in and meeting requirements but additionally to increasing independence, outreach, and leverage. The Gulf states partly refrain consciously from some international humanitarian and development coordination councils and use their own institutions, procedures and operational structures. By pursuing their specific initiatives, the Gulf-driven organisations expose much criticised aspects of the international humanitarian system, such as inflated bureaucratic requirements, high administrative costs, distance to the needs of the affected community, and imposing external dominance.

87 Céline Billat, “The Funding of Humanitarian Action by the Gulf States: A Long-Term Commitment,” *Humanitarian Aid on the Move*, Plaisians, URD, 2016, Vol. 17, p. 15-19, available at: <http://www.urd.org/The-funding-of-humanitarian-action> [last accessed 11 March 2017].

88 Julia Steets and András Derzsi-Horváth, “Old Habits Die Hard at World Humanitarian Summit: Global Public Policy Institute,” Website, *Global Public Policy Institute*, 24 May 2016, available at: <http://www.gppi.net/publications/humanitarian-action/article/old-habits-die-hard-at-world-humanitarian-summit/> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

89 Louise Redvers, “Hunting for the Grand Bargain,” Website, *IRIN News*, 22 March 2017, available at: <https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/03/21/hunting-grand-bargain> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

90 Chloe Stirk, “An Act of Faith. Humanitarian Financing and Zakat,” *Global Humanitarian Assistance*, Bristol, Development Initiatives, 2015, available at: <http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/dev-init-an-act-of-faith-march-2015.pdf> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

91 Elizabeth Dickinson, “In Crisis Zones, UN Courts Faith-Based Charities,” Website, *Devex*, 6 July 2016, available at: <https://www.devex.com/news/in-crisis-zones-un-courts-faith-based-charities-88260> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

Yet, *ad hoc* deliveries with little administrative procedures and a lack of transparency make the Gulf donors also vulnerable to accusations of the misuse of funds and diminish accountability towards donors, beneficiaries, and possible cooperation partners. Irregularities in funding, less bureaucracy and presumably lower administrative costs open debates on how efficient these “direct” forms of assistance are in the long term.⁹² More long-term planning, reporting, supervision and evaluation mechanisms could increase the transparency and the visibility of their operations. This could effectively depict the operations’ impact to the international humanitarian scene and provide grounds for enhanced cooperation with the UN-coordinated humanitarian system.⁹³

While *P'tilaf* had to deal with a drastic reduction of monetary funding accusations of channelling humanitarian funds to military activities in Syria, URDA has expanded quickly and is flourishing. Thereby, URDA seems to give more importance to expanding and promoting their programmes than to seeking the adherence to the pre-established operational procedures of the UN-coordinated emergency response. The expansion of URDA as a major service provider for Syrians displaced in Lebanon has been backed by a discourse that focuses on “filling gaps,” i.e. in service provision between the local and “the global” sphere and pursuing approaches that engage local communities. In bilaterally negotiating agreements with Lebanese state authorities, URDA has established itself as an independent humanitarian actor that navigates its position within Lebanon’s sectarian power balance and clientelistic politics. Looking back to the visits at the URDA run camps, it appears that for a part of the refugee community and its adjacents, these shelter facilities provide more than stability, basic services, community life, and decent livelihood perspectives. They also provide order, security, and control.⁹⁴ And while open questions remain in regard to funding and spending overviews as well as to possible political clientelism, URDA also advertises its compatibility to international standards of humanitarian service provision.

While humanitarian engagement of largely Gulf-financed organisations might even be seen as undermining the structures of the UN-led international humanitarian system, a wider perspective shows that it is actually a variety of factors that threaten and put current working modes of these international institutions into question. The rise of populism and nationalism in western societies is likely to come along with a reduced

92 Andrea Binder, Claudia Meier, and Julia Steets, *op. cit.*

93 Andrea Binder and Claudia Meier, *op. cit.*

94 Lebanon Support, “Crisis and Control. (In)Formal hybrid security in Lebanon,” *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, 2016, available at <http://civilsociety-centre.org/resource/crisis-control-informal-hybrid-security-lebanon> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

funding of international humanitarian institutions.⁹⁵ International humanitarian action in Syria has shaken the humanitarian system's foundations of impartiality and neutrality and deeply questioned current operation modes.⁹⁶ Academic studies moreover show that particularly in conflict environments, humanitarian action unfolds in close proximity to militaristic operations⁹⁷ and that humanitarianism has also become an inherent part of the EU's border and migration regime.⁹⁸ Jérôme Bellion-Jourdan describes the question if Islamic charities are actually humanitarian in view of the politicised contexts in which humanitarian operations take place as a wrong question (*question piège*).⁹⁹ In view of all these underlying political dynamics, one might question to what extent the promotion of core principles such as neutrality and impartiality obstructs the view on basic structural circumstances, political matters, and in how far solidarity with those struggling with the circumstances of their displacement might actually be more appropriate in respect to their political subjectivity. Nevertheless, despite political differences and failures in living up to their own principles, multilateral institutions function also as instruments for conflict regulation and are supposed to mitigate the effects of political and military conflicts. The question, therefore, is how to create a multilateralism in humanitarian structures which is not necessarily dominated by western interests, but provides forums for the efficient coordination of relief mechanisms, for the promotion of commonly agreed international standards, and for mediating between conflicting positions.

So far, Gulf donors in Lebanon trigger a change of the humanitarian landscape that brings competition to the established structures of the international system.¹⁰⁰ The

95 Antonio Donini, "Humanitarianism at a Crossroads," Website, *The Citizen*, 12 May 2016, available at: <http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/oped/Humanitarianism-at-a-crossroads/1840568-3475142-h7ri0uz/index.html> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

96 Julia Steets, "The Impasse in Syria Might Encourage Much Needed Changes in the Humanitarian System," Website, *Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection (PHAP)*, 27 April 2014, available at: <https://phap.org/thematic-notes/2014/april/impasse-syria-might-encourage-much-needed-changes-humanitarian-system> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

97 Didier Fassin, *La Raison Humanitaire: Une Histoire Morale Du Temps Présent*, Paris, Gallimard, 2010.

98 William Walters, "Foucault and Frontiers. Notes on the Birth of the Humanitarian Border," in Ulrich Bröckling, Susanne Krasmann, and Thomas Lemke (eds.), *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*, London, Routledge, 2012, p. 138-164.

99 Jérôme Bellion-Jourdan, "Les ONG Islamiques Sont-Elles Purement Humanitaires? Réflexions Sur Une Vraie Fausse Question," *Vacarme*, Paris, Association Vacarme, 2006, Vol. 34 (1), available at: <http://www.vacarme.org/article558.html> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

100 Ngaire Woods, "Whose Aid? Whose Influence? China, Emerging Donors and the Silent Revolution in Development Assistance," *International Affairs*, London, Chatham House, 2008, Vol. 84 (6) p. 1205-1221.

competition between parallel humanitarian systems is likely to increase polarisation and a loss of overall capacity, but it also increases the variety of services and approaches. Studying these approaches closer might provide valuable impulses for reforms and appropriate inclusion of Gulf donors in the multilateral system.¹⁰¹ In this sense, the current fragmentation in the humanitarian landscape might be a good starting point to examine different approaches, reflect their effectiveness, and to acknowledge the existence of different stakeholders. Joint evaluation and increased cooperation could contribute to improving resource efficiency and better meeting the needs of those in need of humanitarian support. Moreover, it could counteract increasing polarisations and contribute to the regulation of future conflicts.

Lebanon has already been one of the crucial sites of reform initiatives within the UN system (e.g. cash programmes), but the country could play a much bigger role in exploring possible modes of cooperation between Gulf-funded relief mechanisms, the UN-coordinated response, and civil society.¹⁰² This is all the more true as the density of different humanitarian and development organisations is very high, and Lebanese society is not only formally very qualified but also practically very experienced in dealing with different factions, conflicting dynamics, with international organisations, flight, and migration.

101 Sultan Barakat and Steven Zyck, *op. cit.*; Ngaire Woods, *op. cit.*; Mohammed Kroessin and Abdul-fatah Mohamed, *op. cit.*

102 A suggestion for an according shift in this directions has for example been provided in: Rabih Shibli, "Reconfiguring Relief Mechanisms: The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon," *Refugee Research and Policy in the Arab World Program*, Beirut, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs and UN Habitat, 2014, available at: https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/public_policy/pal_camps/Documents/research_reports/20140224ifi_pc_unrwa.pdf [last accessed 29 September 2017].

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*Understanding
State
incorporation
of the workers'
movement in
early post-war
Lebanon and its
backlash on
civil society*

LEA BOU KHATER

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the part played by the organised workers' movement in the political and economic struggle for change in Lebanon during the first decade of the post-civil war period. It seeks to explain the trajectory of the workers' movement, represented by the General Confederation of Workers in Lebanon (GCWL), and their successes and failures during the period in question. It investigates the structure and legal framework within which trade unions and leagues were created, as well as their past political affiliations or alliances. In doing so, the research examined labour provisions, the structural framework of the organised workers' movement, GCWL documents as well as newspaper archives, which reveal different facets of state-labour relations in Lebanon. As such, the paper begins by briefly charting the main issues affecting state-labour relations, then goes on to advance that the workers' movement was significantly weakened by state and the ruling elite intervention, repression, and eventually, state incorporation.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, changes and structural shifts in the global economy have downsized the scope of union activity. In the concluding chapter of their anthology *Varieties of Unionism*, John Kelly and Carola Frege study the ongoing crisis of unions in the industrialised world and reflect on possibilities for their revitalisation.¹ They posit that despite significant economic and political changes at national and international levels, trade unions remain key actors in the economic and political realms. A key aspect of their study is a focus on the impact of the decline of unions on civil society and politics. “Union decline threatens not only the collective regulation of industrial relations (safeguarding better wages, working conditions and job security), but also affects, if more indirectly, the quality of the broader civil society and political life by weakening one of its largest and most significant civil actors or, in the developing world, by not developing unions to support the growth of civil society, in playing a pivotal role in the growing resistance against corporate-led globalisation.”²

In turn, the analysis of the weakening of the workers’ movement at the onset of the post civil war period and the process of state incorporation allows for a better understanding of the absent or at least scant cooperation between trade unions and civil society organisations in their mobilisation for change in post-war Lebanon. The challenges and current conditions of the civil society in Lebanon cannot be clearly understood without taking into account the repercussions of a tamed workers’ movement represented by the General Confederation of Workers in Lebanon (GCWL) and its paralysis vis-à-vis civil society.

With this context in mind, this paper considers the part played by the organised workers’ movement, represented by the GCWL and the League of public sector employees in the political and economic struggle for change in Lebanon in the early post-war period. The research examines the state and ruling elite weakening of the workers’ movement, and their making use of the patrimonial character of state institutions.

The term “elite” is linked to a so-called normative value that judges the “quality” of the members of the ruling class. It is, therefore, necessary to recall the strict functional dimension of this term, at least in the way it is used in this research. Thus, the definition of “elite” refers to a limited group of individuals that hold more power (or influence)

1 Carola Frege and John Kelly (eds.), *Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalisation in a Globalising Economy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.

2 Michael Morley, Patrick Gunnigle, and David Collings, *Global Industrial Relations*, London, Routledge, 2006, p. 221.

than others, this power being the real influence, indirectly or directly, on the politics and activity of the state.³ It is in this context that I aim to examine the role of the ruling elite.

To what extent did the state and the ruling elite tame the workers' movement by intervening in the country's institutional and legal framework? To what extent was the GCWL able to influence political and economic policies in Lebanon in the early post-war period?

STATE-LABOUR RELATIONS

The sectarian political system in Lebanon has played a central role in shaping the trajectory of the labour movement. Time and again, it has halted the mobilisation of wage earners against the ruling elite and the state through the manipulation of sectarian and political affiliations as well as institutional and organisational conditions. The perpetuation of traditional social relations, the impact of sectarianism, political affiliations, and government intervention within the union structure all resulted in a divided movement, and generally cautious and moderate behaviour towards the government.

Following independence, the Lebanese state adopted restrictive legal provisions pertaining to the workforce and trade unions. In addition to predominant traditional familial and sectarian affiliations that curbed the development of a large and powerful labour movement, the state imposed restrictive regulations on the workforce and private sector trade unions. Lebanon did not ratify the *International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 87 of 1948 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise* seemingly because it did not want to allow for the development of strong trade unions capable of challenging state policies and elite interests. Article 2 of Convention No. 87 sanctifies the right of association without pre-authorisation: "Workers and employers, without distinction whatsoever, shall have the right to establish and, subject only to the rules of the organisation concerned, to join organisations of their own choosing without previous authorisation."⁴ Convention No. 87 also provides that the procedures of union registration are limited and short in view of taming the conditions and procedures that might constitute an obstacle for the right of association. In 2012, the Minister of Labour Charbel Nahhas submitted to the council of ministers a draft law to allow for the ratification of Convention No. 87. Legislative Decree No. 8530 dated July 18, 2012 stipulated the submission of the draft law to the parliament, however, it had a major amendment: a reservation on the second article of the convention pertaining to the

3 Robert David Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*, London, Prentice-Hall, 1976.

4 International Labour Organisation, "Convention No. 87 of 1948 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise," Website, *International Labour Organisation*, available at: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en> [last accessed 6 July 2018].

cancellation of the pre-authorisation of unions. Article 2 is the main pillar of Convention No. 87, which shows that the government still insisted on the pre-authorisation provision despite its negative impact on workers.⁵

In line with its abstention from ratifying the convention, the Lebanese Labour Code promulgated in 1946 explicitly limited freedom of association. The legal provisions in the Labour Code were characterised by the substantial role accorded to the state for the control of employment conditions and the management of trade union affairs. Initially, Article 50, as it appeared in the Labour Code of 1946, allowed the employer to dismiss any of its employees that are not subject to a contract or an agreement for a determined period of time. Article 50 was amended by Decree No. 9640 of February 1975. The amended Article 50 stipulates that the “dismissal of the members of a trade union council, duly elected, shall depend, during the period of their tenure, on recourse to the competent Conciliation Board”. Therefore, the protection of unionists is limited to the elected board members of unions licensed by the Ministry of Labour. Consequently, the code does not protect union leaders during the founding period of the unions in question, that is, the period between the application for founding a union and the elections of the trade union council of representatives after receiving the authorisation of the Ministry of Labour. This period is usually the time when unionists need protection the most as unions are usually established when conflicts arise between workers and employers.⁶

Furthermore, as specified in Article 86, “no employers’ or wage earners’ and salary-earners’ trade union may be established except after due authorisation from the Ministry of National Economy.”⁷ Surprisingly, the authorisation required for unions is not imposed on associations and political parties, which are not required to file an authorisation at the Ministry of Interior. In addition, the law does not specify a deadline for the Ministry of Labour to issue its decision regarding the authorisation. This leaves trade unions under the control of the minister in charge and at the mercy of political will, which means that a trade union’s requests may end up sitting unapproved in the ministry drawers. Such restrictive legal provisions have proved to be major impediments to the flourishing of the labour movement, and they are still in place today. Eventually the code dealt with trade unions as threats to political stability and showed limited faith in free collective bargaining.

5 Diana Kallas, “*al-Qadā Yu’addi Dawr fi Himayat al-Hurriyyat al-Naqabiyya Raghma al-Thugurat al-Kanuniyya: Fahal Yaṣṭajib al-Musharri?*” Website, *The Legal Agenda*, 12 November 2012, available at: <http://legal-agenda.com/makalat.php?katib=75> [last accessed 19 April 2018].

6 *Ibid.*

7 Currently known as the Ministry of Labour.

In addition to Labour Code restrictions on private sector trade unions, the law also constrained the association of public sector employees (including public sector teachers). According to Article 15 of Law Decree No. 112 issued on 12/6/1959, civil servants are forbidden from dealing with political affairs, joining a political party, or participating in strikes. Law No.144 issued on 6/5/1992 allowed civil servants to join political parties, but continued to prohibit their association with any trade union. According to Article 65 of Law Decree No. 112, a civil servant's participation in a strike is akin to a resignation, which clearly violates the freedom of association of workers.

In 1972, Decision No. 335 gave the right to public primary school teachers to organise in leagues. Primary school teachers succeeded in securing their rights for organisation in elected leagues before secondary teachers, which was the result of a momentous teachers' mobilisation during the 1970s inflicting protracted pressure on the Ministry of Education to enact such a decision. Although Decision No. 335 gave the primary educational staff the right to organise under "cultural" leagues without any mention of a workers' association or trade union, teachers transformed the leagues into a demand platform in order to ameliorate their working conditions as well as the overall situation of public schools. Moreover, in 1993 the graduates of the Administration Institute, a state agency for administrative reform, were organised under one league, which became the League of Civil Servants in 2012.

In addition to legal constraints, the labour movement suffered from a problematic organisational structure. The GCWL charter promulgated in 1970, which remains unchanged in 2017, was controversial and considered to be behind the weakening of the labour movement. On April 30, 1958, the government authorised the establishment of the GCWL, consisting of four federations.⁸ The Confederation was inactive and included only right wing federations. The Ministry of Social Affairs did not authorise other federations, and therefore a large share of trade unions remained outside the GCWL. However, in 1966, the Ministry of Social affairs authorised five new federations of which a main left-wing federation, which adhered to the GCWL.⁹ It took until May 1970 to subsume all trade union federations under the GCWL which became the official negotiator for both public and private sector workers in Lebanon. The confederation was initially designed with a structure that aimed at reducing disagreements between rival federations stemming from political affiliations. Nevertheless, this

8 Federation of United Trade Unions; League of Trade Unions of Workers and Employees of the Lebanese Republic; Federation of Trade Unions of North Lebanon; Federation of Independent Trade Unions.

9 National Federation of Trade Unions of Workers and Employees.

structure lacked two key democratic features. First, the lower body did not elect the superior one: the council of representatives did not elect the executive council. Second, proportional representation of federations according to the total number of members was not applied, even though the size of the federations varied significantly. Consequently, the GCWL was subject to political intervention through electoral engineering: the proliferation of federations, mainly after the war, was largely due to the intent of the state to control the Confederation's decision-making.

In addition, the Confederation mainly relied on financial assistance from the government and foreign donor institutions, which might have had negative repercussions and implications on the labour movement in general, especially in terms of its independence. While many attempts to reform internal regulation have been made since the 1980s, those regulations remain, until today, unchanged.

Economic factors also come into play in the post-civil war period. Liberal economic measures, the control of the ruling power elite, the prevalence of the tertiary sector, and the deteriorating productive sector all served to demarcate labour relations and shape the size and trajectory of the labour movement. Moreover, the core features of the labour market also hindered the advancement of the labour movement. Despite a fully-fledged reconstruction plan and pledged economic growth, the economic situation in post-war Lebanon did not improve as expected. While the target annual growth rate of the reconstruction programmes¹⁰ was around 8%, the actual average rate for the period of 1993–2010 only reached around 4.5% with major variations in different periods.¹¹ It should be noted that the post-war annual growth rate was below the 6% growth rate average registered before the war, especially during the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s.¹²

Post-war reconstruction policies had severe repercussions on the private sector in terms of productivity and employment. In fact, 36% of the total credit of banks (equivalent

10 At the end of the war in 1990, the government designed a reconstruction strategy that aimed at reviving the traditional role of Lebanon as a regional trade and financial centre. This vision was clearly stated in the official reconstruction plan “Horizon 2000, for Reconstruction and Development” with a budget of USD 14.3 billion over a period of ten years between 1993 and 2002.

11 Ministry of Finance, “Public Finance Yearly Report,” Beirut, Ministry of Finance, 2012, p.7, available at: http://www.finance.gov.lb/en-us/Finance/Rep-Pub/DRI-MOF/Public%20Finance%20Reports/YR_2011.pdf [last accessed: July 6, 2018]

12 Toufic Gaspard, *A Political Economy of Lebanon, 1948-2002*, Leiden, Brill, 2004.

of 90% of GDP) was assigned to the government in view of covering the state deficit. This deficit, which maintained high interest and borrowing rates, hampered access of the productive sector in particular and the private sector in general to necessary credits. A constant decrease of loans to the private sector emerged starting in 1999, going from 34% to 23%.¹³ Around 65% of all loans in 1999 were dedicated to the sectors of construction and trade, while industry was allocated 10% of all loans and agriculture between 1% and 2%. The industrial sector operated at 30–50% of its capacity.¹⁴ The monetary and fiscal policies clearly stymied the development of the productive sector and the private sector during the post-war period. Even though industry and agriculture were not traditionally strong holdings in pre-war Lebanon, these sectors could not be substituted in terms of job creation, equal redistribution of resources, or the establishment of strong pillars for a healthy economy.

The activity rate in Lebanon remained stagnant and low, resulting in a large share of the population being excluded from the regulated labour market and in turn from the labour movement: In 2004, the activity rate stood at 44%, which was close to the rate in 1970 (45%). Sectoral distribution of the workforce shows the predominance of workers in the services sector (46%) versus 8% in agriculture and 15% in industry in 2004.¹⁵ In terms of labour demand, according to the 2004 “Census of Establishments”, about 90% of establishments employed less than five workers.¹⁶ The small size of the majority of enterprises - was accompanied with the limited capacity for association of workers in micro and small enterprises. Another factor affecting the size of the labour movement was the high share of informal employment, foreign workers, and domestic workers who were legally restricted from unionisation. These features of the workforce played a role in decreasing the share of unionised workers in the workplace. In view of the repercussions of the above-mentioned obstacles, the labour movement was not endowed with resilient pillars for growth and development.

