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RESILIENCE OR LEARNED HELPLESSNESS?

The Case of Lebanese Adults Stripped of their Right to Health, Education,
and Adequate Standards of Living

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ABSTRACT

Lebanon is in a palliative state. The country is undergoing one of the worst man-made crisis in history, with all of its social, economic, and political sectors crumbling at once. This thesis investigates the nature of this chaos, as well as to the dynamics behind it. The historical/legal content analysis uncovers the way the deep rooted corruption and abuse of power, have been reinforced by the absence of accountability and justiciability. These trends led to the retrogressive realization of the most fundamental human rights in the country, focusing specifically on the rights to health, education, and adequate standards of living.

The study also inspects the psychological state of the population surviving this calamity. Through a quantitative analysis, it looks closely into the levels of resilience and learned helplessness of the adults in the country. The results generated exhibit a prevalence in the levels of learned helplessness, with nothing but moderate levels of resilience.

This thesis attempts to shed the light on the disastrous living conditions of people in Lebanon that are deprived of their basic human rights. With little room for impactful action, the population is the outmost impacted victim, forced to survive rather than live.

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EMA was a journey of self. Self-discovery, self-growth, self-care.

I did not used to understand why people thanked other people in their acknowledgment sections. I always thought that the work is made entirely by the author, and no one deserves credit but them. I see things differently now.

ارى دعم والدي المستمر لأحقق أفضل نسخة من نفسي ، أرى تضحياته التي يخفيها ليوفر لي حياة أكثر استقرارًا دون الشعور بالاجهاد و القلق باستمرار .. اقل ما يقال شكرا لك يا أبي

Je vois l'attention infinie de ma mère pour mon bien-être et celui de mes choix de vie. Une source d'affection qui alimente mes quêtes de vie, sans laquelle mes journées seraient sombres.

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Chapter One: Foundation of Study

Introduction

Today, I make sure I am mentally capable of calling my friends and family before doing so. The people back home who are supposed to motivate you and give you energy to move forward, do the exact opposite, drain you. Once they have picked up the phone, you start hoping the news today will not be worse than the ones you received yesterday, you hope for no improvement, just no deterioration from the last time you spoke.

Today, people in Lebanon have lost access to their own lifelong deposits and funds that are trapped in the banks, due to the unlawful capital control (Kandasamy, 2022, p. 142; Pierre & Dadouch, 2022). People no longer have access to medications due to shortages, and can no longer afford the healthcare system that is privatized and extravagantly expensive (Fleifel & Abi Farraj, 2022, p. 4). People can no longer secure an education for their children given the strikes in public schools and the exorbitant tuition fees of private schools (Save the Children, 2023). People can no longer have more than two hours of electricity per day or clean water without having to pay an enormous amount of money due to the inability of the state to provide these public services (Yuan, 2022, p. 1503; Jalabi, 2022). People in Lebanon are no longer living, they are surviving.

Lebanon is undergoing what many people have called to be one of the worst crises witnessed globally since the 19th century (Strategic comments, 2022). Be it an economic crisis, a social, or a political one. The country was unable to meet its obligations in relation to its sovereign-debt (1.2 billion USD Eurobond default). Its currency lost more than 90% of its value officially, with that number being much higher in the black market exchange rate. These numbers increased the poverty rate in the country extending to 80% of its population. Social tensions are increasing substantially over the scarcity of medicines, petrol, and foods (Mehvar, 2022). In addition to that, the unemployment rates that are skyrocketing among young graduates are further encouraging the phenomena of immigration and brain drain (Perry, 2020; Halawi, 2022).

While it is safe to say that this collapse has been building up for many years now, one cannot deny the crucial role the corrupt political bodies had to play in this. That is, the same political powers that have been ruling the country for more than thirty years now. Flaws and cracks in the structures established post-civil war and independence only surfaced after they could not be hidden anymore. These can be attributed to the political malpractices that were run to profit the people in power and their own interests rather than the interests of the state and its citizens.

Hence, the existent corruption led to the inability of the state to fund the development and maintenance of public services and obligations (OHCHR, 2022). Those happen to constitute some basic and fundamental human rights to the Lebanese citizen, mainly the economic, social, and cultural rights of the people that are meant to be guaranteed by the state. This disregard of state obligations happens to exist despite the ratification of several international human rights treaties, as well as numerous attempts by international forces and bodies to support Lebanon's ongoing crises. Whether it is through funding, or through guidance and advice, the Lebanese state remains unable to provide its people with their basic human rights.

This is on top of the recent explosion that was equivalent to 300 tons of explosives and destroyed the capital in 2020, the revolution in 2019, the Syrian refugees influx in 2011, the Israeli war in 2006, and the civil war from 1975 to 1990 (Reuters, 2020; Makdisi, 2021; Delgado, Cherri, & Gonzalez, 2020; El-Khoury, 2019; Shaar, 2013). Therefore, adults who have survived all of those events have somewhat witnessed the degradation of the country and its situation, but also the re-election of the same political bodies throughout all these years.

The endurance of the different series of events of the country most certainly had an impact on the mental state of Lebanese adults, in addition to their personal, social and economic suffering. Having to deal with a whole new incident throughout childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and adulthood most certainly scared the people psychologically. Some call the Lebanese people resilient with the fact that they are able to live in such degrading conditions given the absence of a working government. Others call them helpless with the fact that they are unable to bring about positive change in the country

Having survived such harsh and difficult instances throughout all of one's life, in one's very own home country can indeed develop a sense of helplessness. Learned helplessness can be attributed to having a feeling of being unable to do anything to prevent corruption, war, bombings, or being unable to leave your nation looking for safety somewhere else, or being unable to secure a future that is safe from atrocities, uncertainties, and emotional exhaustions. Lebanese adults could have basically developed a mental state making them believe that, independently of their actions or responses, the negative situational outcomes of the country are going to take place either way (Quinless & McDermott Nelson, 1988, p. 11). The negative culture of corruption, human rights violations, violence, and insecurity, most certainly took a toll on the wellbeing of the nationals. This is especially true after being violently met during the October 2019 revolution by the Lebanese military with beatings, and

teargas (Salahedin, 2021). The re-election of the majority of the old political bodies during the 2022 parliamentary elections is also an example of how efforts have gone in vain, cutting any sense of and control over change and participation in the making of the future (Hawi, 2022, p. 4).

Nevertheless, on the opposite side of the spectrum lies the argument that the ability of Lebanese adults to endure such degrading living conditions is attributed to the resilience the population holds psychologically. That is, as defined by Soutwick and Charney in their book, “the ability to bounce back after encountering difficulty” (2012, p. 6). The American Psychological association on the other hand defined it as the process through which one can move forward despite the trauma, conflict, crisis, and adversities faced (American Psychological Association, 2023). One can fit the Lebanese population right into this definition, since they successfully manage to regain stability after each event, and stay in the country despite the numerous challenges and risks it brings about.

With no available literature existing to prove or refute either of the two psychological states, this thesis will be debunking the reality of things behind Lebanese adults’ mental state in order to fill the gap in the literature. It will also highlight the crack in the political system, which despite the binding force of international human rights laws and treaties, appears to be ineffective.

Research Question

This thesis comes to investigate the reality behind the man-made crisis that Lebanon is undergoing. It will also inspect the psychological state of Lebanese adults by answering one main research question; Have Lebanese adults developed resilience or learned helplessness in the absence of their human rights caused by the corrupt ruling government?

In addition to that, the thesis will also look into the international human rights law governing the country and the dynamics that come into play between the obligations that arise after ratification, and the existent human rights reality. The goal behind this analysis is to highlight the discrepancy between the UPR responses and the actuality on the ground. Furthermore, the support and assistance offered by international forces and bodies to protect human rights in the country will be emphasized in order to display the unwillingness of the authorities to allow the proliferation of the country and the citizen’s enjoyment of their basic rights. The thesis will also be exploring possible viable solutions the country could embrace to come out of the chaos it is undergoing today.

Methodology

The research questions of this thesis will be answered in an interdisciplinary approach that will combine a quantitative data collection and analysis, in addition to a qualitative legal content analysis.

Psychological research study. The former part will be executed through the elaboration and introduction of an online survey that will be distributed to the target population. However, this part of the study will not be initiated before the obtainment of the ethical approval of the ethics board at the faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana. This step is crucial in order to ensure the best interest of the participants as well as their wellbeing.

As to the explicit content of the survey, we will be using two validated psychological scales to respectively measure the levels of learned helplessness in opposition to the levels of resilience in the Lebanese population. Learned helplessness will be assessed through the Learned Helplessness Scale developed by Quinless and McDermott Nelson in 1988, while resilience will be in turn measured through the Brief Resilience Scale developed in 2008 by Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, and Bernard.

The sample. The target population will be Lebanese adults aged between 55 and 60 years. This age group was specifically selected since it is this generation that endured the most eventful situations in the country, since a young age until today. Therefore, they would constitute a perfect representation of mental health state caused by the country's situation. With a 95% confidence level, we aim to target a sample of 200 adults for a margin of error of 6%. This value will allow us to obtain results that are most likely to be representative of the entire Lebanese population.

Data collection. A survey will be spread and distributed throughout social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, LinkedIn) in order to be able to collect the required data of the study. The survey will be created from the validated scales of resilience and learned helplessness (Quinless & McDermott Nelson, 1988; Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, & Bernard, 2008) that will be translated into all of the three languages of Arabic, French, and English. This is due to the difference in lingual preferences found among the Lebanese population. The snowball sampling method will be used as it is the most convenient for the purposes of this research, and given my lack of absence on the Lebanese territory. Informed consent from the participants is a mandatory step that needs to be acquired before being able to access the survey. This part will be disclosing to all of the research participants the aims and purposes of the study, its duration, as well as the nature of the

research. Informed consent will also be ensuring the confidentiality of the participants, as well as their voluntary participation to the research, allowing them to drop out with no consequences.

Historical/legal content analysis. The latter part, that of the qualitative legal content analysis, will be tackled through looking into the different international human rights ratifications in Lebanon. The actions taken with regards to the achievement and fulfilment of the state obligations will be analyzed and evaluated as well, with a particular focus on the social, economic, and cultural rights that are absent in the country. This legal analysis will give a better understanding as to why the mental health of the Lebanese population endured a severe deterioration in the absence of their fundamental human rights. By highlighting the failure of the state to uphold its obligations at several occasions, the exhibition of psychological distress by the people gets to be elaborated and justified.

Outline

Chapter two will look extensively into the history of Lebanon's human rights' situation since its independence until this day. The different international ratifications made by the country will be highlighted, in addition to the efforts made by the Lebanese authority to fulfil the binding obligations that arise. More specifically, we will be going through the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, focusing particularly on the right to health, right to education, right to adequate standards of living (United Nations, art. 13, 12, 11, 1966). The Universal Periodic Reviews will then be compared to the reality of things on the ground, emphasizing the retrogression the country witnessed throughout the years, with the little to no intervention from the state in that regard (HRC, 2021). This historical introduction will explain the different hardships Lebanese adults went through since their childhood until today, highlighting the importance of their mental state after everything they underwent.

Chapter three will be highlighting in details the situation of the country with regards to the right to health, the right to education, and the right to electricity that falls under the umbrella of the right to adequate standards of living. The private and public sectors' historical co-existence will be explained, as well as how this phenomenon led to the reliance of the government on the service provision of the private sector. This situation is the main factor behind the government being able to cover up their duties developing and progressively realize their obligations towards the fulfillment of these human rights to the people.

Chapter four will be looking into the several opportunities offered to Lebanon from international actors as to the improvement of the economic, social, and cultural rights status in the country. Be it through funding, or advice and guidance from the international communities that all went in vain (Abdelnour, 2001; Borroso Cortes & Kechichian, 2020). A country comparison will also be introduced as to the way the European Union came to assist Kosovo towards the achievement of its economic, social and cultural independence and human rights proliferation. This will specifically highlight on the opportunities of growth and development the country has been offered, that led to the protection and promotion of the basic human rights there.

Chapter five will set the groundwork for the research aspect of this thesis. We will be elaborating further on the mental health status of Lebanese adults enduring severe violations to their basic and fundamental human rights. A detailed methodology section will be describing essential aspects of the study. That is, the suggested hypothesis, the ethical measures taken, the participants and sampling method, as well as the study's design, measure, and procedure. This will then be followed by the detailed result section that will analyze the obtained data run through SPSS. Finally, a discussion section wrapping up all the findings of the study will be included, which will also be highlighting the limitations faced that could have somewhat impacted the obtained results.

The conclusion will reiterate the main points tackled by the thesis, by going through all of the historical aspects that created this man-made chaos. It will also emphasize the human rights situation in the country that is relatively inexistent, and how the citizen are surviving through personal adaptation efforts. Finally, the most relevant findings of the psychological study ran will be highlighted in accordance to how future policies and institutional developments should be based for the best interest of the population.

Chapter Two: Lebanon's Historical Adversities

Charles Malik: a Lebanese philosopher and diplomat who is deemed as one of the founding members of the Human Rights Commission (HRC) in 1946, and whose work cannot be taken lightly (Mitoma, 2010, p. 222). That same individual happens to have significantly contributed to the drafting and development of today's most important human rights instrument, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. It is hence, only normal to imply that the country such a man originates from would be ruled by equality, wellbeing, and non-discrimination. One cannot deny that human rights were promoted in the constitution early on after the country obtained its independence from the French mandate in 1943. Their protection were guaranteed through the strengthening of the rule of law, the assurance of the independence of the judiciary system, and the regulation of criminal justice under the constitution (Amnesty International, 1997). The Lebanese republic had even laid down in its document several freedoms such as that of assembly, association, and expression. Additionally, the country was one of the first in the Arab world that agreed to uphold several fundamental human rights treaties soon after their adoption. That is, the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), (United Nations, 1965) adopted in 1969 and ratified by Lebanon in 1971, followed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (United Nations, 1966) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (United Nations, 1966)), both adopted in 1966, and ratified by Lebanon in 1972 (OHCHR).

Unfortunately, we can safely refer to those days as the golden ones before the eruption of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, that bore with it the demolition of every aspect of the human rights realm in the country.

Civil War

The 15-year-long war from 1975 until 1990 ravaged across all institutions related to the state and that included the army. The war was significantly marked by flagrant human rights violations which were in fact, inflicted by governmental militias and political powers. The exact forces obligated to protect and promote one's safety, would be behind one's danger and insecurity instead. Warlords would go above and beyond with their abuses for the goal of gaining control over an area in the country. The mass human rights abuses included but were not limited to civilian abductions and killings, as well as enforced disappearances, and detentions (Amnesty International, 1997).

