

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

FOREIGN AID AGENDA IN LEBANON: REINFORCING
STABILIZATION AND SECURITIZATION OF THE STATE

by
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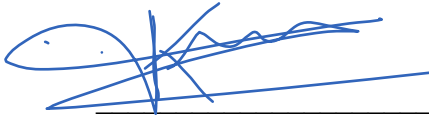
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ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT OF

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Title: Foreign Aid Agenda in Lebanon: Reinforcing Stabilization and Securitization of the State

This master's project will demonstrate the securitization of foreign aid policy and its relations with developing countries, particularly Lebanon. It also assesses how and to what extent the donor community uses a security lens that determines the developmental approach towards Lebanon and the developing world. By reviewing the available public data and findings regarding foreign aid to Lebanon, this paper will answer the rationale for the "securitization" of foreign aid, and find the expected benefits of aid as a stabilization tool at the strategic level. It will identify the viability of foreign aid, and its intended purposes, especially with regard to stabilization and securitization in Lebanon. One of the core objectives will be to highlight how donors use aid to advance their security objectives rather than recipients' development needs. In the case of Lebanon as a recipient country, the purpose of this research is to explore whether foreign aid produced stabilization effects and whether aid projects to Lebanon's national security agencies, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Internal Security Forces (ISF) improved security in Lebanon? Furthermore, it studies how foreign aid and recipients' policy regimes are two interconnected variables that influence aid effectiveness. This case study will also explore the level of foreign aid given to Lebanon and whether it fostered nation-building, governance, and stability. This paper also explores a controversial question within the Lebanese context. Who is responsible for the prospect of the success of foreign aid to stabilize Lebanon as a recipient country? Donors finance disbursement modus operandi or Lebanon's absorption capacity? Therefore, the paper emphasizes what is needed to bolster and ensure effective aid absorption by recipient states and allocation by donors. Most importantly, it will highlight the ways to ensure that the initial phases of aid are complemented and used to synchronize aid with the country's capacity to absorb and the need for optimization of the absorption capacity. As such, it shows the importance of creating a ministry in Lebanon charged with coordinating foreign aid that acts as a regulatory body and a unified counterpart for foreign aid.

KEYWORDS: Absorption Capacity, Development, Donors, Foreign aid, Governance, Humanitarian, Institutions, Lebanon, Policy regime, Paris Declaration, Recipient state, Stabilization, Security, Securitization.

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ABBREVIATIONS

C

| | |
|---|---|
| confessional, consociational, communitarian, clientelistic, corrupted system (5C system) | 6 |
|---|---|

D

| | |
|---|---|
| Development Assistance Committee (DAC) | 1 |
|---|---|

E

| | |
|---|----|
| Economic Support Funding (ESF) | 10 |
| European Security Strategy (ESS) | 5 |
| European Union (EU) | 2 |

I

| | |
|---|----|
| Internal Security Forces (ISF) | 10 |
|---|----|

L

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) | 10 |
|--------------------------------------|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| Lebanon Crisis Response Plan | |
| (LCRP)..... | 23 |
| M | |
| Ministry of Interior and Municipalities | |
| (MoIM)..... | 9 |
| Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network | |
| (MFAN) | 5 |
| O | |
| Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) | |
| (OECD) | 1 |
| P | |
| Public Choice Perspective | |
| (PCP)..... | 13 |
| Public Interest Perspective | |
| (PIP)..... | 13 |
| R | |
| Reform, Recovery, and Reconstruction Framework | |
| (3RF)..... | 25 |
| U | |
| UN Interim Forces | |
| (UNIFIL)..... | 12 |
| UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator | |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| (OCHA)..... | 9 |
| United States | |
| (US)..... | 2 |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In order to find sustainable solutions, particularly challenges facing the Lebanese government, the topic addresses what affects Lebanon in so many ways. Foreign aid to developing countries akin to Lebanon is an ingredient for development and stabilization.

As a public servant who has served for twelve years at the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM), I have had the opportunity to work at the grandest public administration in Lebanon. The Major deficiencies observed are the lack of a clear organizational structure, absence of a comprehensive ministerial strategic plan resulting in the conflict of priorities, and the limited monetary and human resources.

Part of my job in the Planning and Coordination Unit is donor coordination, to ensure that donor contribution to the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities address ministerial priorities, avoid duplication of projects, and is aligned with the minister's work plan. The Planning and Coordination unit was established in 2020 to act as a focal point to coordinate and cooperate with donors and implementing partners. It should be responsible for administering a donor coordination platform and donor coordination meetings. It should also assist in building strategic planning and project management capabilities across ministry's agencies and bodies. The unit is rich with immense duties and responsibilities. Unfortunately, it remains understaffed, with unfilled positions. The project funded by donors was the first attempt to optimize the absorption capacity of the state through the MoIM. Considering my hands-on experience, I noticed that unsuccessful donors' projects were pervasive. Therefore, I have invested my skillset in finding evidence, solutions, and answers to the foreign aid fiasco in Lebanon.

Undoubtedly, donors are not engaged in foreign aid solely because it makes them feel good about themselves or because altruism is hardwired. The widespread narrative concerning foreign aid is that it harbors a hidden agenda, a secret plan, and ulterior motives which debilitate its effectiveness. This paper will demonstrate that foreign aid could be a win-win situation for both donors and recipients alike.

The Lebanese government and donors alike should be ready to avoid the many past pit-falls for future projects and be prepared for the equally crucial challenges in reforming the aid disbursement model. Any future endeavors by the donor community are to be characterized by a strategic sharing of burdens and costs. The Lebanese government, with the donors, should aim to ensure that assistance money contributes to creating new innovative systems of governance and reform to lay the foundation for stabilization and peace.

Institutional paralysis, lack of governance, and limited absorption capacity within developing countries are the go-to justification by donors for any foreign aid project fiasco. Mindful that foreign aid would not have existed if developing countries had good governance systems. Donors' modus operandi may be contributing to aid failure. The probable reason is that donors may not have considered strategic incentives and fundamental prerequisites in the initial phases of aid disbursement to effect reform. The humanitarian-development-stabilization nexus, still in its nascence, is an attempt by the UN and donor community to maximize the impact of aid. Part of the collective responsibility between governments and donors includes a periodic reexamination of foreign aid goals and alteration of its course.

After the Lebanese civil war, an incessant dribs and drabs rise in instability has persisted, the drivers of which are multifaceted. The interrelationships and interactions of

the sociological, economic, political, governance, and security ingredients have impacted Lebanon's stabilization standing. Instability begets instability; insecurity begets insecurity; and fragility begets fragility. Foreign aid was designed and denoted to eliminate the chain of instability for this parity.

What is the rationale for the "securitization" of foreign aid, and what are the expected benefits of aid as a stabilization tool in Lebanon at the strategic level? Is it stabilization, security, or actual development? This paper also explores a controversial question within the Lebanese context. Who is responsible for the prospect of success of foreign aid to stabilize Lebanon as a recipient country? Donors finance disbursement modus operandi or Lebanon's absorption capacity?