13 Marco Retting, “The Role of the Banking Sector in the Economic Process of Lebanon, before and after the Civil War.” Master Thesis, London, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2010, p.53.

14 Sami E. Baroudi, “Continuity in Economic Policy in Postwar Lebanon: The Record of the Hariri and Hoss Government Examined, 1992-2000,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (Winter 2002), p.63.

15 Central Administration of Statistics, “L’enquête par sondage pour la population active au Liban 1970”, Beirut, CAS, 1972, p. 103; Central Administration for Statistics, “Living Conditions of Households. The National Survey of Household Living Conditions” Beirut, CAS, 2004, p. 58.

16 Central Administration of Statistics, “Census of Establishments of 2004,” Beirut, Central Administration of Statistics, 2006, p.26.

THE INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

This research assesses the impact of legal and institutional frameworks on labour relations in Lebanon. According to an institutional perspective, institutions are “formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organisational structure of the polity or political economy. They can range from the rules of a constitutional order or the standard operating procedures of a bureaucracy to the conventions governing trade union behavior or bank-firm relations. In general, historical institutionalists associate institutions with organisations and the rules or conventions promulgated by formal organisation.”¹⁷ Institutionalism considers the institutional structures of regimes to have different implications, particularly in terms of the political incorporation of various social structures.

Although they do not specifically focus on labour movements, the works of Eva Bellin are insightful for understanding labour relations in the Middle East. For Bellin, neither the weakness of civil society, nor the state’s firm grip on the economy, poverty, or culture are satisfactory explanations for the Middle East’s resistance to democratic transition. According to Bellin, other regions, which were similarly deprived succeeded in the transition to democracy.

“Why have the Middle East and North Africa proven exceptionally resistant to democratic transition, in marked contrast to other regions in the world? The answer, it argues, lies not in cultural or socio-economic factors but rather in the character of the Middle Eastern state, and most important the exceptional strength and will of its coercive institutions to repress all democratic initiatives. Four factors explain the exceptional coercive capacity and will of the Middle Eastern state: The region’s access to rent, the persistent support of international patrons, the patrimonial character of state institutions, and the limited degree of popular mobilisation for democratic reform.”¹⁸

According to Bellin, a country’s level of institutionalisation defines and determines the robustness of coercive apparatus in repressing reform initiatives. More precisely, a coercive apparatus coupled with a limited level of institutionalisation is fertile ground for patrimonialism, cronyism, a blurred distinction between public and private – leading to corruption and abuse of power – and discipline “that is maintained through the exploitation of primordial cleavages, often relying on balanced rivalry between different

17 Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor, “Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms,” *MPIFG Discussion Paper*, Cologne, Max-Planck-Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung, 1996, p. 6.

18 Eva Bellin, “Coercive Institutions and Coercive Leaders,” in Marsha Posusney and Michele Angrist (eds.), *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005, p. 21.

ethnic/sectarian groups.”¹⁹ In these conditions, any political reform is perceived as a prospect of ruin for the elite of the coercive apparatus.

Bellin’s analysis underlines the significance of reviewing structural factors and the character of state institutions when researching democratic transition and the prospects of democratic initiatives stemming from the labour movement. As previously mentioned, this research examines the effect of institutions - designed by a sectarian ruling elite – on the capacity of the sectarian elite to tame any reform initiatives including those that stem from the mobilisation of the labour movement.

This first section of this paper charts the demands and actions of the GCWL, and the interrelations among GCWL members, during a vigorous period between 1992 and 1997. The second section will highlight the major means of control and state incorporation of the labour movement in Lebanon.

A VIGOROUS LABOUR MOVEMENT, 1997–1992

Before the outbreak of the Civil War in 1975, the Confederation comprised eighteen federations. During the war period from 1975 to 1989, six new federations joined the Confederation and at that point the Confederation represented 156 trade unions.²⁰ In 1992, the GCWL was presided by Antoine Bishara knowing that the last elections of the executive board were organised in 1981.²¹

At the end of the war, the GCWL expressed its endorsement of the Taïf Agreement and welcomed the economic and social provisions included in the accords, which focused on the need for balanced regional development as well as the establishment of the Economic and Social Council. In almost all key statements issued after the war, namely at the 1995 and 1996 GCWL conferences, the GCWL voiced its demand for the immediate implementation of the economic provisions of the agreement, notably the setting in motion of the Economic and Social Council.

The period between 1992 and 1997 was characterised by an energetic GCWL that repeatedly voiced demands for wage increases, a new salary scale, and fringe benefits. Its militant leadership, that was resolutely opposed to the reconstruction strategy of the

19 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

20 My calculations are based on data collected from the Ministry of Labour.

21 Antoine Bishara was President of the Federation of Unions of Independent Authorities and Public and Private institutions, one of the largest federations. He was the GCWL president for ten years (1983-1993).

government, mainly shaped the mobilisation of the Confederation. During this period the GCWL repeatedly demanded a minimum wage increase, which the cabinet approved three times in 1994, 1995, and 1996. The following are the key events of this period.

The elections of the first post-war executive board in summer 1993 witnessed the defeat of Antoine Bishara. Most of the independent and left-wing candidates won in the elections and Elias abu Rizq was elected President.²² Elias abu Rizk was an employee at the national television network Tele Liban. He was elected President of the Union of Tele Liban Workers and Employees and was later elected President of the Federation of United Trade Unions.

At that point the GCWL entered into dialogue with the Minister of Labour Abdallah al-Amin regarding a list of demands.²³ In November 1993, the Ministry of Labour and the GCWL reached an agreement pertaining to wage increases, benefits, and price controls. But the government failed to respect the agreement.²⁴ The following year, the GCWL reiterated its demands several times. In September 1994, it submitted a detailed declaration to the President, the Council of Ministers, and the parliament, presenting the demands for wage increases, workers' benefits, and regulations on rent control and consumer prices. In December 1994, the same package of demands was presented at the sixth session of the National General Conference of Trade Unions. The final document of the Conference repeated the demands for wage increases, additional worker benefits, enhancing control over consumer prices, a progressive taxation system, additional public spending on education and health services, a new salary scale for professors of the Lebanese University and school teachers, the establishing of the Economic and Social Council, as stipulated by the Ta'if Agreement, and the endorsement of the prerogatives of the GCWL to name its representatives to the Economic and Social Council.²⁵

The confrontation between the GCWL and the Hariri cabinet continued through 1995 as soon as Hariri was appointed to head his second cabinet on 25 May 1995. Following the pressure exerted by public sector employees, including public school teachers and Lebanese University professors, in July 1995 the government approved a 20% wage

22 An-Nahar, July 9, 1993.

23 Abdallah el-Amine was affiliated to the Baath party.

24 Sami Baroudi, "Economic Conflict in Postwar Lebanon: State - Labor Relations between 1992 and 1997," *Middle East Journal*, Washington DC, The Middle East Institute, 1998, Vol. 52 (4), p. 537.

25 General Confederation of Workers in Lebanon, "Taqrir Mu'tamar al-Naqabi al-Watani al-'Am 1994," Beirut, General Confederation of Workers in Lebanon, 13 December 1994, p. 3.

increase for all public-sector employees.²⁶ On 19 July 1995, the GCWL called for a general strike and demonstrations when the government decided to mainly finance the wage increase by imposing an additional charge of LBP 2,500 (USD 1.8) on every 20 litres of gasoline purchased. The government did not withdraw the gasoline tax and reacted by banning all demonstrations and public gatherings, calling upon the internal security forces and army to intervene. At this point, heavy criticism of the government was expressed by several officials, notably Speaker of the House Hussein al-Husseini, and the former prime minister, Omar Karami. The prime minister was reproached for using the army to strengthen his power.²⁷

In February 1996, the GCWL expressed its opposition to the economic and political policies of the government at the seventh session of the National General Conference of Trade Unions, an annual conference organised by the Confederation. This comprised a virulent attack on the government for its poor economic policies, public debt, trade and budgetary deficits, high interest rates, and the deterioration in workers' living conditions. In addition to this economic critique, the report also tackled political issues, criticising the new media law and the ban on demonstrations as a serious violation of the freedom of the people. The conference report presented the same GCWL demands as expressed in previous National Trade Union Conferences. It set a one-month ultimatum for the government to address the list of demands before calling for a general strike and mass demonstrations.²⁸

In February 1996, public school teachers and Lebanese University professors held strikes demanding the implementation of a new salary scale.²⁹ In the same month, the GCWL called for a national general strike and anti-government demonstrations on the 29th of February. In reaction to this call, the government once again banned all demonstrations while the army imposed a curfew the day of the declared strike.³⁰ The GCWL retreated and cancelled the strike 11 hours before it was due to start in order to avoid clashes with the army. As discussed in the following section, the GCWL

26 An-Nahar, "Al-Mu'allimun Yuwasilun al-Idrab wa 90 Alf Talib Aliqun," *An-Nahar*, 8 July 1995, p. 1, 16.

27 As-Safir, "Mawaqif Niyabiyya Tantaqid Muqarrarat Majlis al-Wizara' al-Akhira," *As-Safir*, 27 October 1995, p. 3.

28 General Confederation of Workers in Lebanon, *op. cit.*; As-Safir, "Jam'iyya 'Umumiyya wa lika'at Manatiqiyya Litanfidh al-Idrab fi 27 al-Hali," *As-Safir*, 7 February 1996, p. 6.

29 As-Safir, "Al-Hiwar al-Maqtu' Yadfā 60 Alf Ushadh ila Idrab Tahziri fi Intizar Akhir Shubat," *As-Safir*, 13 February 1996, p. 1, 10.

30 As-Safir, "Majlis al-Wizara' Yu'akkid Qrar Mani' al-Tazahur wa Yukallif al-Jaysh Dabt al-Amn Limudatt 3 Ashhur," *As-Safir*, 28 February 1996, p. 3.

showed a tendency to call off strikes at the last minute in response to government promises or pressure.

Following this episode, Hariri and Elias Abu Rizq did in fact meet to discuss prior events, as Hariri appeared to be willing to take into account some of the voiced criticism of his economic programme.³¹ Abu Rizq visited the Prime Minister in his residence, where he reiterated the Confederation's demands. In March 1996, business leaders revealed they were ready to discuss labour demands and wage increases. Consequently, the price index committee³² held a set of meetings in March 1996 to identify the price increase of basic goods and services in 1995 and to determine the adjustment to the cost of living to be applied for 1996.³³ While the GCWL demanded a 76% wage increase, business representatives offered nothing more than 15%. At this point, the committee suspended its meetings.³⁴ In reaction to the government's silence and inaction, the GCWL decided to use the upcoming visit of the French president Jacques Chirac as a pressure tool against the government and therefore issued an ultimatum: the government would answer the workers' demands at once or the workers would organise a sit-in in front of the parliament coinciding with President Chirac's speech on 6 April 1996. Throughout that day, the Lebanese army ensured that the entrance to the headquarters of the GCWL remained blocked and prevented those inside from marching to the parliament.³⁵ Instead, the sit-in was held inside the headquarters and was covered by the local media.

In April 1996, Israel launched "Operation Grapes of Wrath" against Lebanon, conducting extensive shelling for 16 days in what it claimed was an attempt to stop rocket attacks from Hezbollah. Following the April War, the government approved a scheme for wage increases and other benefits for workers in the private sector in May 1996.

On one side, business associations rejected the scheme, arguing that it would lead to financial burdens. Business associations include the Chambers of Commerce, trade

31 As-Safir, Ghasib al-Mukhtar, "*Al-Hukuma Tuqarrir I'adat Tartib Awlawiyataha*," *As-Safir*, 10 February 1996, p. 2.

32 The Price Index Committee includes representatives of business associations, the GCWL, and the Ministry of Labour to determine annual wage increases in line with the increase of costs of goods and services.

33 Imad Marmal, "*Taqriran Hawla Waqa'i' wa Asda' Lika' al-Hariri – Abu Rizq*," *As-Safir*, 13 March 1996, p. 3.

34 An-Nahar, "*Al-'Ummal Yulawihoun Takraran bi al-'Idrab wa al-Hiwar Yusabiq Nihayat Adhar*," *An-Nahar*, 27 March 1996, p. 1.

35 Rita Sharara, "*Birri: Harriy Tawjih al-I'tissam Dodd al-Hukuma la Dodd Ziyarat Chirac*," *An-Nahar*, 4 April 1996, p. 2.

associations, and the bank association who are expected to take part in the dialogue with the GCWL regarding wage increase related demands at least within the Consumer Price Committee.³⁶ It should however be noted that it became rather common for the Lebanese political class to encompass wealthy businessmen who represented the interests of the business-financial elite. This became an inherent part of the political formation of post-war Lebanon and its relation with an “ultra-liberal” economic model, which overlapped between the interests of the business-financial elite and the ruling political elite. Many examples of deputies and ministers who would later on become rich proved the enmeshed economic and political arenas.³⁷ A study by Joseph Bahout on the professional background of deputies elected to the parliament in 1996 showed that the largest share of deputies in fact belonged to the category of businessmen (30%) – this category included entrepreneurs, bankers, traders, industrialists, etc. – followed by lawyers and doctors.³⁸

The GCWL, meanwhile, rejected the scheme as it fell significantly below the requested 76% increase. In addition, public sector teachers organised strikes and demanded a new salary scale for public sector employees. To increase the pressure, they also suspended the grading of official baccalaureate exams, leaving 60,000 students stranded without grades.³⁹ Another action followed, and an usual one in the trajectory of the Confederation, whereby the GCWL and the teachers’ leagues threatened to instruct their supporters to vote against pro-government deputies in the elections of the summer of 1996 unless the parliament approved the new salary scale for public school teachers.⁴⁰ Following this immense pressure, the salary scale and most of the teachers’ demands were approved by parliament. The main pressure stemmed from the action of the

Teachers’ Bureau, which gathered both public and private sector teachers, and relied

36 Decree No. 4206 of August 8, 1981 stipulates the creation of the Price Index Committee composed of representatives of workers and business associations. Law 36/67 date 16/5/1967 stipulates that the Government of Lebanon is bound to publish, through the Price Index Committee, a yearly cost of living index.

37 Joseph Bahout and Chawki Douayhi, *La vie publique au Liban, expressions et recompositions du politique*, Les Cahiers du CERMOC 18, Beirut, CERMOC, 1997, p. 24.

38 *Ibid.*

39 An-Nahar, “*Maktab al-Mu’allimin Yukarrir Ta’liqahu al-Tasshih Raythama Tanjali al-Ta’ahudat aan al-Nata’ij*,” An-Nahar, 2 August 1996, p. 19; An-Nahar, “*Maktab al-Mu’allimin ma zal Mawqifahu ‘an la Tasshih illa bi al-Silsila*,” An-Nahar, 7 August 1996, p. 19.

40 An-Nahar, “*Hay’at al-Tansiq: Linussawit Dodd man Salabuna Luqmat al-Aysh wa Fursat al-Amal wa al-Sakan wa al-Musslashfa*,” An-Nahar, 8 August 1996, p. 8.

on strikes and the suspension of the grading of official exams.⁴¹

In the immediate aftermath of the parliamentary elections that took place on 25 September 1996, Elias Abu Rizq attacked the government once again. During a political gathering of leaders opposing the Hariri cabinet, Abu Rizq launched a virulent critique of the government's plans to close down almost all private television and radio stations.⁴² He also repeated all the workers' demands voiced previously by the GCWL, and declared the readiness of the Confederation to call for strikes and mass demonstrations against the government's violation of freedom of speech and the media.⁴³ A few days later, and despite the government ban, Abu Rizq called for a sit-in across the government headquarters on 4 October and a general strike and mass demonstrations on 10 October. As usual, the army intervened to prevent the scheduled sit-in and ban the demonstrations.

On 7 November, Hariri formed his third cabinet and on 28 November 1996, the GCWL again tried to organise demonstrations against the media ban as well as the poor economic and social conditions. Unsurprisingly, the demonstrations were violently thwarted by the army.

FROM STATE REPRESSION TO STATE INCORPORATION

The following section focuses on state repression of the labour movement through legal and structural manipulation. The state's intervention in the labour elections aimed at ousting the president of the GCWL and therefore weakening its opposition to state decisions and policies. The ruling elite's intervention relied on the political and sectarian affiliations of trade unionists in shaping the elections: the GCWL members – representatives of federations – voting behaviour was shaped by clear instructions from the political parties. These elections, like previous and following ones, were more a reflection of political alliances, tensions, and conflicts than a manifestation of workers' conditions and demands.

Following on from the GCWL's attempts at demonstrations in November 1997, Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and Speaker of the House Nabih Berri decided to attack the GCWL leadership. Hariri and Abu Rizq had a long-standing tense relationship. As mentioned

41 An-Nahar, "Iqarar Silsilat al-Mu'allimin wa Ihalat Baqiyyat al-Muwazzafin 'ala al-Majlis al-Muqbil," *An-Nahar*, 14 August 1996, p. 9.

42 The national gathering (*Al-Likâ al-Watani*) was a meeting of opposition leaders including Hussein al-Husseini, Salim al-Huss, and representatives of the Phalangiist party and the Lebanese Communist party.

43 An-Nahar, "Birri Yatawafa' Hallan Mutawazinin lil Flam wa al-Lika' al-Watani Yulawwih bi al-Idrab wa al-Tazahur," *An-Nahar*, 26 September 1996, p. 1, 16.

earlier, Abu Rizq enjoyed close relations with the political opposition to Hariri, mainly with Hezbollah and the Lebanese Army's commander-in-chief, Emile Lahoud, who was in continuous political disagreement with Hariri.⁴⁴ At the beginning of 1997, Hariri attempted to halt the promotion of six colonels, including Jamil al-Sayyid, who was close to the Syrian regime, and Lahoud. Following Syrian pressure, Hariri was forced to allow the promotion. In turn, the 1997 GCWL elections were an occasion for Hariri to counter the increasing power of Lahoud through a campaign against the election of Abu Rizq. Hariri rallied opponents of Lahoud and the army, including Berri and Assaad Hardan, the labour minister. He also assembled trade unionist leaders who had previously clashed with Abu Rizq, such as Antoine Bishara.

Berri and Abu Rizq were also political rivals. In the 1996 parliamentary elections, Hardan, who was on Berri's list, competed with Abu Rizq, who was on the opponent list, over the same orthodox seat in the Hasbaya-Marjayun electoral area. The following year, Berri and Abu Rizq clashed again, as the GCWL executive council opposed the admission of five new federations⁴⁵ that were politically affiliated to the Amal Movement headed by Berri.⁴⁶ The confrontation between Hariri and Abu Rizq reflected a conflict related to the balance of power within the post-war sectarian political system, rather than a conflict between workers, trade unions, and the state. This confrontation, however, led to the weakening and fragmentation of the labour movement.

In early 1997, Hardan launched a campaign against Abu Rizq aimed at toppling him at the next GCWL elections, which were to take place in April 1997. It is important to note that during the term of Abu Rizq, the Ministry of Labour withheld its LBP 500 million (USD 330,000) annual budget allocation to the GCWL and only transferred the outstanding sum upon the election of a new executive council later the same year.⁴⁷

During this period, the Ministry of Labour was accused of intervening in the elections of

44 Sami Baroudi, *op. cit.*, p. 543.

45 Federation of Workers in Metal, Mechanics and Electricity; Lebanese Federation of Taxi Drivers and Transport Authorities in Lebanon; National Federation of Workers and Employees in South Lebanon; Federation of Jabal 'Amil for Agricultural Workers.

46 The Amal Movement was founded in 1974 as the "Movement of the Dispossessed." Amal is associated with the Shiite community and is represented in the parliament by 13 deputies (2016). Nabih Berri has been the chairman of Amal since 1980 and president of the parliament since October 1992.

47 Issam Al-Jurdi, "Hal Tajfah Istikalat al-Zughbi Ma'rakat al-Hayyaliyyat li I'adat al-Tawhid?", *An-Nahar*, 13 May 1998, p. 6.

several federations in order to guarantee pro-Amal representatives in the GCWL executive council. This aimed at guaranteeing a majority of votes against Abu Rizq. Indeed, on 13 April 1997, the elections of the Federation of the Workers of South Lebanon were the subject of widely documented government intervention.⁴⁸ Newspapers reported heavily on the rigged elections. After these results, critics warned against similar government intervention in the upcoming GCWL elections.⁴⁹ These federation elections resulted in five pro-government delegates on the executive council that would vote against Abu Rizq.

Moreover, a few days before the GCWL elections, the Ministry of Labour authorised the creation of five new federations, despite their rejection by the GCWL. These authorisations secured ten additional pro-government delegates in the executive council.⁵⁰ These five newly authorised federations had not been admitted to the GCWL during the previous four years. The GCWL had required that the five federations submit additional documents in order to complete their applications.⁵¹ In other words, these federations had not been rejected. According to the internal regulations of the Confederation, the admittance of new federations required a two-thirds vote by the executive council and the council of representatives. Once rejected, the federations in question could resort to the judiciary. The Ministry of Labour was not entitled to impose the admittance of federations to the Confederation. According to the Labour minister, the Ministry relied on Articles 93 and 94 of the Labour Code,⁵² in addition to two judiciary consultations.⁵³ As mentioned earlier, these federations applied for membership to the GCWL four years prior to the April 1997 elections, but the Ministry of Labour only intervened four days before election day, which drew attention to the role and intervention of the government

48 This federation would also be subject to divisions. On May 11, 1997, despite the elections that took place on April 13, the federation would witness the election of a second executive council.