One main characteristic of the Lebanese civil war was the birth of sudden roadblocks all around the territory, where identity checks were required. Those surprise roadblocks would be the Lebanese version of the Russian roulette, where you could run free, be kidnapped, or be killed solely based on your ethnic and religious identity (Battel, 2011, p.133). Home abductions, civilian massacres, and enforced disappearances were also common practices throughout the war done by civilians and political militias, to the so called enemy, only being the opposing civilians party of another political militia. But of everything that occurred, enforced disappearances marked significantly the Lebanese civil war, with an estimation of 17,000 individuals who until this day, remain missing. Being considered as one of the most dangerous breaches of human rights, enforced disappearances can even be qualified as a crime against humanity (Rome Statute, 1998, art. 7) (United Nations, 1998). This can be attributed to the grand effect it has on not only the primary target, but also on the indirect victims that are the families of the disappeared individuals. In other words, long-term consequences that go beyond the conflict. Both economic, social, cultural, and civil and political rights are violated through the absence of the right to know the truth, and the right to protection and family life (OHCHR, 2023).

It was quite difficult to keep track of the violations and of the party behind it. This was due to the inability of investigating on the grounds given the dangers, and the enormous number of violations that would take place, making it impossible to keep up with (Battel, 2011, p. 133). Many years after its end, the civil war remains a taboo subject among the Lebanese population, with more unresolved questions than answered ones (Haugbolle, 2010, p. 69). The society claims its unwillingness to go back remembering some of the darkest days they had to live, while political leaders avoid debating about it all together. One of the main articulated reasons behind this rationale was the acknowledgement of equal guilt among everyone, and the uselessness in serving justice as they would all, with no exception, be prosecuted for trial. To ensure this immunity, an Amnesty Law was passed in 1991 in order to guarantee the non-investigation of war-crimes, allowing the presumed perpetrators to remain in their positions of power. According to Saghie, the law applies to any crimes that breached human dignity, additionally to any crime against humanity (Saghieh, 2022, p. 255). This broad spectrum gives chance to a wide range of interpretation as to the protection of various human rights violations. Therefore, this closed nature of the topic makes it extremely difficult to investigate the multiple violations that took place, and in turn, prosecute them. It was until 2018, that another law was passed that declared the death of all 17,000 disappeared individuals (ICRC, 2022). This latter not only puts an end to the fate and whereabouts of the missing people, but also terminates any chances of investigation the committed crime or holding any of the responsible criminals accountable (Battel, 2011, p. 144).

When it comes to the economic, social, and cultural rights, the civil war had detrimental impacts on the established healthcare and education systems whether they were private or public. Regarding the medical field, the majority of the public facilities were gravely demolished making them unoperational and non-functional throughout the period of conflict. However, the massive number of war injuries and increasing demand required the ministry's budget to shift from the public sector to the private one to accommodate the dire need of society (Kronfol, 2006, p. 460). The state's failure to promote health related policies that would enhance stable and long-term partnership between the private and public sectors led to the predominance of the private healthcare division (Kronfol & Bashshur, 1989, p. 391). This not only had momentary effects, but rather influenced the development of the healthcare system entirely after the tense conflictual period of the civil war. The governmental system became strictly exclusive to covering the health costs based on the severity of the vulnerability of the patients, making it an ineffective and discriminatory. This comes to oppose the International Court of Justice's and the UN Human Rights Committee's affirmation that states the clear applicability of Human Rights law even in times of international armed conflict. This creates an obligation to fulfil and protect equally even in times of war (Amnesty International, 2006; Kronfol, 2006).

The similar inadequate establishment of governmental policies led to the collapse of the educational system in Lebanon during the civil war. This collapse gave an advantage to the private educational sector that proliferated throughout the crisis into becoming stronger than the public one, both on the financial, and quality levels. The war was particularly harsh to this sector given the massive destruction targeted to the buildings that shut down more than 156 governmental schools while another 60 were under occupation (Abdul Razak & Khalaf, 2019, p. 345). The ministry of higher education was lacking significant funding to restore the facilities, in addition to finance the academic years during the conflict, leading to the schools' closures for long periods of time, the decrease of the school schedule (three hours per day instead of seven), in addition to the removal of most of the taught school subjects. The degradation of the educational system contributed to an increase in the number of children joining non-state armed groups, increasing the level of illiteracy among the Lebanese population to more than 70%. The remaining population enrolled its children in private schools despite their heightened tuition fees given the failure of the state to rehabilitate and fund the public schools into re-opening their doors. This phenomenon weakened the governmental educational sector both on the short and long-term.

Human rights started being allocated on the basis of one's sect and religious belonging, completely disregarding the principle of equality that is behind them. Basically, warlords started taking advantage

of the non-existence of a working government to offer their sectarian followers the communal services the state is expected to provide. All of essential public goods, such as education, healthcare, and power supplies like gas and electricity were made available by civil societies that are meant to protect and defend very specific communities they deem as their own. By exploiting the needs of the people in times of vulnerability, the militias would grow more in power, as segregation among the people would be enhanced, and sectarian governance nurtured (Nagle & Clancy, 2019, p. 2).

Post Civil War

Out of the civil war was born the “Taif Agreement” that had a goal of ending the ongoing war by institutionalizing the sectarian dynamics that some claim to be the cause behind the conflict (Nagle & Clancy, 2019, p. 2). This agreement was reached by the heads of the political parties, the leaders of the different religious sects of the country, in the presence of the Syrian government, the Arab league, and the United Nations (Nagle & Clancy, 2019; Rosiny, 2015). Lebanon being a country where religious and sectarian pluralism clearly succumb, the agreement updated the power-sharing pacts of the country to better adapt all the existing sects and their respective representation by changing the Lebanese constitution. Most importantly, it guaranteed that the state can never be dominated by one group only. This is how the “pie-sharing” political dynamics started, dividing the legislative and parliamentary powers on the basis of religious quotas. The government was therefore made up of warlords representing each religious sect with his own political party. Hence, public institutions and governmental departments would be divided among sects, with each leader feeding his constituency by taking advantage of it. Through governmental theft of the public contracts, and the exclusive employment of supporters, the system was rendered inefficient, dysfunctional, and highly corrupt.

Nonetheless, the end of the civil war in 1990 brought with it a great deal of improvements to the human rights situation in the country. With the rule of law being upheld by the state once again, Lebanon had restored its respect to all obligations it has under the international human rights law and in its constitution, which was inexistent in the time of war. The promotion and protection of human rights within the Lebanese territory was executed by several state and non-state actors, including judiciary institutions, the bar association, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the parliamentary committee for human rights (Amnesty International, 1997). However, the country kept on witnessing several breaches of basic rights justifying those practices to fall under the need to maintain security. Citizens would suffer from arbitrary detention and arrests, absence of authority investigations of ill-treatment and torture allegations, as well as the failure to maintain the standards for fair trials of

political detainees. This is where contradictions are highlighted between the theoretical human rights claims in the constitution and the international binding documents, in opposition to the practices executed on the ground.

Regarding the arbitrary arrests and detention, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Lebanon is a party, forbids them and makes a pre-trial detainee notification mandatory (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1954, art. 9). Complimentary to the ICCPR is the Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP) of the Lebanese legislation which interdicts arrests without a concrete judicial order or warrant (Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 24, 2001). The obligations arising from the two legal documents however appear to be insufficient facing the arbitrary detentions on the Lebanese soil that would target members of specific groups. This practice would usually be witnessed after acts of violence that are politically motivated, exhibiting afterwards the failure of the state to uphold its duties towards its citizens.

Moving to the practice of torture and ill-treatment, article 7 of the ICCPR clearly prohibits both of them (1954). Similarly, the Lebanese Penal Code has article 401 that also stipulates the prohibition of both acts with disciplinary consequences in cases of breach. With the authorities targeting certain religious groups, there is a tendency towards executing those acts more often to them than to other members of the society, violating in turn the right to equality and non-discrimination (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, art. 7). The gravity of this breach intensifies further when the torture or ill-treatment creates a need for intensive medical care, and at times, death of the detainee while in custody (Amnesty International, 1991).

As to the right to fair trial, the ICCPR has article 14 that entitles every individual for a public, fair tribunal that is impartial and independent (1954). This extends to one's status of innocence until proven guilty, as well as having the ability to adequately prepare for one's non-delayed trial. On the national level, the Lebanese law comes once again, to uniformly compliment the international document with article 20 of the legislation that requisites a fair trial in due process of law. Article 70 of the CCP also makes the presence of a lawyer with the accused a mandatory aspect of the trial, without which, the defense cannot take place.

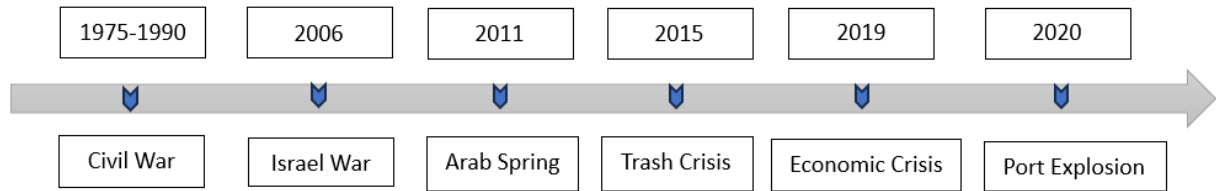
The end of the civil war and the massive human rights violations at the time also brought to the light the state of women in the country, that of existent inequality and gender-based bias. Despite the non-discriminatory guarantee by the constitution (Lebanese Constitution, 1926, art. 7), in addition to

the binding nature of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Lebanese women tend to face a great deal of inequality in practice within the Lebanese patriarchal society (Kikoski, 2000; Zein, 2005). This can be partly attributed to the multifaceted aspect of the legislation, where no explicit content bans discrimination based on gender, hence the shortfall to the protection needed, giving women unequal rights. It is worth mentioning that this is despite Lebanon being the first country in the Arab World that granted the right to vote back in 1952, after which the remaining Arab countries started following the trend. On the other hand, Lebanese women suffer from the Citizenship Law no. 15 that prohibits them from passing their Lebanese nationality to their foreign husbands and in turn, children since the law sets a priority to patrilineal inheritance. Additionally, the judicial system as a whole can be deemed as discriminatory against women by nature since they face a different treatment than men in most instances like in inheritance laws, nationality laws, and divorce laws (Zaatari, 2005). To name a few, women's access to the system is restricted by several factors, and the penal and criminal codes treat the two genders quite differently in cases of marital rape, and adultery charges for examples.

Finally, the right to an adequate standard of living started becoming jeopardized after the end of the civil war when the state could no longer provide the country with electricity for 24 hours a day. A great deal of governmental mismanagement and neglect of the public company of Electricite du Liban (EDL) as well as corrupt policies, and unsustainable planning led to the inability of the state to maintain the power all day long. These include the mismanagement of funds and in turn the lack of transparency, but also electricity theft and inefficient billing process. The population started paying two separate electricity bills, one for the public sector, and one for the private generators that would fill the gap when the state would cut off power (Haytyan, 2022). An additional privilege was easy access to clean and hygienic water after the civil war. The conflictual events severely damaged the sector's infrastructure, and with it, all of the source's control and regulations (Gharios, Frajalla, & El Hajj, 2021, p. 3675). The limited quantity and quality of access to water is despite the country's abundance in water sources all across its territory. This richness however, is missing political will to take over the private investments and better adjust the ineffective public participation (Makdisi, 2007).

Figure 1

Timeline of the Historical Adversities in Lebanon



2006 War

A few stable years later, conflict in Lebanon re-emerged in the summer of 2006 when Israel attacked the country after an escalation with one of the local political parties, Hizbullah. It only took the attack 24 hours to take the life of 38 civilians at once from the middle of their houses, directly stimulating international concerns (Amnesty International, 2006, p. 3). War crimes and human rights violations of all sorts were executed on the Lebanese territories given the wide range of hostilities that took place from both sides of the conflict. From air strikes, to bombings, to minefield creations, to air and sea blockades, the human rights council described this conflict as a “two-parallel efforts of air and ground war” (HRC, 2006, p. 9). The civilian casualties, and death toll rose significantly in no time, as well as the severe damages and devastation caused on all of the social, medical, and economic levels that spread throughout the territory. The south of the Lebanon, bordering the Israeli occupation, was home to most of the destruction, but so was the Beqaa valley, and the capital Beirut, where Hizbullah’s headquarters were located. Nearly a quarter of the country’s population was forced to be displaced due to the spread of bombardments widely, causing immediate danger in one’s very own village and home, and more than one million individual sought shelter in inhumane conditions that lacked basic needs like electricity and water (OCHA, 2006; Human Right Council, 2006, p. 17). Some citizen nonetheless remained trapped throughout the conflict with an inability to move due to either the risk of doing so (road attacks and air strikes), the destruction of roads and infrastructure on top of the creation of an air and sea blockade, or the lack of the necessary means (Amnesty International, 2006, p. 29). The numbers recorded the damage of more than 25,000 houses, and total destruction of more than 7,900. The conflict was so intense, that even humanitarian operations faced difficulties reaching the field, sometimes abandoning the mission and the rescue attempts and fleeing. This is the case of several Red Cross ambulances as well as a convoy by the World Food Programme that were met with missiles, immediately terminating the humanitarian assistance they were meant to provide to people in desperate

needs of it (Amnesty International, 2006, p. 45-46; HRC, 2006, p. 12). Some villages under siege in the south were even unreachable by any humanitarian institution for more than one week.

The impact this war has had on civilians is most certainly not a light one especially having barely recovered from the physical and mental losses of the previous civil war. Lebanese citizens were once again, faced with a destroyed economy that encompasses infrastructure damages, water and power disruptions, hospital destructions, school demolitions, a disabled airport, and knocked down factories. The country was therefore deprived of vital necessities that could simply not reach its people in dire need, creating major food and medication crisis as declared by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2006). According to the health ministry, the country had lost approximately 60% of its operational hospitals to either fuel shortages, or bombings and attacks, losing with it, the people's right to health (Amnesty International, 2006, p. 53; BBC, 2006). Alongside it comes the lack of access to electricity and water, due to previously mentioned infrastructure destruction of the water pumping stations (Chevigny, 2006; British Red Cross, 2006). People were obliged to rely on water wells to provide for their needs but those in turn required electricity to function, which was either disabled by the scarcity of fuel or the non-operative power sector. As to education, hundreds of thousands of children were deprived from accessing their right to schools after the war had badly damaged more than 300 schools and completely demolished around 50 (Logan, 2006). At times, there would be little to no destruction around the school, indicating it being the sole and main target of an attack (Amnesty International, 2006, p. 55). It can also be said that both parties had taken no precautions as to the protection of civilians, given that residential areas were made targets after the placement of weapons and combatants in such cities and villages.