Adopting a stabilization framework for Lebanon necessitates understanding the drivers of instability as the first step of any problem-solving countermeasure. Specifying and narrowing down the problems lay the foundation for incremental fixing. However, donor countries have stated that foreign aid will be unequivocally delivered directly to the people of Lebanon with the utmost efficiency and transparency (Donors' Chair Summary, 2020). This new approach changes the main philosophy behind foreign aid as a means to prop up security and alleviate instability.

The donors' community foreign assistance is used as a trump card and a vantage to influence decision-making in developing countries. When the public institutions are impaired, state revenues will dwindle, and government services will fall behind. International development organizations have invested much time and resources to reform state institutions, but evidence shows that their efforts have usually failed (Buntaine, 2017, p. 471).

A unanimous definition of foreign aid has never been agreed upon, as each donor has different approaches and agendas to the diverse programs at hand. The term foreign aid pertains to financial transfers mainly from developed to developing countries for varied reasons and objectives. Humanitarian, economic, trade, military, security, and political aid is disbursed by donor countries, with the reasoning to accomplish political stabilization, institutional reform, promote sustainable economic growth and development in recipient countries. The effectiveness of realizing the miscellaneous objectives of foreign aid is contingent upon achieving efficient project execution (Elayah, 2016).

Foreign aid underpins a rentier economy, due to focusing on consumption instead of investing, which weakens economic growth. The windfall of foreign aid paves the way for corruption, rent-seeking activities, and even to civil wars. Empirical evidence provided by Djankov proves that foreign aid can damage recipient governments' institutions by diminishing democratic rules and institutional checks and balances. The reasoning is that recipient countries administrators would sideline regulatory frameworks to facilitate seizing foreign aid resources (Jankov, 2006, pp. 7,9,10,11).

Foreign aid is tantamount to windfall gains, leading the government to perceive these inflows as free and unexpected money, tending to engage in a consumption spree. Unfettered foreign aid to developing countries might result in the emergence of the so-called Dutch disease syndrome, which might have unexpected repercussions on the overall economy. The disbursement of aid might lead to unintended consequences that seem counterintuitive if governments are not encouraged to invest rather than consume. Foreign donor assistance might deteriorate the tradable sector and precipitate the

ascendency of the non-tradable sector by crowding out investments in productive activities in addition to breaking down democratic order (Jankov, 2006, pp. 2,5,7,12).

Inflation of the perceived achievements of developmental projects comes with multiple downsides and at a high cost for recipient countries. While the focus of aid has been on ensuring state reform and stability, we rarely question the necessity to reformulate aid infrastructures for better management and teeming results. Accordingly, the focus should be on the needed reforms to foreign aid practices in recipient countries that will improve aid return and bring a satisfactory outcome (Riddell, 2007, p. 477).

The exploding literature on Foreign aid ought to be mandatory reading for policy-makers and university students. Foreign aid as a complex endeavor necessitates the development of aid analysis and the production of policy briefs to highlight main issues to be addressed, which is more important than ever in international relations (Riddell, 2007, p. 477). Foreign aid should be given more weight within the global governance system as it is a fundamental instrument of international cooperation (Riddell, 2007, p. 479). Riddell has shown that aid has made a difference but can do much better through restructuring and reforming aid management (Riddell, 2007, p. 477).

Transparency sets aside the smokescreen, resulting in better coordination among the various donor groups rendering innovation and change possible, which is not the case in Lebanon. In Lebanon, the scarcity of reliable and up-to-date information about aid makes it challenging to acquire accurate numbers and threatens the sustainability of any reform process (LCPS, 2018, p. 10). Accordingly, the study has potential limitations. Confirmatory validity analyses are not possible as donors and the Lebanese government's closure project reports are publicly unavailable. In addition, the absence of Lebanese

institutional memory, national statistics, and proper data management systems, limits the ability to run business intelligence and analytics.

The paper will review the available public data and findings regarding foreign aid to Lebanon. It will identify the viability of foreign aid, and its intended purposes, especially with regards to stabilization and securitization in Lebanon. One of the core objectives will be to highlight how donors use aid to advance their security objectives rather than recipients' development needs. Sources that highlight the prevailing international discourse towards aid will be assessed. The paper uses qualitative assessment with sources drawn primarily from dissertations, books, journal articles, policy papers, and other primary sources such as speeches, documents, and resolutions. Quantitative data is also withdrawn from primary sources.

In the case of Lebanon as a recipient country, the paper will explore whether foreign aid produced stabilization effects. Furthermore, it studies how foreign aid and recipients' policy regimes are two interconnected variables that influence aid effectiveness. This case study, will also explore the level of foreign aid given to Lebanon and whether it fostered nation-building, governance, and stability. The paper also emphasizes what is needed to bolster and ensure effective aid absorption by recipient states and allocation by donors. Most importantly, it will highlight the ways to ensure that the initial phases of aid are complemented and used to synchronize aid with the country's capacity to absorb and the need for optimization of the absorption capacity.

Lastly, the paper concludes with an overview of the findings.

CHAPTER 2

AID ALLOCATION FOR STABILIZING FRAGILE STATES

Fragile states are defined by the donor community as those with flawed policies or underperforming institutions, and researchers have found that foreign aid is more impactful and growth-enhancing in countries with adequate policies. They are unanimous in their belief that better policies will result in more effective aid (McGillivray, 2011, p. 1).

The selectivity approach, which is the way donors favor countries that use aid more effectively, is the new dominant paradigm in international aid policy. Most donors' foreign aid allocation is contingent on the quality of the recipient country's policies and institutions, judging that it is more efficient in such countries. Accordingly, they focus on countries with solid institutions and policies (McGillivray, 2011, p. 2).

Foreign aid and policy regime are two interconnected variables that influence aid effectiveness in promoting growth in recipient countries. Other aid-growth variables include the degree of democracy or totalitarianism, structural vulnerability, the presence of trade shocks, climatic conditions, political stability, post-conflict situations, and institutional quality (McGillivray, 2011, p. 3).

A specific concern for fragile states is that aid allocation is contingent on having responsive, equitable policies and effective, accountable institutions. Institutional paralysis and lack of governance in fragile states is the go-to justification to withhold donors' aid. Undoubtedly, foreign aid would not exist if fragile states were beaming with governance and strong institutions.

The literature on aid spending and absorption in fragile states is limited. A raft of macroeconomic and structural policies is needed in aid-receiving countries to buttress aid efficiency. Donors that tend to engage in an aid spree in post-conflict countries risk counting out the synchronization of aid with the country's capacity to absorb received foreign aid. This aid spree could stray into the dangerous realm of recipient countries' incapacity and incompetence to assimilate aid. A suboptimal absorption capacity within recipient countries necessitates absorption capacity optimization as a prerequisite for any future assistance. When a bespoke absorption plan is without a preplanned good absorption, donors and recipients may go through the motions with little results and much uncertainty (Gupta, 2011, pp. 2,3). Therefore, setting in advance the right conditions through policies and institutional dynamics will influence the effectiveness of aid (Williamson, 2009, p. 18).