49 As-Safir, "*Al-Qiyada al-'Ummaliyya: 'Iddat al-Ma'raka Taktamil*," *As-Safir*, 17 April 1997, p. 1, 15.

50 Rula Baydoun, "*Al-Haraka al-'Ummaliyya: Min al-Nidal li al-Wihda ila Daya' Wihdat al-Nidal*," *An-Nahar*, 15 May 1997, p. 9.

51 As-Safir, "*Al-Qiyada al-'Ummaliyya: 'Iddat al-Ma'raka Taktamil*," *op. cit.*, p. 1, 15.

52 Article 93 of the Labour Code: "An application for membership is presented to the trade union committee together with the applicant's identity card, and a work certificate approved by the Social Affairs Services and indicating that the applicant continues to exercise the profession represented by the trade union. Within fifteen days the trade union committee must decide by secret ballot whether the applicant is to be admitted or refused"; Article 94: "The applicant may object to the refusal decision before the Social Affairs Service which then adjudicates his case." See: Argus de la Législation Libanaise, "Code of Labour. A Comprehensive English Translation of the Lebanese Labour Code," Beirut, Bureau de Documentation Libanaise et Arabe, 2010, Volume 56 (1), p. 1-28. During an interview, Elias Abu Rizq pointed out that these articles refer to the admittance of working individuals and not to federations and therefore were irrelevant to that case.

53 "*Al-Qiyada al-'Ummaliyya: 'Iddat al-Ma'raka Taktamil*," *op. cit.*, p. 1, 15.

in the April 1997 elections.

The five newly licensed federations had clear political and sectarian affiliations to Nabih Berri's Shiite Amal Party. Bassam Tlays, president of the Workers' Bureau within the Amal Movement even acted as a spokesperson for these five federations, which was a clear indication of their political allegiance. The federations were licensed a few days before the elections of the GCWL executive council and were to participate in these elections despite the Confederation's rejection of their membership.⁵⁴

The 22 member federations of the GCWL, plus the five newly authorised ones, participated in the elections of 24 April 1997.⁵⁵ Out of the 27 federations, 11 were opposed to the GCWL leadership of the time. These were the five new federations and the six federations that had boycotted the GCWL: the federations of bank employees, aviation employees, independent authorities, maritime workers, the league of trade unions, and the federation of food products and leisure.

On 24 April 1997, two different elections for the GCWL executive bureau took place, and several irregularities were recorded. The first election was held at GCWL premises in the absence of representatives from the Ministry of Labour, which refused to undertake its observation prerogatives. Delegates from 12 federations loyal to Abu Rizq re-elected him as president. Out of the 26 delegates that attended these elections, 24 voted for Abu Rizq.⁵⁶ According to the accounts of some delegates, these elections witnessed the heavy presence of security officers, who prevented some participants from entering the premises.⁵⁷

One hour later, in the same building, another round of elections was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour, and broadcast on national television. The five newly licensed federations attended the elections. According to the Ministry of Labour, 35 delegates out of 54 voted for 12 pro-government members of the bureau with Ghanim

54 "Al-Qiyada al-'Ummaliyaa: 'Iddat al-Ma'raka Taktamil," *op. cit.*, p. 1, 15.

55 An-Nahar, "Muwajaha Qiyassiya al-Yawm Tuqarrir Muslaqbal al-Ittihad al-'Ummali," *An-Nahar*, 24 April 1997, p. 1, 12. The GCWL executive bureau refused to submit the list of federation delegates to the executive council as requested by the Ministry of Labour based on Decree number 52/7993, in order to supervise the elections. Therefore, one day before the elections, the Ministry published the list of delegates of the 27 delegations eligible to participate in the bureau elections. However, it is important to note that during the 1993 elections, the GCWL did not submit the list of delegates to the Ministry of Labour but only revealed it to its representatives on the day of the elections.

56 An-Nahar, "Ittihad al-Mu'arada...wa Ittihad al-Muwalat," *An-Nahar*, 25 April 1997, p. 1, 18.

57 Rula Baydoun, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

al-Zoghbi as president.⁵⁸ Al-Zoghbi had participated in trade union activities since 1964 within the Trade Union of Workers and Employees of Water Authorities in Lebanon. He took part in the establishment of the Federation of Trade Unions of Independent Authorities and Public and Private Institutions, of which he became Secretary General and later its representative on the GCWL executive council.⁵⁹

These elections marked the first explicit split in the labour movement despite its resilience to division during the Civil War. The division of the Confederation was the result of state intervention and corruption in the elections through the manipulation of legal provisions. Unsurprisingly, the Ministry of Labour recognised the results of the second elections and communicated its recognition to international and Arab organisations. The newly elected leadership paid a protocol visit to the President of the Republic Elias Hrawi, Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, and Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri.⁶⁰

However, Abu Rizq continued to claim the presidency. At the close of the elections, Abu Rizq declared his own victory while internal security forces halted media coverage. He was soon supported by political figures, notably government opponents, including the former prime minister Salim al-Hoss.⁶¹ The member of parliament Mustafa Saad, Hezbollah, the Lebanese Communist Party, and the Communist Action Organisation together published a communiqué supporting Abu Rizq in his election victory and denouncing government intervention.⁶² This was followed by the support of representatives of the ILO, the International Federation of Arab Unions, and the International Federation of Free Unions in Brussels, which also denounced the poor conditions surrounding the electoral process.⁶³

58 *Ibid.*

59 An-Nahar, “*Al-Hrawi La Yumani‘ fi Muadara Niyabiyya Litqassir Wilayat al-Majliss 4 Ashhur*,” *An-Nahar*, 29 April 1997, p. 1, 20.

60 *Ibid.*

61 *Ibid.*, extract translated by the author: “What happened in the elections was very disappointing and has led, as expected, to the dangerous split of the labour movement. All this is due to the clear and unjustified interference of the government in these elections and its direct support for one party against another.”

62 Nabil Nasser, “Linakun Wahidan fi Istiqbalihi,” *An-Nahar*, 26 April 1997, p. 5

63 “*Ittihad al-Mu‘arada...wa Ittihad al-Muwalat*,” *op. cit.*, p. 1, 18; “*Al-Hrawi La Yumani‘ fi Muadara Niyabiyya Litqassir Wilayat al-Majliss 4 Ashhur*,” *op. cit.*, p. 20, extract translated by the author: Hassan Jammam, representative of the International Federation of Arab Unions: “What happened during these elections aims to destroy the labour movement and I have never seen such interference during my 25 years of union practice,” and Georges Martinez, director of the legal department at the International Federation of Free Trade Unions: “I just witnessed the worst aggression against democracy and union freedom which has ever occurred in any democratic state (...).”

Briefly, these elections were marked by the intervention of the government on a legal and organisational level to curb the forces opposed to it within the GCWL. Hariri adopted a staunch position against the Confederation, as he feared it would hamper his economic reform plan. Between 1992 and 1997, the Confederation and the Hariri cabinets clashed over several demands, namely wage adjustments, consumer price control, and the independence of the labour movement. Hariri also reacted to the fact that the Confederation took positions and action in the political realm, which was not common behaviour for the GCWL.

State-labour relations during Elias Abu Rizq's term as GCWL president between July 1993 and April 1997 were highly confrontational. Under his leadership, the GCWL questioned and challenged almost every policy of the three Hariri cabinets. Hariri was determined to prevent the GCWL from imposing concessions on the government and therefore mobilised all available resources against Abu Rizq, including government intervention in elections with the support of the judiciary branch, which validated the victory of his rival Ghanim al-Zoghbi.⁶⁴

Following the 1997 elections, the GCWL leadership would be tamed. Abu Rizq would surprisingly seize the presidency again in the 31 July 1998 elections but would no longer be able to pose any major challenge. On 15 March 2001, 47 out of 74 members of the executive council participated in the elections and voted unanimously for Ghassan Ghusn as president and Bassam Tlays as vice president. Ghassan Ghusn was then president of the Federation of Aviation Workers and close to the Amal Party, while Bassam Tlays was president of the Workers' Bureau at the Amal Movement. Ghusn would remain president of the GCWL until 2016. Under his leadership, the GCWL would be characterised by its weakness and timid actions.

MEANS OF STATE CONTROL

The State and the ruling elite worked on taming trade unions and blocking their opposition to socio-economic policies as well as their repeated sets of demands. The major tool of the ruling elite in their relations with the GCWL was intervention at institutional and organisational levels including the withholding of the budget allocated to the GCWL, interference in executive council elections, and the excessive authorisation of federations of specific political affiliation.

64 An-Nahar, "Al-Hariri Yattahim Alannan al-Ajhiza bi al-Taddakhul fi Intikhabat al-'Ummal," *An-Nahar*, 24 July 1997, p. 1, 19. During a television interview in 1997, Rafiq Hariri revealed for the first time that the security forces had intervened in GCWL elections.

Withholding of the budget allocation

During the terms of Abu Rizq's leadership of the GCWL, the budget allocation of the Ministry of Labour to the GCWL was withheld as mentioned earlier, and only released after the departure of Abu Rizq in 2000. This was a key tool in weakening the GCWL in order to tame its actions against the government.

Intervention in GCWL Elections: Divide and Rule

The government resorted to the old tactic of divide and rule. During every GCWL election, the government intervened in one way or another. In 1993, the government sided with the coalition of Antoine Bechara against Elias Abu Rizq. Following this, the Ministry of Labour intervened in every election of the executive council by requiring the submission of the electoral roll and the list of candidates prior to the elections. Legal provisions regulating trade unions do not stipulate this practice. The failure to submit these election details by the GCWL was usually followed by the Ministry of Labour refraining from validating the results of the elections. For instance, the Ministry of Labour refused to validate the elections in 1997. This intervention in the electoral process and its results facilitated the election of pro-government candidates and also led in some instances to a split in the Confederation, as was the case between 1997 and 1999.

Authorisation of New Federations

The main tool used by the ruling elite through the Ministry of Labour was the excessive authorisation of federations. In their study on the workers' movement in Lebanon, Badran and Zbib observed the creation of additional trade union federations in a process they describe as "hatching."⁶⁵ According to Badran and Zbib, political parties such as the Baath party and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party were actively trying to increase their influence on the workers movement in the post civil war period.⁶⁶ Bechara and Abu Rizq tried to prevent the admission of new federations, aware that the government was trying to achieve a pro-government majority within the GCWL executive council. The absence of proportional representation facilitated this task: each federation had two representatives in the GCWL council regardless of its size. While the communist party maintained its traditional presence in the committee, other parties linked to former militia leaders and close to the Syrian regime gained a majority of the votes.⁶⁷

65 Ismail Badran and Mohamad Zbib, "Al-Ittihad Al-Ummali Al-'Am Fi Lubnan," Beirut, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2004.

66 *Ibid.*

67 Hannes Baumann, "Citizen Hariri and Neoliberal Politics in Postwar Lebanon," PhD thesis, London, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2012.

The number of federations in the GCWL kept increasing after 1997 from 22 in 1993 to 36 in 2001 to 59 in 2015.⁶⁸

CONCLUSION

This research focused on the centrality of the labour movement in the political and economic struggle for change. The decline of the organised labour movement does not imply that class struggle is no longer relevant, although this is the explanation adopted by those who prefer to privilege other factors such as identity, and citizenship. It rather means that capital and state have been winning this struggle. While structural changes in the global economy significantly hampered the activity and scope of associational power, trade unions remain important actors in the economic and political realms and scholars continue to study their possible revitalisation. The continuous attempts by the state and ruling elite to undermine the labour movement are evidence that a resilient and vigorous labour movement constitutes an imperative menace to the political system in place in Lebanon.

Finally, in addition to the use of force, the ruling elite has recently adopted the same tactics and lines of attack that it had employed to tame the GCWL in the 1990s, to fragment and weaken the mobilising project of public sector workers between 2011 and 2015. The head of the Union Coordination Committee, Hanna Gharib, was toppled in the 2015 elections of the secondary teachers' league, which was the backbone of the mobilisation. The elections of the board of public secondary school teachers league were subject to the manipulation of sectarian identities and political affiliation of teachers whereby almost all political parties allied together to give strict instructions to teachers' representatives to vote for their candidates. Through the same strategy, in July 2017, Ni'mi Mahfud, the president of the private sector teachers' union, was toppled in the union's elections.

The importance of studying state incorporation of the labour movement resides in its detrimental repercussions on civil society. With state incorporation, the GCWL was sidelined from agenda setting and negotiations with state and business associations within the policy making realm. Instead, it is political leaders within the state who take the duty to negotiate and set work related policy coupled with a quasi complete silence from trade unions and federations. This paralysis of the workers' movement cannot but ensue the weakening of the civil society. An effective civil society in Lebanon today hinges on the revival of the workers' movement in its organisation, mobilisation, and forceful participation in policy making.

68 Ibid.

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***Les projets
collectifs de
développement
en Palestine :
Diffusion de
la vulgate
néolibérale et
normalisation
de la domination***

SBEIH SBEIH

RÉSUMÉ

Au lendemain de la création de l'Autorité palestinienne en 1994, une multitude d'acteurs se met à réaliser des projets collectifs de coopération au développement sous l'égide des bailleurs de fonds internationaux. L'analyse d'un projet financé par la Banque mondiale illustre la façon dont le projet devient un réseau de pouvoir, qui produit aussi bien les normes gestionnaires que les mécanismes nécessaires à leur application auprès des bénéficiaires de l'aide. Cela contribue à transfigurer le développement en une croyance dominante, fondée sur une lecture néolibérale et post-conflit de la société palestinienne. Au nom de la coordination pour la « bonne gouvernance, » cette mise en réseau structure le cadre de l'interaction des bénéficiaires de l'aide, tout en construisant un nouvel espace social : le « monde du développement. » Si l'adhésion des acteurs locaux à cette croyance se traduit par leur intériorisation des normes rationnelles, elle entraîne une nouvelle manière de percevoir la réalité sociale. De ce fait, un nouveau système de valeurs s'établit. Une nouvelle hiérarchie sociale s'instaure dans la « Palestine des bailleurs de fonds, » au sommet de laquelle se trouvent les bailleurs internationaux. Si l'article se fonde sur le cas palestinien, il aborde une thématique globale, celle de l'instrumentalisation de la « société civile » par les organisations internationales afin

d'instaurer l'économie de marché dans les pays dépendants de l'aide dédiée au développement.

INTRODUCTION¹

Les conditions politiques de certains bailleurs de fonds,² leurs priorités et leurs critères de sélection des bénéficiaires locaux palestiniens sont à l'origine de la perception négative qu'ont les habitants des Territoires palestiniens occupés en 1967 (TPO) des bailleurs et de leurs « partenaires » locaux. Cette sélectivité des bailleurs dans le choix des bénéficiaires paraît d'autant plus sévère que l'Autorité palestinienne (AP), tout comme les ONG, dépendent de plus en plus de l'aide internationale pour assurer la pérennité de leurs structures.

Face à cette situation, certains bailleurs de fonds ont mis en place des projets collectifs de développement dont la réalisation implique une multiplicité d'acteurs : l'AP, des ONG et des entreprises. Pour eux, ces projets répondent à une nécessité économique permettant de réduire le taux de chômage et de pauvreté. De plus, en s'inscrivant dans le modèle du « moins d'État » inspiré par la théorie économique du libre marché et le paradigme de la gouvernance,³ ils perçoivent l'exécution collective de ces projets comme une stratégie destinée à améliorer la performance de l'aide internationale et instaurer une plus grande coordination entre les acteurs locaux empêtrés dans des luttes de pouvoir. Les bailleurs considèrent ainsi que ces projets contribuent à transformer les luttes de pouvoir et la concurrence – entre les ONG elles-mêmes d'un côté, et les ONG et l'AP de l'autre – en un partenariat qui garantit une meilleure répartition de l'aide internationale, et permettent ainsi de prendre le chemin du développement voire de la démocratie.

Pour autant, l'aide internationale peut s'analyser comme un instrument de domination au sens wébérien, c'est-à-dire comme « la possibilité de contraindre d'autres personnes à infléchir leurs comportements en fonction de sa propre volonté. »⁴ Le don institue

1 Un remerciement est adressé à l'*Asfari Institute* - l'Université américaine de Beyrouth (AUB) pour avoir octroyé un financement post-doctoral à l'auteur pour la valorisation de ses recherches sous formes de publications.

2 Si les Palestiniens refusent les négociations directes avec Israël « les États-Unis limiteront leur aide à l'AP. » Voir : Radio France Internationale, « Négociations directes avec Israël: l'avertissement de Barack Obama à Mahmoud Abbas, » Website, *Radio France Internationale*, 1 août 2010, disponible sur : <http://www.rfi.fr/moyen-orient/20100801-negociations-directes-israel-avertissement-barack-obama-mahmoud-abbas> [consulté le 4 juin 2018]. Les mêmes menaces sont adressées par certains dirigeants européens.

3 Les organisations internationales considèrent la gouvernance comme condition indispensable pour le développement et la lutte contre la corruption. Voir parmi d'autres : Laëtitia Atlani-Duault, « Les ONG à l'heure de la 'bonne gouvernance', » *Autrepart*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2005, Vol. 35 (3), p. 5, disponible sur : <https://www.cairn.info/revue-autrepart-2005-3-p-3.htm> [consulté le 22 août 2017].

4 Max Weber, *La domination*, Paris, la Découverte, 2013, p. 44.

ainsi un rapport de supériorité et constitue un acte de « violence déguisée en geste désintéressé. »⁵ C'est dans un contexte de « construction étatique » en situation coloniale, et de dépendance structurelle de l'AP et des ONG palestiniennes à l'égard de l'aide internationale que le pouvoir symbolique et financier des bailleurs de fonds s'est consolidé. La perception « post-conflit »⁶ qu'ont ces derniers de la réalité sociale – c'est-à-dire la réification de la signature des accords d'Oslo en 1993 comme rupture historique à partir de laquelle l'antagonisme entre Palestiniens et Israéliens cède la place au partenariat dans le processus de paix – s'impose ainsi aux bénéficiaires locaux de l'aide au nom de l'objectif de « promotion de la paix et du développement. »⁷ En ce sens, le discours dominant des bailleurs internationaux occulte la réalité coloniale en Palestine et prend appui sur une « réalité virtuelle, »⁸ selon laquelle l'établissement de l'AP constituerait un aboutissement de la souveraineté palestinienne.

De plus, à travers le programme économique néolibéral qu'il porte, ce discours vise à « mettre en question toutes les structures collectives capables de faire obstacle à la logique du marché pur »⁹ telles que la nation, les syndicats et les organisations politiques. En effet, depuis le Consensus de Washington en 1989, l'intervention internationale pour le développement dans les pays du Sud est régie par une lecture néolibérale qui réduit la société au trinôme « secteur public, société civile, marché ». C'est ainsi que la récupération néolibérale du concept de « société civile » s'accroît.¹⁰ Ses piliers y sont les ONG dont le rôle consiste d'abord à limiter l'intervention publique dans l'économie de marché, et à former ensuite une opposition politique face au pouvoir public, généralement considéré comme corrompu.¹¹ L'accent est davantage placé sur la rationalité économique fondée sur la perception d'un individu calculateur et rationnel.

5 Maurice Godelier, *L'énigme du don*, Paris, Fayard, 1996, p. 21.

6 Sari Hanafi et Linda Tabar, *Buruz al-nukhba al-falašiniya al-mu'awlama: al-manihun, wa al-munazzamat al-dawliya, wa al-munazzamat gheir al-hukumiya al-mahaliya*, Ramallah, Muwatin, 2006, p. 219.

7 Voir : Banque mondiale, « Developing the Occupied Territories (1993), An investment in peace, » Washington DC, Banque mondiale, 1993, disponible sur : <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/1993/09/698867/developing-occupied-territories-investment-peace-vol-1-6-overview> [consulté le 4 juin 2018]. Au nom de la paix et du développement, l'intervention des puissances internationales dans le Tiers-Monde devient un « droit » selon Michael Hardt et Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Paris, 2004, p. 42.

8 Gilbert Riš, *Le développement: histoire d'une croyance occidentale*, Paris, Presses de Sciences-Po, 2001, p. 342, 370-376.

9 Pierre Bourdieu, *Contre-feux. Propos pour servir à la résistance contre l'invasion néo-libérale*, Paris, Raisons d'Agir, 1998, p. 107-109.

10 Michel Foucault, *La naissance de la biopolitique. Cours de Collège de France, 1978-1979*, Paris, Gallimard, 2004, p. 299; Catherine Audard, *Qu'est-ce que le libéralisme? Éthique, politique, société*, Paris, Gallimard, 2009, p. 171.

11 Laëtitia Atlani-Duault, *op. cit.*, p. 5-6.

Néanmoins, la « neutralisation du contexte »¹² qu'implique le discours universel de développement fait l'impasse sur des particularités locales comme la colonisation israélienne, l'impuissance structurelle de l'AP et le morcellement des TPO. Ainsi, bien que ce discours intègre une dimension « colonisatrice de la réalité, »¹³ et reconfigure les rapports de forces et la hiérarchie entre les acteurs locaux sous l'égide des bailleurs, il présente le développement dans les TPO, à l'instar d'autres pays, comme un projet « universel » de l'humanité, fondé sur un ensemble de mesures techniques, notamment économiques, et « donc situées hors du débat politique. »¹⁴ Cette représentation néolibérale du monde social conçoit en effet la sphère politique comme devant être au service de l'économie de marché. De ce fait, le rôle des technocrates s'y trouve idéalisé¹⁵ par opposition à toute lecture politique nationale ou encore à toute revendication de lutte pour la libération.