Aside from the economic and social repercussion of the war, its impact on safety was also felt for a considerable amount of time after the ceasefire. According to the UN Mine Action Coordination Center (UNMACC), it would take a minimum of one full year to clear all the lethal bombs and grenades that were dispersed on the Lebanese grounds (Zarocostas, 2006, p. 515). The fact that they happened to be scattered in residential areas made it all the more difficult to protect civilians, specifically children who more often than not had to suffer from such tragedies (Amnesty International, 2006, p. 56).

All those war crimes, and serious humanitarian and human rights violations did not only endanger and wound people's lives, but rather scarred the mental wellbeing of civilians, and their psychological state as well. The disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks kept people wondering

whether they'd see light the next day or not. The failure of the Lebanese state's and army's intervention also had a role to play on the distress of the citizen. Having such an impactful war take place on the Lebanese soils without the republic of Lebanon being one of the conflictual parties raises a great deal of insecurities as to the what the future hold in terms of national security. Additionally, the absence of any kind of national and international investigations on the committed violations, followed by consequential convictions keeps the citizen on hold of their right to truth and right to justice. This plays a crucial role in the attribution of responsibility and judicial determination. Without it, nothing can similarly guarantee a sense of safety and security in one's very own nation, giving chance to the re-occurrence of such events that are not prosecuted for.

Following the war, the country witnessed a severe governmental repercussion that lasted 18 months; an impasse that interrupted all political activities. Tension was created between political parties requiring greater parliamentary representation in the cabinet and a consequential opposition to such a demand (Knio, 2008, p. 449). This governmental paralysis clearly also impacted the work that is meant to be invested into the rehabilitation of all the institutions that were destroyed throughout the recent war, to re-provide Lebanese citizen with their rights. Hence, citizen heavily relied on the services offered from political parties in power, that would finance once again, the education, healthcare, and power supply of their followers, ensuring their political contribution and support in return, in other words, clientelism. Another source of assistance as to the provision of people with their rights was the significant amount of humanitarian aid that was contributed by international actors. More than 940 millions US dollars were donated towards the reconstruction of the country and its infrastructure, citizen's houses and villages, schools and universities, the airports, and the energy and telecommunication institutions (Ghosn & Khoury, 2013). The donors were various international organizations such as the United Nations and European Union, but also individual countries such as the United States, and France. This funding played a significant role in the country's reconstruction, especially given the political crisis that was taking place, putting everything else on hold. Nonetheless, the funding was also a double-edged knife, that substantially benefitted the survival of the corrupt elite rulers of the country since the assistances would come to both fund public services but also hide the inefficiency of the public sectors, and in turn, the leaders. While the country's economy was going through a recession due to its unsustainable politics, lack of transparency, and political clientelism, the influx of foreign funds revived it. Although such sums can be invested greatly towards an economic growth and development, no such trend was recorded however thanks to the money-sucking rulers of Lebanon (Issaev & Korotayev, 2022, p. 77). The stability being artificial, could not last for long after

the funds started decreasing, putting the country once again, into a recession. The economic instability in Lebanon is something that was bound to happen with the corrupt ruling elite that solely ran the public sectors to their own personal advantages. Heads of state would benefit from inflated governmental contracts personally, but also from their attributed administrative roles through the selective sectarian employment of their followers in the public sector completely disregarding meritocratic considerations. Not only has it created a dysfunctional bureaucratic system, but also a burden on the state's budget, and economic capacity (Zakaria, 2020, p. 67; Salloukh, 2019, p. 48). The emergence of such a public sector could not be anything but corrupt and distorted, failing in turn to provide the people with the services it is meant to offer.

Previous Movements

Multiple small movements were recorded in Lebanon after 2010, all driven from the same frustration towards the socioeconomic decadence, political corruption, and state's failure to provide its obligations to the people. It started with the Arab Spring in 2011 that was not as intense as other countries but that nonetheless led to the collapse of the ruling government after the resignation of several ministers (Issaev & Korotayev, 2022, p. 80). Four years later, the Lebanese people took down the streets once again for a civil movement after the streets of Beirut had been compiled with uncollected trash. A crisis of trash disposal was left unresolved by the government that failed to come up with alternatives to the ending trash collection contracts due to the politicians' inability to come to agreements as to how to benefit from the contract (DW, 2015). Not only did this situation show the negligence of the ruling parties, but also to what extent they would put their own personal interests ahead of their responsibilities towards the people. This is the case given the health crisis this garbage situation had created, endangering the wellbeing of the Lebanese people in their very own country, by their very own rulers. Once more, a one-year long political paralysis had hit the country afterwards, following the end of the president's mandate, with a failure to agree on the election of a new one, followed by a self-extension voted by the members of the parliament that kept themselves in power (Kraidy, 2016, p. 21).

In the meantime, the public sector was growing at an alarming rate, from 175,000 state employees in the year 2000 to around 300,000 in 2017 (Salloukh, 2019, p. 46). For instance, the education sector recorded an impressive four students to one teacher ratio in 16% of the public schools in the country in 2017. This nonetheless is misleading given the quality of education that was being offered, often being mediocre. Having a capacity to accommodate 3,400 new job openings per year, the

Lebanese economy was dealing instead with 23,000 ones annually. This would not be as problematic had they been quality recruits that would benefit the economy and the growth of the country, but on the contrary, inefficient and unproductive functioning was more of the reality behind it. Naturally, the total governmental expenditures witnessed a significant increase, with in turn, a decrease in fiscal space. This led to the state's continuous failure to provide citizen with basic services such as water and electricity. To obtain them, people have had to seek private suppliers, having to eventually pay two separate bills, a public and a private one (Zakaria, 2020, p. 67). In parallel, such services would be made readily available to the elite rulers. The same would apply to different sectors such as the healthcare or education ones, where a trend was noticed with a preference being attributed to the private sector, that would guarantee both better services and better quality of what one seeks. That being said, Lebanese are forced to pay exorbitant prices to ensure their very own academic and health wellbeing while the private sectors go on strikes out of the blues, or are just incompetent to provide people with their needed services.

In 2018, after nine years, the country finally underwent parliamentary elections that had been postponed three times since 2009. The politicians would attribute the cause of the adjournment to several reasons being security worries, political concerns, and conflict over the electoral laws (France 24, 2017). What came out from this delay was a new electoral law that is claimed to make the elections a more inclusive and transparent process. Unfortunately however, the same sectarian forces that have had been in power for three decades held the majority participation to the 2018 parliamentary elections. Facing them, were a minority of allies made up of civil society movements that were not powerful enough to break the corrupt cycle, giving once more power to the sectarian elite to govern the country. For politicians to remain this powerful for nearly a century, it means that it is the people, at the end of the day, who have been attributing them such capacities.

All of the small unsuccessful movements as well as the country's accumulating corruption were creating momentum that would peak in 2019, after the decayed system would at last crumble.

2019 Revolution

On a random Thursday, the Lebanese government voted on a decision to instigate a tax on all WhatsApp users in Lebanon in order to generate income to the state's budget (Issaev & Korotayev, 2022, p. 79). This new legislation was only emblematic since it then took the news two hours to initiate street protests and manifestations all over the capital's center. People from all different backgrounds, ethnicities, socioeconomic status, and ages unified across the country to voice their wish to overthrow

the political ruling class (Makdisi, 2021, p. 437). The unexpected plot was the participation of the followers of multiple political parties, which symbolized a great deal of hope for the prospects of the country that was going through a severe crisis. Those individuals are the ones who would usually take the political parties upon their personal identities by rooting and voting for them, but also supporting and defending their ideologies. People were uniting in the name of the country, demanding political reform on the basis of social justice and equality. The protests spread from the capital to the different cities of the country, and later on, to the different cities in the world home to Lebanese expats. The main slogan this revolution held was “Kelloun Yaane Kelloun” (all of them means all of them), being heard everywhere by everyone in demand of the removal of every single politician in parliament, no matter who he/she is and what their affiliation is (Karam & Majed, 2022). The power of these uprisings were the fact that nothing was staged or created and organized by some civil societies or parties. Its inclusive cross-sectarian nature assembled the people with chants, and gatherings, but also sittings in front of political institutions, and countrywide roadblocks.

The first achievement of the revolt came in ten days after its start, with the resignation of the Prime Minister Saad El Hariri, bringing down the system and not just the government. From what the people thought was a victory, became the slow uncovering of a huge Ponzi scheme. Bankruptcy was declared by the country for its very first time, the national currency lost more than 80% of its value back then leading to a hyperinflation, and the banking sector started restricting the withdrawal of depositors' own savings (Makdisi, 2021, p. 442; Issaev & Korotayev, 2022, p. 79). As it turns out, a public debt of 150% of GDP, one of the highest worldwide, had been accumulated by the corrupt political governance. While this number is not unusual, it is particularly tricky in the Lebanese economy that lacks diversification, is heavily reliant on services, and debt defaulting (Saab, 2005; World Bank, 2021; Reuters, 2022) The banks then started implementing unlawful capital control policies, erupting further concerns in the people who were told that their funds were trafficked outside the Lebanese soils (Mroue, 2021). This ad hoc capital control was imposed on the citizen, limiting their ability to withdraw and transfer their personal savings in foreign currencies (U.S. Embassy, 2020). A month of protests were still not enough to take down the political class that was unresponsive to the streets' voice (Fakhoury, 2019 p. 3). Instead, forces started being deployed in the name of the state in order to put an end to the peaceful manifestations that had disabled stable life in the country (Barroso Cortes & Kechichian, 2020, p. 120). Severe and violent clashes started being witnessed on the streets between the security forces and the protestors, with an excessive use of tear gas, beatings, rubber bullets, and live ammunition (Amnesty International, 2020). Knowing that those forces only follow the

orders of the state, the politicians have then violated multiple of the protestors' rights such as and failed to protect them. Those include the failure to protect peaceful protesters, use of excessive force, arbitrary detention, and forcibly dispersing protesters.

Simultaneous hits and adversaries were that of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the weather deterioration that slowly started silencing the streets that were once booming for a regime change. It was mainly the nation wide lockdown and precautionary measures that had put an end to the movements. What the lockdown also did was further weaken the economy that was already collapsing (Schoorel, Luitjens, & Van Der Reijden, 2020). The multi-faceted crisis came to hit all the different sectors of the country inducing a never ending chaos in the lives of the Lebanese people. Turmoil was present in every aspect of the country ranging from education, to safety, to healthcare, to electricity, to finances.

Beirut Blast

Less than a year later, in the middle of the summer season, the capital, Beirut, was destroyed to the core, in a matter of minutes. At 6pm, on the 4th of August 2020, a container in the Port of Beirut caught fire, leading to two consecutive explosions at 6:07pm with a 30 second interval between them. Specialists claimed the blast to be one of the biggest non-nuclear explosions in all of history by specialists (Helou, El-Hussein, Aciksari, Salio, Della Corte, Von Schreeb, & Ragazzoni, 2021, p. 2200). As it turns out, 2750 tons of ammonium nitrate were stored in an unsafe way, at the doors of the capital, in a populated area with the full knowledge of the state (El Sayed, 2022, p. 1203). In other words, this explosive material was stored consciously by the ruling parties for over six years, knowing how life threatening they can be. Indeed, the numbers recorded more than 6,000 severe injuries, 200 deaths, 100 missing bodies, and 300,000 displaced and homeless individuals as a result. The explosion was so powerful that it was heard and felt in all of Palestine, Syria, Cyprus, and Turkey, with an estimated earthquake magnitude of 3.3 (El Sayed, 2022, p. 1203; Helou, et al., 2021, p. 2200). People were inside their houses, heading home, or in a café, when they saw life being stripped away from them. The entire city was left in ruins; houses were shattered to the ground, cars had exploded from the intensity of the shock, the capital's infrastructure was deeply destroyed, all adding to an estimate of 10 to 15 billion US dollars in damage. Midst the pandemic, 500 hospital beds were lost with the destruction of three major hospitals in the capital, while three others were severely damaged. A significant number of medical supplies were also lost in the explosion, with them being stocked in 17 containers at the explosion site, adding onto the already existing medical supply scarcity of the country

(Abouzeid, Habib, Jabbour, Mokdad, & Nuwayhid, 2020, p. 1381). This was problematic given the medical emergency this catastrophe created especially with around 2000 medical staff having been among the victims.

This explosion was the last thread of trust and patience the people could have possibly had for the men in power. No responsible, conscious individual would be aware of such devastating possibility, and would sleep on it. To say the least, knowledge of the existence of this amount of nitrate ammonium was among government officials, the Lebanese customs, port authorities, the army, and the judiciary, all of which took no measures whatsoever to ensure public safety, and prevent such a disaster from taking place (El Sayed, 2022, p. 1203). This is in addition to the multiple warnings and advice the authorities received as to the risks posed by the container, that were all left unanswered. People were left homeless, permanently disabled, and indefinitely scarred. Just when people thought things could not get worse, they had hit rock bottom.

Almost three years after the occurrence of this event, no one is held accountable for this crime. Having violated without questioning the right to life under the international human rights law, the political body keeps on delaying one way or another the required investigations on the case. This puts into light all the more the extent to which even the judiciary sector is bound to political bias and interference (HRW, 2022). Another violation to be added to the interminable list in this case is the right to truth of the victims and their families that are kept with no answers as to the crimes committed.

Chapter Three: Lebanon's Current Situation

Fast forward to today, the country and its situation did not remotely improve but rather seems to be infinite, only deteriorating further in a snowball manner as time passes. The world bank claims that Lebanon's crisis is "the most devastating, multi-prolonged crisis in modern history" (2022). The country was even reclassified from an upper middle income country to a lower middle income country, a movement that usually is only witnessed in countries undergoing war. A significant drop of 36.5% of the GDP per capita was recorded between 2019 and 2021, indicating to what extent the country's economy is plummeting. In Lebanon, more than half of the people live below the poverty line today (Abouzeid et al., 2020, p.1381). The decline of their purchasing power is putting Lebanese people at risk of homelessness, and starvation. This is due to the severe currency depreciation and the unwitnessed inflation level that led to the loss of the Lebanese Lira of more than 97% of its value. In other words, if the minimum wage used to be of 450 USD, it is estimated to be of 7.5 USD in the new exchange rate (Alsamara, Dbouk, & Farouk, 2022). Hence, prices of good and services are skyrocketing in Lebanon while the salaries remain the same. That is, food, rent, schools, healthcare, recreational activities, and everything remaining. And given the originally frail and fragmented structure of the public sectors, Lebanese people are left to deal with the crisis alone, unable to count on the state's support since it is it that put them in this situation.