Fragile countries have difficulties absorbing the amount of aid they receive, and those with bad policies are the ones that need it the most. According to the OECD's States of Fragility report (2018), donors spent \$68 billion, or more than 65 percent of their earmarked funding, in 58 fragile contexts in 2016. Funds are unevenly distributed to these countries, giving rise to the phenomenon of aid darlings and aid orphans (Carment, 2018 , pp. 1,2). Donors should expand the scope of aid models: The first mode of aid is designated for countries with poor policy environments and aid absorption problems; the second mode for countries with good policies.

2.1 Fragile states' stability as a national security goal for the US as a donor

In the wake of World War 2, a new configuration of foreign aid emanated with the United States (US) Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe. In historical terms, its nascence is somehow novel. The US and the European Union (EU) engrossed foreign aid as a tool to advance their security (Cassady, 2018, p. 1).

In 1947, Secretary of State George C. Marshall advocated a forceful foreign aid policy to rebuild Europe. Marshall said:

“It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace”. “Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos.”

The Marshall Plan wasn't philanthropy. Firstly, it invigorated the US economy by creating markets for American goods in Western Europe. Secondly, the economic meltdown of European economies post World War 2 created a feeble continent susceptible to the spread of communism. The United States sought a strong Europe to serve as a counterweight to the world's other rising power, the Soviet Union (O'Hare, 2017) (State Department, n.d.).

The substantive rationale is that foreign aid is a long-term investment. The reasoning is that it envisages fostering solid trading partnerships with recipient states and lays the groundwork for the stability and security of recipient countries. Aid securitization as an approach focusing on security and stability goals risks trumping sustainable developmental goals.

Since the twentieth century, the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) have adopted foreign aid to bolster their security objectives. This "securitization of aid" evolved as security threats changed (Cassady, 2018, p. 1). Accordingly, the 2017 National Security Strategy of the United States delineated a whole schmeer of positive outcomes amongst recipient countries from America's judicious use of foreign aid whether it be stability, prosperity, and political reform (The White House, 2017, p. 34). According to the 2017 strategy, one of America's achievements was to assist fragile and developing countries to become successful states. As a result, trading partners, allies, coalition partners, and states with shared interests and values emerged. The modus operandi regarding US foreign assistance in the proclaimed strategy is to end the recipient states need for it and bring about self-sustained partners. Moreover, it embraced a vision to strengthen weakly and failed states to avoid instability spillover to America. Its strategy is multipronged consisting of diplomatic, economic, and military tools when assisting the so-called aspiring partners (The White House, 2017, pp. 38-40). In the National Security Strategy, countries that capitalize on the full potential of American aid were termed aspiring partners. The National Security Strategy noted that American assistance enabled the recovery of Western Europe after World War 2, paved the way for the integration of Central and Eastern Europe into western institutions after the Cold War, and helped South Korea and Japan democratize and become among the most developed economies in the world (The White House, 2017, p. 40).

In the 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance the president of the United States stated in his cover letter that when we invest in the economic development of countries, we create new markets for our products and reduce the likelihood of instability, violence, and mass migrations (The White House, 2021). It also emphasized

that development agencies will provide foreign assistance to promote global stability and secure an alternative to predatory development models. Military force is to be used as a last resort, with diplomacy, development, and economic statecraft serving as the primary tools of American foreign policy (The White House, 2021, pp. 12,14).

Foreign aid, a tool of foreign policy, seeks to assure American national security through stabilization interventions in areas prone to radicalization, violence and instability. With views that terror organizations develop in countries rife with instability and poor governance, foreign aid a conflict-mitigation strategy is as a precursor to reactionary use of Armed Forces. Whereas military prowess is the tool of last resort (Levy, 2018). Hence, it's not a stochastic analysis by almost every Secretary of Defense since 9/11 to advocate for Congress to increase funding for the International Affairs Budget and development projects. In 2019, over 140 retired three and four-star generals seconded the proposal, noting that development, and diplomacy foster international political stability, tackles poverty, disease, and terrorism (The Borgen Project, 2020). This posits the exactness of what the former Secretary of Defense James Mattis quoted, 'if you don't fund the state department fully, I need to buy more ammunition' (The Borgen Project, 2020).

The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) published a list of Guiding Principles for Effective U.S. Assistance. It stated that foreign assistance is vital to promote security and to translate this into reality, US foreign assistance should center on reducing global poverty, countering transnational threats like violent extremism, upholding human rights and democracy, broadening global trade and investment (Modernizing foreign assistance network, 2017). When The Trump administration

attempted to cut the foreign aid budget, the congress blocked it considering it as a threat to U.S. national security (Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, 2018).

2.2 Fragile states' stability as a national security goal for the EU as a donor

The US and the European Union (EU) have developed foreign aid programs to bolster their security objectives since the 20th century. The securitization of aid evolved as security threats changed. Therefore, EU engagement as a donor is considered by its members necessary for long-term stability amongst recipient countries (General Secretariat of the Council of Europe, 2009, p. 1). In Europe aid securitization debate was reinitiated in the 2010s owing to the late-2000s Great Recession, conflicts in the Middle East, subsequent flows of migrants and refugees, and rising populist and nationalist movements (Olivié, 2021, p. 1).

The European Union security framework was initiated with the European Security Strategy (ESS) entitled a Secure Europe in a Better World. According to the strategy, the EU contributes to a more secure world by reducing poverty and inequality, promoting good governance, human rights, development, and addressing the root causes of conflict and insecurity. It is also stating that Europe has interest in securitization outside its immediate boundaries. State fragility paves the way to conflict, so fragile countries would fall into a vicious cycle of weak governance and recurring conflict. The EU intends to break it through development assistance to guarantee better security with a special focus on Security Sector Reform as a significant component of post-conflict stabilization for the EU (General Secretariat of the Council of Europe, 2009, pp. 18, 19).

International peace building and state-building are essential elements for development throughout any conflict, starting from prevention to crisis response and stabilization. In the context of development cooperation, the EU engages with security sector actors in developing countries to build their capacity to ensure peaceful and inclusive societies. The EU aims at promoting solutions to security and development challenges, by supporting democratic governance of security sector agencies. The EU and its Member States recognize the need of preventing radicalization leading to violent extremism. (European Parliament, 2017, p. 34). The EU considers assisting the Security Sector Reform to facilitate the establishment of stable democracies based on sustained national ownership (European Parliament, 2017, p. 34).

The European Consensus on Development emphasized that fragile and conflict-affected states necessitate special attention and continuing donor support. The EU's ultimate objective to conduce stability and security is based on a multifarious recipe consisting of democracy, the rule of law, good governance, and promoting human rights in fragile countries (European Parliament, 2017, p. 35).