Cet article a pour objectif de démontrer comment la mise en place des projets collectifs de développement dans les TPO contribue à légitimer la domination des bailleurs internationaux et leur perception de la réalité. Ainsi, ces projets collectifs seront appréhendés comme dispositifs, au sens foucauldien du terme, dans lesquels se dissimulent des relations de domination.¹⁶ Par hypothèse, leur mise en place contribue à construire une croyance fondée sur le développement que partagent aussi bien les bailleurs que les ONG bénéficiaires de l'aide. De cette croyance découle une nouvelle configuration politique, de nouveaux rapports de force qui se légitiment par de nouvelles valeurs. Le développement définit désormais les programmes d'action des ONG et des acteurs bénéficiaires de l'aide. En reconfigurant le système de valeurs qui donne sens à leur action et légitime leur hiérarchie, il modifie également le cadre social de leurs interactions. En ce sens, l'article vise à montrer la façon dont ces projets collectifs consolident cette croyance et la rationalité qui en découle. Bien qu'il soit fondé sur le cas palestinien, l'article traite d'un phénomène global dans l'ère de la globalisation néolibérale qui concerne l'ensemble des pays « bénéficiaires » de l'aide internationale. Il fera sans doute écho au cas libanais.

12 Pierre Bourdieu et Loïc Wacquant, « Sur les ruses de la raison impérialiste, » *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, Paris, Seuil, 1998, Vol. 121-122, p. 109-118.

13 C'est-à-dire un discours faisant d'une certaine représentation théorique la base pour décrire et construire la réalité sociale, d'où l'importance d'analyser le développement comme discours au sens foucauldien pour souligner la domination qu'il incarne. Voir : Arturo Escobar, *Encountering development: the making and unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 5-6, 21-54.

14 Gilbert Riſt, *op. cit.*, p. 129-130.

15 Pour aller plus loin, voir: Sbeih Sbeih, *La « professionnalisation » des ONG en Palestine: entre pression des bailleurs de fonds et logique d'engagement*, Thèse de doctorat, Guyancourt, Université de Versailles St-Quentin-En-Yvelines, 2014, disponible sur : <https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01220122> [consulté le 22 septembre 2017].

16 Luc Boltanski, *De la critique: précis de sociologie de l'émancipation*, Paris, Gallimard, 2009, p. 16-17.

Pour démontrer cela, nous étudions le cas concret du projet *The Palestinian NGOs* mis en place dans les TPO en 1997 et financé par la Banque mondiale (BM). Son analyse s'avère heuristique pour plusieurs raisons. Tout d'abord, ce projet incarne le paradigme de la gouvernance et associe les trois acteurs principaux chers à la lecture néolibérale de la société : le secteur public, le secteur privé et la société civile. Si *Ta'awun – Welfare Association*, une fondation créée en 1983 à Genève par des capitalistes palestiniens¹⁷ avant de s'installer à Ramallah dans les années 1990 – se charge de la responsabilité du projet, celui-ci finance principalement les trois principaux réseaux associatifs en Cisjordanie :¹⁸ *The Palestinian Network of NGOS* (le PNGO, crée en 1994), *The Palestinian General Union of Charitable Societies* (la PGUCS, formée en 1958) et *The Palestinian National Institute of NGOs* (le PNIN, fondé en 1997). L'objectif est de renforcer le *networking*¹⁹ et la coordination entre ces réseaux pris dans des luttes de pouvoir du fait de leurs différents positionnements politiques vis-à-vis de l'AP.

Ensuite, le financement de ce projet par la BM attire l'attention en ce qu'il est inhabituel que cette organisation internationale finance les ONG sans passer par l'autorité officielle locale, à savoir l'AP. La BM justifie ce dépassement par l'importance du rôle des ONG dans l'économie palestinienne. Elle considère ce projet comme projet pilote et envisage, en cas de succès, de reconduire cette expérience dans d'autres pays en développement.²⁰ Finalement, la manière dont le projet a évolué révèle un processus d'institutionnalisation d'un réseau de pouvoir dans les TPO. D'abord mis en place pour une durée de trois ans, il connaît des prolongements (phase II de 2001 à 2006) qui débouchent en 2007, lors de la phase III, sur la création du *NGO Development Center*, le NDC. Depuis, celui-ci est enregistré comme association auprès de l'AP et continue à bénéficier de l'aide de nouveaux bailleurs. Malgré son importance, le NDC reste jusqu'en 2011 peu visible

17 Khalil Nakhleh, *Filištin: Wattan lil bai‘*, Ramallah, Rosa Luxembourg, 2011, p. 204.

18 Si le projet intègre d'autres réseaux associatifs à Gaza, le blocus que l'occupant israélien impose sur cette zone a limité le terrain de l'auteur – effectué entre 2007 et 2014 dans le cadre de sa thèse de sociologie (Sbeih, *op. cit.*) – à la Cisjordanie. Il est important de préciser qu'en plus des rapports cités, cet article s'appuie sur une trentaine d'entretiens effectués auprès des réseaux associatifs auxquels adhèrent les ONG étudiées en Cisjordanie et des employés du projet de la BM.

19 Durant le travail de terrain, l'auteur a pu remarquer l'usage intensif du terme de *networking* et le poids que les enquêtes donnaient au réseau associatif dans la configuration associative palestinienne.

20 Banque mondiale, « Supporting Non-Governmental Organizations, » Website, *Banque mondiale*, disponible sur : <http://go.worldbank.org/NOQSI5EWN0> [consulté le 4 juin 2018]; Banque mondiale, « Implementation completion report: Palestinian NGO projet, » Washington DC, Banque mondiale, 2003, disponible sur : <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/362041468780571316/pdf/262520WB-GOICR.pdf> [consulté le 4 juin 2018].

dans les TPO, date à laquelle l'ouvrage de Khalil Nakhleh²¹ est publié, critiquant le NDC et la fondation *Ta'awun (Welfare)*.

Nous présenterons d'abord la configuration des trois réseaux associatifs cités ci-dessus, avant d'analyser leur insertion dans le projet et l'institutionnalisation de celui-ci en ONG, le NDC. Cela nous permettra de démontrer comment, depuis sa création, ce dernier se met à produire des normes gestionnaires et à imposer leur application par des mécanismes d'évaluation. Nous démontrerons ensuite comment la réalisation des projets collectifs fait naître un nouvel espace social régi par l'esprit gestionnaire : le « monde du développement. » Enfin, l'analyse portera sur la place de la critique dans la transformation du développement en croyance à laquelle adhèrent les réseaux associatifs et les acteurs collectifs de ce monde.

LUTTES DE POUVOIR ET FINANCEMENT DE TROIS RÉSEAUX ASSOCIATIFS

L'histoire de la formation du PNGO, de la PGUCS et du PNIN nous permet de mieux cerner les luttes de pouvoir dans lesquelles ils sont empêtrés ainsi que la nature différente de leurs relations avec les bailleurs.

Pour décrire leur configuration, Jamal Salem, l'un des fondateurs d'une ONG agricole affiliée au Parti du peuple (l'ancien Parti communiste), et ancien membre du comité de coordination du PNGO, explique :

« La différence entre ces réseaux est plutôt politique [...] la World Bank²² a fait un truisme fund, ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui le NDC, pour renforcer ces réseaux [...] le PNGO était bien fort. Shadid [directeur du projet de la BM, entre 1996 et 2006 et ancien responsable de la fondation Ta'awun] ne voulait pas une couleur unique dans les NGOs et voulait intégrer tout le monde. Donc avec ce projet [...], il a encouragé les associations du Fatah [Mouvement de libération nationale de la Palestine] à créer leur organe : PNIN, et a remotivé la PGUCS, pour faire concurrence au PNGO. Enfin, il faisait du capacity building pour les trois réseaux. »²³

En effet, dans les années 1990, en particulier après la guerre en Irak et la chute de l'Union soviétique, l'Organisation de libération de la Palestine (OLP) et ses factions politiques subissent une pénurie financière. L'aide internationale devient une des ressources principales

21 Khalil Nakhleh, *op. cit.*, 2011.

22 Note de l'auteur: Les mots en anglais et les concepts gestionnaires seront soulignés (*en italique*) tels qu'ils ont été prononcés lors des entretiens effectués en arabe ou rédigés dans les rapports étudiés.

23 Entretien réalisé par l'auteur avec Jamal Salem, l'un des fondateurs d'une ONG agricole et ancien membre du comité de coordination du PNGO, Ramallah, 18 août 2009.

Note de l'auteur : Sauf exception, les noms des interlocuteurs ont été modifiés.

pour ces organisations. Si celles de gauche assurent des emplois à leurs militants par le biais des ONG qui leur sont affiliées, l'AP emploie en particulier les militants du Fatah. Dans leur rivalité partisane, les deux parties utilisent l'aide pour acquérir un certain pouvoir politique. Ainsi, leur stratégie par excellence devient l'insertion dans la « chaîne de l'aide internationale. »²⁴

À partir de 1993, certains directeurs d'ONG de gauche – en particulier le Parti du peuple et le Front populaire de libération de la Palestine (FPLP)²⁵ – se regroupent alors et fondent le PNGO. Celui-ci constitue une coalition politique au nom de la « société civile » face à l'AP naissante – celle-ci qualifiait alors les ONG de « *fat cats* »²⁶ – pour gagner en autonomie et garantir à ses membres l'obtention de l'aide internationale. Le conflit prend de l'ampleur lorsque le PNGO mobilise des parlementaires palestiniens et certains bailleurs de fonds contre le projet de loi sur les associations proposé en 1995. Celui-ci contenait des procédures d'enregistrement permettant à l'AP d'exercer un contrôle financier et politique considérable sur l'action associative.

Face à ce lobbying, l'AP soutient la création du réseau associatif regroupant les ONG du Fatah, le PNIN (1997), avant de fonder en 1999 le ministère des Affaires des ONG. En ce faisant, l'AP voulait désamorcer les critiques des bailleurs de fonds l'accusant de corruption, d'autoritarisme et de « mauvaise gouvernance, »²⁷ en utilisant le même langage qu'eux : celui d'une « société civile, » dominée par le Fatah, qui défendrait l'AP contre une « société civile » d'opposition dominée par la gauche. L'intervention des bailleurs de fonds et de certains représentants des pays européens en faveur des ONG et du PNGO oblige l'AP à proposer finalement un nouveau texte de loi,²⁸ qui sera promulgué en 2000. Le ministère est également transformé en commission sans aucun véritable rôle.

Le PNGO (une centaine d'ONG) reste néanmoins privilégié par les bailleurs internationaux par rapport aux deux autres réseaux. Entre 1998 et 2003, un financement de *core fund* de

24 Sari Hanafi et Linda Tabar, *op. cit.*

25 Les membres du FPLP s'opposent plus radicalement aux accords d'Oslo et à l'AP que les responsables appartenant au Parti du peuple.

26 Rema Hammami, « NGO's the professionalization of politics, » *Race and Class*, Londres, SAGE Publications, 1995, Vol. 37 (2), p. 51-63.

27 Au nom de la « bonne gouvernance, » certains bailleurs de fonds imposaient des conditions politiques à Yasser Arafat pour contrôler ses dépenses notamment celles en faveur de la résistance. Leur usage de cette notion a été analogue à la corruption pour discréditer sa « mauvaise gouvernance. » À la suite du déclenchement de la 2e Intifada, cet argument sera utilisé pour justifier le boycott international de l'AP.

28 Sari Hanafi et Linda Tabar, *op. cit.*, p. 16, 42, 239.

la part de la *Ford Foundation*, installée en Égypte, lui permet de recruter quelques employés et une coordinatrice. Mais, une véritable pénurie de financement met ensuite le réseau dans l'incapacité de payer ses employés.²⁹ Dans ce contexte, le PNGO commence en 2006 et 2007 à bénéficier de l'aide du NDC.

Quant au PNIN, il a été créé en 1997 pour contrebalancer le poids du PNGO, ainsi que pour faire bénéficier les associations proches du Fatah de l'aide internationale.³⁰ Bien que le PNIN ait pu profiter de certaines aides de la part du bureau du président Yasser Arafat avant son décès en 2004, son financement principal provenait du projet de la BM et plus tard du NDC. Cependant, le PNIN reste beaucoup moins important que le PNGO bien qu'il englobe environ 400 membres en 2009.³¹

La PGUCS a été formée en 1958 sous l'administration jordanienne de la Cisjordanie. Elle dépendait financièrement des comités jordano-palestiniens et de l'aide de l'Union jordanienne des associations de charité. Ce financement, interrompu en 1988 à la suite du désengagement jordanien de Cisjordanie, n'a été comblé ni par l'AP ni par les bailleurs de fonds internationaux. La PGUCS, fortement affaiblie, n'a pas été en mesure de continuer à payer les salaires de ses quatre employés. Ses responsables se sont arrangés pour que l'AP prenne en charge ces salaires, octroyés sous forme d'aide aux chômeurs.³² La PGUCS, qui fédère environ quatre cents associations, reste néanmoins à l'écart du conflit qui a opposé les ONG et l'AP. De plus, n'ayant pas de relations avec la communauté des bailleurs de fonds, elle est marginalisée dans la configuration associative palestinienne après Oslo. Toutefois, les responsables de la PGUCS commencent eux-aussi à bénéficier de l'aide du NDC à partir de 2008-2009.

Ainsi, quel que soit leur contexte de création, les trois réseaux associatifs commencent à bénéficier de l'aide du NDC. Leur relation avec cette structure ne se réduit néanmoins pas au financement, ils vont s'insérer progressivement dans son conseil d'administration.

29 Entretiens réalisés par l'auteur avec Hatem, ancien directeur du projet au PNGO, Ramallah, 23 juin 2009 et Paris, 23 juin 2012.

30 Entretien avec Jamal Salem *op. cit.*

31 Entretien réalisé par l'auteur avec Salem Salem, ancien président du PNIN, universitaire palestinien et membre du conseil d'administration du NDC, Naplouse, 16 août 2009

32 Entretien réalisé par l'auteur avec Fadi Jameel, le président de la PGUCS au niveau national, 17 août 2009; entretien réalisé par l'auteur avec Sami, le président de la PGUCS, région d'Hébron, 17 août 2009; entretien réalisé par l'auteur avec la secrétaire de la PGUCS, Hébron, 17 août 2009.

LE PROJET : INSTAURATION DE LA DOMINATION DE LA BANQUE MONDIALE AU NOM DE LA COORDINATION

En 1997, la BM met un *trust fund* à la disposition du consortium de *Ta'awun, Welfare Association Consortium*, pour lancer le projet *The Palestinian NGOs*.³³ Sophie, au NDC, explique que l'objectif était de fournir des services aux « marginalisés et pauvres » à travers des sous-projets réalisés par des ONG conçues comme *delivery mechanism*.³⁴ À travers ce projet, son exécution, sa modalité de gestion, l'émergence progressive de nouveaux acteurs et l'exclusion d'autres, c'est un réseau de pouvoir et une nouvelle hiérarchie associative au sommet de laquelle se trouve la BM qui se mettent en place. Par la lutte contre la pauvreté, cette organisation instaure sa domination sur les différents acteurs impliqués dans le projet.

En plus de la fondation *Ta'awun*, nouvellement installée à Ramallah, deux institutions britanniques forment le consortium qui se charge de la gestion du projet entre 1997 et 2006 (les phases I et II). Si *Ta'awun* s'occupe de l'exécution des activités sur place, les deux institutions britanniques se chargent du *technical assistance* (*consultancy et capacity building*). Les trois organismes constituent le bureau de gestion du projet Project Management Office, selon les termes employés par Sophie. Elle précise également que pour échapper au contexte de concurrence entre les ONG et l'AP et renforcer la coordination entre eux, la BM et le consortium a formé un comité de pilotage *steering committee*. Celui-ci intègre des représentants du secteur public – selon la période, des employés du ministère du Plan ou du ministère des ONG – et de la « société civile » issus des trois réseaux associatifs le PNGO, la PGUCS et le PNIN. En 2003, quelques hommes d'affaires palestiniens et personnalités académiques rejoignent ce comité avec l'émergence pendant la IIe phase du projet d'un nouvel objectif : renforcer le partenariat avec le secteur privé. Ainsi se reforme dans le comité de pilotage le triangle néolibéral « société civile, secteur privé et secteur public, » en plus des universitaires dont l'intégration vise à donner au réseau constitué une certaine légitimité académique.

Toutefois, bien que la tâche principale du comité de pilotage, nommé désormais « conseil de supervision, » soit d'étudier et de valider les demandes de subventions de la part des ONG, la décision dépendait en dernière instance de la BM. Le président de la PGUCS,³⁵ membre du comité depuis sa création, explique que même si la BM comme l'AP n'avaient

33 Khalil Nakhleh, *op. cit.*, 2011, p. 217.

34 Entretien réalisé par l'auteur avec Sophie, policy manager au NDC, Ramallah, 10 août 2009; sites internet de la BM, *op. cit.*

35 Entretien avec Fadi Jameel, *op. cit.*

pas le droit de vote au sein du comité, la BM possédait *de facto* le véritable pouvoir de décision. En effet, les subventions accordées par le comité devaient être validées par la BM. Il ajoute que celle-ci a posé quelques objections à des subventions dans les années 2000.³⁶ Salem Salem, en tant que représentant du PNIN, explique que lui-même et les représentants du PNGO et de la PGUCS, avaient alors dû menacer de se retirer du projet si la BM n'acceptait pas de financer les ONG palestiniennes de Jérusalem.³⁷ Toujours selon Salem Salem, le représentant de la BM dans les TPO avait exclu ces dernières pour des « raisons politiques » liées au statut de Jérusalem. Face à ce lobbying, la BM a accepté de soutenir ces ONG, mais en posant comme condition que leur financement provienne de fonds arabes et non pas de la BM.

En 2006, le projet connaît une nouvelle restructuration. Dans un rapport d'évaluation, la BM constate que, pendant les deux premières phases, le projet a contribué à réduire la pauvreté puisque 500 ONG en ont bénéficié.³⁸ Le rapport reste cependant « ambigu » et associe les faiblesses du projet à des facteurs externes sans préciser lesquels.³⁹ Il souligne également que le projet n'a pas entraîné le renforcement des capacités des ONG impliquées. Pour ce faire, la BM avec *Ta'awun* recommandent donc le prolongement du projet en troisième phase tout en créant une nouvelle ONG : le *NGO Development Center* (NDC). Celui-ci se chargera désormais de la gestion et de l'exécution du projet et remplacera le consortium de *Ta'awun*.⁴⁰

Les anciens membres du comité de pilotage deviennent membres du nouveau conseil d'administration du NDC, dont l'effectif s'accroît progressivement. Toutefois, le président du projet (ancien responsable de la fondation *Ta'awun*) est remplacé par le directeur de

36 Après avoir bénéficié d'une subvention lors de la phase I du projet, l'ONG ARIJ n'a pu en obtenir d'autres depuis. Selon l'ONG israélienne *NGO monitor*, ARIJ fut privée de ces subventions, car elle avait adopté un *political biased approach to its research*, c'est-à-dire qu'elle avait utilisé les questions écologiques comme prétexte pour critiquer Israël. Voir : *NGO Monitor*, « World Bank - PNGO Project, » Website, *NGO Monitor*, disponible sur : www.ngo-monitor.org/article/world_bank_pngo_project0 [consulté le 4 juin 2018]. L'auteur tient à préciser que l'avis de l'ONG israélienne, *NGO monitor* influence certains bailleurs de fonds européens surtout à propos de leur aide en faveur des ONG palestiniennes. Voir : entretien réalisé par l'auteur avec Fayez Jad, ancien employé du NDC, Ramallah, 7 septembre 2009.

37 Entretien avec Salem Salem, *op. cit.*.

38 Entretien avec Sophie *op. cit.*.

39 N'ayant pas obtenu ce rapport, l'auteur s'appuie sur l'analyse de Nakhleh: Khalil Nakhleh, *op. cit.*, 2011, p. 172.

40 Entretien avec Sophie, *op. cit.*.

l'entreprise Coca Cola à Ramallah⁴¹ ce qui révèle l'influence grandissante du secteur privé dans l'orientation de l'action associative pour le développement. L'AP en est également exclue. « Dans une structure, non gouvernementale, *we don't need a government*, » explique Sophie.

La nouvelle répartition du pouvoir semble liée à la volonté d'exclure le gouvernement palestinien formé par le Hamas (Mouvement de résistance islamique). Après sa victoire électorale en 2006, le Hamas est boycotté par les bailleurs de fonds qui le considèrent comme un groupe « terroriste » et lui reprochent de ne pas reconnaître l'État d'Israël. Incapable de payer les salaires de l'AP, le Hamas prend par force le contrôle de la Bande de Gaza en 2007 face au Fatah dont le pouvoir se limite à la Cisjordanie.⁴² En 2007, Salam Fayyad, ancien employé de la BM⁴³ soutenu par les bailleurs internationaux, forme ainsi son cabinet ministériel de technocrates pour remplacer celui du Hamas. Il met en place son programme de développement d'inspiration néolibérale⁴⁴ uniquement en Cisjordanie. Les associations islamiques de charité proches du Hamas deviennent la cible aussi bien de l'armée israélienne que des forces de sécurité de l'AP en Cisjordanie. Cette dernière ferme en 2007 une centaine de ces associations et reconstruit leurs conseils d'administration. De plus, certains de leurs responsables, membres de la PGUCS, sont arrêtés par l'AP et par l'armée israélienne.⁴⁵ Contrairement à ses objectifs affichés en faveur des ONG et de leur rôle dans le développement, le NDC ne prend pas leur défense. Ceci d'autant plus qu'en excluant le gouvernement du Hamas de sa structure, il contribue à appuyer l'ordre politique établi au nom du développement et à légitimer l'entrée au politique de Salam Fayyad malgré son faible poids électoral.