Right to Health

Lebanon has always been renowned before the crisis to be the hub of medical and healthcare services all around the MENA region (Ismail, 2023; Sanayeh & El Chamieh, 2023, p. 2). More specifically, it was the private medical sector that would attract multiple foreigners seeking safe and trustworthy treatments. Similarly, Lebanese people have always had a preference for the private medical sector as compared to the public one. Nonetheless, the trends have shifted today towards the public sector for the sole reason of people's inability to afford the arising costs of healthcare. This is problematic for many reasons. To start with, the sector is not capable of accommodating such an increased demand, especially not amidst such an economic crisis. The healthcare system has been greatly privatized since the end of the civil war, with more than 86% of the hospital beds belonging to private hospitals. This made the public healthcare system somewhat reliant on the private one, which throughout the different crises, seemed to take the upper hand (Hamadeh, Kdouh, Lereschem, & Leaning, 2021, p. 2). With time, this led to the progressive decrease in state budget to the ministry of public health, on top of the predominant corruption, which both led to the failure to establish an esteemed public healthcare system.

The consecutive crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Beirut blast, and the economic crisis also did not allow the sector to develop smoothly and exacerbated it all the more.

The COVID-19 situation that required extensive medical care, budgeting, and attention, was met with unprepared and unqualified hospitals, clinics, and scarce material to survive this international chaos. The lack of medical supplies, hospital beds, and medicine in the country's public health facilities was associated to the state's budget cut of the healthcare system after the start of the economic crisis (Amnesty International, 2023). To add to it, the power cuts and absence of electricity due to fuel shortages did not make things easier, especially in the hospital setting where electric devices that are crucial to the pandemic such as ventilators and incubators.

The inability of one to afford private healthcare with exorbitant inflation prices, and the unprepared public medical institutions led to one's health being greatly endangered. The Beirut port explosion then came to add gasoline on the fire amidst the pandemic urgency, with the destruction of three major hospitals in the capital that would accommodate most of the needs of the area (Fleifel & Abi Farraj, 2022). The public hospitals could neither accommodate the societal needs in terms of budget and financing, nor in terms of resources available. People in dire need of medical care were hence left with no place to go to seeking such services.

In addition to that, the explosion also destroyed around 17 container of medicine and medical equipment shipped for national distribution. This further added weight to the scarcity of drugs and medications in the country that had forced people to provide for their needs from neighboring countries (Fleifel & Abi Farraj, 2022, p. 3). The medical supply shortages can be mainly attributed to the economic crisis that made the prices of drugs reach five times their original prices. This is due to the fact that more than 80% of medications found in Lebanon are usually imported from abroad (Das, 2021). Therefore, medicine has become either way too expensive to afford, or too rare to find in pharmacies and hospitals. The ability to afford medical assistance has become a privilege only a certain socioeconomic class could enjoy. This exhibited an unprecedented increase in public hospital emergency room admissions to clinical chronic cases purely caused by the stoppage of treatment such antidiabetic drugs, blood pressure stabilizers, diuretics, etc. (Antonios, 2021). When people had to make a choice as to their basic necessities, they opted for food and housing as a priority compared to medicine and healthcare.

Finally, the country is witnessing once more an increased phenomena of brain drain. That is, shortages of medical staff are being more and more recorded in hospitals and medical institutions. The healthcare personnel is being tempted abroad with lucrative offers in more stable countries and work conditions on all of the financial, social, and mental aspects of the job. Medical staff is mainly settling in the gulf and the U.S. (Webster, 2021). So far, more than 40% of the country's doctors and 30% of the country's nurses have immigrated, leaving the healthcare sector in crumbles (Iskandarani, 2021). This trend is called by the WHO director as a threat to the frail health sector (Ghebreyesus & Al Mandhari, 2021).

This multifaceted health chaos is gravely dangerous to all of Lebanon's population but more so to the medically vulnerable. The hospitals' fuel shortages and the lack of governmental power are causing surgical delays, medical complications, and life-threatening medical deterioration. The head of Medecins Sans Frontieres in Lebanon Joao Martins stated that the medical situation in Lebanon is so alarming that people are today, prone and likely to die of avoidable and treatable causes due to the lack of power, medical supplies, and staff. According to the director general of one of the biggest public hospitals in Lebanon, Dr. Firas Abiad, the state used to provide the hospital with 20 hours of electricity per day, which decreased to four hours per day at first, and then to no supply throughout the entire 24 hours. This is forcing him to make inhumane decisions as to prioritize between one case and another.

Hence, Lebanese people's inability to afford private healthcare led to their shift towards the public sector that is originally frail and in a strained state of emergency due to the ongoing crisis (Bou Sanayeh & El Chamieh, 2023). Their right to health comes to be greatly jeopardized in all the different aspects of it. Lebanese people do not have adequate access to the sector, limiting the services provided and their quality. They are also accessing those services on an unequal basis, with the minority of people belonging to the higher socioeconomic status being able to afford healthcare and its increasing prices, leaving the middle and lower classes helpless.

Amnesty international declared the violation of the Lebanese authorities to the right to health and right to life of the Lebanese population (2021). The ruling parties have clearly failed to safeguard and uphold their obligations towards the people that are today, unable to both access and afford healthcare, highlighting their negligence and recklessness. The government, being well aware of the severity of the situation has failed to put in place a social protection plan that would ensure the access of the people to healthcare. This is an aberrant situation given the adherence of Lebanon to multiple human rights treaties that emphasize the right to health as an outmost priority and necessity. The same applies to

international humanitarian conventions that also highlight the arising obligations of states towards the fulfillment of people's right to health. The country has also become a participating state of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development which is particularly ironic seeing the retrogressing state of things. The ICESCR, to which Lebanon is a ratifying party, sets out obligations for the country to fulfil on a national level. They are the obligation to respect, to protect, and to fulfil. These entail that the achievement of the right to health requires progressive realization through minimum core obligations that have instant effects (OHCHR). In Lebanon's case, even those core obligations are absent since they are meant to ensure equality and non-discrimination, and the taking of concrete steps of an action plan that would guarantee the progressive realization of the right to health. On a visit to the country, Olivier De Schutter, special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, attributed responsibility to the Lebanese state and central bank for the man-made crisis that led to all sorts of human rights violations, including that of health (HRC, 2022). Additionally, in the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural rights highlighted the way governmental corruption and political nepotism led to the significant loss of resources such as the public budget that was spent in an untransparent way on private actors rather on the implementation on national plans towards the achievement of the ICESCR (HRC, 2021).

Right to Education

The education sector is far from being exempted from the chaos of the country. The same scenario somewhat applies to it. One can notice a significant segregation between the private and the public education sectors with access to both being based on one's socioeconomic state of things. The higher quality of education has always been attributed to the private sector with substantial poor levels found in the public one. As a matter of fact, those former educational institutions are ranked among the top 1000 academic establishments in the world (QS Ranking, 2023). It goes without saying nonetheless, that accessing those esteemed schools and colleges require a minimal ability to afford the enrollment costs. That is, society happens to be once again dispatched based on one's financial capabilities. With both the middle and upper socioeconomic classes enrolling their children in private schools, the lower income families are left with no choice but public education. This aspect of things gives a great advantage to graduates of private schools in terms of job and graduate opportunities, further widening the existing inequality gap.

The reason the public education sector happens to be this weak is no other but once more the ruling parties' corrupt management of it. Clientelism runs the field, with the ministry hiring unqualified

staff for political purposes and state advantages, rendering the academic level mediocre. The public sector is actually home to teachers who hold very poor, to no qualifications whatsoever in education (Abdul-Hamid, Sayed, Krayem, & Ghaleb, 2018, p.31). The government would also attribute inefficient policies and corrupt budgeting strategies that would lead to the inability to run maintenance on the outdated facilities, updates the academic curriculums, or the capacity to accommodate all students (Awada, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic, Beirut explosion, and economic crisis also did their share of the equation, further exacerbating the situation. With all schools and universities being shut closed across the country because of the pandemic, private institutions navigated through the health crisis smoothly with technological adaptation and advancements. The public sector on the other hand, was far from being properly equipped for this transition, neither in terms of material resources nor the necessary trainings and workshops required for the distanced teaching (Hdaife, 2023). This also applies to the students who unfortunately, did not have the sufficient means to be technologically ready to keep up with online classes. In other words, students coming from underprivileged backgrounds could not afford new computers, smartphones, or tablets, especially when the household had more than one enrolled child.

The economic crisis weakened the sector all the more with the teachers' salaries being severely devaluated, the scarcity of fuel and power cuts, as well as the increased demand of enrollment that the sector could not accommodate. To start with, the devaluated salaries (as low as 40 US dollars per month) and the inflated life costs are leading to more and more teaching strikes in the sector. Overnight, teachers are putting a stop to the academic life of students in order to fight against their insufficient pay, low transportation costs, unacceptable teaching conditions, and absence of social security and hospital coverage. This means that over one million students are put out of school with such movements (Save the Children, 2023; Homs, 2022). Nonetheless, this one million only represents the children that were actually enrolled, while according to UNICEF, another million has already been deprived from an education since they could not afford the tuition fees of the new academic year in first place (Alarabiya News, 2022). The figures showed that enrollment decreased from 60% in 2021 to 43% in 2022, an alarming downfall to the country.

The fuel shortages and power cuts have also come to severely interrupt the academic cycles of schools, especially that of the public sectors. For instance, the start of the academic year in 2021 had to be postponed due to the inability of the staff and students to commute back and forth to the schools. These shortages are also problematic when it comes to the power cuts that plunge the classroom into

total darkness with no adequate lighting, further getting in the way of education (The National News, 2021). While some institutions offered the alternative of distance learning, it happens to be more complicated in the public sector as previously discussed. This puts once more, the education of children in jeopardy, with hostile environments as education hubs.

Finally, the shift in the trend from the private to the public institutions has been a major concern and problem to the sector. With the currency devaluation and the purchasing power substantially decreasing, parents are left with no choice but to transfer their once private school pupils to what is perceived to be the inferior public sector. With more than 40% of those students relocating, a new unbearable load is dropped on the public institutions that are not necessarily apt to accommodate (Awada, 2021). That is, public schools and universities were never equipped to handle large numbers of students given their historical reliance on the private sector. For instance, the public establishments were unable to afford some of the basic teaching supplies and resources such as papers, chalk, and lab equipment due to allocation of insufficient budget by the ministry of education. Hence, parents are forced to make a decision evaluating between the benefits of enrolling their children in such degrading institutions or their employment for income purposes (Ray, 2022). This is further increasing the illiteracy rates of the country that had already scored horribly in 2018 with the Programme for International Student Assessment finding that basic literacy was not achieved among two third of Lebanese students. This ranked the students among the worst performers in 70 countries, being approximately four years behind students from OECD countries (Abdul Hamid & Yassine, 2020).

It is then safe to say that one of the oldest established human rights, that of education, is clearly absent in the Lebanese territory. A regional educational hub as such, failing to provide its growing generations with what allegedly is a weapon that would get the country and its people out of the mess it is currently in in terms of poverty, inequalities, and unsustainable development. Despite education being a pillar to the prosperous development of a country and its future generations, it is severely disregarded, and overlooked as other matters are prioritized. The OHCHR on the other hand deems that states should consider it as one of the greatest financial investments they could make.

This comes in contradiction to the several human rights treaties the country has ratified that dignify education as a “stepping stone to other human rights” (UNESCO, 2023). Aside from article 26 of the UDHR (1948) and article 13 of the ICESCR (1976), Lebanon is party since 1964 to the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education, the specialized international instrument dedicated to the full realization of the right to education. Its binding nature is specifically powerful

given the inexistence of any reservations, making any ratifying party obliged to conform to all the provisions of the convention.

Complimentary to the international binding documents, the Lebanese system in itself holds in its legislative documents importance to the right to education that is that is highlighted in both the Lebanese constitution and the national accord document.

On his visit to Lebanon, the special rapporteur emphasized the way this man-made crisis comes to violate multiple human rights of the Lebanese people, with the absence of access to education being one of them (HRC, 2022). While the disruption of students' academic years might not seem like a major priority given the other urgent matters of the country, this negligence comes to have grave long-term consequences as to the rising generation. Failing to uphold its obligation towards the fulfillment of the right to education, the country is leaving its people with no options but to stop the learning of their children after having diverted their resources to other necessities such as rent, basic food, and health (HRC, 2020).

Hence, while Lebanon's laws, legislations, and international ratifications are all in place to protect the people's right to access education, the ineffective implementation and enforcement of those laws come to deprive the community from it.

Right to Adequate Standards of Living

The third and final right this thesis will be investigating will be that of adequate standards of living, more specifically, the right to electricity. With the state and Central bank's bankruptcy, the frail public sector that was never able to provide all-day electricity to its people since the end of the civil war is now struggling to even provide two hours of power per day (Yuan, 2022, p. 1503). The remaining hours of the day are expected to be filled by the private generator industry that has substantially bloomed in the past three years alongside the ongoing catastrophes of the country.

The state's power supplier Électricité du Liban (EDL) has been failing for more than thirty years now to be properly run by the government. It is no surprise that corrupt management, misuse of power, and unsustainable policies overtook the sector, steering it into collapse (Strategic Comments, 2022; HRW, 2023). This led to electricity blackouts becoming a prominent feature in the country for decades now, with EDL only being able to provide households with 12 to 21 hours of power per day, depending on which area one resides in. Only 63% of the demand was met by EDL (HRC, 2022). This created a need for people in Lebanon to pay two separate electricity bills, one subsidized for the state

and another for the private generators industry that would come in to fill the power gap of the state (Hably & Hajar, 2019). Nonetheless, it is no surprise that the country's crisis only exacerbated the situation with state electricity becoming all the more scarce, and available for a maximum of two hours per day, if any. This entailed the increased reliance on private generators that originally are not meant to be functional for such long hours. Additionally, those power-run generators faced adversity when the country underwent fuel shortages, with private electricity bills sky-rocketing beyond anyone's financial capacity, consuming the majority of people's resources. This led to low-income households' inability to afford those monthly generator bills that were dollarized while their income remained entirely in the devaluated Lebanese currency. 88% of the monthly income were exhausted by those generator bills leaving very little space for other basic needs, and increasing the number of families under the poverty line (HRW, 2023). This led to a shift in priorities, with only the wealthiest minority affording electricity, while the remaining population bearing outages for more than nine hours per day. Some families would even go full days without power from any of the two sources, helpless and unable to make ends meet. This social segregation as to electricity access showcases nothing but the increased inequalities in the country.