2.3 The Paris Declaration; an overlooked development guideline

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was adopted in 2005 and reaffirmed in Accra in 2008 at Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development ministerial-level forums (OECD) (Bissio, 2013, p. 233). The Paris Declaration resulted from a meeting of delegates from 90 countries. In 2011 135 countries, including the European Commission, adhered to the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action on the OECD website (Bissio, 2013, p. 234).

It is mandatory, according to Article 3.3 of the Declaration, for states to cooperate in ensuring development and remove any obstacles. Furthermore, article 4.2 states that as a complement to the efforts of developing countries, effective international cooperation is essential in providing these countries with appropriate means and facilities to foster their comprehensive development (Bissio, 2013, p. 246).

The Paris Declaration agenda for reforming aid practices was a collective attempt among international donors to improve aid effectiveness and boost sharing of burdens to urge recipient countries to create new governance systems (Knack, 2012, p. 316). The declaration determines the necessary commitments from donors to improve the quality of aid, its effectiveness, and its impact on development. It states on an exigency basis that recipient countries' agencies need to be more engaged in administering, processing, and absorbing aid; it also highlights the downside of weak government systems hindering proper execution of developmental projects. Thus, recipient countries are encouraged to strengthen their public financial management (PFM) systems as a prerequisite, and donors ought to empower such institutions to avoid bypassing country systems as this undermines accountability and policy processes. Nevertheless, donors usually install their parallel aid management systems and poach talented government officials (Knack, 2012, p. 317).

The preliminary step of empowering cardinal catalytic public institutions is construed as a precondition endeavor for sound fiduciary management. By conditioning the optimization of recipient countries' strategic absorption institutions as a prerequisite, donors will be more encouraged and confident to assist. Aid disbursement should be contingent on recipient countries willingness to engage in introductory reform and

governance standards that not only would facilitate proper implementation but would also prove that both recipients and donors are reliable counterparts.

Ensuring aid effectiveness in fragile states is fundamental for global stabilization and peace. The flow of foreign aid intends to provide initial propulsion to developing countries towards self-sustained growth. The relevance of the Paris Declaration in stabilizing fragile situations is that effective use of aid takes precedence as an essential factor towards stabilization.

Is it the quality or quantity of aid that determines the effectiveness of aid utilization? How does the trade-off of quantity over quality sacrifice productiveness of foreign assistance and create a dependency culture?

2.4 Humanitarian, development, and stabilization nexus

The aid system is spread too thin with inadequate coordination among development and humanitarian project interventions. Accordingly, the humanitarian-development-peace nexus burgeoned not as a successive process but as a focus on what is needed to handle people's vulnerabilities in a systematized way throughout any crisis. The nexus is changing the way foreign aid is planned and financed. It has gained traction and support from the entirety of the UN family, numerous donors, and multiple NGOs as a mechanism to professionally address systemic causes of conflict and vulnerabilities (Oxfam, 2019, p. 3).

The Peace pillar of the triple nexus was recognized and endorsed at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016 (Oxfam, 2019, p. 11). At this event, humanitarian and development actors pledged to work more closely to deliver the Sustainable

Developmental Goals. This approach became known as the ‘humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The ‘New Way of Working’ (NWoW) framework also emerged from the summit by the UN and the World Bank to support the nexus implementation. The nexus concept aims to operationalize its actors to work towards collective outcomes (COs) (Oxfam, 2019, pp. 3,13).

The World Humanitarian Summit demands improved coordination and cooperation between actors working in crisis contexts, and recognizes that effective development requires developing countries to take ownership of developmental initiatives (Veron, 2021, p. 6). Before operationalizing the triple nexus, the various actors engaged also need to be on the same page regarding the goals and priorities in any country, as well as an explicit partitioning of duties and coordination mechanisms (Veron, 2021, p. V). Furthermore, these efforts are expected, wherever possible, to reinforce and strengthen state national capacities, and emphasize the importance of fostering local leadership, governance, and institution-building (Oxfam, 2019, p. 13)

The nexus is an endeavor to engage the root causes and recognize that humanitarian crises can transpire due to poor developmental policies. It also strives to ensure peace investments, to address systemic causes of conflict and facilitate sustainable development (Oxfam, 2019, p. 6). The rationale for the humanitarian, development, and peace/security nexus is to unify the diverse actors’ objectives for better protection of affected populations. Besides, development and peace building obviate the demand for humanitarian assistance in the future. Collective and well-coordinated actions on the part of actors will facilitate the enactment of reforms. The benefit of merging all actors' efforts is to fill vulnerability gaps, and resolve root causes of conflicts (Veron, 2021, p. 2). The triple nexus demands that the humanitarian, development, and peace actors implement

their assignments more cooperatively to alleviate global suffering and prevent conflict (Caparini, 2019). It's worth noting that the lack of collaboration, coordination, and knowledge sharing among the different actors risks having redundant and unsuccessful projects. Additionally, the absence of a centralized governmental entity charged with top-down coordination of foreign aid and aligning it with strategies defined by its line ministries will further complicate development goals. Efficient coordination handled by recipient states gives a much better picture of ongoing projects for the donor community.

Oxfam stated that staff should not be experts in all three pillars of the nexus; nonetheless, a nexus approach requires implementers to step outside of their comfort zone and work across different disciplines (Oxfam, 2019, p. 30). However, it is important to mention that people of all skills are not capable of being experts. State institutions via ministries and administration are intricate and complex and necessitate specialized interventions and policies from specialized agencies for specific sectors and not generalists.

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) adopted a Recommendation on the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus in February 2019, providing a comprehensive framework to support member countries in implementing more collaborative humanitarian, development, and peace actions. The OECD DAC recommendation encourages member countries to coordinate and deliver better financing across the nexus (Caparini, 2019). The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on the OECD's Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus ultimate objective is to end the need for humanitarian assistance through development and peace efforts. The DAC Recommendation aims to build a comprehensive framework that would align the three

nexus of humanitarian, development, and peace actions particularly in fragile regions (OECD , 2022, p. 3). The OECD recommends that the nexus should be context-specific, taking advantage of stakeholders' comparative advantage, collaborative planning, and outcomes. It also recommends that the nexus should be a two-way street to support local authorities and UN leadership, mainly the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators, to ensure cost-effective coordination (OECD , 2022, pp. 6,7).

In 2018, the European Council incorporated the peace element to the humanitarian -development nexus, instituting the triple nexus (Veron, 2021, p. 2). The EU's triple nexus approach means complementarity and collaboration at three levels: Firstly, the intra-EU institutional and headquarters level cooperation; secondly, the vertical exchanges between funding organizations such as EU delegations, agencies, member states' embassies and (international) non-governmental organizations (INGOs); thirdly the horizontal interactions between implementing partners and the relationships with governmental institutions (Veron, 2021, p. 4).

After taking the oath of office, UN secretary general Antonio Guterres's remarks to the General Assembly laid out the need to bring the humanitarian and development spheres closer together from the start of a crisis to support affected communities, address structural and economic impacts and help in the prevention of fragility and instability relapses. Guterres stated that humanitarian response, sustainable development and sustaining peace are three sides of the same triangle. The UN Secretary-General linked the nexus as a means to achieve the 2030 Agenda and accordingly established the triple nexus (United Nations, 2016).