Le NDC forme un réseau de pouvoir dont la capacité financière ne cesse de croître. Son équipe, comptant une trentaine d'employés en 2008,⁴⁶ s'investit dans le *fund raising*

41 Khalil Nakhleh, *op. cit.*, 2011, p. 173, 224.

42 Cette période marque la naissance de ce qu'on nomme depuis la « division palestinienne » : *al-Inqisam al-falaṣṭīni*.

43 Après avoir travaillé à la BM à Washington, il a représenté le Fonds monétaire internationale (FMI), en Cisjordanie.

44 Voir : Autorité nationale palestinienne, « Building a Palestinian State: Towards Peace and Prosperity, » Paris, Autorité nationale palestinienne, 2007, disponible sur : <https://unispal.un.org/pdfs/PRDPFinal.pdf> [consulté le 24 août 2017]. Cette pensée néolibérale est également exposée dans le Plan II en 2008. Voir : Ministère du Plan (MoP) et Ministère des Finances (MoF), « Palestinian Reform and development Plan 2008-2010 (PRDP), » Autorité nationale palestinienne, Banque mondiale, disponible sur : <http://sitere-sources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/PRDP08-10.pdf> [consulté le 24 août 2017].

45 The Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), *Freedom of association in the Palestinian-Controlled Territory* 2008, Ramallah, ICHR, 2008, p. 13-25; Sbeih, *op. cit.*.

46 Durant l'entretien (entretien avec Sophie, *op. cit.*), Sophie indique que le NDC emploie environ 30 employés. Toutefois, la rubrique « *NDC Staff* » sur le site internet du NDC est sans contenu. Voir : NGO

pour mobiliser d'autres fonds.⁴⁷ D'autres bailleurs commencent à financer le projet et élargir ses activités, tels que l'Agence française de développement, un consortium de donateurs suisses, d'autres gouvernements européens, l'Arabie saoudite, et l'*Islamic Development Bank*.⁴⁸ Du fait de son caractère politiquement « correct » favorisant la paix, le projet a attiré les bailleurs qui, pour des raisons politiques, boycottaient l'AP sous la direction de Yasser Arafat, assiégé à Ramallah entre 2001 et 2003, ou le gouvernement formé par le Hamas en 2006. Les employés du NDC ont pu, de même, mobiliser des bailleurs arabes pour financer des projets en faveur d'ONG à Jérusalem.⁴⁹ L'engagement d'autres bailleurs se comprend par l'inscription du NDC dans la doxa de l'aide internationale visant à renforcer la « société civile. » Pour les bailleurs internationaux, le NDC constitue la clé de voûte dans les efforts de networking qu'ils déploient pour le développement. Le budget du projet passe ainsi d'environ cinq millions de dollars par an durant les deux premières phases à une vingtaine de millions par an à partir de 2006, soit durant la troisième phase.⁵⁰

Cela permet à la BM de coordonner l'aide venant de différents bailleurs et de l'homogénéiser selon ses normes d'action en vue de canaliser les fonds internationaux, *channelling the international fund*.⁵¹ Le cas des bailleurs de fonds arabes, dont l'aide s'inscrivait dans les années 1980 dans le cadre du *Sumud* (c'est-à-dire tenir bon en résistant économiquement à l'occupation israélienne) et s'effectuait en coordination avec des comités (comme les comités jordano-palestiniens) gérés en partie par l'OLP et ses factions politiques, en est une illustration. Cette aide passe désormais par les canaux internationaux et sert à légitimer l'intervention de la BM ainsi que sa manière de percevoir la réalité palestinienne, comme ce fut le cas pour la fondation *Ta'awun*. Créée d'abord pour soutenir la stratégie de la résistance économique (*Sumud*) en coordination avec l'OLP, cette fondation est devenue une structure intermédiaire entre la BM, les ONG et les réseaux associatifs

Development Center, Website, *NDC*, disponible sur: www.ndc.ps [consulté le 29 septembre 2017].

47 Khalil Nakhleh, *op. cit.*, 2011, p. 172-174; entretien avec Sophie *op. cit.*

48 NGO Development Centre (NDC), « Building a more capable and responsive NGO Sector, » Ramallah, NGO Development Centre, 2007, disponible sur : http://ndc.ps/sites/default/files/English_Annual_Option%20%282007%29.pdf [consulté le 22 août 2017]; NGO Development Centre (NDC), « Empowering the Palestinian NGO Sector, » Ramallah, NGO Development Centre, disponible sur: <http://ndc.ps/sites/default/files/NDC%202008%20English%20Annual%20Report%281%29.pdf> [consulté le 22 août 2017]; Khalil Nakhleh, *op. cit.*, 2011, p. 171-173, 216-223.

49 Khalil Nakhleh, *op. cit.*, 2011, p. 213.

50 Entretien réalisé par l'auteur avec une employée, project manager au NDC, Ramallah, 10 août 2009; entretien avec Sophie, *op. cit.*

51 Expression utilisée par Sophie (entretien avec Sophie, *op. cit.*).

palestiniens. Elle passe du statut de bailleur (comme fondation) à celui de gestionnaire des fonds de la BM.

De même, ce réseau de pouvoir légitime la nouvelle hiérarchie au sein du champ associatif. En effet, les grandes structures associatives et réseaux associatifs constituent la première cible du NDC. Il les finance en priorité pour les aider à développer leur « gouvernance interne » et leur management financier. Les subventions accordées par le NDC passent donc par les réseaux associatifs tels que le PNGO et le PNIN, qui subventionnent à leur tour les petites ONG. Le NDC renforce les capacités (*capacity building*) de ces grandes structures, qui font de même pour les petites.⁵² Cela permet d'étendre les réseaux associatifs tout en instaurant une nouvelle hiérarchie associative. Autrement dit, les réseaux associatifs ainsi que les grandes ONG détiennent une position de pouvoir par rapport aux petites et le NDC devient le leader de l'ensemble associatif (*NGOs Community*, selon le langage de la littérature du NDC). Cette hiérarchie se traduit par exemple par une certaine grille de salaire, favorable aux employés du NDC par rapport aux employés des ONG locales.⁵³ Enfin, ce sont les bailleurs de fonds et notamment la BM qui sont à la tête de cette chaîne d'aide. Le NDC, quant à lui, restructure les rapports de force entre ces acteurs, en intégrant notamment les bénéficiaires locaux de l'aide, empêtrés dans des luttes de pouvoir (les réseaux associatifs et l'AP à côté des entreprises, au sein de son conseil d'administration), et en excluant d'autres acteurs pour des motifs politiques.

Fruit d'un projet visant à réduire la pauvreté et instaurer la coordination, le NDC devient une structure qui contribue à restructurer l'univers associatif. Celle-ci vise à normaliser la nouvelle perception développementaliste auprès des bailleurs de fonds et des bénéficiaires. Bien que le NDC mette en réseau une multiplicité d'acteurs locaux et internationaux grâce au pouvoir symbolique et financier de la BM, il tient sa force de son image d'ONG professionnelle pour le développement. Autrement dit, son pouvoir repose aussi sur sa capacité à soumettre sa domination à des « exigences de justification. »⁵⁴ C'est par la production et la diffusion de dispositifs gestionnaires et de normes rationnelles qu'elle légitime son exercice de pouvoir au nom du développement.

52 Entretien avec Sophie, *op. cit.*

53 Entretiens avec Fayez Jad et Sophie ainsi qu'une autre employée au NDC, *op. cit.*

54 Les détenteurs d'un pouvoir (les dominants) revendiquent la légitimité de leur exercice du pouvoir en invoquant sa « rationalité, » c'est-à-dire sa soumission à des « exigences de justification. » Luc Boltanski, *op. cit.*, p. 16-17.

PRODUCTION DES NORMES GESTIONNAIRES ET SYSTÈME D'ÉVALUATION

La BM met en exergue la « prévention du conflit et la reconstruction post-conflit »⁵⁵ comme mission à accomplir par le NDC, de même que l'amélioration du marché de l'emploi et la participation civique. Le NDC s'est ainsi efforcé d'instaurer un système de normes – dont le fonctionnement peut être assimilé à la discipline chez Foucault et de ce fait au système de « gratification-sanction »⁵⁶ – qui vise à l'homogénéisation de l'action associative. D'une part, il s'est mis à produire des normes de référence au nom de la « bonne gouvernance » pour le développement. D'autre part, il a mis en place un processus permanent d'évaluation qui, à travers des outils de surveillance et de contrôle, a pour objectif d'assurer l'application de ces normes par les ONG bénéficiaires.

La stratégie établie par un groupe d'experts⁵⁷ en 2006 définit la modalité d'action du NDC ainsi que la stratégie pour l'ensemble des ONG palestiniennes. Si l'occupation israélienne ainsi que la faiblesse des ONG y figurent comme les résultats clés, *key findings*, les préoccupations principales, *primary concern*, sur lesquelles se fonde la stratégie sont décrites en termes de *weak governance* de l'AP et d'*inefficiency* des ONG. Les cinq objectifs proposés sont ainsi exprimés en langage managérial associé au paradigme néolibéral du développement : « *increase effectiveness and efficiency, improve governance, strengthen civil society and democracy, promote community empowerment, promote sustainability of NGO.* »⁵⁸ Ces objectifs constitueront les critères que le NDC appliquera pour évaluer la performance des réseaux associatifs (voir plus loin).

Afin d'identifier les défis et faiblesses du secteur associatif, la stratégie s'appuie sur les propos de *stakeholders* du développement, en l'occurrence « *government, private sector, donor agencies, local and international NGOs, CBOs, intellectuals in the academe.* »⁵⁹ Bien que cette catégorie de *stakeholders* comprenne des acteurs qui occupent des positions sociales et politiques différentes, leurs propos sont introduits dans l'étude sans tenir compte de leurs rapports

55 Sites internet de la BM sur le NDC, *op. cit.*

56 Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir, Naissance de la prison*, Paris, Gallimard, 2002, p. 159, 212, 264.

57 Danilo Songco, Kahlil Nijem, et Majed El Farra, « Proposed Strategy for the Development of the Palestinian NGO Sector, » Ramallah, NGO Development Centre, 2006, disponible sur : https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Majed_El-Farra/publication/237477636_Proposed_Strategy_for_the_Development_of_the_Palestinian_NGO_Sector/links/53f4a95b0cf2888a7491121c/Proposed-Strategy-for-the-Development-of-the-Palestinian-NGO-Sector.pdf [consulté le 22 août 2017]. Cette stratégie a été établie par un groupe présidé par Danilo Songco, expert international pour les agences de développement et diplômé en *Business Administration*.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 2, 3-4, 7.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

de force ou de leur statut (bailleur, bénéficiaire, gouvernement, ONG...). Cela révèle une caractéristique de la lecture gestionnaire et néolibérale de la société qu'adoptent les auteurs de cette étude. Les différents acteurs du développement, *stakeholders*, apparaissent ainsi comme des partenaires interchangeables sans hiérarchie et détenant le même poids, aussi bien dans la prise de décision que dans la réalisation de l'action du développement. L'étude mentionne que certains *stakeholders*, sans savoir lesquels, expliquent le succès du Hamas dans les élections de 2006 par son instrumentalisation des ONG. Ils considèrent ainsi cette « politisation des ONG et du développement » comme un phénomène contre-productif pour le développement et source d'affaiblissement des ONG,⁶⁰ d'où l'importance de la « neutralité » du développement dans cette pensée managériale.

Pour instaurer la perception gestionnaire et la manière dont elle découpe la réalité, le NDC publie en 2008 plusieurs documents tels que le code de conduite des ONG palestiniennes, « *The Palestinian NGOs Code of conduct*. » Ce code définit le « rôle développementaliste » des ONG en mettant en avant douze principes de gouvernance et de management⁶¹ à respecter par les ONG à la façon d'entreprises travaillant dans un « libre marché. » Des centaines d'ONG palestiniennes signent le code dès sa publication en 2008 pour répondre aux exigences de financement de la part du NDC. Des milliers de petites brochures de ce code en arabe et en anglais sont publiées et distribuées de même que des calendriers dans lesquels chaque mois est associé à l'un de ces principes. En outre, le NDC publie en 2008 le *Resource Kit*.⁶² un ensemble de guides de ressources pour le management et la planification financière et managériale auxquels les ONG doivent se référer pour garantir leur *capacity building* et remplir correctement leur rôle dans le développement. Le *Kit* contient également des guides d'orientation sur le droit international, en particulier celui qui privilégie le droit des individus et/ou des groupes sociaux. De ce fait, les revendications politiques des associations sont censées être réduites au plaidoyer qui

60 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

61 Les principes sont les suivants: *Compliance with Covenants and Laws, Priorities of Development, Participation, Networking and Coordination, Transparency, Accountability, Equality and Inclusiveness, Good Governance, Prevent Conflict of Interest, Influence and Effectiveness, NGO's Integrity, Dispute resolution. The Code of Conduct Coalition*, « *The Palestinian NGOs Code of conduct*, » Website, *NGO Development Centre*, 2008, disponible sur : <http://ndc.ps/sites/default/files/1204355297.pdf> [consulté le 22 août 2017].

62 Lors de l'enquête effectuée par l'auteur en 2009, celui-ci a obtenu ce *Resource Kit* que le NDC a publié en arabe. Censé le développer, Le NDC définit ce Kit: « *The Resource Kit serves as a tool for NGOs and provides them with detailed procedures manuals in the areas of board governance, finance and administration, and strategic planning*. » Voir: *NGO Development Center (NDC)*, « *Terms of Reference Palestinian NGO IV Project NGO Sector Development: Revision of the Resource Kit Manuals AFD-C-29 B*, » Website, *NGO Development Center*, disponible sur : <http://www.ndc.ps/sites/default/files/ToR-review-resource-kit.PDF> [consulté le 20 septembre 2017].

s'appuie sur ce langage juridique et non pas sur des revendications collectives au nom de la libération nationale.

Le rôle du NDC consiste ainsi à diffuser les normes gestionnaires pour le développement auprès de la communauté des ONG à travers les réseaux associatifs. Chaque projet financé par le NDC englobe un budget pour des formations à destination des équipes des ONG pour renforcer leurs capacités de mobiliser et gérer les fonds (*fund raising, proposals' writing*). De même, les équipes des ONG doivent être capables de mettre en valeur leurs activités à travers la publication de leurs réalisations (*success stories*), des rapports financiers et annuels respectant les modèles proposés des projets ainsi que les mots clés.⁶³

Pour légitimer ces normes (leur appropriation, *ownership*, par les acteurs locaux), le NDC met en évidence leur production dans le cadre d'une démarche dite participative qui englobe l'ensemble des acteurs locaux, notamment les trois réseaux associatifs. Ces derniers apparaissent ainsi comme des « partenaires » de la BM et des bailleurs de fonds, autrement dit des *Stakeholders*. Afin d'établir les critères d'évaluation de la performance des réseaux associatifs, le NDC organise en octobre 2007 un atelier⁶⁴ lors duquel la discussion, en présence des réseaux associatifs, se fonde sur les objectifs élaborés dans la stratégie de 2006⁶⁵ (présentée ci-dessus). Le tableau suivant liste les critères d'évaluation retenus par le NDC.

63 Entretiens avec Sophie ainsi qu'avec Jamal Salem, *op. cit.*.

64 NGO Development Centre (NDC), « 'Compte-rendu' of the Network Performance Standards Workshop, 20-21 October 2007, » Bešt Eastern Hotel, Ramallah, obtenu en 2009.

65 Danilo Songco, Kahlil Nijem, et Majed El Farra, *op. cit.*.

Tableau I : Critères d'évaluation de trois réseaux associatifs palestiniens par le NDC⁶⁶

CRITÈRE D'ÉVALUATION	INDICATEURS
La raison d'être du réseau et son organisation (15 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le taux d'adhésion dans le réseau associatif (5 points) ; • La valeur ajoutée du réseau ; • Les règlements internes
La gouvernance (20 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L'organigramme et la prise de décision (10 points) ; • L'application du <i>code of conduct</i>
Le management (20 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le secrétariat exécutif (5 points) ; • La planification et réalisation des programmes ; • La mobilisation de fonds et gestion des finances ; • Le suivi et l'évaluation
La durabilité (sustainability) (10 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La continuité financière (5 points) ; • La pensée stratégique
La performance du réseau par rapport à ses rôles (30 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La mobilisation et la sensibilisation pour influencer les politiques publiques (5 points) ; • Le développement du <i>capacity building</i> des membres pour accroître leur efficacité et efficience ;⁶⁷ • Le management de l'information et la création du savoir pour développer le rôle des ONG et leur participation dans le développement ; • Le renforcement de la coordination et de la coopération entre membres ; • Le renforcement de la responsabilité (<i>accountability</i>) auprès du réseau, de ses membres et des catégories de bénéficiaires ; • Le renforcement de la solidarité des membres avec le peuple palestinien face à l'occupation
Degré de satisfaction total de la performance (5 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le degré de satisfaction total de la performance

Dans ces critères, la question politique n'apparaît qu'à la marge, en l'occurrence deux fois : pour mesurer l'influence des réseaux sur les « politiques publiques » de l'AP d'un côté et sur le rôle des réseaux dans le « *strengthen members' solidarity with the people in promoting steadfastness against occupation* »⁶⁸ de l'autre. Le poids du politique est marginalisé et la

66 NGO Development Center, « Tableau Excel interne du NDC: Umbrella Network assessment results, » 2009, obtenu en 2009.

67 L'efficacité signifie l'efficacité au moindre coût (Marie Benedetto-Meyer, Serge Maugeri, et Jean-Luc Metzger, *L'emprise de la gestion: la société au risque des violences gestionnaires*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2011, p. 13). NGO Development Centre (NDC), *op. cit.*, obtenu en 2009.

68 NGO Development Centre (NDC), *op. cit.*, obtenu en 2009.

lutte contre l'occupation apparaît floue – les réseaux associatifs apparaissent comme des structures étrangères au peuple et donc en « solidarité » avec lui – et figure comme un élément mineur parmi d'autres. L'accent est mis uniquement sur la capacité des acteurs, leur liberté, tout en excluant toute référence à la domination et aux contraintes structurelles, qui influent sur leurs « choix » et actions. En cas d'échec, l'évaluation pointe la faible performance des acteurs bénéficiaires de l'aide ou le manque de coordination entre les *Stakeholders*.

En bref, l'évaluation suit une représentation post-conflit de la réalité des TPO et incarne le paradigme néolibéral et l'hégémonie du management et de ses normes. Elle reflète la domination des bailleurs et leur orientation de l'action associative, tout en dissimulant cette domination dans des dispositifs gestionnaires. Les actions menées, et de ce fait évaluées, prennent ainsi appui sur toute une autre réalité, construite sur une pensée managériale. Cela consiste à reproduire les rapports de domination en les dissimulant sous un partenariat entre des *Stakeholders*. Or, l'implication de ces derniers dans le politique, en particulier lorsque cela concerne la lutte anticoloniale, représente un manque de professionnalisme et un obstacle au développement puisque s'opposant à la caractéristique de l'aide du développement : la neutralité.

CONSTRUCTION DU MONDE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT ET L'ADHÉSION À SES NORMES

La conformité des acteurs bénéficiaires de l'aide à l'ensemble des normes imposées et l'intégration des dispositifs rationnels du développement leur garantissent l'accès au financement ainsi qu'une place dans le « monde du développement. » Celui-ci constitue en effet l'espace social construit par la mise en place des projets collectifs et du *networking* sous l'égide des bailleurs. Il se rapproche de la « cité par projet » : une cité calquée sur la littérature du management, fondée sur « l'organisation par projets » et la multiplication des réseaux.⁶⁹ Dans ce monde, le raisonnement gestionnaire constitue le point d'appui normatif qui permet de faire collaborer des acteurs (ici : l'AP, les réseaux associatifs, les ONG et les entreprises) sous la responsabilité des organisations internationales.

Dans ce cadre sont créées des ONG, telles qu'AMAN,⁷⁰ dont la tâche principale est d'évaluer d'autres ONG et de leur accorder des « certificats de transparence » en fonction de leur respect des normes financières et professionnelles. Cela se traduit également par

69 Luc Boltanski et Ève Chiapello, *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*, Paris, Gallimard, 1999, p. 157-158.

70 The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN), « About us, » Website, *The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity*, disponible sur : <https://www.aman-palestine.org/en/about-aman/about-organization> [consulté le 25 septembre 2017].

un classement des ONG selon leur « mérite » et leur légitimité à bénéficier de l'aide ainsi que leur capacité à gérer les fonds internationaux. La conformité des acteurs à ces normes devient ainsi l'expression de leur professionnalisme indispensable à leur inclusion dans le monde du développement.

Dans ce monde, l'usage du langage gestionnaire, souvent en anglais est fréquent car considéré comme synonyme de professionnalisme. C'est notamment le cas des acteurs qui y occupent une position importante, comme le démontrent certains passages – soulignés en *italique* dans cet article – des entretiens effectués en arabe auprès des employés du NDC. La majorité de ces derniers sont diplômés en gestion et maîtrisent parfaitement l'anglais d'autant plus qu'une partie d'eux vient des agences de développement (par exemple du Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement, PNUD, comme ce fut le cas du directeur du NDC depuis 2006)⁷¹ et du secteur privé.