In today's world and society, electricity has become a crucial necessity for one to live a dignified and respectful life. Its absence comes to greatly influence the standards of living of the Lebanese population, extending to all the different sectors, be it private or public. Life in Lebanon had to be adjusted based on the electricity trends. As previously mentioned, the health and education sectors are two of many that have greatly been influenced by the power cuts. All the public sectors have also been victim of great shortages, if not complete blackouts, given the state's failure to provide.

The private life of people has also been greatly demeaned given the electricity cuts that come interrupting everyone's daily life, but also endangering it greatly. The trend of private generators allowed for their presence to be quite noticeable in the city, especially in residential areas, putting its inhabitants at heightened risks of air pollution and lung diseases given their diesel burning nature (Yuan, 2022). People are also getting more and more food poisoned with the inadequate refrigeration of food and aliments, further deteriorating the health status of Lebanese citizen. Henceforth, the aspect of having to compromise between food, education, health, and electricity, as well as the downgrading living conditions depriving the Lebanese from equal, reliable, and affordable access to electricity even after doing so is nothing but a violation of the internationally protected right to an adequate standard of living (Save the Children, 2021). This is given how fundamental and crucial electricity is to every

aspect of one's life in society, affecting other right-related aspects such as pumping and receiving water (HRW, 2023).

These daily violations are once again attributed to the authorities that proved to what extent electricity is not solely an amenity but a basic right the government is obliged to provide its people with (Aljazeera, 2023). The state is therefore required to ensure the equal access and provision of electricity to all the Lebanese citizen urgently as they are failing to uphold their international duties with the regards to the multiple binding documents they are party of. Both the UDHR (art. 25) and the ICESCR (art. 11) do not explicitly mention electricity as right but recognize it falling under the rights to adequate standards of living in order to better achieve development and wellbeing. Also being a participating state to the 2030 agenda for SDGs, the Lebanese state is legally bound to fulfill goal seven, of ensuring equal access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy to all. The progressive realization of the right to electricity has therefore been a responsibility for the state from the moment it ratified the legal documents. Due to the corrupt management and the chronic failed financing and budgeting, the sector sank. It is cynical however that the progressive realization is more of a retrogressive one in the Lebanese power sector.

While renewable sources of energy such as solar and wind power could be highly effective given Lebanon's location and weather, the state disregarded such investments since their own interests were accounted for with their unconditional control over EDL, ensuring that their personal needs were being met, before that of the people. Playing on the sector's budget and diesel pricing, the politicians were better off with fossil fuel induced energy than renewable sources of it (Ahmad, McCulloch, Al-Masri, & Ayoub, 2022, p. 11; MoE & UNDP, 2015, p. 3). The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights Olivier De Schutter clearly claimed that electricity does not have to be made free, but at decent and accessible prices to all given the grave consequences its absence has on all the human rights aspects (HRC, 2022, p. 17). The latter urges an intervention on the matter since the impact it has today on lower-income groups (more than half of the Lebanese population) is detrimental.

Chapter Four: The International Community

International Intervention and Lebanon

The state of chaos the country is going through is far from unknown or unspoken of. On the contrary, Lebanon has always been greatly supported and cared for from the international community. That is both multilateral donors such as the international bodies and forces like the World Bank, the European Union, and INGOs, and bilateral donors such as individual countries like the United States, France, and Saudi Arabia to name a few (Mahmalat, Atallah, & Zoughaib, 2023). The abundance of religion in the country also allowed multiple religious actors to assist with the needs of Lebanon and its people. This trend is not a new one nonetheless. The country has been receiving international donor aid since the 1970s, with motives varying between economic, humanitarian, political, and religious (Combaz, 2013). These were used for the reconstruction of the country after the multiple instances of destruction and war, but also for the development of its services and public sectors, and finally, its security. However, this plethora of grants and donations be it loans or humanitarian aid, had started to drop as time passed given the accumulation of sovereign debt, as well as the lack of transparency from the government as to the in the allocation of humanitarian donations and assistances (Bouchabke & Haddad, 2021). Financing parties started noticing the corrupt trends of the country and its ruling forces (Khatib, 2020), especially after being strongly blamed for the port explosion, and the country's plummeting crisis

The international attention granted to Lebanon since the end of the civil war in 1990 through major donor conferences like the Paris II, Paris III, the Rome II, and the CEDRE (Reliefweb, 2007; Schenker, 2007; Mogherini, 2018; CEDRE, 2018), gave great opportunities for the government to work on the country's development and proliferation. But this turned into an financial reliance trap instead, with the lack of transparency, professional consultations, and national development plans leading to a significant increase in public debt and inefficiency

This led to a shift in the allocation of funds from one actor to another, being from governmental institutions to civil societies. Beirut port explosion was the first major event after which funders started allocating their assistances to local organizations to deploy them where needed, instead of relying on the state to do so. The Lebanese Red Cross was one of the major actors, as well as other local non-governmental organizations with each having different aims. While some had an aim to reconstruct, others were meant to provide medical care, and others to simply distribute financial assistance to the victims of the blast (Lebanese Red Cross, 2020).

In the recent chaotic situation of the country, the European Union announced in March 2023 60 million euros of humanitarian aid after a visit of the commissioner for Crisis Management that allocated them to the people in most dire need. This aid will come in the form of food assistance, health and education services, and cash support (European Commission, 2023). It adds to a total of 860 million euros of EU humanitarian funding since 2011 to Lebanon (ECHO, 2023). Such assistances are distributed to the people through the works of local NGOs, UN agencies, and international organizations, each specialized in a specific field, targeting a specific gap in the life of the Lebanese population.

The country's meltdown also contributed to the extension of the World Bank's 300 million US dollars of the previous 2021 Emergency Crisis and COVID-19 Response Social Safety Net project (ESSN) of 246 million US dollars. The world bank aims to benefit and protect the most impacted populations, but also support Lebanon's development of a social safety system (World Bank, 2023). This ESSN project has been building a foundation for social system targeting poverty through effective and transparent cash transfers to the most vulnerable. The subsequent monitoring highlighted the extent of gravity the situation is given the majority of expenditures being on food and healthcare, two of the most basic human needs.

These basic needs are also being provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) that is targeting the most vulnerable Lebanese families through their 17.4 million US dollars humanitarian assistance (U.S. Embassy Beirut, 2023). Similarly to other aids, the U.S. embassy does not guarantee handing over the assistance to the government but rather distributes it to the population through NGOs, medical organizations and the World Food Program (WFP), all of which are partners to the embassy. This mechanism allows for transparency but also adequate monitoring, something that would not be available had they collaborated with the government directly.

Humanitarian Aid for Health Crisis

What characterizes the embassy, is its identification of the gaps that are worsening the people's vulnerabilities and attending to them. For instance, midst the medical crisis and shortages, the U.S. government enriched the ministry of public health with 97 tons of medical supplies and medicines that were gone missing in the Lebanese territories (U.S. Embassy Beirut, 2021). They included essential drugs for chronic illnesses, surgical and medical supplies, and nutritional commodities. This one million U.S. dollars worth of shipment was handled by UNICEF that then ensured its delivery across

public healthcare facilities. This allowed the inadequately prepared hospitals to open its doors and provide its services to the most impacted individuals in need of medical assistance or intervention.

This is on top of the multiple humanitarian assistances the country received after its devastating port explosion. Most of the donations aimed to rehabilitate and attend to the medical needs of the country after this catastrophe that had crippled the healthcare sector, but also reconstruct the lost capital that was home to many. A direct release of 14.1 million U.S. dollars was executed from the UN followed by additional international aid given the state's complete inability to manage their man-made disaster (OCHA, 2021).

Humanitarian Aid for Education Crisis

The education sector has also been greatly assisted internationally to accommodate the right to education of the people. That is, UNICEF, the World Bank, and INGOs such as Save the Children International (SCI) have allocated a great deal of donations in order to facilitate the access to education of Lebanese citizen (Alarabiya News, 2022). This is done through the development of the outdated infrastructure of educational institutions, the provision of school resources, and the adequate trainings to education professionals. Those donations were also used to offer scholarships and grants to students whose financial situation prohibits them from pursuing an education. USAID is particularly known for its generous scholarship grants and education funding across the territory. Such interventions came to replace what is supposed to be the role of the state to create an inclusive environment that is accessible to all no matter what the circumstances are. But such assistances do not account for all the deficiencies of the sector (HRW, 2023). Therefore, despite all the effort dedicated to it, certain aspects cannot but be attended for by the state. This includes the allocated depreciated salaries of the employees who still go on strikes, putting the academic year on pause. Similarly, the fuel shortages cannot be handled by the humanitarian aids that eventually will come to an end, putting the schools in the same problematic situations they have previously been in due to the lack of adequate governmental budgeting and therefore funding.

Humanitarian Aid for Power Crisis

The power sector is also a prominent target by multiple organizations and humanitarian aids. After realizing the impact power cuts had on the people, and electricity being a basic human rights, significant attention was granted to the field. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed several programs such as the Environment, Climate and Energy Programme that promote sustainable energy and improve the power sector through natural resources the country could invest in

(UNDP, 2022). The solar for health initiative was also introduced by the UNDP and the German Government who worked towards providing a number of public hospitals with sources of renewable energy that guarantee power to the institutions, allowing them to keep running amid the increased demand. A similar mobilization was invested by UNICEF, that implemented solar power on vaccination centers all around the country (UNICEF, 2023).

On a larger spectrum, the World bank collaborated with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) on allocating funds towards the electricity sector in Lebanon (EBRD). Their goal is to enhance the efficiency of the sector, as well as fostering reforms and long-term sustainable energy supply across the territory. Through improving the infrastructure, the projects automatically improve the systems of generating, transmitting, and distributing power.

The implementation of all these projects not only supports Lebanon and its people, but is also linked towards the achievement of multiple SDGs like goals one, three, four, six, seven, eleven, twelve, and thirteen. By investing in sustainable long-term projects as such, inequalities tend to decrease and societal development tends to evolve, all of which create a better living environment for the community.

Lebanon and the IMF

While all those abovementioned aids substantially alleviate the multiple human rights violations the people are undergoing, they are far from being a solution to resolve the multi-faceted challenges of the country. Humanitarian aids attenuates immediate needs by providing short-term relief but sustainable development requires much more dedication and effort. In order to do that, the Lebanese authorities have approached the International Monetary Fund (IMF) seeking financial support for the implementation of sustainable reforms for the country. A three billion U.S. dollars loan would be accessible to boost the dead economy and ease the social tensions after Lebanon would come to terms with IMF's conditions. These conditions were nothing unusual of the nature of the requested loan, in the very circumstances of Lebanon. The IMF was attempting to reach a sustainable and equitable growth in the Lebanese society through requiring fiscal consolidation, structural reforms, monetary and exchange rate policies, social safety nets, and governance transparency which includes truth and reconciliation to hold the corrupt actors accountable (Ishker & Youssef, 2022, p. 290). All of these preset conditions stress the important aspects that the ruling force should take into account as to the development of adequate reform plans. It is crucial for the rescue plan to be elaborate and sustainable given the inability of the country or the people to survive any additional catastrophe. The measures and

conditions tackle every deficit in the current regime, with a solution in parallel that would lay the foundation for the stability of the social and economic state of things, in addition to the protection of the vulnerable people who are unfairly enduring all this (IMF, 2022).

After having taken several months to agree to the terms set by the IMF, the ruling force comprehended the urgent need to pledge by the formal structural agreements with the institution. Furthermore, a year after the accordance, the EU and IMF condescend and criticize the Lebanese governors for only having achieved limited progress with implementation of the agreed upon reforms. More specifically, the transparency in the banking sectors through adequate audits, and capital control law reforms (Reuters, 2022). Despite recognizing the urgent need for intervention, political will does not seem to be present, jeopardizing progress (Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon, 2023). According to the IMF, the present period is critical for Lebanon's recovery, given that further delay in action would trap the country in a never-ending crisis. The men in power are also being condemned for not taking into consideration how frail the population is, and the extent to which they are struggling to survive this crisis since the consequences are entirely suffered by the people. The few implemented reforms are also not necessarily in line with the requests of the IMF. This is in an attempt by the authorities to tweak them to their own interest and benefits (Jbeili, Scala, & Younes, 2022, p. 11). For instance, the banking secrecy law does not lift bank secrecy as a whole, giving governing bodies power in that regard, specifically in instances of criminal investigations such as money laundering or illicit enrichment.

This specific exception is one of many that allow the ruling elite to protect themselves from being held accountable for their unlawful doings. Adjusting laws and regulations to the benefit of the political leaders has somewhat allowed them to grow richer while country was growing poorer. The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) exposed in their new Pandora Papers the offshore fortunes of politicians all over the world, of which Lebanese are part of. Lebanese politicians also happen to be one of the most numerous group of clients to one of the companies providing offshore services, Trident Trust (ICIJ, 2021). Such companies are used specifically to conceal unlawfully gained money and to evade taxes (Bhuiyan, 2022). Listed are the names of Lebanese prime ministers, parliamentary members, ministers, and central bank staff are found among that of other world leaders. Hence, the impoverishment of the Lebanese, and the dysfunctionality of the public sector can be directly linked to the millionaires that have been running the public offices for years now.

Law Enforcement and Accountability

The national judiciary body being entirely controlled by the same men that are in power makes it impossible for lawful investigations and prosecutions to take place. In Lebanon, politicians enjoy parliamentary immunity that protects them by not being subject to the central control agencies' jurisdiction (Macaron, 2019). In other words, the widespread of corruption can neither be controlled nor can it be addressed, making the phenomena of corruption and malpractice so widespread (Helou, 2019, p. 74). The current system also gives way to rulers to freely amend and create laws and legislations without any repercussions. Not only does this weaken the rule of law but also creates an environment that allows easy manipulation of laws (Ramesh & Vinayagathan 2017; North et al. 2013). Therefore, with no legal body enforcing laws and stressing accountability, corruption enters a never-ending loop that is enabled by the absence of such bodies. This is especially problematic when the tweaking of laws creates injustice as to the obtainment of the population's human rights, which was the case in Lebanon.