Effective public administration that enables good governance spawns a solid developmental path. It is central to delivering the plethora of public services to the general

public in a complex society. Fundamental changes in the public sector are needed to provide and serve the public adequately (Oliveira, 2015, p. 65). Public administrations constitute a vast nexus of institutions more complex than the triple nexus, necessitating the alignment of the triple nexus with the complexity of governments' bureaucracy.

Humanitarian aid is designed to assist those in need and alleviate their suffering. Developmental aid responds to the economic and development welfare of developing countries (Oxfam, 2019, p. 37). Stabilization, as previously defined, is a political effort to create conditions in which locally legitimate authorities and systems can manage conflict peacefully.

The humanitarian-development-stabilization/peace nexus is an amorphous concept that is obscure. The nexus is almost adjusted to eschew public administrations from its calculus. The new paradigm should show how the UN views the role of recipient states and the way to improve and empower democratic public administrations. The public administration- development nexus is a cogent strategy for the role of recipient states.

Because the UN is highly regarded, any new concept it introduces is adopted without any questioning. Therefore, the triple nexus as a new concept easily gained traction, and garnered supporters by the entirety of the UN, the EU, and The OECD. However, the concept remains flawed and lacks specificities in dealing with states complexities. The nexus, mainly centered on the donors, didn't address the complexities of the public administration, its ministries, and institutions in recipient states. It is unclear whether the nexus aims at reforming recipient states' public administrations or works towards weaning off recipients from donors' aid. Considering the nexus as a solution to

all the ills of foreign aid is a misconception hindering the possibility of thinking about alternative solutions. Employing an intricate nexus without ensuring a sophisticated absorption system within recipient states' public administrations is a recipe for failure. It is crucial to have a clear division of roles and responsibilities based on each actor's comparative advantages, capacities, and resources. Nevertheless, clarifying the role of the recipient state's ministries, administration, and institutions ought to be a precondition.

CHAPTER 3

STATE/ INSTITUTIONAL FRAGILITY AND STABILIZATION - LEBANON CASE

Lebanon is a country facing self-inflicted disasters that the term failed state is likely to become more ubiquitous. The Lebanese collapsed economy, rampant corruption, weak infrastructure, and increased poverty are all ingredients for its dysfunctional state. Lebanon received much aid throughout the decades, but this aid wasn't a solution to its fragility and instability. Aid did not rescue the country from Lebanese politicians' ill-designed policies that inflicted devastating effects on the Lebanese economy, ranking it in the top three most severe global crises since the mid-nineteenth century.

Lebanon's GDP fell from nearly US\$52 billion in 2019 to an estimated US\$ 21.8 billion in 2021, and the share of the Lebanese population below the 5.5 US dollars international poverty line is on the rise (World Bank, 2021, pp. Xi,11). According to estimates, 80 percent of the population is impoverished. Sixty-three percent of young people aged 18 to 29 want to leave the country. Ratings of government performance fail as far as delivering on its mandate, with only 4% pleased with the government's performance owing to corruption, and the system's failure to address fundamental issues (Barometer, 2021, pp. 9,12,13).

In a country where economic decline and socio-political instability are mutually reinforcing the exponential growth of security incidents, intra and inter-communal clashes, assassinations, and murder will be on the rise (International Crisis Group , 2021). The Fragile States Index (FSI) is an annual ranking of 179 countries based on the various pressures that affect their levels of fragility. The index considers twelve key political, social,

and economic indicators, as well as over 100 sub-indicators. Fragile State Index data rank Lebanon fifth in terms of the highest decline in fragility across political, economic, and social indicators; all of which have deteriorated since 2020 and signal a pattern of continuous decline. Moreover, out of the 179 countries included in the index, Lebanon is the 34th most fragile (Fund For Peace , 2021, pp. 7,27,40). It is one of the world's most corrupt countries, and ranks 149 out of 180 countries of how corrupt the public sector is perceived to be in the global Corruption Perception Index, dropping six points since 2012 (Transparency International, 2021).

In Lebanon, the seesaw between formal and informal institutions, state and non-state actors is undefined. Armed entities, civil society organizations, and political leaders tend to supplant the service functions of the state, disjointing and breaking down the state's authority and legitimacy (Mansour & Khatib, 2021, p. 7). If Lebanon isn't already a failed state, it is quickly hurtling to become one. What is surprising is that the more fragile Lebanon turns, the more hesitant international lending institutions, and western governments come to intervene in aid.

In general, fragile states face skill shortages, limiting their ability to scale-up aid-financed projects (Gupta, 2011, p. 13). Lebanon's literacy rate among the population aged 15 years and older stands at 95.1% in 2018 (UNESCO, 2018), and the gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education was 38.5 percent in 2015 (knoema, 2015); However, not used profitably or wisely, the capacity building fixation to public agents didn't yield any fruitful absorption capacity results. This reality lays out a controversial fact that Lebanon doesn't fall short in professionals and academics, but that human capital capacity is not harnessed to accentuate the absorption capacity of the state. Donors' capacity building initiatives ought to be based on well-formed policies and training curriculums.

The process of supporting the state in transcribing new policies is a prerequisite to any capacity-building project. The World Bank warned in a December 2020 assessment that the brain drain reached alarming proportions and that permanent human capital damage would be irreversible (Vohra, 2021).

Due to the dire economic situation Lebanon has been undergoing, and bordering on becoming a fragile state, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was willing to offer the Lebanese government \$11 billion in 2020 if it proposed and implemented reforms such as privatizing state-owned enterprises or cutting the misappropriation of state funds. Yet, structural reforms would seemingly menace Lebanon's sectarian oligarchs' patronage networks and their unfettered access to state funds. Lebanese politicians informed the international community that letting Lebanon collapse would mean the unleashing of the over 1.5 million Syrian refugees that reside in Lebanon (Gadalla, 2021). Lebanese factions have been playing the refugee- conflict card as a manipulation game whenever they felt threatened with real reform via aid, a blackmailing tool to deter the international community from conditioning the disbursement of funds. Fragility exploitation is used as a tool to instill fear of becoming more fragile and increasingly destabilized.

3.1 Understanding the Lebanese stabilization concept

Lebanese confessional, consociational, communitarian, clientelistic, corrupted (5C) system is a driver of instability, exacerbating poor governance and fragility.

The 5C system mutually reinforces mismanaged government finances, identity conflicts, communitarian fears, economic destruction, and poor governance systems (Leenders, 2012, pp. 6,149,240). It leverages the sectarian system to grow its interests at society's expense. Lebanon's political parties' control over state institutions enabled them to funnel

public-sector resources to strengthen their sectarian-based patronage networks. These practices are visible in a bloated public sector, where public servants are typically appointed based on sectarian and political affiliations (Atrache, 2021) (The World Bank, 2020, p. 14). Sectarian leaders maintain constituents' backing by perpetuating a discourse of existential threat and demarcated communitarian existence to leverage votes by instilling fear (Yayboke, 2019).