De manière inverse, le non-recours à ce langage et l'incapacité à intégrer dans sa structure des employés compétents pour lever des fonds internationaux (*fund raising*) sont tous les deux perçus comme des signes d'incompétence. Le cas de la PGUCS, illustré ci-après par l'extrait d'un entretien collectif avec ses responsables, démontre notre propos :

« Ils nous appellent les « traditionnels, » on n'est pas à la mode, on ne prend pas d'argent pour rembourser nos déplacements, cela leur paraît dépassé [...] Nous n'avons pas de budget pour voyager à l'étranger [pour expliquer l'insuffisance de relations extérieures], et nos frères au PNGO [...] leurs bras sont plus longs que les nôtres, ils ont des relations extérieures et ils ont des « cadres » qui savent écrire en langue étrangère et donc font de la communication. »⁷²

Non seulement, les bailleurs de fonds internationaux ne considèrent pas la PGUCS comme un réseau associatif adéquat au développement, mais les employés du NDC et du PNGO posent de plus un regard péjoratif sur elle, comme l'a constaté l'auteur lors de son enquête effectuée entre 2007 et 2014. Toutefois, la répercussion des normes gestionnaires sur sa structure, en particulier sa section à Jérusalem, est révélatrice. Les rapports publiés par cette dernière montrent son engagement dans l'application des normes de la « bonne gouvernance » et sa mise en valeur de la formation en matière de management de projets et de création de réseaux. La création des sites internet en

71 Entretiens réalisés par l'auteur avec Ghaleb Kassem, le directeur du NDC, ainsi qu'avec une employée, project manager, Ramallah, 10 août 2009.

72 Propos recueillis lors d'un entretien collectif réalisé par l'auteur avec Fadi Jameel, président de la PGUCS au niveau national, lors de ses échanges avec Sami, président de la PGUCS dans la région d'Hébron, Hébron, 17 août 2009.

anglais,⁷³ l'utilisation du langage de la société civile et du développement ainsi que la nouvelle stratégie d'action autour du plaidoyer sont autant d'exemples révélateurs de ces transformations. Après une période de marginalisation, la PGUCS passe du statut de «représentation des associations membres» à celui de réseau associatif de coordination et d'exécution des projets du développement, malgré la méfiance de ses responsables.

Ces transformations concernent aussi les deux autres réseaux associatifs. Le PNGO se charge actuellement des activités de *capacity building* des ONG membres, des *legal campaigns* et des *social and economic rights*. Un représentant du NDC participe aux élections de son comité de coordination pour témoigner de ce processus essentiel pour tout financement éventuel.⁷⁴ Contrairement à son discours mettant en avant sa relation avec les organisations politiques pour faire face à l'AP dans les années 1990, le PNGO commence à insister sur son apolitisme.⁷⁵ Ses responsables le perçoivent comme porte-parole de la société civile face au secteur public, en l'occurrence l'AP. Le réseau se donne pour objectif de renforcer la coordination entre les ONG membres⁷⁶ et se met à promouvoir le partenariat selon le paradigme de gouvernance. Ses ONG membres sont majoritairement dépendantes de l'aide internationale et se définissent comme ONG de développement. Le PNIN devient aussi à son tour un « acteur collectif du développement » bien qu'il reste toujours un instrument politique au service de l'AP.

En bref, l'entrée de ces trois réseaux dans le monde de développement se traduit par la promotion collective du code de conduite développé par le NDC (présenté ci-dessus), par l'intériorisation de ses normes et de son langage et par leur engagement à les diffuser. Ils sont désormais des acteurs du développement. Ils adoptent le langage juridique international et l'esprit gestionnaire. Nous assistons à l'homogénéisation du langage utilisé dans les rapports annuels sur la base de la rhétorique et de la terminologie du monde du développement.

Cela dit, l'évolution des acteurs collectifs de développement ne s'explique pas uniquement par la dimension opportuniste ou économique malgré son importance. Elle ne signifie pas

73 Pour un exemple de site d'ONG en anglais, voir: Union of the Charitable Societies – Jerusalem, « Welcome in UCS, » Website, *Union of the Charitable Societies-Jerusalem*, disponible sur: <http://ucs-pal.org/english/> [consulté le 4 juin 2018].

74 Entretien avec Fayez Jad, *op. cit.*

75 Sari Hanafi et Linda Tabar, *op. cit.*, p. 370-372.

76 Voir: Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO), « Mission & Vision, » Website, *Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network*, disponible sur : <http://www.pngo.net/mission-vision/> [consulté le 4 juin 2018].

non plus l'instauration d'une coordination sans hiérarchie et sans concurrence. De plus, l'intervention de la BM à travers le NDC – de même que d'autres projets collectifs financés par les organisations internationales⁷⁷ – n'omet certainement pas la lutte de pouvoir et les rapports de force entre les acteurs bénéficiaires de l'aide. Mais elle reconfigure les structures de pouvoir dans lesquelles se situent les acteurs et donc les logiques d'insertion et d'exclusion de la configuration politique. Les bailleurs internationaux s'imposent ainsi comme acteurs indispensables dans les TPO. Leurs normes constituent la base du « consensus, »⁷⁸ de la croyance, qui définit désormais à la fois la manière dont les acteurs bénéficiaires de l'aide se situent les uns par rapport aux autres, mais aussi leur perception de la réalité et leur *modus operandi*.

L'intervention internationale transforme ainsi la lutte politique de ces derniers – leur position par rapport aux accords d'Oslo ou leur implication dans la lutte nationale palestinienne contre l'occupation – en une question de concurrence pour obtenir l'aide internationale à travers leur degré du professionnalisme. L'acquisition de l'aide traduit le degré de l'adhésion du bénéficiaire de l'aide aux normes gestionnaires et donc sa soumission au nouveau système de valeurs, ce qui déterminera sa position dans le monde du développement. En être exclu signifie une marginalisation, comme ce fut le cas de la PGUCS, le réseau associatif le plus ancien. En bref, occuper une place dans le monde du développement devient le tremplin vers le champ du pouvoir de la « Palestine des bailleurs de fonds, » c'est-à-dire la Palestine telle qu'elle est appréhendée dans le discours de ces derniers et telle qu'elle est constituée à travers leurs plans d'action et d'intervention. L'adhésion aux normes du développement de la part des acteurs locaux s'impose comme une contrainte structurelle sur les réseaux associatifs. Refuser ces normes est synonyme d'être privé de l'aide, mais c'est aussi l'origine d'un regard péjoratif stigmatisant, en bref de l'exclusion politique.

La relation entre les bailleurs et les acteurs locaux ne se limite donc pas à une question financière, mais renvoie aussi à des enjeux de perception de la réalité sociale, de légitimité, de pouvoir et de hiérarchie dans le monde du développement. Elle se nourrit de la logique gestionnaire, conçue comme l'« [...] ensemble de principes d'action présentés comme

77 L'auteur a enquêté auprès d'un projet collectif de développement mis en place en Cisjordanie par le PNUD (voir Sbeih, *op. cit.*). D'une manière semblable au projet de la BM, il a été lancé en 1997 pour une durée de deux ans avant d'être renouvelé à plusieurs reprises jusqu'en 2013. Des ONG agricoles se mettent également en concurrence pour obtenir de l'aide internationale afin d'exécuter des projets suivant le même modèle, conçus sur la base de la mise en place de réseaux pour diffuser la vulgate néolibérale.

78 André Tosel, « La presse comme appareil d'hégémonie selon Gramsci, » *Quaderni*, Paris, Éditions de la MSH, 2005, Vol. 57 (1), p. 61, disponible sur : http://www.persee.fr/doc/quad_0987-1381_2005_num_57_1_1661 [consulté le 22 août 2017].

rationnellement fondés, » ce qui permet de « [...] considérer que l'on peut « gérer » [...] toutes les activités et les relations sociales [...]. »⁷⁹ Ces normes et ces raisonnements constituent la croyance rationnelle en le développement. Pour consolider celle-ci, le NDC produit d'un côté la rhétorique en sa faveur tout en visant à monopoliser le champ de la critique de l'autre.

LE MONOPOLE DE LA CRITIQUE ET LA PRODUCTION D'UNE CROYANCE

Afin de justifier cette nouvelle croyance et les actions et la hiérarchie qui en découlent, le NDC vise à monopoliser le champ de la critique tout en s'inscrivant dans la doxa internationale du développement. Précisons d'abord que nous distinguons deux types de critiques : d'un côté la critique contestataire qui remet en cause l'ordre social établi par les accords d'Oslo ; de l'autre la critique évaluatrice (ou correctrice) qui prend appui sur l'ordre sur lequel repose le droit d'intervention international pour le développement. Cette seconde critique a pour objectif de corriger les comportements, les stratégies et les discours des acteurs impliqués dans le développement pour qu'ils soient conformes à cette nouvelle croyance. Elle vise aussi à améliorer leur image et à les responsabiliser. L'évolution de cette critique ainsi que sa relation dynamique vis-à-vis de la première critique révèlent la manière dont se produit cette croyance.

En effet, depuis les années 2000, les critiques contestataires mettant en avant la dimension coloniale en Palestine se sont multipliées. Plusieurs travaux⁸⁰ inculpent ainsi le fondement de l'intervention internationale mettant plus ou moins directement en cause les accords d'Oslo. Après avoir travaillé plusieurs années au sein de *Ta'awun* et d'autres organisations européennes, Khalil Nakhleh s'appuie sur son expérience, ses archives et ses données pour dénoncer les politiques de cette fondation, du NDC et des bailleurs de fonds en Palestine.⁸¹ Il qualifie les experts en développement travaillant en Palestine de mercenaires. De même, il démontre comment les capitalistes palestiniens ont instrumentalisé l'aide au *Sumud* dans les années 1980 ainsi que celle provenant des bailleurs internationaux dans les années 1990 pour conquérir le marché palestinien construit dans les TPO après les accords d'Oslo.⁸² Cela s'articule avec la dimension du *business* de la paix évoquée par

79 Marie Benedetto-Meyer, Serge Maugeri, et Jean-Luc Metzger, *op.cit.*, 2011, p. 12-13.

80 Parmi d'autres, voir : Adel Samara, *Munazzamat gheir hukumiya 'am qawa'id lil'akhar? NGOs!*, Ramallah, Centre Al-Shuruq, 2003; Khalil Nakhleh, *Uṣṣurat al-tanmia fi falaṣṭin, al-da'm al-siyassi wal murawagha al-muṣṭadima*, Ramallah, Muwatn/PASSIA, 2004.

81 Khalil Nakhleh, *op. cit.*, 2011.

82 Khalil Nakhleh, *op. cit.*, 2004.

d'autres chercheurs.⁸³ C'est dans ce sens que l'aide internationale est perçue comme un soutien à Israël et ses pratiques puisque, par ce biais, les puissances occidentales prennent en charge les coûts de l'occupation israélienne des TPO (la santé, l'éducation des habitants sous occupation) d'autant plus que cette aide sera dépensée dans une structure économique intégrée *de facto* à cette économie dominante.

Face à ces critiques contestataires, une littérature critique, correctrice, a été développée par les bailleurs eux-mêmes et le NDC, dont l'objectif est d'éviter une remise en cause profonde du système de l'aide et du projet politico-économique qui lui est associé. Dans leurs rapports, la BM comme le PNUD justifient la détérioration de la situation économique des TPO par les effets pervers de l'aide, et notamment le grand nombre de bailleurs, leur manque de coordination et la concurrence entre eux – comme le soulignent les plans de Salam Fayyad (déjà cité) et l'étude de De Voir et Tartir,⁸⁴ financée et publiée par le NDC. S'y rejoignent certains chercheurs qui inscrivent leurs travaux dans une perspective de recommandation et de *do no harm*,⁸⁵ en adoptant une posture d'expertise.⁸⁶ Ce type de travaux donne à la critique correctrice comme aux plans d'action qui en découlent une certaine aura de scientificité.

Cette rhétorique correctrice constitue le cadre référentiel qui permet au NDC de fonder rationnellement sa stratégie de développement et de justifier son évolution. Le NDC renvoie ainsi le lecteur de ses guides aux sites internet des organisations internationales pour toute information complémentaire et introduit les rapports du PNUD sur le développement humain.⁸⁷ Il inscrit son évolution – partant d'un projet visant à réduire la pauvreté pour devenir une structure dont l'objectif est de renforcer le partenariat entre société civile, gouvernement et secteur privé – dans le 8e objectif des Objectifs du

83 Markus Bouillon, *The Peace Business: money and power in the Palestine-Israel conflict*, Londres/New York, I.B./Tauris, 2004.

84 Joseph De Voir et Alaa Tartir, *Tracking external donor funding to Palestinian non-governmental organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip 1999-2008*, Ramallah, NDC/MAS, 2009.

85 Mary Anderson, « Do no harm: the impact of international assistance to the occupied Palestinian territory? », dans Michael Keating, Anne Le More, and Robert Lowe (eds.), *Aid Diplomacy and facts on the Ground, the case of Palestine*, Londres, Chatham House, 2005, p. 144-147.

86 Dans le sens où la connaissance est produite pour « être intégrée au processus de décision. » Philippe Roqueplo, *Entre savoir et décision, l'expertise scientifique*, Paris, Institut national de la recherche agronomique (INRA), 1997, p. 15.

87 NGO Development Center (NDC), « Le guide sur le développement économique et social et les priorités des ONG, » Ramallah, NGO Development Center, 2008, p. 8-20.

millénaire pour le développement (OMD).⁸⁸ De même, c'est au nom du partenariat pour le développement que ses employés justifient la demande du NDC aux ONG d'inscrire leurs actions dans les plans de développement du gouvernement Fayyad (d'inspiration néolibérale comme présenté ci-dessus).

Toutefois, sa structure et sa production rhétorique évoluent en se référant uniquement aux critiques correctrices des organisations internationales. Elles font l'impasse sur les critiques contestataires qui remettent en cause le paradigme néolibéral du développement et la manière dont la réalité y est représentée. Cela concerne en particulier la question de l'occupation comme l'illustre l'exemple du rapport sur le développement humain dans le monde arabe en 2009. Certains responsables du PNUD ont supprimé du rapport cité les analyses consacrées aux effets de l'occupation en Irak comme en Palestine, ainsi qu'un chapitre rédigé par l'économiste marxiste Samir Amin⁸⁹. Au nom de la « neutralité » technique et du professionnalisme, les institutions internationales invisibilisent la domination imposée par l'occupation et excluent les critiques contestataires en les qualifiant d'idéologiques et d'irrationnelles. L'exclusion du gouvernement formé par le Hamas en 2006 du conseil d'administration du NDC et le refus de financer des ONG jugées politiques s'inscrivent effectivement dans ce type de discours : la « neutralité » du développement exige l'exclusion de toute référence à la « politique. » La seule politique admise est celle qui est mise au service de l'objectif de « promouvoir la paix, » et qui favorise l'économie néolibérale et correspond à sa lecture de la société.

Les employés du NDC et les acteurs du monde du développement se réfèrent ainsi à la critique correctrice – qui forge désormais leurs catégories de perception – pour justifier leur action. C'est dans ce sens qu'ils considèrent que le NDC lui-même a été fondé pour harmoniser et canaliser l'aide. Pour eux, cette structure constitue une réponse aux critiques ayant mis l'accent sur la duplication des activités financées par les bailleurs et réalisées par les différents acteurs locaux (AP, ONG). Elle incarne aussi la thématique de la mise en réseau (*networking*) qui occupe une place importante dans la rhétorique produite par le NDC.

À travers la production d'études critiques, le NDC cherche à monopoliser le champ de la critique adressée aux ONG et aux acteurs du développement, tout en se limitant

88 *Ibid.*, et entretiens avec des employés du NDC, *op.cit.*.

89 Son auteur principal, le consultant en chef Muṣṭapha El-Sayyid, embarrassé par ces modifications, a rendu ces informations publiques à la publication du rapport. Voir : Al-Jazeera, « Katib Taqrir Al-tanmia yatabara' menh [en arabe], » *Al-jazeera*, 18 juillet 2009, disponible sur: <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/ebusiness/2009/7/18/كتاب-تقرير-التنمية-العربية-يتبرأ> [consulté le 22 septembre 2017].

aux critiques correctrices. Il vise à répondre aux critiques correctrices adressées aux programmes de développement, et à leur échec dans l'atteinte des objectifs affichés. L'évolution de ses objectifs s'inscrit en effet dans un processus d'ajustement face aux critiques,⁹⁰ et cela s'effectue sans tenir compte des critiques contestataires. Les objectifs affichés par les agences de développement deviennent la référence sur laquelle les projets de développement « doivent » être évalués, analysés, voire critiqués. Ces évaluations, même lorsqu'elles sont critiques, contribuent à légitimer et à renforcer l'ordre établi par l'intervention internationale et faire l'impasse sur les particularités nationales ou locales. De ce fait, les projets du NDC prennent appui sur la réalité telle qu'elle est conçue dans le discours universel du développement, et non pas comme la perçoivent les acteurs locaux.

Le NDC s'impose ainsi comme *think tank*, au sens donné à ce terme par Bourdieu, à savoir comme le produit d'un « travail intellectuel organisé » et d'une véritable entreprise de production et de diffusion de la « vulgate néolibérale »⁹¹ et de sa lecture de la réalité. Le développement de l'autocritique par les théoriciens et les fonctionnaires des organisations internationales vise à légitimer l'intervention internationale sans faire aucune référence à la centralité de la domination du développement et les structures cognitives qui en découlent.

Autrement dit, c'est à travers le « monopole de la raison »⁹² que s'instaure la nouvelle croyance universelle centrée sur le développement. L'autocritique tend à améliorer l'image des bailleurs de fonds : responsabilité, capacité à reconnaître leurs erreurs et volonté d'y remédier. Les acteurs locaux y trouvent de leur côté des arguments qui justifient, voire qui donnent sens à leur action et interaction avec les organisations internationales et surtout à leur transformation. Ce monopole consiste à produire la croyance en le développement même si les objectifs affichés ne sont pas atteints ou encore malgré leur contradiction avec la réalité du terrain. Selon cette croyance, pour améliorer la performance de l'aide, il suffit de coordonner l'action des bailleurs de fonds, de rationaliser les actions et discours des acteurs locaux.

La vulgate néolibérale devient la référence par excellence pour les acteurs locaux du monde du développement. Elle nourrit leur croyance et donne le sens social et politique à leur action.

90 L'auteur s'inspire ici des travaux de Boltanski et Chiapello qui démontrent comment le capitalisme se développe grâce à sa capacité à désamorcer les critiques qui lui sont adressées. Voir : Luc Boltanski et Ève Chiapiello, *op. cit.*

91 Pierre Bourdieu, *Contre-feux 2. Pour un mouvement social européen*, Paris, Raisons d'Agir, 2001, p. 7-8.

92 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

CONCLUSION

Le projet de la BM a été ainsi prolongé en constituant une « superstructure »⁹³ de contrôle des réseaux associatifs et des ONG dans les TPO. Il s'est institutionnalisé en donnant naissance au NDC, dont la structure englobe une multiplicité d'acteurs. Au nom de la coordination pour le développement, le NDC exclut certains acteurs locaux en formant un réseau de pouvoir. Celui-ci repose sur des liens diversifiés et tissés entre des détenteurs de différents types de capitaux sociaux : ceux qui occupent des positions importantes au sein de la BM, de la fondation *Ta'awun*, de l'AP (Fatah), de différents réseaux associatifs (le PNGO, le PNIN et la PGUCS), des entreprises et des universités. Au sommet de ce réseau, se trouve la BM.

En créant son propre réseau, ce projet s'est mis à produire et à diffuser les normes rationnelles et gestionnaires de la vulgate des organisations internationales. Leur production dans une démarche dite collective et participative, contribue à la constitution d'une croyance, à laquelle adhèrent les acteurs collectifs du développement. L'hégémonie du modèle économique assimile les ONG aux entreprises pour lesquelles le management et la rationalité économique sont les meilleures garanties d'une bonne conduite de leur action. Leur rôle découle de la représentation normative de la réalité sociale et politique ce qui exige l'absence de toute implication politique au sens de la lutte anticoloniale. Après avoir été impliqués dans des luttes de pouvoir politique, les réseaux associatifs sont désormais en concurrence pour obtenir l'aide internationale.

Le respect des normes gestionnaires est le premier critère de sélection d'un acteur ; il conditionne son droit d'entrée dans le monde du développement et fonde son mérite à y occuper une position. Le travail collectif entraîne une transformation graduelle des acteurs locaux qui s'ajustent à ces normes au cours de leurs interactions avec les bailleurs tout en tissant des réseaux permettant à ces normes de se répandre. La mise en place des dispositifs de développement permet de légitimer la domination que les bailleurs de fonds exercent sur les bénéficiaires de l'aide. Les dispositifs évoluent de sorte à reconfigurer le système de valeurs favorable à la nouvelle croyance. Ils évoluent de manière à monopoliser la critique. Lorsque les critiques correctrices mettent en avant la faible coordination entre acteurs du développement et la duplication de leur travail, des dispositifs favorables au *networking* et aux projets collectifs sont mis en place de sorte à exclure toute critique contestataire.