Internationally, very little action can be done with regards to accountability. International bodies like the UN have limited capacity in the scope of action of human rights enforcement and corruption accountability. When experts are appointed, they are restricted to the formulation of recommendations and advice for the improvement and strengthening of the human rights situation (Committee on ESC Rights, 1993). This implies that if the international forces have their hands tied, and the local forces abuse of their power, the Lebanese people are left to deal with the violation of their rights by themselves. The non-justiciable nature of the social, economic, and cultural rights, also does not facilitate the process of accountability, since the effectiveness of the covenant is conditional to the state-induced measures. Hence, with the recommendations not holding a legally-binding nature, the failure of the state to provide its obligations to the people is a simple dead end.

Beirut port explosion's investigation. Even major human rights violations such as the Beirut port explosion seem to be disregarded with false promises on behalf of the government to provide with an immediate three day investigation. Almost three years after the blast, the people have seen nothing but continuous political interference, hampering, and attempts to conceal the truth behind the explosion. The UN expert on judicial independence emphasized the entitlement of the victims to the truth and warned the threatening of the judiciary system's legitimacy (HRW, 2023; Reuters, 2023). The Lebanese politicians who have not even taken the time to reply to the special rapporteur's letter, keep on obstructing the investigations through efforts to block the assigned judge. The latter has even

received several death threats, a major violation to his right to security and life. Henceforth, with the knowledge that warlords are in power, the human rights watch, local civil organizations, and 38 countries are calling for the establishment of an international impartial fact-finding mission by the UN human rights council. They claim justice can only be served, and responsibility determined that way.

Central Bank Governor investigation. Similarly, central bank governor Riad Salemeh, the man behind all of Lebanon's finances, has been pressed both locally and internationally with money laundering and embezzlement charges (Reuters, 2023). The governor is being accused of abusing his power to access an enormous amount of money, and illicit personal enrichment. One might think that such accusations would be generated from the Lebanese judiciary, but the 30 year standing governor has been taken down by the French and German states, as well as Interpol that issued an arrest warrant. Having to take lead in the investigations, Lebanon has been hosting European investigators for the case after having received a request for cooperation from Switzerland (Chehayeb, 2023). But once more, Lebanon's judiciary system shows incompetence and corruption with the constant political meddling that would disable the investigations from taking place. Access to data and reports is being prevented from the prime minister of the country. These investigations could be the door to a history of corruption and money embezzlement by all the political leaders of the country (Azzi, 2023; Daher, 2023). Its obstruction is for the benefit of the majority because if the long-standing governor falls, a dominos effect is likely to occur, taking down with him, the class of elite rulers.

Lebanon's Missing Piece, the EU

This next section will be highlighting the active role the EU played in Kosovo as to the promotion and protection of human rights in the country, especially in comparison to Lebanon's free state of things. Similarly to Lebanon, Kosovo is a developing country facing multifaceted challenges in all of the economic, social, and financial aspects. Unlike it however, the EU has vigorously looked after the country and its situation. Kosovo's location plays a pivotal role in the dynamics of this phenomenon. The European Council had emphasized the EU's obligation to intervene in the humanitarian mess that was taking place within its territory (Shepherd, 2009). The EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) constitutes by far the largest common security and defense policy mission. Since its depletion in 2008, it has played a crucial role in supporting Kosovo's authorities in the field of rule of law (Greicevci, 2011). Its mandate even includes executive tasks. So for instance, the primary security responder is the Kosovo police, followed by EULEX as a second responder.

The country's institutions have strongly been strengthened by the mission. For instance, the justice and judicial systems have mostly benefited from technical assistance and fair trial promotion in order to avoid the occurrence of corruption and crime (EULEX, 2023). The mission also happens to assist the prosecutor's offices with operational and technical support to remain respectful to the country's legislation (Muharremi, 2010, p. 367). This allows to ensure the adequate enforcement of laws within the territory to avoid any kind of abuse of power and misbehavior. The EULEX really stresses the importance of promoting democratic values, as well as good governance and rule of law. All of which, significantly contribute in a complimentary way, to the enhancement and protection of human rights.

Through its continuous mandate, the support Kosovo has been getting from the EU as to its economic development, political stability, and social peace has significantly advanced the country positively (Greicevci, 2011). This is especially the case in relation to the human rights aspect of it. In comparison to Lebanon, Kosovo has been extensively monitored, evaluated, and intervened with by EULEX in cooperation with the UN and local institutions. Human rights are of particular interest of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) that helps strengthen the existent policies and legislations on the respect of rule of law and human rights protection (OSCE, 2023). Complimentary to it is EULEX's support to achieve transitional justice and a reliable judicial system.

In comparison to Lebanon where the respect of rule of law and protection and promotion of human rights rests solely in the hands of the corrupt domestic powers, Kosovo's advantage lies in the executive power EULEX is granted. Its ability to actually take concrete actions in relation to its mandate makes a significant impact to the human rights field that is not solely condemned to the local authorities. The greater belonging to the European territory also creates legal obligations on the state that makes it bound to respect the rights and freedom. The legislative framework backs up the matter with the compliance enforcement that arises. This is where the absence of such institution crucially impacts negatively the rule of law and human rights protection, with no adequate monitoring of the situation, like in the case of Lebanon. It is however, important to keep in mind that the two countries and their circumstances remain substantially different, especially in terms of social, political, and international state of affairs. To sum up, the international attention granted to Lebanon's situation is definitely worth while, and most certainly positively impacts the lives of the disadvantaged population. But it is like giving paracetamol to a bullet wound; it is simply not enough. The humanitarian aids eventually come to an end, giving way to the return of the policy mismanagement and retrogressive

development. The absence of adequate law enforcement and accountability is what put the country in this position in the first place. But then again, no international body holds such executive powers over the country, nor in the region like the EU does in Kosovo. So what is it that Lebanese people should do to secure a semi-decent life, where their basic rights are ensured?

Chapter Five: Resilience, Learned Helplessness, or Both?

This fifth and final chapter comes to investigate the psychological aspects of resilience and learned helplessness in the Lebanese population. Specifically, our targeted age group is adults aged between 55 and 60 years of old who have underwent all the different events in the country mentioned previously. The former chapters have explained the way chronic corruption has destroyed all of the social, economic, and political sectors of the country, leading to the Lebanese people being stripped away from their basic human rights. This chapter will attempt to explain how this absence of human rights has impacted the mental health of the people.

Literature Review

Multiple generations have lived through several major adversities that took place in Lebanon, and even in neighboring countries. Be it the civil war, the Israeli occupation and 2006 war, the uprisings, Beirut port explosion, or the current multi-faceted crisis. This comes with several consequences, of which, one is psychological. A systematic review by Hamadeh, El-Shamy, Billings, and Alyafei investigated the way people in the middle east coped psychologically with conflictual events (2023). A highly emphasized aspect in their search was the way culture might impact the findings, especially if collective memory is taken into account. That is, the way history is engraved in the previous generations, but also carried on with the future ones. Across the 27 selected studies, the researchers identified several recurrent trends in the psychological status of middle-eastern residents, and other trends as to their coping strategies. The former counts anger and resentment towards the ruling party, as well as loss and trust and hope in them. The latter on the other hand, included normalization and desensitization as a way to accept reality, in addition to resilience. This serves as an example to the scars individuals carry with them following adversities, without necessary knowing that this is happening. In the very case of the Lebanese population, two of those themes have been attributed to them; Resilience and Learned Helplessness.

Resilience. In simple terms, resilience is characterized by two core concepts; adversity, and positive adaptation (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, p. 13). Adversity entails the difficulties that take place due to the occurrence of certain negative life events. But this cannot be generalized across populations given the substantial differences in adversities that might arise. The difficulties and challenges faced by a child in Denmark cannot be compared to that of a kid in Afghanistan for instance. While both are valid and fall under the same umbrella, they do tend to differ significantly in terms of contextual severity and resources (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Claudieu, 2010). That leads us to the second

complimentary concept, that of positive adaptation. As the name entails, it is about the successful adaptation to the adversities through the manifestation of behavioral competences. Once more, a sociocultural lens is needed to look at positive adaptation in order to better understand the way an individual or a society might be operating. Henceforth, resilience can be defined as the ability of an individual to adapt successfully to the adversities he or she might face. In other words, being able to bounce back and move on, from challenges and difficulties. Taken from a societal perspective, resilience is the efficient power of a community to accommodate the hazards and recover from them. But for a society to be resilient, research points to several prerequisites that are crucial to the phenomena. Those are cultural, demographic, socio-economic, and political (Lewis, 2017, p. 3). It is those assets that create the power behind the recovery capability.

In the very case of the Lebanese society, one cannot deny the sense of societal identity belonging and patriotism that the people hold dearly to their country. Despite the 18 different religious sects that stratify the population, the attachment they have for the land, its people, its culture, help them remain connected to it, and as a matter of fact, fight for it, as one identity. This collective identity is a strong contributing factor to the resilience they develop. The collective memory is of particular interest here, since it attaches the growing generations with one another (Aboultaif & Tabar, 2019; Ghosn & Karaki, 2023). For instance, the young adults today, would talk about the crimes of the civil war they have not lived as vividly and emotionally as their parents would. The support system of this population lies greatly within themselves, allowing them to hold onto their nation.

People in Lebanon are always described through the phoenix metaphor; constantly rising from the ashes. The capital itself is known to have been rebuilt from scratch more than seven times. The numerous destructions never stopped the country from rejuvenating into a newer, better version of itself (Petri, 2020; Bizri, Alam, Bizri, & Musharrafieh, 2020). This ability to reconstruct, re-adapt and move forward strongly falls within the previously defined concept of resilience. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise to claim that in the face of the current chaos, the people remain resilient. Amidst the absence of their most basic human rights, the people still manage to find a way through. Small initiatives take place within the country between people. An unknown group of people called “The World Sucks” approaches vulnerable individuals on a daily basis with assistances. Another initiative is the “Khod eza mouawiz w trok eza adir” fridge which literally translates to “take if you need, and leave if you can” fridge, found across the country’s big cities. The Lebanese people who have migrated seeking a better life are also not letting their Lebanese brothers and sisters deal with the situation by

themselves. Several families are solely surviving on the basis of the foreign money sent from friends and family abroad, since their local salaries are worth almost nothing today (Al-Abbas, 2021; Guignon & Domat, 2023). People would then exchange the foreign amount to the local currency, giving them a great deal of additional funds they would use to support themselves and meet their needs.

An interesting point of view was raised by the Lebanese neuroscientist Samah Karaki in a podcast episode where she argued that the resilience of the older generation simply lies in their ignorance (Ghosn & Karaki, 2023). In other words, the older generation might not be aware of their rights, and of the obligations of the states towards the fulfilment of those rights. This lack of knowledge could greatly contribute to the adaptation and non-reliance on the state to provide themselves with what they need. Further elaborating on this idea of ignorance, living in a society where public services have nearly never been provided for by the governmental entities, creates a cognitive reality that detaches the concept of human rights from that of state obligations.

Learned helplessness. In opposition, learned helplessness tends to be defined by perceived uncontrollability. Basically, the individual comes to understand the complete independence between one's action, and the subsequent consequences (Teodorescu & Erev, 2014, p. 1861). Having faced several stressful stimuli, the individual develops maladaptive numbness and emotional passivity. In the very scenario of Lebanon, adults who underwent the several adversities of the country, and the multiple parliamentary elections, grew a feeling of helplessness to bring about change to the country's ever-unsteady situation. This aligns well with the themes of loss of hope and trust found in the systematic review by Hamadeh et al., (2023). Similarly, Nova also argued in favor of the phenomena where he explained the way oppressive and corrupt ruling regimes tend to induce learned helplessness in societies (2019). This is especially the case given the vicious cycle people tend to find themselves in when living in such communities. For instance, Lebanese people, especially adults, claim finding themselves in a tricky position having to deal with the dilemma of opposing corruption for its negative consequences, but also needing it to survive in this society (Ghosn & Karaki, 2023). Once more, the neuroscientist Samah Karaki explained how the consecutive occurrence of negative events in the country led the population to develop an extremely low threshold of expectations in terms of safety, equality, and peace. This decrease in expectations is explained to be a strong characteristic of learned helplessness where people simply lose the ability to believe in good coming from their leaders (Ghosn & Karaki, 2023). Such findings were similar to a study conducted by Haatainen et al. in 2003 that found increased levels of learned helplessness in adults who lived a childhood filled with adversities.

Those adults grew in a stressful environment with constant occurrence of major events, similar to the case of the Lebanese adults.

People in Lebanon exhibit emotional exhaustion and weakness from the previous events they have survived (Khoury, 2022). Not being able to settle peacefully in their adult years by having nothing secured from healthcare, to adequate standards of living, or education for their children only aggravates their restless well beings, and their fragile psychological state. The several attempts to institute change that were met with disproportionate violence and uncontrollable responses created a passivity within the population that deems itself powerless (Salahedin, 2021). Learned helplessness is also strongly exhibited through the humongous number of immigration witnessed. And the fact that older adults are also taking part in this phenomena displays their willingness to start over, for safer and more humane living standards. Adults claim being tired of surviving instead of simply living.

Hypotheses

The previously tackled literature points to a gap in the literature as to the mental state of the Lebanese population with regards to the deterioration of their human rights. Taking this into account this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. There is a positive correlation between the levels of learned helplessness and the levels of resilience.

Hypothesis 2. Women score higher on learned helplessness, and lower on resilience in comparison to men.

Hypothesis 3. Participants whose socio-economic status improved score lower on learned helplessness, and higher on resilience, than participants whose socio-economic status deteriorated.

Method

Ethical considerations. The approval of the Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Social Sciences was obtained on 8th of May 2023 (Appendix A). This crucial approval was secured in order to ensure both the ethicality of this research study, but also the safety of the participants and their wellbeing. Each and every participant was required to read and sign an informed consent (Appendix B) before taking part in the study, without which they cannot have access to the survey. The informed consent stated clearly the purpose of the study, the duration of their participation, and the researchers behind the work. Furthermore, participants were ensured that their

identity is kept anonymous and confidential, as the data gathered does not require their name or any type of information that can be traced back to them. Additionally, the voluntary nature of the study was also disclosed, allowing the withdrawal from participation at all time, with no consequences whatsoever.