Lebanon is governed through a confessional system to balance political power among religious sects, institutionalized sectarianism, and cronyism, reflected in the country's current political instability. The institutional power of the Lebanese state is a significant threat to the confessional elites' perpetuation in power, as well-functioning governmental agencies would pose a threat to their adjudged decisions. Accordingly, the political elite intends to hamper the efficient implementation of developmental assistance and public sector reform projects through the deliberate vanquishing of foreign aid. This ceaseless driver of instability destabilizes foreign aid disbursement and impedes needed reform. However, frustration and intimidation from the confessional system as a driver of instability should not be a stumbling block to donors for decisive action.

Dissecting Lebanon's flawed Economy is the first step towards understanding the destabilizing environment. Since the 1990s, Lebanon has possessed one of the highest debt/GDP ratios in the world and in global comparison, has an extremely large banking system (Mazarei, 2020, p. 2). However, a controversial question remains: How did the monetary and fiscal regime manage to acclimatize for prolonged periods of time? The building blocks of this monetary regime were put in place in the early 1990s, in a way to be aligned and operate in conformity with the reshaped political regime.

Lebanon underwent a systemic destruction of the economy that is tantamount to disastrous levels, with the likelihood that it has reached a point of no return. Given the gravity of the situation, Lebanon is presumably unsuited for a playbook-style rescue (Rickards, 2020, p. 7). De facto, The World Bank has ranked the Lebanese economic crisis possibly among the worst three to afflict a country since the late 19th century (The World Bank, 2021). Lebanon's hobbled monetary system was initiated in the early 1990s, with an exponential growth towards collapse. Maintaining the system for 30 years was no easy feat. It was obvious from the very start that this could not be permanently sustained. The establishment as a whole was adamant that this con artistry would perpetuate. For 30 years the system was never streamlined, nor did it divert from the gradual course towards collapse (Mazarei, 2020, p. 1).

The point of departure for any acrobatic financial maneuver is having a political safety net. The banking sector in Lebanon linked to powerful politicians is faced with conflicting personal and financial interests with the public common good. Wielding fiscal and monetary policy decisions and holding high stakes in the sector reinforced an aspect of crony capitalism through unethical round-trip trading between sovereign debt and bank deposits (Mazzucotelli, 2020, p. 33). Political leaders' intertemporal predisposition for prioritizing instant stability over long-term stabilization approaches has many unintended outcomes and did not bring Lebanon closer to reform.

As Lebanon grapples with a debilitating currency slump, the disintegration of the security forces remains a serious risk. A grave threat that might ensue is political parties' and non-state actors' willingness to fill the void left by hollowed institutions. Donors seek to provide livelihood assistance to security agencies to ensure that political

parties and non-state actors will not capitalize on security agencies' weaknesses and offset the security vacuum through unofficial means (International Crisis Group , 2021, p. 1).

Refractory politicians have always balked at needed reforms. An International Monetary Fund stabilization package is necessary to resolve the Lebanese financial meltdown and public debt. However, for the Lebanese state to start receiving substantial development aid, it is fundamental to restructure the banking sector, audit Central Bank's accounts, shrink the public sector, clamp down corruption, and promote the rule of law (International Crisis Group , 2021, p. 1).

Despite the economic abyss that Lebanon has dramatically fallen into, Lebanese politicians did not reverse the nefarious policies that shielded their grasp for power but kept delaying the needed reforms that could jeopardize their hold onto power. They are hesitant to let go of a political system that provided them with economic and political gains since the end of the civil war. Otherwise stated, sectarian leaders will not relinquish power unless it is taken away from them. Political parties applied two ingredients to garner unflinching obedient support -- sectarian identity politics and patronage. Being preoccupied with staying in power, they overlooked economic development and contributed to the country's financial ruin. Ergo, international donors, wary of the Lebanese political elite which has mismanaged previous aid packages, withheld the much-needed bailout (International Crisis Group , 2021, p. i).

Instability in Lebanon juggles between reform-resistant politicians and the conditionality of developmental aid on far-reaching reforms (International Crisis Group , 2021). This may plunge state administrations in the risk of a vicious circle of institutional collapse and hollowing. If, however, the political elite's cost-benefit calculus shifts towards reform, state institutions may be unable to extricate themselves from the fragility

trap hindering the attainment of reforms. Similarly, the Lebanese state has been successful in creating an inefficient aid management system to avoid an efficient aid system that would pave the way to creating institutional reform. In the same vein, foreign aid has served to keep on resuscitating and reviving the political establishment. Unfortunately, donors noticed the unintended consequences of easily accessible foreign aid to Lebanon only when it became too late. Suddenly, donors had a moment of eureka in which they realized that the remedy for this inconvenience was to carry out a new approach bypassing the state, hence, undermining coordination and effectiveness (Finckenstein, 2021, pp. 4,5).

3.2 A bespoke experiment for a stabilization mission for Lebanon

According to a report published by the London School of Economics, around \$170 billion were given in financial assistance to Lebanon since the end of the civil war, and this amount is higher than assistance provided to countries under the Marshall Plan (Finckenstein, 2021, p. 2). The UN, alongside donors and their implementing partners in Lebanon, initiated in 2016 an aid tracking mechanism to provide the government with real-time and transparent information measuring the aggregate amount of development, humanitarian, security, and all other types of aid flows. The Aid Tracking results for 2019 showed that 1,526,740,947 \$ were allocated and committed for this year (United Nations, 2021).

A synthesis report by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (OCHA) analyzes the findings conducted between February and June 2019 of all donor projects being mapped for the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM). The report shows that the MoIM received 330 million dollars' worth of assistance out of the 1.5 billion

dollars mentioned above for its different sectors. Of the 330 million dollars, 130 million dollars (46%) were allocated to capacity-building and institutional strengthening, in addition to 40 million Dollars (13%) to technical assistance to the MoIM. The numbers show that capacity building, institutional strengthening, and technical assistance represent the lion's share of 2019 projects (Office of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, 2019).

The 330 million dollars allocated to capacity-building urge us to search for factual accounts as to whether this donor capacity-building drift has generated the so-called desired capacities for state institutions. The question remains whether the donor intended projects to build and reinforce the public agents' capacity building minimize reliance on foreign experts and manage to pave the way for Lebanon as a recipient country to gain control over its future development. Donors' capacity-building efforts necessitate an epistemic approach apropos the best possible way to perform in recipient states. The steady and outstanding capacity of public servants is instrumental to set the scene for institutional, economic, and political stability.

It is worth noting that Lebanon received 445 million US\$ in 2010, 965 million US\$ in 2015, and 1.525 billion US\$ in 2019 of Net official development assistance, respectively (OECD, 2019). The incremental increase of assistance was a last-ditch effort by donors to help Lebanon avoid the ineluctable collapse. Lebanon witnessed an assistance burst in the last year before the monetary house of cards came crashing down. The amount of aid disbursed to Lebanon in 2019 is interpreted as akin to a failed attempt to curb the Lebanese ills.