En ce sens, la Palestine est considérée comme un État souverain dont la « société civile »

93 Au sens marxiste du terme, ce qui renvoie à l'organisation politique et idéologique, voire symbolique, qui repose sur le pouvoir économique.

a pour rôle principal de travailler en complémentarité avec le « secteur public » et le « secteur privé » pour réaliser le développement. Cette répartition des tâches émane de l'ordre politique néolibéral établi dans la « Palestine des bailleurs de fonds, » un laboratoire expérimental d'un mode universel de « gouvernance » sans État. Le discours néolibéral doit sa force au fait qu'il est « [...] enraciné dans un système de croyances et de valeurs et une vision morale du monde, bref *un sens commun économique*, lié, en tant que tel, aux structures sociales et aux structures cognitives d'un ordre particulier. [Celui de l'économie américaine]. »⁹⁴ L'universalisation de cet ordre au nom du développement renverse l'ordre social localement établi (en Palestine) et normalise celui fondé sur les accords d'Oslo et l'intervention des bailleurs de fonds. Le monde du développement permet ainsi d'instaurer la domination de ces derniers et les structures cognitives qui en découlent à travers l'implication (consciente ou non, par contrainte ou conviction) de ceux qui sont les premiers à en subir les effets. Alors que les colonies israéliennes se propagent dans les TPO et que la situation socio-économique ne cesse de se détériorer, la rhétorique du développement constitue pourtant la base du consensus ou du sens commun auquel se réfèrent les acteurs (les *stakeholders*) de la « Palestine des bailleurs de fonds. »

En bref, le « droit » d'intervention des bailleurs de fonds et leur domination se normalisent à travers la mise en place des projets collectifs. En produisant des normes rationnelles, les acteurs collectifs du développement et leurs projets, introduisent le développement comme croyance. Fondée sur la « raison » gestionnaire universelle, cette croyance se nourrit d'une littérature critique correctrice dont la visée est de désarmer toute critique contestataire mettant en avant le contexte politique et local. Si le pouvoir financier des bailleurs constitue le corps du monde du développement dans la Palestine des bailleurs de fonds, la croyance dans le développement en forge l'esprit.

94 Pierre Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, 2001, p. 26.

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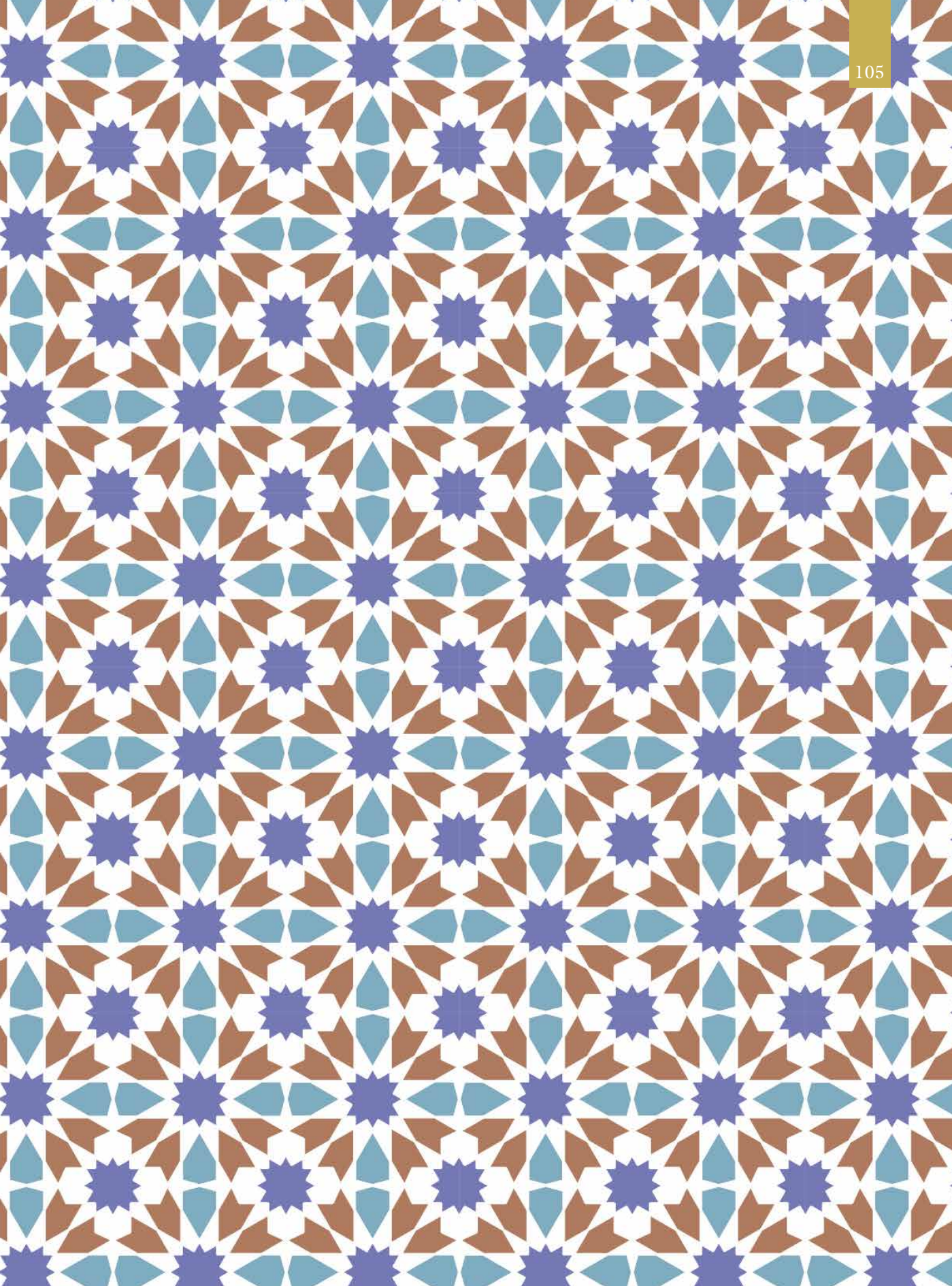
Liste de sigles

AP	Autorité palestinienne
BM	Banque mondiale
Fatah	Mouvement national de libération de la Palestine
FMI	Fonds monétaire internationale
FPLP	Front populaire de libération de la Palestine
HAMAS	Mouvement de résistance islamique
NDC	NGO Development Center
OLP	Organisation de libération de la Palestine
OMD	Objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement
ONG	Organisation non gouvernementale
OPGAI	Occupied Palestine and Syrian Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative
PGUCS	Palestinian General Union of Charitable Societies
PNGO	Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network
PNIN	Palestine National Institute for NGOs
PNUD	Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement
PRDP	Palestinian Reform and Development Plan
TPO	Territoires palestiniens occupés depuis 1967

Perspective

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

P. 104 ELIE AL HINDY, TANIA HADDAD,
MARIA NOUJAIM



***Advocating for
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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. Coşton² 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. Coşton then used this distinction between positive and negative to analyse the effectiveness of advocacy actions. Najam³ 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 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,⁴ defined civil society organisations as falling into two major categories: those that provide services (“operational”) and those that lobby the government for change (“advocacy”).⁵

1 Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheier, *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: A Cross-National Analysis*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1997; Derick Brinkerhoff, “Exploring State–Civil Society Collaboration: Policy Partnerships in Developing Countries,” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 1999, Vol. 28 (4), p. 59-86.

2 Jennifer Coşton, “A Model and Typology of Government-NGO Relationships,” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 1998, Vol. 27 (3), p. 358–382, available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jennifer_Brinkerhoff/publication/249675475_A_Model_and_Typology_of_Government-NGO_Relationships/links/00b7d5352f4f7ed821000000/A-Model-and-Typology-of-Government-NGO-Relationships.pdf [last accessed 15 June 2017].

3 Adil Najam, “The Four-C’s of Third Sector-Government Relations: Cooperation, Conformat, Complementarity, and Co-optation,” *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 2000, Vol. 10 (4), p. 375-396.

4 Peter Van Tuijl, “NGOs and Human Rights: Sources of Justice and Democracy,” *Journal of International Affairs*, 1999, Vol. 52 (2), p. 493- 512.

5 Salamon also proposed a third role for civil society organisations, that of mirroring the pluralism of the society, building communities, and encouraging individuals to become active members of society. Lester Salamon, “Explaining Nonprofit Advocacy: An Exploratory Analysis,” *Working Paper Series*, Baltimore, Centre for Civil Society Studies at Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies, 2002, Vol. 21, available at: http://ccss.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/09/CCSS_WP21_2002.pdf [last accessed 12 July 2017].

While advocacy features heavily in the work of civil society organisations,⁶ it has only found legitimacy in academic circles over the last five decades. Cairns⁷ even states that advocacy “has never been a subject for scholarly consideration.” Furthermore, Gen and Wright⁸ 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.” Reid⁹ 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 Edwards¹⁰ 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.”

Hopkins¹¹ presents four different approaches to advocacy to which McCarthy and Castelli¹² 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

6 Sheldon Gen and Amy Wright, “Policy Advocacy Organizations: A Framework Linking Theory and Practice,” *Journal of Policy Practice*, 2013, Vol. 12 (3), p. 163–193, available at: <http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1897&context=sspapers> [last accessed 15 June 2017].

7 David Cairns, *Advocacy and the Making of the Adversarial Criminal Trial 1800–1865*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 445.

8 Sheldon Gen and Amy Wright, *op. cit.*

9 Elizabeth Reid, “Understanding the Word ‘Advocacy’: Context and Use,” in Elizabeth Reid (ed.), *Nonprofit Advocacy and the Policy Process: Structuring the Inquiry into Advocacy*, Washington DC, The Urban Institute, 2000, p. 2.

10 Kenneth Andrews and Bob Edwards, “Advocacy Organizations in the U.S. Political Process,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2004, Vol. 30, available at: http://www.unc.edu/~kta1/Andrews%26Edwards_AnnualReview.pdf [last accessed 15 June 2017].

11 Bruce Hopkins, Charity, *Advocacy and the Law*, New York, Wiley, 1992, p. 670.

12 John McCarthy and Jim Castelli, “The Necessity of Studying Organizational Advocacy Comparatively,” in Patrice Flynn and Virginia Hodgkinson (eds.), *Measuring the Impact of the Nonprofit Sector*, New York, Springer Publishing, 2001, p. 103–121.

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.¹³ Direct and indirect methods are used, such as direct communication with the government, instructing the public, and working on grassroots mobilisation.¹⁴

While the literature focused on advocacy organisations is limited, interest in the topic began to increase as of the 1960s.¹⁵ Cairns¹⁶ notes that many attempts were made to analyse the reasons for such a growth inside the United States and globally.¹⁷ These analyses mainly attributed this growth, first of all, to the focus on social instability that led to the appearance of interest groups.¹⁸ Second, growth was attributed to resource

13 Craig Jenkins, "Nonprofit organisations and political advocacy" in Walter Powell and Richard Steinberg (eds.), *The Nonprofit Sector: A research handbook*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006, p. 307-322; Jennifer Mosley, "Institutionalisation, privatisation, and political opportunity: What tactical choices reveal about the policy advocacy of human service nonprofits," *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 2011, Vol. 40 (3), p. 435-457.

14 Elizabeth Reid, "Nonprofit advocacy and political participation" in Elizabeth Boris and Eugene Steuerle (eds.), *Nonprofit and government*, Washington DC, The Urban Institute Press, 1999, p. 291-308.

15 For example, see: Kenneth Andrews and Bob Edwards, op. cit.; Jeffrey Berry, "An Agenda for Research on Interest Groups," in William Crotty, Mildred Schwartz and John Green (eds.), *Representing Interests & Interest Group Representation*, Lanham, University Press of America, 1994, p. 21-28; Curtis Child and Kirsten Grønberg, "Nonprofit Advocacy organisations: Their Characteristics and Activities," *Social Science Quarterly*, 2007, Vol. 88(1), p. 259-281; Peter Frumkin, *On Being Nonprofit: A Conceptual And Policy Primer*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2002; Chao Guo and Gregory Saxton, "Voice-in, Voice-out: Constituent Participation and Nonprofit Advocacy," *Nonprofit Policy Forum*, 2001, Vol. 1 (1), p. 1-25, available at: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.493.4542&rep=rep1&type=pdf> [last accessed 15 June 2017]; Kelly LeRoux, "The Effects of Descriptive Representation on Nonprofits' Civic Intermediary Roles: A Test of the "Racial Mismatch" Hypothesis in the Social Services Sector," *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 2009, Vol. 38 (5), p. 741-760; Judith Sidel, "Nonprofit organisations, Political Engagement, and Public Policy," in Elizabeth Reid and Maria Montilla (eds.), *Nonprofit Advocacy and the Policy Process: Exploring organisations and Advocacy*, Washington DC, The Urban Institute, 2002, p. 1-18.

16 David Cairns, op. cit.

17 See Kay Schlozman and John Tierney, *Organized Interests and American Democracy*, New York, Harper and Row, 1986; Debra Minkoff, *Organizing for Equality: The Evolution of Women's and Racial-Ethnic organizations in America, 1955-85*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1995; Jack Walker, *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America: Patrons, Professions, and Social Movements*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1991; Kenneth Armstrong, "Rediscovering Civil Society: The European Union and the White Paper on Governance," *European Law Journal*, 2002, Vol. 8 (1), p. 102-132; Robert Brulle, *Agency, Democracy, and Nature: The U.S. Environmental Movement from a Critical Theory Perspective*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2000; Paul McLaughlin and Marwan Khawaja, "The Organizational Dynamics of the U.S.," *Rural Sociology*, 2000, Vol. 65 (3), p. 422-439.

18 Kenneth Andrews, Marshall Ganz, Matthew Baggetta, Hahrie Han, and Chaeyoon Lim, "Leadership, Membership, and Voice: Civic Associations That Work," *American Journal of Sociology*, 2010, Vol. 115 (4), p. 1191-1242, available at: <https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/8065967/>

mobilisation that led to the appearance of advocacy organisations,¹⁹ and, third, to political opportunity in stable environments.²⁰ The last factor contributing to growth were cultural values, especially with the shift of such values in industrial societies.²¹

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.

Ganz_RelationshipLeadership.pdf [last accessed 12 July 2017].

19 *Ibid.*; John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology*, 1977, Vol. 82 (6), p. 1212–1241.

20 Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998; David Meyer and Douglas Imig, "Political Opportunity and the Rise and Decline of Interest Group Sectors," *The Social Science Journal*, 1993, Vol. 30 (3), p. 253-270; Kenneth Andrews and Bob Edwards, *op. cit.*

21 Russell Dalton, *The Green Rainbow: Environmental Groups in Western Europe*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994; Thomas Rochon, *Culture Moves: Ideas, Activism, and Changing Values*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998; Jeffrey Berry, *Lobbying for the People: The Political Behavior of Public Interest Groups*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977; Craig Jenkins, *op. cit.*; Kenneth Andrews and Bob Edwards, *op. cit.*

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,²² such as in the work of Andrews et al.,²³ or on the environment in which these organisations are functioning.²⁴ The question that remains, however, is how advocacy campaigns might be assessed.

In order to succeed, advocacy needs to be organised inside an organisation; Reid²⁵ 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.²⁶ 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.²⁷ 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.

22 Kenneth Andrews, Marshall Ganz, Matthew Baggetta, Hahrie Han, and Chaeyoon Lim, *op. cit.*

23 *Ibid.*

24 John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*, London, Transaction Publishers, 1987.

25 Elizabeth Reid, *op. cit.*, 2000.

26 Ivan Barkhorn, Nathan Huttner, and Jason Blau, "Assessing Advocacy," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Stanford, Stanford Centre on Philanthropy and Civil Society, 2013, available at: https://ssir.org/articles/entry/assessing_advocacy [last accessed 12 July 2017].

27 Many other practical frameworks have been developed for the analysis of advocacy campaigns. See, for example: Julia Coffman, "User's Guide to Advocacy Evaluation Planning," Harvard Family Research Project, Cambridge, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2009, available at: https://www.indianaafterschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/UserGuideAdvocacyEvaluationPlanning_1.pdf [last accessed 28 June 2018]; Julia Coffman and Ehren Reed, "Unique Methods in Advocacy Evaluation," Los Angeles, California Endowment, 2009, available at: http://www.pointk.org/resources/files/Unique_Methods_Brief.pdf [last accessed 28 June 2018]; Julia Coffman, "Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy," New York, UNICEF, 2015, available at: https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy_Toolkit_Companion.pdf [last accessed 28 June 2018].

Table 1: Indicators for assessing advocacy campaigns

Functioning venue(s) for adoption	The relevant legislative, legal, and regulatory institutions are functioning 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 the intended benefits.
Dynamic master plan	A pragmatic and flexible advocacy strategy and communications plan is ready for execution.
Strong campaign leader(s)	Central advocates can assemble and lead the resources to execute the strategy and communications plan.
Influential support coalition	Allies can sway needed decision-makers and help the campaign leader to pursue the solution.
Mobilised public	Relevant public audiences actively support the solution and its underlying social principles.
Powerful inside champions	Decision-makers who can overcome the opposition support the solution and its underlying principles.
Clear implementation path	The implementing institution has the commitment and the ability to execute the solution.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses the indicators put forward by Barkhorn et al.²⁸ 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.²⁹

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).

28 Ivan Barkhorn, Nathan Huttner, and Jason Blau, *op. cit.*

29 *Ibid.*

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 <i>General Coordinator</i>	Introducing electoral reforms and adopting a new electoral law	Public Opinion – Civil Society – Political Parties – Members of Parliament – Ministry of Interior
ALEF – act for human rights	Ms. Dima Wehbe <i>Executive Director</i> Mr. Georges Ghali <i>Projects Coordinator</i>	Torture Prevention – Criminalising torture – Creating a National Prevention Mechanism	Public Opinion – Civil Society – Concerned Ministries
CARITAS Lebanon Migrants Center (CLMC)	Ms. Noha Roukoz <i>Head of Training & Awareness</i>	Security and Safety of Migrant Domestic Workers	Public Opinion – Concerned Ministries – General Security Forces

CCER³⁰ 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.

30 CCER stands for Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform, Website, CCER, available at: <http://www.ccerlebanon.org/> [last accessed 12 July 2017].

ALEF³¹ 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.³²

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.³³ 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.

31 ALEF - Act for Human Rights stands for Association Libanaise pour l'Éducation et la Formation, Website, *ALEF*, available at: <http://www.alefliban.org/> [last accessed 12 July 2017].

32 Interview by the author with ALEF's programmes manager, ALEF offices, December 17, 2015.

33 CLMC stands for Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre, Website, *CLMC*, available at: <http://english.caritasmigrant.org.lb/> [last accessed 12 July 2017].

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.³⁴ 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.³⁵ 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.³⁶ In Lebanon, it has become clear over the years, and was evident in the responses of the three interviewees, that a “window

34 Ivan Barkhorn, Nathan Huttner, and Jason Blau, *op. cit.*

35 Cited in Catherine Owen, “The Struggle for Meaning of *Obshchestvennyi Kontrol* in Contemporary Russia: Civic Participation between Resistance and Compliance after the 2011–2012 Elections,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2017, Vol. 69 (3), p. 379-400.

36 Ivan Barkhorn, Nathan Huttner, and Jason Blau, *op. cit.*

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.³⁷ 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

37 Siobhán Mullally, *Care, Migration and Human Rights: Law and Practice*, New York, Routledge, 2015, p. 146; Louay Faour, "Lebanon criticizes countries that ban maids over mistreatment," Website, *Daily Star*, 9 December 2015, available at: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Dec-09/326654-lebanon-criticizes-countries-that-ban-maids-over-mistreatment.ashx> [last accessed 27 September 2017]; Naharnet Newsdesk, "Philippine Workers Banned from 41 Countries, Including Lebanon," Website, *Naharnet*, 2 November 2011, available at: <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/19221> [last accessed 27 September 2017].

place.³⁸ 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.

2.3 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.³⁹ 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.⁴⁰ 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

38 Human Rights Watch, “Lebanon: Stop Abuse of Domestic Workers. Investigate Recent Suicide; Enact Labor, Immigration Protections,” Website, *Human Rights Watch*, 13 March 2012, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/23/lebanon-stop-abuse-domestic-workers> [last accessed 27 September 2017].

39 Ivan Barkhorn, Nathan Huttner, and Jason Blau, *op. cit.*

40 For more information on CCER’s vision and reforms, see: The Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform, “Booklet for Reforms,” Beirut, CCER, available at: www.ccerlebanon.org/Modules/Reforms/Reforms/PdfUploads/BookletFormat.pdf [last accessed 12 July 2017].

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” people⁴¹ 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.⁴² 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

41 Electoral “Keys” are the prominent people who are leading the electoral effort in their small community and who have the ability to influence voters, pressure them or classify them in a way that reveals their voting choice. These people have been a key tool in the manipulation of past elections and any serious assertion of the secrecy of vote must address their role and liberate the voters from their influence.

42 To have an overview of ALEF’s two projects on Torture Prevention and Monitoring in Lebanon see: ALEF - Act for Human Rights, “Torture Prevention and Monitoring in Lebanon I,” Website, *Alef*, available at: <https://alefiban.org/projects/tpml1/> [last accessed 12 July 2017]; ALEF - Act for Human Rights, “Torture Prevention and Monitoring in Lebanon II,” Website, *Alef*, available at: <https://alefiban.org/projects/torture-prevention-and-monitoring-in-lebanon-ii/> [last accessed 12 July 2017].