Participants. The targeted sample for this study consisted of Lebanese adults, both males and females. They were required to fall within the age group of 55 to 60 years old. Anyone aged younger or older was excluded from participating. This particular age group was of interest for having faced most of the adversities of the country; the civil war during their childhood, building up to today's state of things. Data from both Lebanese residents and expats were included in the study and collected data set.

The participants were recruited through both convenience and snowball sampling by spreading the survey on the different social media platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn). Moreover, with a confidence level of 95%, a sample of 233 participants was gathered ($N=233$), for a margin of error of 6%. While this is not ideal, with the scarcity of time, these results are most likely to be representative of the population.

Design and Measures

Demographics. Participants were first required to fill a questionnaire regarding their age, gender, area of residence, and the highest level of education they obtained. Additional questions were about the change of their socio-economic status since the start of the 2019 crisis, as well as whether they have a nationality other than their Lebanese one (Appendix C).

Survey. The survey took no more than five minutes to be filled. It consisted of the informed consent, language selection, five demographic questions, the learned helplessness scale (Quinless, & McDermott Nelson, 1988) made up of 14 questions, and the resilience scale (Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, and Bernard 2008) made up of six questions. None of the questions were mandatory to fill except for the informed consent. If the participant does not consent to participate, the survey will end immediately.

Participants were free to abstain from answering the questions they did not wish to answer. Nonetheless, incomplete surveys would be taken out from the data set in order to avoid inaccurate scores.

The survey was translated into all three languages of Arabic, French, and English since the Lebanese population tends to have a certain preference. The survey was also adjusted to the human rights situation in Lebanon, instead of its original general and generic questions.

Assessments and measures. The two psychological constructs of Learned helplessness and Resilience were measured in the study using Learned Helplessness scale by Quinless and McDermott Nelson (1988), and the Brief Resilience Scale by Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, and Bernard (2008).

The Learned Helplessness Scale (LHS) (Quinless & McDermott Nelson, 1988) (Appendix D) is a 20-item scale. Each one of these items is measured through a four-point Likert Scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (1 to 4). The level of learned helplessness would be determined based on the obtained score that would range between 20 and 80. Lower scores indicate low levels of learned helplessness and higher scores in turn indicate high levels of learned helplessness. When compared to other learned helplessness measures, the LHS scored adequately in terms of internal consistency. The scores were found reliable in both a sample of adults and university students (Quinless & McDermott Nelson, 1988; McKean, 1994).

The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) (Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, & Bernard, 2008) (Appendix E) is a 6-item scale. Similarly to the LHS, a four-point Likert Scale is used to measure each item, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (1 to 4). Scores are calculated by adding the total sum obtained by the total number of questions answered. Three levels of resilience can be found based on the score; low (score equal to or smaller than 1.99), normal (score equal to or smaller than 2.99), and high (score equal to or smaller than 4) level of resilience. This scale was found to be reliable both in terms of test-retest reliability and internal consistency, making it an adequate measurement tool to the ability to “bounce back” from stressful events (Smith et al., 2008).

Results

The research study had an aim of investigating the psychological states of resilience and learned helplessness in the Lebanese adults who are succumbing to a loss of access to human rights. The predictor variables evaluated were gender, and change in socio-economic status. They were used in order to better understand the way the outcome variables of resilience and learned helplessness tend to be exhibited among the population.

The normality of the data was first assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk normality test. It appeared that the learned helplessness scores from LHS were normally distributed, $W(233) = .99, p = .12$. The resilience scores obtained from the BRS on the other hand are not, $W(233) = .97, p < .001$ (Table 1).

Table 1

Tests of Normality

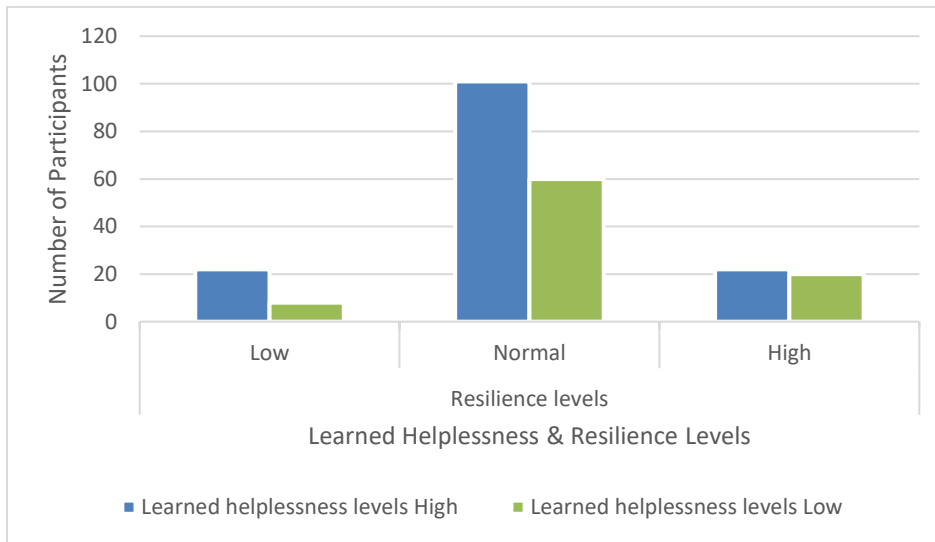
	<i>Kolmogorov-Smirnov^a</i>			<i>Shapiro-Wilk</i>		
	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Learned Helplessness	.058	233	.057	.990	233	.123
Resilience	.112	233	<.001	.975	233	<.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The average scores resulting from the survey showed that the individuals in the sample were more likely to have high levels of learned helplessness with a mean score 36.36. The levels of resilience were moderate however, with an average of 2.45, indicating that the individuals in the sample scored normal levels of resilience. Furthermore, 62% of the sample seemed to have high levels of learned helplessness with almost 70% of them scoring normal levels of resilience (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Learned Helplessness and Resilience Distribution across the Participants



In order to get a better understanding of the existing relationship between learned helplessness and resilience levels, Spearman's correlation was executed (Table 2). The results entailed the existence of a negative significant correlation between the two variables, $r_s = -.179$, $n = 233$, $p < .05$. This means that the higher the learned helplessness scores, the lower the resilience level. But the strength of this correlation can be deemed as small to moderate.

Table 2

Spearman Correlation between Learned Helplessness and Resilience

	<i>Learned Helplessness</i>	<i>Resilience</i>
Learned Helplessness		.006*
Resilience	.006*	

Note. * $p < .05$

Gender. An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the levels of learned helplessness in both female and male participants. There was no significant differences in the levels of learned helplessness between females ($M = 36.7$, $SD = 6.58$) and males ($M = 35.4$, $SD = 8.40$), $t(231) = 1.2$, $p = .25$ (table 3). This entails that across the sample, the levels of learned helplessness were similar in both genders. Both males and females scored alike in learned helplessness.

Table 3

Gender Differences in Learned Helplessness

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Female	36.66	6.583	1.161	231	.247
Male	35.4	8.403			

Uniformly, an independent sample t-test was also conducted to compare the levels of resilience in both the female and male participants. Likewise, the levels of resilience across genders were not significantly different. Both females ($M = 2.5$, $SD = .52$), and males ($M = 2.4$, $SD = .59$), did not score differently in the levels of resilience, $t(231) = .81$, $p = .42$ (Table 4).

Table 4

Gender Differences in Resilience Levels

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Female	2.47	.521	.811	231	.418
Male	2.4	.587			

This analysis points to the uniformity in the psychological impact the situation has on the Lebanese population regardless of their gender. In other words, both females and males tend to be impacted by situation the same way.

Socio-economic change. In order to compare the levels of learned helplessness in participants whose socio-economic status has changed (by decreasing or increasing), another independent t-test was conducted. It was found that no significant differences in the levels of learned helplessness exist between the two groups of participants; the one whose socio-economic status got lower ($M = 36.2$, $SD = 6.78$), and the one whose socio-economic status got higher ($M = 36.8$, $SD = 7.72$), $t(231) = -.6$, $p = .53$ (Table 5).

Table 5

Socio-Economic Status and Learned Helplessness

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Deterioration	36.18	6.785	-.626	231	.532

Improvement	36.82	7.72
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Once more, the same comparison ran through an independent t-test to compare the levels of resilience in the participants who socio-economic status changed due to the country's crisis. Similarly, no significant difference was found in the levels of resilience scored between the group of participants whose socio-economic status decreased ($M = 2.4$, $SD = .53$), and the group whose socio-economic status increased ($M = 2.5$, $SD = .56$), $t(231) = -1.2$, $p = .23$ (Table 6).

Table 6

Socio-Economic Status and Resilience Levels

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Deterioration	2.42	.527	-1.195	231	.234
Improvement	2.52	.557			

In conformity to the gender analysis, it seems that the psychological state of the participants was not influenced differently by the crisis based on the change in socio-economic status that had occurred to them. In other words, had the socio-economic status of the participants decreased, increased, or remained the same, their mental health would be impacted similarly.

Discussion

The conducted study had an aim of investigating the psychological state of the Lebanese adults with regards to the deterioration of their access to human rights in the country. The initially proposed hypotheses claimed for a difference in the psychological impact of resilience and learned helplessness between men and women, but also between Lebanese adults with an improved socio-economic status and a deteriorated one.

The multifaceted crisis in Lebanon did not hit everyone similarly. Each group got impacted in a different way. For instance, some people found the currency depreciation advantageous given the nature of their salaries being in foreign currency, while others saw their life-long investments and savings substantially lose their value overnight. People who fled the country's chaos might not be as

strongly impacted as those who are stuck in Lebanon with no where else to go (HRW, 2022). That group of people reached 79,134 individuals in 2021 only, spreading mainly around Europe and the U.S. (Haddad, Matar, Abardazzou, Abdallah, & Choucair, 2022). For this very reason, the study looked more closely into how severely the country's current situation and all the previous events might have taken a toll into the mental health of the adults of the country. More specifically, into the levels of learned helplessness and that of resilience in the population whose corrupt leaders created this man-made chaos.

In conformity with the literature, more than 60% of the population scored high on the levels of learned helplessness (Ghosn & Karaki, 2023; Hamadeh et al., 2023; Khoury, 2022; Haatainen et al., 2003). This means that the population seemed to have difficulties perceiving solutions to the corruption of the ruling party, and to the situation in the country. Resilience on the other hand, was moderate in the population, with neither high scores, nor low scores. Unlike the previous literature that found high levels of resilience in corrupt ruling regimes (Pavlova, 2020), almost 70% of our sample obtained normal levels of resilience. Nevertheless, these dissimilar results can be attributed to culture that can come to play a role (Sewilam, et al., 2015; Soutwick, et al., 2014). Cultural behaviors and attributions can substantially have an impact on one's mental health and perception of things.

To go more in depth, the study found a small to moderate negative correlation between the two dependent variables of resilience and learned helplessness. This entails that the higher the level of resilience in an individual, the lower the levels of learned helplessness, and vice versa. The strength of this relationship is not very powerful but existent. So basically, the individual that perceives him/herself as helpless does not have a strong capacity to "bounce back" from the adversities faces. While this established correlation does not imply causation, it does offer room for further investigation as to the mechanisms behind this relationship.

As to the gender aspect of the study, both females and males exhibited very similar levels of learned helplessness as well as resilience. These results point out to the inexistence of any association between gender and the psychological states the study identified. The lack of existence of any significant difference among the genders does not rule out the possibility entirely nonetheless. But in the sample of adults that participated in the study, it is safe to say that learned helplessness scores were similar across the two genders of males and females, implying that the situation impacted them similarly.

Finally, the two groups whose socio-economic situation either improved or worsened in the crisis also seemed to be affected in the same way. The generated results from the independent t-test were not significantly different since the levels of learned helplessness and that of resilience were similar as well. This lack of significant variance entails that the situation uniformly influenced the psychological constructs in the population, even if their socio-economic status had changed. Nonetheless, this conclusion cannot necessarily be generalized across the entire population, and thus does not rule out the possibility of an influence.

Limitations and Future Directions

It goes without saying that extensive future research is required to debunk the reality behind this situation. This is especially the case given that this current study cannot be considered to be free from limitations. One can start with the small sample size that took part in the study $N=233$, due to the absence of the luxury of time to write the thesis and collect more data. This aspect played an essential role in the results obtained, especially in terms of statistical power and population generalization. The small sample and the results it generated might not be representative of the overall population in the country, not allowing the findings of the study to be generalized.

Another important limitation is the self-reporting nature of the psychological measures. The reliance on the participant's subjective perception and recall abilities can greatly influence the accuracy of the test results. This in turn, jeopardizes the internal validity of the findings.

Finally, culture is an aspect that has a heavy weight in Lebanon. While the two scales used to conduct this study have been developed and validated in western countries, little is known about their applicability in the Arab world where norms and cultures heavily nuance the behaviors and perceptions of the people. This can particularly be pointed out given how mental health is still deemed as a burden and taboo in the middle-east (El Halabi, El Hayek, Kahil, Nofal, & El Hayek, 2020).

While the study does not provide conclusive results one can base policies on, it does set the ground for future studies. Many additional factors need to be taken into consideration when assessing the mental health of the Lebanese population with regards to the social state of things. For instance, the political affiliation of the people to certain ruling elites could have an important impact on their levels of learned helplessness. This is the case since it is the today's adults that have consecutively voted for the same political for more than 30 years now. Hence, look more closely into how they are handling the

current state of things would be groundbreaking to understand the overall dynamics of the population's mental health

Other social aspects such as the level of religious faith would be interesting to look at since the people in the country are brought up religiously early on. Having religious faith can be deemed as a strong coping mechanism that would attribute life adversities to god's plan, making the people all the more resilient to move on with their lives (Milstein, 2019).

Study Conclusion

In conclusion, in the scope of our study, the Lebanese adults in the sample exhibited high levels of learned helplessness with regards to the situation of the country, with normal levels of resilience. These findings are important to shed the light on how the political, economic, and financial crisis is taking a toll on the mental health of the Lebanese people. The absence of influence of gender or socio-economic status to the psychological state of the population also highlights the severity of the situation that is spread out to everyone. Nonetheless, further investigations that would look more closely into other sociocultural factors that might come into play are important to understand the dynamics behind people's responses to the numerous adversities in the country.

Furthermore, those results shed the light on the inhumane living conditions the corrupt governors have put their people in. But also on the urgent need to allocate more resources to the mental health field in Lebanon that is greatly disregarded as non-priority.