3.2.1 The stabilization assistance of the U.S and U.K in Lebanon

Stabilization, as defined by the 2018 U.S. Stabilization Assistance Review, is the “political endeavor to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities and systems can peaceably manage conflict” (USAID, 2018). Accordingly, the United States has provided more than \$4 billion in total foreign assistance to Lebanon Since 2010, including \$2 billion for economic support and security needs to bolster security agencies, improve public services, maintain the multi-sectarian character, and counter Hezbollah's narrative and influence. The United States made it clear that supporting Lebanese security agencies is central to its endeavors to maintain stability in Lebanon.

It also provided nearly 1 billion dollars for Economic Support Funding (ESF), \$2 billion to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in security assistance to strengthen the LAF's ability to secure Lebanon's borders, counter internal threats, and demonstrate it as the sole legitimate defender of sovereignty, as well as \$235 million in civilian security assistance to improve the capabilities and professionalism of security institutions, including the Internal Security Forces (ISF), as they work to prevent, counter, and respond to criminal and terrorist threats and extend the rule of law. Another \$2.3 billion were provided as humanitarian aid in Lebanon since the start of the Syria crisis (U.S. Department of State , 2020).

Lebanon, including its army, is among the largest recipients of foreign aid in the Middle East. Since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war, the US and its allies have worked to improve the Lebanese Armed Forces ' (LAF) capabilities and professionalism, focusing primarily on counterterrorism and border security. (Shah, 2020). The US government sees Lebanon's security services as critical in stabilizing the country throughout the ongoing crisis. Security assistance to the LAF is given based

on the sole legitimate national institution that transcends national confessions. Due to the Lebanese confessional fragmented history, LAF's high priority has been preserving legitimacy in the post-civil war era through cross-confessional representation, balance, and neutrality. Domestic tensions, with a propensity to unexpectedly break out, are a significant source of instability in Lebanon (Shah, 2020).

The inclination of non-state actors to usurp the reserved security provision right of the state and their attempt to evolve into an alternative actor that competes with official state institutions (Walsh, 2019) is a reason why the U.S government aims to accentuate the influence of Lebanese security agencies over non-state actors by building the Lebanese army capacity.

Reckoned as an institutional alternative to non-state actors, the LAF is ordained to stand watch against them and affirm state legitimacy. As part of its foreign policy, the United States provided security assistance to the LAF on the rationale of strengthening Lebanon's sovereignty, tackling terrorist organizations, and strengthening legitimate state institutions. As such, since 2006, more than \$2 billion in military assistance has been provided to the Lebanese military to help it defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Lebanon and conduct operations against Al Qaeda. Additionally, the U.S. government supported the army to increase its presence in southern Lebanon alongside the UN Interim Forces (UNIFIL) and implement UN Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1680, and 1701 (Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, 2020). Likewise, the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) funded 930 thousand dollars to refurbish a new community policing station in Ashrafieh. From 2006 to 2018, the United States provided the Internal Security Forces with more than 178 million U.S dollars in training and equipment (U.S. Embassy in Lebanon, 2018).

In a small security aid package of \$2.5 million, the U.S. embassy in Lebanon undertook the initiative with the ISF to develop and implement improved standardized operating procedures to incorporate internationally recognized best practices in the ISF Prisons Directorate and the ISF Training Academy (U.S. Embassy Beirut, 2019). Helping governments adopt standardized procedures is equivalent to supporting governments to become autonomous and self-sustained. Donors should find innovative ways to unlock the policy potential of governments and set up a new paradigm that addresses the core of the problem.

Additionally, the U.K government refurbished the Raouche and Ramlet El Bayda police stations to transform them into model police stations. British ambassador Chris Rampling clearly stated that support is to be provided to the Internal Security Forces' through projects under the ISF Strategic Plan. Nonetheless, the first ISF's strategic plan pillar is to promote safety, security, and stability (The Bulletin, 2018). The ISF's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 commits the organization to an overall shift toward increased accountability and human rights protection. International donors see the ISF as a driver of stability, arguing that reforming state security agencies is one way to improve Lebanon's stabilization (Walsh, 2019).

An attempt to organize aid received by Lebanon was taken through an initiative by Siren Associates a UK-registered not for Profit organization specializing in security and public sector reform (Siren Associates, 2022). It helped establish a Donor Coordination Platform (DCP) in Lebanon's Council of Ministers after the Beirut port explosion in 2020, and aimed to log and track donations to fund Beirut's recovery and reconstruction. The platform displays data regarding the amount, type, source, and target of foreign aid. Similarly, the Ministry of Interior, with Siren's assistance, established an

Analysis, Planning, and Coordination Unit to administer foreign aid in the ministry and devise a mechanism to map all projects and track funding by creating a new platform for donor coordination. This new platform managed by the unit is supposed to grab the reins of donor coordination. One reasoning behind setting up the platforms is that data are a prerequisite for evidence-based decision-making and effective coordination between donors, the state, and project implementers. Another reasoning is to empower state institutions to control roles originally envisaged for them, and take charge of strategic planning that drives development despite donor vagaries (Siren Associates, 2021). An interview with a senior official at the MoIM on the condition of anonymity highlighted that the Coordination Platform was never operationalized. Additionally, the Planning and Coordination unit is still understaffed and not fully active, hindering the intended objective of optimizing the efficiency of foreign aid from reaching its expected outcome.

3.2.2 The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan: the biggest stabilization experiment

A breakneck exodus of refugees has entered Lebanon without delineating the state's threshold of pain and tolerance by any entity. As of May 2015, UNHCR registered 1,184,427 Syrian refugees in Lebanon (Hochberg, 2021, p. 4). This reality posits the question of the refugee number to be outlined as the highest possible limit in recipient countries. Should a neighboring state receive an indefinite number of refugees regardless of the recipient state's capacity limit and political dimensions? Is setting up a refugee ceiling alongside the maximum number of refugees who may enter a country in a period a privilege restricted to developing countries and no other? The refugee problem is mainly a Third World problem because developing countries aim to keep refugees away from

their borders, through the management of broad refugee camps in Third World countries (Sanyal, 2017, p. 119).

The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) lays down the following strategic objectives namely to ensure the protection and assistance of vulnerable populations, to support service provision through national systems, and to reinforce Lebanon's economic, social and environmental stability. Lebanon has received \$8.807 billion in aid under the LCRP since 2011 (UN & GoL, 2021). Additionally, \$2.75 billion worth of funding was received and allocated in 2021 (United Nations, 2021). This amount is almost double the 1.59 billion USD total amount of development, humanitarian, security, and all other aid flows the Lebanese government received in 2020 (UNOCHA, 2020). The LCRP aims to prevent the deterioration of living conditions for vulnerable people in Lebanon so that western governments would avoid refugee spillover to their own countries. The large amounts spent on the LCRP illustrate that donors use aid to advance stabilization objectives rather than address the Lebanese government's developmental and governance needs. Instead of investing in the Lebanese economy that has been crippled for decades, the LCRP was a stop-gap solution that didn't tackle the crux of the problem. In the absence of structural administrative reform, unfettered access to aid will only defer the inevitable collapse.