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.⁴³ 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

43 Ivan Barkhorn, Nathan Huttner, and Jason Blau, *op. cit.*

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. LADE⁴⁴ 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

44 The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) is a Lebanese NGO that works on promoting more democracy, introducing gender quota system, and reducing the legal voting age to 18 years. See: Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections, "Min nahnou," Website, *LADE*, available at: <http://www.lade.org.lb/LADE/About-Us.aspx> [last accessed 12 July 2017].

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).⁴⁵ The latter coalition includes roughly seven Lebanese NGOs that are working collectively on torture, arbitrary detention, and unfair trials (Coalition on Preventing Torture, 2015).⁴⁶ Ghali argues that the lack of

45 For examples, see: Joint Submission 14, "List of Researching and Drafting NGOs," Geneva, Universal Periodic Review, 2015, available at: https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/lebanon/session_23_-_november_2015/js14_upr23_lbn_e_annexe1.pdf [last accessed 27 September 2017]; Joint Submission 14, "I. General background and Framework," Geneva, Universal Periodic Review, 2015, available at: https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/lebanon/session_23_-_november_2015/js14_upr23_lbn_e_main.pdf [last accessed 27 September 2017]; ALEF, PAX, Pax Christi International, "Lebanon," Geneva, Universal Periodic Review, 2015, available at: https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/lebanon/session_23_-_november_2015/js17_upr23_lbn_e_main.pdf [last accessed 27 September 2017]; ALEF, PAX, Pax Christi International, "Annex 1 - Finding Durable Solutions to the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon," Geneva, Universal Periodic Review, 2015, available at: https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/lebanon/session_23_-_november_2015/js17_upr23_lbn_e_annexe1.pdf [last accessed 27 September 2017]; ALEF, PAX, Pax Christi International, "Annex 2 - Protection Mechanism against Arbitrary Arrest, Lengthy pre-trial Detention and Long Delays in Trial Protection Mechanism against Arbitrary Arrest, Lengthy pre-trial Detention and Long Delays in Trial," Geneva, Universal Periodic Review, 2015, available at: https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/lebanon/session_23_-_november_2015/js17_upr23_lbn_e_annexe3.pdf [last accessed 27 September 2017]; ALEF, PAX, Pax Christi International, "Annex 3 - ALEF's Commentary on the ISF Code of Conduct," Geneva, Universal Periodic Review, 2015, available at: https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/lebanon/session_23_-_november_2015/js17_upr23_lbn_e_annexe5.pdf [last accessed 27 September 2017].

46 ALEF - Act for Human Rights, Alkarama for Research and Studies, Association of Justice and Mercy (Ajem), Insan Association, Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, Proud Lebanon, and ReStart Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, "Lebanon Joint Shadow Report," Beirut, Coalition Against Torture (CAT), 2017, available at: https://alefiban.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NGO-coalition_CAT_LEB_ShadowReport_Final_20170320_EN.pdf [last accessed 27 September 2017].

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.⁴⁷

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

47 ALEF - Act for Human Rights, "Establishing the Primacy of Human Rights in Security Sector Reform in Lebanon," Website, *ALEF*, available at: <https://alefliban.org/publications/establishing-primacy-human-rights-security-sector-reform-lebanon/> [last accessed 12 July 2017].

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.⁴⁸

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.⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ Further efforts are being exerted by the coalition to pass the law on "Criminalizing Torture."⁵¹

48 For an overview of the work on shelters, see: Caritas Lebanon Migrants Centre, "CLMC Shelters," Website, *CLMC*, available at: <http://english.caritasmigrant.org.lb/our-action/projects/shelters/> [last accessed 12 July 2017].

49 Daily Star, "Lebanese electoral law 2017: Full text in English," Website, *Daily Star*, 7 July 2017, available at: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2017/Jul-07/411988-lebanese-electoral-law-2017-full-text-in-english.ashx> [last accessed 27 September 2017].

50 UNSCOL, "SCL Sigrid Kaag welcomes the passing of the law on Lebanon's National Human Rights Institution," Website, UNSCOL, 20 October 2016, available at: <https://unscol.unmissions.org/scl-sigrid-kaag-welcomes-passing-law-lebanon%E2%80%99s-national-human-rights-institution> [last accessed 27 September 2017].

51 Al Karama, "Lebanon: UN Human Rights Committee Adopts List of Issues Ahead of

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.⁵² 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.⁵³

Table 3: Summary review of the three cases

	CCER: ELECTORAL REFORM	ALEF: TORTURE PREVENTION	CLMC: MIGRANT WORKERS
Functioning venue(s) for adoption	Government is functioning in its minimal capacity – Campaign targets Gov. 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 functioning in its minimal capacity – Campaign targets govt. officials, but does not rely on them
Open policy window	<p><i>International interest:</i> Very high between 2006-2009</p> <p><i>Favourable momentum:</i> 2009 Parliament Elections – new President</p> <p><i>Credibility & readiness:</i> Strong, but not willing to compromise</p>	<p><i>International interest:</i> High pre-2011, until the Arab Spring</p> <p><i>Favourable momentum:</i> Lebanon signing OPCAT</p> <p><i>Credibility & readiness:</i> Accumulation of expertise – Strong networking</p>	<p><i>International interest:</i> Very High (notably from donor states and states of origin of Migrant Workers)</p> <p><i>Favourable momentum:</i> Good for advocate's image with limited political cost</p> <p><i>Credibility & readiness:</i> International credibility & track record of professionalism</p>

Lebanon's Third Review," Website, *Alkarama*, 17 August 2017, available at: <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/un-human-rights-committee-adopts-list-issues-ahead-lebanons-third-review> [last accessed 2017].

52 Caritas Lebanon Migrants Centre, "Migrants Project," Website, *CLMC*, available at: http://english.caritasmigrant.org.lb/?page_id=1024 [last accessed 27 September 2017].

53 Human Rights Watch, "Lebanon: Recognize Domestic Workers Union, Add Labor Law Protections for These Employees," Website, *Human Rights Watch*, 10 March 2015, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/03/10/lebanon-recognize-domestic-workers-union> [last accessed 27 September 2017].

Feasible solution & dynamic master plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on achievable technical reforms • Forced to show more flexibility on proportional electoral system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law to criminalise torture drafted but difficult to pass • Focus on internal ISF policy & on diminishing public acceptance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on GS cooperation: signing MOU, offering support, training and access to detention centres
Strong campaign leader(s)	Credible founding members including Minister of Interior	Credible founding members in key positions offer support & good network	Credible international institution: strong & credible founder (of 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 several coalitions (MDW, Torture, etc...), but main achievements were due to individual efforts
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very selective & limited use of mobilisation, mainly for awareness. • Careful not to damage established 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 General Security directors on board for partnership & pushing forward 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 mechanisms are working well; efforts to change the <i>kafala</i> system and improve labour rights for migrants are undergoing

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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Annex: Questionnaire on Advocacy Effectiveness

Name of organisation: _____

Name/Title of Person Completing Assessment: _____

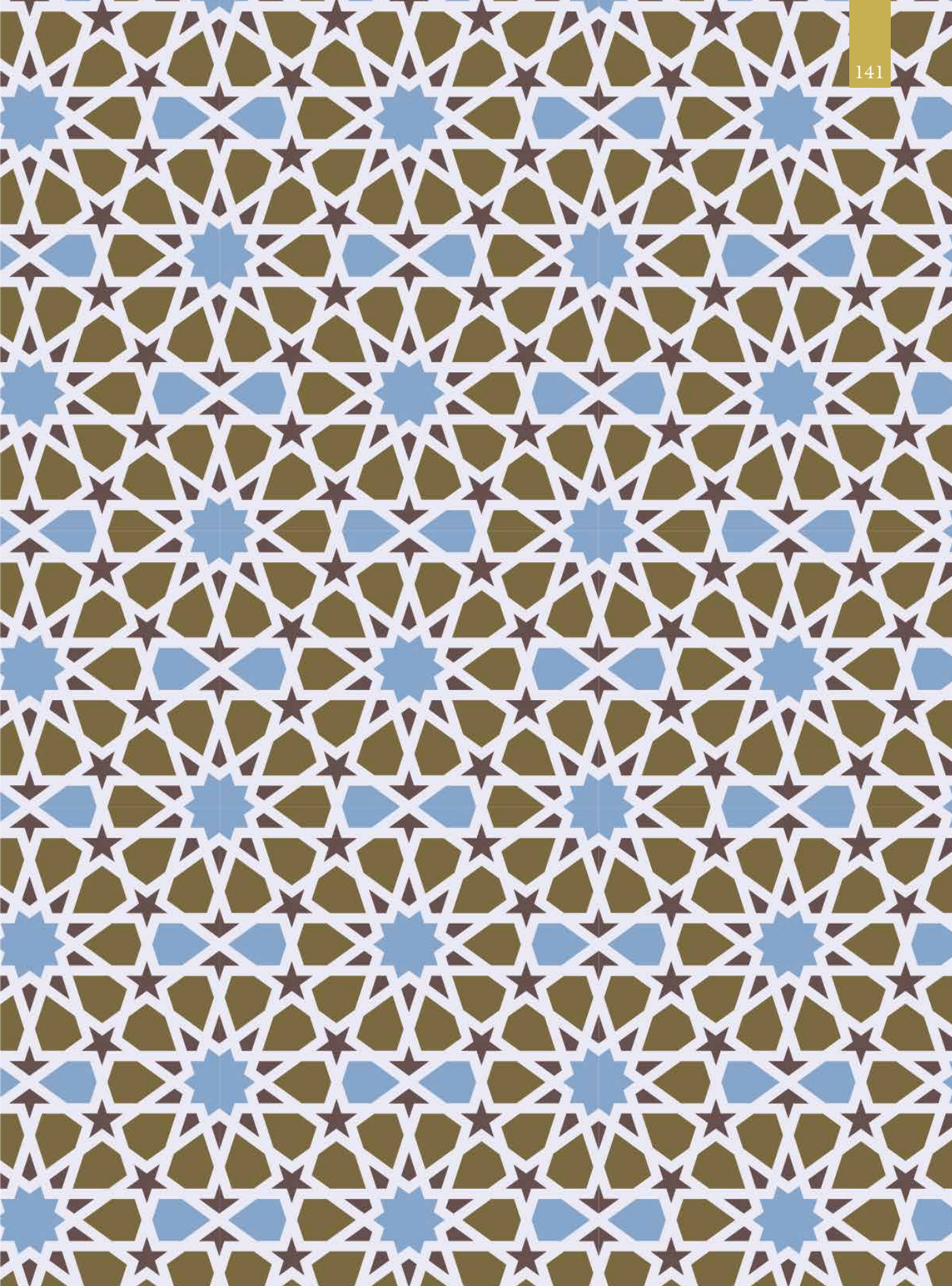
Date of Assessment: _____

1. List the policies that the NGO has been working on.
2. Do you think that all these policies should be taken into consideration now or should it be postponed because of the current situation?
3. What creates the need for amending a public policy? To what extent was it related to public will and political will?
4. What procedure do you use to put your policies on the agenda?
5. What are the steps used to develop a policy proposal? What factors are taken into consideration for the development? Do you select only one alternative or many? Adaptation or adoption?
6. What is the advocacy strategy used? Is this strategy used to reach an effective change?
7. What are the strategies and activities used to reach the advocacy goals? How did you choose them?
8. Who are the focus groups and stakeholders that are the main advocates of the policy? Who are the opponents?
9. What role did the Media have in the process?
10. What are the measures used in evaluating the impact of your advocacy plan?
11. What are the main reasons for failure? What are the main factors of success?
12. Is research used to investigate in the problem?
13. Do you change your advocacy policy based on the evaluation of previous results?
14. To what extent is your work contributing to raise the level of awareness in the Lebanese Society?
15. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of NGO advocacy in Lebanon? Provide an example.
16. What are the challenges faced in the implementation process? Give an example.

Book Review

Carmen Geha, *Civil Society and Political Reform in Lebanon and Libya: Transition and Constraint*, London and New York, Routledge, 2016.

P. 140 LAURA EL CHEMALI



***Civil Society
and Political
Reform in
Lebanon
and Libya:
Transition
and Constraint***

REVIEW BY: LAURA EL-CHEMALI

BOOK BY: CARMEN GEHA

Publisher: Routledge, London
and New York

Year of publication: 2016.

The topic of Carmen Geha's book is the failure of civil activism in the Middle East, notably in the cases of Lebanon and Libya: "*Civil Society and Political Reform in Lebanon and Libya: Transition and constraint.*" Citing problematic bureaucracy and a legacy of colonialism, the author explains the inability of political activists to trigger change in their respective countries and the resilience of authoritarianism through critical juncture analysis. As respective case studies, the author analyses the ineffective electoral reform initiatives in Lebanon in the aftermath of the 2005 Cedar Revolution and the desperate efforts of Libyan activists to promote constitutional change in the context of the fall of Mohammed Qaddafi's dictatorship in Libya in 2011.

The book begins with a deep theoretical discussion of institutional processes. Geha argues that civil society was unable to promote change in Lebanon or Libya due to existing political barriers to democratisation and reform that are enshrined in the legacy and political culture of both countries. These political patterns fostered path-dependency that simply hindered any effort to reform: "The options available to decision-makers about reform remained highly path-dependent in the cases of Lebanon and Libya and, as such, limited the potential for critical moments to be turned into critical junctures. This means that any reform that supports a new type of representation or relations between citizens and state has a minimal chance of success because institutions have deeply rooted practices that have become difficult, if not impossible, to change" (p.6).

According to Geha, the steadfastness of non-democratic and dysfunctional forms of governance in both Lebanon and Libya are the result of three "elements of continuity:" Weak states, communal power-sharing, and the ineffectiveness of civil society actors in achieving their goals (p.31). Both Lebanon and Libya are countries that have long struggled with post-colonial obstacles to political authority stemming from inherent divisions – either ethnoreligious, communitarian or geographic – which undermine state institutions and political change. Compounding this, the system of sectarian power-sharing in Lebanon, established by the National Pact of 1943, has created established confessional or tribal elites who benefit from the existence of the power-sharing system and the dominance of the central government, giving them little reason to support reform.

Consequently, Geha's book is an attempt to understand the resistance to reform in the context of Lebanon. She identifies the power-sharing system as a source of creating a rigid and unyielding commitment to institutions that simply bolsters the power of local confessional authorities, the *zu'ama*. She affirms that "even after independence, the efforts of political leaders were directed not towards the creation of a national civic identity, but towards the fragmentation of identities in order to maintain sectarian loyalties" (p.57). The fifteen-year long Lebanese Civil War, starting in 1975 and fought along various sectarian lines, did not bring this order to an end; rather it shifted the bases of power and "disrupted these networks and replaced *zu'ama* clientelism with a new and more complex

mix of clientelistic networks” (p.63). Syrian intervention following the Civil War had channelled these networks to promote a pro-Syrian agenda, used by the pro-Syrian elite to manipulate the electoral system. Consequently, under Syrian tutelage, civil society was managed in a way that ensured only pro-political elites could cultivate the renewal of civil activism. When a popular movement arose in March 2005 in response to the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, it provided a brief opportunity for new civil groups to oppose the status quo. One of these groups was the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE), a group in which Geha herself was active in. From 2005 to 2009, LADE worked to promote non-partisan education and systemisation of the electoral process. Ultimately, though, the non-sectarian initiative was no match for the political machinations of Lebanon’s sectarian elites. Rhetorical support for electoral reform among the leading political movements did not translate into real change in the Lebanese political landscape.

In the case of Libya, Geha traces the problems of state consolidation to its early post-colonial history, when very diverse regions – notably Fezzan, Tripolitania, and Cyrenaica – were fused into a single country. Despite the vision for a structured federal government, the country was subjected to a long history of centralised authoritarianism. According to Geha, Libyans were “coerced” into accepting unification by being assured that authority would remain localised to region and tribe (p.116). This progressed into an endeavour to undermine local authority through Arabisation and Islamisation under Qaddhafi. Nevertheless, the application of power under Qaddhafi’s “third universal theory” created little in the way of robust political institutions. The ultimate breakdown of any form of power sharing left a void in the heart of the state once the Qaddhafi regime was overthrown: “[The spread of violence and complete deterioration of state institutions after 2014 reveals a path of dependence on a central leadership able to oppress opposition or mitigate conflict, a leadership role that appears utterly void at present” (p.109). The National Transitional Council, therefore, embodied many of the regional, tribal, and religious problems that had never been resolved under the dictatorship, and reproduced many of its dysfunctions.

Thus, there was no independent civil society presence during the 2011 popular movement (p.125). Beyond the revolution itself, there was no existing means to promote a reform agenda that would unify all Libyans under a common banner. One of the strongest attempts at rectifying this was the Forum for Democratic Libya (FDL), here portrayed by Geha as a broad national organisation aimed at fostering citizenship, democracy, government accountability, and the free participation of civil society (p.145). Geha’s research into the work of the organisation reveals some inherent constraints on its efforts. Among other things, she found that participants mistrusted national institutions and the work of the FDL, as the “most repeated demand regarding the state system was for a system that could guarantee public services equitably across all regions” (p.150). It should come as little surprise that regional dynamics played into the political division of Libya in the following years.

Finally, Geha maintains that state weakness, coupled with the strength of identity politics in the two countries, hindered the influence of civil society, ultimately limiting “citizenship and political rights [...] to a person’s ethnic, religious, or regional origin” (p.165). As civil society was squeezed out of the political process, it foundered in the middle of a juncture that proved to be only “partially critical” (p.172).

All in all, Geha’s book provides empirical case studies of specific civil actors, such as LADE in Lebanon or the FDL in Libya, that should play an important role in deepening our understanding of the process of transition and its relationship to civil society in the MENA region. Her work is well-recognised for summarising the political systems and phenomena of the two societies. However, the empirical aspects of the case study are given short shrift and it would have been beneficial to reveal more of the research findings to demonstrate the veracity of her claims. This might have been achieved with a more detailed account of the activities and limitations of LADE and the FDL, or with more research into the work of other parallel civil society groups involved in the transitions. It is also unfortunate that in a work with this depth of insight into institutional processes in the two states, she makes relatively little reference to the classic works of Michael Hudson and Theodor Hanf on Lebanon, or Lisa Anderson on Libya and the institutional legacies in both country. With regard to civil society, Karam Karam and Melani Cammett are two important reference books that consider civil society organisations in the MENA region and may have provided further value to Geha’s work.

Moreover, given the way that civil associations tend to be dominated by the sectarian and regional groupings that impede a wider notion of nationhood in both societies, it would also be useful to consider the role of some local sectarian or sub-regional organisations, in order to better understand their influence on the process of transitional reform. Geha’s argument is that power-sharing only serves to reinforce the demarcations that undermine a functional political space. However, some civil society organisations that exist to promote religious or other ends actually do serve multiple sectarian, regional and cross-religious populations, like Musa Sadre, Al Marrabat, Makhzoumi or the Middle Eastern Council of Christian Churches, in addition to Amel, le Mouvement Social Libanais or Arc en Ciel - all which deserve to be analysed more closely. Some of them started as service organisations and turned later into advocacy organisations, often built around the personality of a religious or political leader with a strong supporter base. It would be interesting to see in which ways these civil society groups may actually help to accelerate reform by addressing service gaps, such as healthcare or education to the poor or refugees, which are not provided by the state, and contrasting with other major politically oriented organisations, which hamper these efforts.

Meanwhile, institutional “path dependency” is at the heart of Geha’s argument. It implies that institutions tend to reinforce themselves, but such an explanation only goes so far. What

role does human action play in this process? Why is it, for example, that Lebanese and Libyan elites continuously resist reform despite very active and vibrant civil societies, and when this is not the most appropriate strategy? While the pattern of power in Lebanon, for example, remains bound to a small number of greater and lesser *zu'ama*, the cast of characters changes with the ups and downs of power. The system of "power-sharing" does not always empower the existing elite. Embracing new institutional forms may well be a useful motor for one *za'im* to achieve relative gains. Indeed, some have embraced change for that very reason, as in the case of the ideology of Walid Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party, or the various ideologies that have driven Michel Aoun from one tactical position to another until his current presidency.

Arguably, the problem of Lebanon's and Libya's resistance to political reform is probably a combination of both the aforementioned complexities and state violence in the hands of factional groups and revolutionaries. In this sense, Geha contends that weak institutions "played into the interest of armed militias," but does not really consider their external sources of supply or their brutality as other reasons for the failure of reform (p.139). The decline of civil society in the wake of the Arab Spring owes much to the activities of militant factions that targeted and impacted non-violent activism among the civil actors in Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Libya, and Yemen. In all cases, a peaceful pro-democracy protest movement has been eclipsed by violent movements.

Geha does show concern for the role of the civil organisations that she studies. Towards the end of her work, she addresses some of the tactical mistakes of civil society. Unfortunately, these observations remain somewhat superficial, as they culminate in provocative advice for civil society organisations. She argues that civil organisations need to lay aside some of their idealism and work within the system as it is, building partnerships with existing political players as a means of encouraging change and reform.

Though Geha maintains that civil society has proven to be too weak to be effective in Lebanon and Libya, she remains optimistic about the potential of civil initiatives to reinforce power-sharing in divided societies. Although she finds that power-sharing tends to undermine the civil society sector, "an ineffective associational sector is both a symptom of weak states and power-sharing agreements, though it can also be an enabler of these two dimensions. A strong and influential, nationally active civil society might prompt a process of reconstruction of strong state institutions and could either be art of power-sharing agreements or maintain a strong oversight role regarding such agreements" (p.171). If this is true, then state weakness can contribute to increasing the influence of civil society groups. As they grow in capacity and relevance, perhaps such groups could respond positively to the present malaise of states in the MENA region.