Chapter Six: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Wrap-up

Today, Lebanon is in palliative care. In other words, in a critical condition that needs urgent intervention to alleviate the severity of the crisis. The country is undergoing a man-made chaos that stripped people of their fundamental rights. This thesis looked closely into the timeline of the country through the human rights lens. While time moved forward, the human rights situation appeared to be stagnated in Lebanon, eventually undertaking a retrograding wave. This devastating situation impacted many aspects in the country such as the political, the social, or the financial. The deepest scar however, is most definitely imprinted on the population, that is enduring it with very little room for action.

The purpose behind this inter-disciplinary thesis was to explore and analyze the development of the current crisis in Lebanon. After obtaining a better understanding of the roots implicated in the situation, the thesis went on to inspect the psychological state of the population as to their domestic human rights situation. The main research question looked into whether the chaotic state of things is actually man-made, and how the people are coping with it along way. A combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis was implemented in order to embrace the integrative nature of the thesis. The topic was therefore approached and shaped through a historical and legal content analysis, along with a quantitative psychological research study.

The thesis illustrated the way Lebanon's case is unparalleled but not unpredictable. Alongside the people, the human rights reality of the country underwent the multiple adversities that came in the way. It started with the devastating 15 years long civil war from 1975 to 1990 that required the country's entire political, civil, economic, and social reconstruction. Human rights were tagged along since in that period, Lebanese people would only access their rights on the basis of their religious and political belonging. This was followed by yet another war in 2006 with Israel that once again demolished the country's recent developments, and any sense of safety the people had. The following relatively peaceful period was setting the ground for the warlords who had become governors, to build their clientelism empires. Their actions were strongly reinforced by corruption and abuse of power. The years of mismanagement only came to light in 2019 with the biggest economic crisis the country has witnessed, classifying as one of the worst worldwide. The country's central bank also announced bankruptcy, disabling all public sectors from offering what was already unsatisfactory, limited services. People plummeted in poverty, as their life long savings lost 90% of their value in no time. To make things worse, the pandemic hit amidst the crisis, aggravated by one of the biggest non-nuclear

explosions that burnt the capital down to ashes. People were met with a state that endangered their lives, and a state that failed to provide them with their basic fundamental rights. The public sectors were found to be rotten with years of clientelism, rendering them inefficient and inadequate to provide the services they are meant to offer in one of the most critical times. This accumulated chaos brought light to the chronic mismanagement of the ruling party that made the country unlivable. They made people seek homes away from their home.

Looking more in depth into the right to health, right to education, and right to adequate standards of living, it was found that unless people managed to provide themselves with such services, they would not have access to them at all. The state's healthcare sector has been heavily reliant on the private sector, instead of being developed and perfected throughout the years. Its insufficient budget, old infrastructure, and understaffed personnel made access to public healthcare unfeasible. The education sector is enduring somewhat the same fate with an inability to accustom the increased demand to primary education. This can be attributed to the years of underfunding, inadequate hiring, and sector mishandling. The realm is met today with unqualified staff, in outdated facilities jeopardizing what is meant to be a fundamental right. Finally, the right to adequate standard of living is far from being met in the absence of the right to electricity. Power constituting an essential aspect of a dignified life in today's world is considered luxury in Lebanon today. The state's provision of electricity is inexistent for more than 2 hours a day, forcing the population to either spend enormous sums on private generators or live powerless. While these are only three tackled rights out of many, they set an example to the severe deprivation the population has been in for more than three years now. This failure to provide can solely be attributed to the chronic corruption executed by the political leaders that have been in power for more than 30 years without coming up with a stable, sustainable public structure.

This alarming state of things has most certainly grabbed the attention of the international community who despite its mistrust in the governing power, still attempts to help the country and its people. The numerous donations and financial aids provided throughout the years have not been properly managed by the rulers who personally benefited their fortunes rather than the best interest of the country. For this very reason, the donors addressed the aids to civil organizations and non-state actors in order to ensure benefitting the most vulnerable, the people. While these assistances are varied and somewhat endorse all the different sectors, they alleviate the symptoms without treating the roots of the illness; the corruption. With no one being held accountable, it is difficult for the problem to be

solved. Unlike in Europe, there is no governing force that has justiciability power. The United Nations' scope of power is restricted to recommendations and advice, letting the people in the country deal with the situation by themselves.

This leaves the Lebanese with little to no room for impactful action that would improve their current living conditions. For a community to undergo so many stressful and life-threatening events in such a period of time and still make it out points to a strong coping mechanism. It can either be resilience with the situation, or helplessness with it. In the very case of the Lebanese people, the quantitative research study provided results pointing to a prevalence in learned helplessness with moderate levels of resilience. In other words, the population was helplessness with bringing about change to the country's situation. An interesting aspect to these results was the uniformity in learned helplessness levels across both genders and socio-economic status'. This revealed the communal psychological state of the population despite their differences.

Implications and Recommendations

The thesis shed the light on the high costs of corruption that impacted the population in the outmost manner. The country's chronic condition is spreading, slowly deteriorating the quality of life of its citizen. A multi-faceted crisis as such requires nothing but a multi-faceted approach to tackle the different problematic levels. While the IMF confidently claims that its reforms have the potential to get Lebanon out of the hole it is in, the literature is found to highlight the harmful effects the IMF has on developing countries (Masters, Chatzky, & Siripurapu, 2021). While it is easier said than done, Lebanon might be better off establishing its very own institutional, political, social, and economic long-term reforms. Such an urgent initiative requires a great deal of commitment nonetheless, which might be the biggest challenge in Lebanon's case.

It is crucial for institutional performance to be improved through the creation of regulatory and independent bodies. These bodies would be made up from field experts that are qualified to make autonomous and quality decisions regarding the development steps of each field (or ministry in Lebanon's case). Only studied policies and structured plans that prioritize society's best interests are to be performed, when showed to be sustainable and effective.

The institutional reform Lebanon so direly needs, most definitely requires the establishment of a secured and efficient monitoring and accountability structure. This body should be put in place to carefully avoid the mistakes that led to the sinking of the country. Instituting such a figure will not

only optimize the refinement of the offered services, but also boost the national and international trust in Lebanon, that is deeply lost today.

By targeting the root causes that led to the current state of things, Lebanon stands a chance to regain its once known glory. If the crisis is looked at from a human rights' lens, one can very clearly notice the discrepancy within the Lebanese constitution. While it incorporates the UDHR in its preamble, its articles are found to violate several other rights like that of equality (art. 6). This is where professional expertise is required to look at such gaps in the system that have made life in Lebanon an undignified one.

Limitations

In an attempt to uncover the reality behind the multi-faceted crisis of Lebanon and its consequences, this thesis cannot be deemed as free from academic limitations. The scope of research of this specific topic is extremely wide, with its dynamics being deeply intertwined. This makes it difficult to tackle every aspect that could play a role in the building up of today's situation. This is especially the case given the lack of empirical and accurate data that could back up our arguments. Lebanon is a country with very little reliable data available, making it challenging to identify the severity of occurring phenomena such as brain drain, increased unemployment, or expat foreign contribution.

Additionally, very little attention was granted to the role the older Lebanese generation played to the chronic re-voting of the same corrupt, political body. The parliamentary nature of Lebanon allows the people to choose their members of the parliament. Therefore, a contributing factor that fueled today's accumulation of chaos can be attributed to the built up power granted by the electors to the ruling force. While this is usually associated with a political affiliation, it makes the absence of accountability and transparency more likely to happen, further reinforcing corruption, nepotism, and clientelism.

Finally, the role of the religious leaders in the country is also not a light one that can be disregarded. Lebanon's religious predominance is accorded a considerable scope of power that tends to influence the decisions, behaviors, and beliefs of their community.

Investigating such matters would bring about a better understanding to the socio-political factors that could have had a contributing effect to today's state of things. This would also clarify whether the population did have a role to play in this scheme, or have they really just been victims of the politicians' manipulation.

Concluding Remarks

On an ending note, the deeply impacted individuals can be deemed as the main victims of this corruption-fueled crisis. However, this generated learned helplessness among the population should be taken as an incentive for the people to collectively bring about change. If neither the ruling politicians, nor the international bodies can provide the Lebanese with their human rights, the solidarity and fostered unity of the people should attempt making a difference. As overwhelming as the idea sounds, potential long-term investments in human capital should be looked at more closely in future research. In other words, how do the people invest in themselves to save a country?

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APPENDIX A

Ethical Board Approval

Univerza
v Ljubljani
Fakulteta
za družbene vede



Kardeljeva ploščad 5
1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija
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Številka: 801-2023-003/TD
Ljubljana, 5. 5. 2023

Zadeva: Soglasje Komisije za etiko v raziskovanju FDV – Yasmin El Harati

Raziskovalka Yasmin El Harati je 19. 4. 2023 na Komisijo za etiko v raziskovanju FDV naslovila vlogo za etično presojo raziskovalnega projekta z naslovom: »*Resilience or Learned Helplessness? The Case of Lebanese Adults Stripped away from their Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights*«.

Komisija za etiko v raziskovanju FDV je pregledala vlogo s strani vlagateljice in ugotovila, da vsebuje vsa potrebna zagotovila za etično ravnanje z udeleženci. Skladno z ugotovitvijo izdajam naslednje

SOGLASJE

Komisija za etiko v raziskovanju FDV izdaja soglasje za izvedbo predlaganega projekta z naslovom »*Resilience or Learned Helplessness? The Case of Lebanese Adults Stripped away from their Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights*«, katerega prijaviteljica je Yasmin El Harati.

Predlagana vloga za raziskovalni projekt vsebuje vsa potrebna zagotovila za etično ravnanje z udeleženci in z njihovimi osebnimi podatki. Popravki ali dopolnila vloge niso potrebna. Tveganja za sodelujoče udeležence ocenjujemo kot minimalna, malo verjetna in kratkotrajna. Na podlagi navedenega projektu izdajamo soglasje za izvedbo.

Vloga za etično presojo predstavlja raziskovalčino zavezo o tem, kakšno raziskavo bo izvedla, na kakšen način in kako bo varovala osebne podatke. Vsakršna odstopanja od potrjene vloge avtomatično razveljavijo podano soglasje etične komisije. Če je potrebno zaradi kakršnegakoli vzroka spremeniti elemente predstavljene v vlogi, je potrebno za načrtovane spremembe še pred izvedbo raziskave pridobiti soglasje KERFDV.

Znanstvena sodelavka dr. Brina Malnar
Predsednica Komisije za etiko v raziskovanju FDV

BRINA
MALNAR

Digitally signed by
BRINA MALNAR
Date: 2023.05.07
19:45:15 +02'00'

Posredovano:

- vlagatelju zadeve Yasmin El Harati
- predsednici KERFDV, zn. sod. dr. Brini Malnar
- AIDV

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

INFORMATION ON RESEARCH SURVEY: Resilience or Learned Helplessness? The case of Lebanese adults stripped of from their social, economic, and culutral rights.

I kindly invite you to participate in the research "Resilience or Learned Helplessness? The case of Lebanese adults stripped of from their social, economic, and culutral rights" carried out by Yasmin Ibrahim El Harati, Masters student in the framework of the Master's thesis. The research is conducted at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, under the guidance of Dr. Matjaz Nahtigal and Dr. Petra Rotter.

The purpose of the research is investigate wether the Lebanese adults have developed a sense of resilience or helplessness with the situation in the country and related data collection, analysis, storage for scientific research purposes. While demographics will be collected from research participants, they will remain anonymous and confidential.

The survey will take approximately requires five minutes of your time to be filled.

Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary, you may refuse to answer certain questions or discontinue participation without consequence and request the destruction of the collected personal information at any time.

In accordance with the recognized ethical standards of scientific research and with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), we will take steps to protect your personal data in processes of collection and use for educational and scientific research purposes.

No personal information that may disclose your identity will be required from you. Upon completion of the data collection, everything will be stored in the researcher's computer in a password-protected sheet that grants access to no one but the researcher himself.

Participation in the survey does not present any risks whatsoever.

Participation in research does not bring specific benefits, except for the knowledge and experience you will gain from the collaboration, in addition to the valuable contribution you will be offering to the literature.

If you have any further questions, you may contact Yasmin Ibrahim El Harati on yasminaelharati@gmail.com or Dr. Matjaz Nahtigal on matjaz.nahtigal@fdv.uni-lj.si.

I have read and understood the purpose of the study and I consent on my voluntary participation to the research

YES / NO

APPENDIX C

Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
2. What is your higher obtained level of education?
 - a. First Level Education
 - b. Second Level Education
3. Where do you currently live?
 - a. In Lebanon
 - b. Abroad
4. Do you hold a second nationality?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. How did your socio-economic status change since 2019?
 - a. It got lower
 - b. It did not change
 - c. It got higher

APPENDIX D

Learned Helplessness Scale

Instructions to Participant:

Please place a check in the box that most closely describes you or your feelings about yourself.

Thank you.

	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Agree</i>
	<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Agree</i>	
1. No matter how much energy I put into an action in relation to the country, I feel the people have no control over the outcome.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I feel that our ability as citizen to solve problems is the cause of our success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. We as Lebanese, can find solutions to the difficult problems of the country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I don't place myself in situations in which I cannot predict the outcome.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. If we create change in the country successfully, it is probably because of our ability to do so.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. We have the ability to solve most of Lebanon's problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. When we do not succeed to bring about change in the country, we do not attempt any similar attempts because we feel that we would fail them also.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. When something doesn't turn out the way I planned, I know it is because I didn't have the ability to start with.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The politicians have more control over the country's success and/or failure than the people do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I try new tasks if I have failed similar ones in the past.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 11. When we perform poorly in bringing change, it is because we don't have the ability to perform better. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. I accept trying to bring change even if I am not sure that I will succeed in doing so. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. I feel that we have little control over bringing change in Lebanon. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. We as Lebanese people, are successful at most tasks we try to bring change. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. I feel that other countries could be better than us at bringing change. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. We Lebanese, are able to reach the goals we have for the country. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. When I don't succeed at a task, I find myself blaming my own stupidity for my failure. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. No matter how hard Lebanese people try, things never seem to work out the way we want them to. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. I feel that our success in bringing change reflects our ability to do so, not chance. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. My participation seems to influence the success of bringing change. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

APPENDIX E

Brief Resilience Scale

Instructions to Participant:

Please place a check in the box that most closely describes you or your feelings about yourself.

Thank you.

			<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Agree</i>
<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly</i>		<i>Agree</i>	
1. I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times in Lebanon.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have a hard time making it through stressful events in Lebanon.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event in Lebanon.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens in Lebanon.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I usually come through difficult times with little trouble.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs that I face in Lebanon during my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>