Moreover, the Best Practices Compendium of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2017 – 2021 aims to streamline best practices and make them more relevant and impactful for future programming. The review demanded to align them to the thematic areas of Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus. The compendium stated that advancing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus could be through improving

public service provisions, promoting the Global Compact on Refugees, and increasing the resilience of host and refugee populations (Julian Murray Consulting, 2021, p. 2).

The strategic review reflections on best practices in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus claimed to have innovative approaches in that regard in Lebanon. It was stated that the thematic group on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus was attentive to ensuring sustainability. The attempts to ensure sustainable solutions was through vague and very broad approaches, such as the LebRelief behavioral change of users by improving infrastructure, the UN-Habitat initiative to hand over the Abjad center to a local organization, and through UNDP's economic emergency assistance and capacity-building of workers (Julian Murray Consulting, 2021, p. 15).

This strategic review of the largest humanitarian- development program in Lebanon known as the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2017 – 2021 mentions the role of the nexus in a cursory manner. The first seedling of the nexus for the UN in Lebanon is still ill-defined and not fully developed. If it is challenging to clarify and develop the nexus concept in the LCRP, then it may not be applicable for the UN to assist Lebanon.

3.3 Reform, Recovery, and Reconstruction Framework: a Lebanese nexus

In the aftermath of the 4th of August Port of Beirut explosion, the 3RF was established to provide for over 18 months a tailored recovery and reconstruction response to address Lebanon's extreme fragile situation. The reformulated plan of action aims to have a targeted approach that creates new innovative systems of governance and reform such as the adoption of a new procurement law (The World Bank, 2020).

In 2020 and after the Beirut port explosion, the international community recognized that it should no longer conduct business the usual way in Lebanon. Therefore, a new response entitled the 3RF, Recovery, Reform and Reconstruction, Framework led by the European Union (EU), United Nations (UN), and World Bank Group (WBG) have developed a reformulated approach to channeling aid independently from the state (Zoughaib, 2021). The 3RF aims to help the Lebanese government respond more efficiently to the compounded challenges through optimizing institutional capacity, implementing reform, improving governance, and other approaches (The World Bank, 2020, p. 4).

The altered donor attitude emphasizes on the remodeling of aid disbursement by overseeing the execution of reforms still in the pipeline, which is an upshot of the complete loss of confidence in the current sectarian establishment. In every case, the international community has got the upper hand over the inflow of capital into Lebanon, allowing it to call the shots. In light of past failures of foreign aid throughout the decades, the 3RF is a new attempt by donors to make sure that their money is well spent and brings fruitful outcomes. Aid is a double-edged sword in Lebanon, especially after the Beirut port explosion, putting donors between a hammer and an anvil. Humanitarian aid is rudimentary in such dire circumstances, but political profiteers can use it as a tool to refuel their clientelist base through the targeted allocation of citizens entitled to in-kind assistance (Zoughaib, 2021).

The 3RF aims to achieve three objectives; Firstly, it is a people-centered recovery to secure sustainable livelihoods for the affected population and the betterment of social justice. Secondly is reconstructing infrastructure essential for services and

sustainable economic recovery. Thirdly, adopt the necessary reform and governance measures for better reconstruction and restore people's trust in the government. The 3rf is a collaborative process between the government, the civil society, the private sector, and development partners considering a strong inter-ministerial collaboration.

A Consultative Group for the multi-agency framework is a forum for setting the strategic direction, the policy dialogue, the coordination among stakeholders, and facilitating links between the political, humanitarian, and development actions for a more efficient aid system (The World Bank, 2020, pp. 14,15).

The 3rf acknowledged that financial assistance is inadequate to exit the Lebanese abyss without structural reforms. Conversely, it affirmed that considerable foreign aid is needed to restore confidence in the financial system, bolster social stability, and meet public and private needs. It also acknowledged the risk of letting foreign aid perpetuate the structural flaws that led to the crises and underscored the importance of accountability measures for resource disbursement. The lack of a reform agenda would deviate Lebanon towards a humanitarian catastrophe, aggravating instability (The World Bank, 2020, p. 27).

The four Consultative Group Meetings on Lebanon's Reform, Recovery, and Reconstruction Framework have already been conducted. The statement for each was published online to clarify the course of action.

The first meeting was held on the 31st of March 2021 and gathered around sixty representatives from the Lebanese Government, Civil Society, donors, and financing institutions, to evaluate the needs and priorities for recovery interventions. The members discussed the needs of those affected by the Port of Beirut explosion and showed concern about the deteriorating situation and the necessity to implement reforms. The Government

of Lebanon confirmed its commitment to operationalizing the 3RF governance structures and committed to the following reform actions; investigating the Beirut Port explosion, delivering macroeconomic reforms (forensic audit of the central bank), reforming the banking sector, adopting a capital control law, agreeing on an exchange rate unification, adopting a social protection program, approving a registry for social assistance programs, guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary, implementing the anti-corruption strategy, and adopting the new Public Procurement Law (European Union, 2021).

The second meeting was held on the 28th of July, 2021. The meeting group stated that without a government formation, the international community's assistance would not make a difference and would result in signal social and security implications. They also seconded that the Lebanese government's progress on reforms under the 3RF has been slow. They stated that the 3RF contributed to Emergency Cash Transfers, Refurbishment of health facilities, rehabilitation of schools, and legal assistance to victims of the blast. The meeting highlighted the delays in activities under the 3RF, such as the Emergency Social Safety Net, and the collapse of service delivery mainly in the electricity sector. The international community emphasized the recommendations stated in the first meeting, in addition to the halt of subsidy, Capital Controls law, the issue of the 2021 budget, the activation of the National Anti-Corruption Institution, the passing of the Public Procurement law secondary legislation, the activation the Supervisory Commission for Elections, and the reinforcement of the aid coordination, as well as tracking aid according to the humanitarian-development nexus (The World Bank, 2021).

The third meeting was held on November 16, 2021. The Group reiterated its call for justice in the aftermath of the Beirut port explosion and reviewed progress on fundamental reforms discussed at the second meeting. The members of the 3RF

Consultative Group also expected the government to act before the fourth Consultative Group on social protection, the passage of the Competition, Insolvency, Bankruptcy laws, and the formation of an inter-ministerial committee to implement the Public Procurement law (UNSCOL, 2021).

The fourth meeting was held on April 4, 2022. Discussions focused on three strategic issues: economic stabilization and recovery, social protection, justice and accountability. The CG confirmed the importance of the Independence of the judiciary, and called for the urgent mobilization of resources for the National Anti-Corruption Commission and discussed Social Protection (UN-Lebanon, 2022).

The time span between one meeting and the other shows that the 3rf members are closely following up the needed reforms recommended to be achieved by the government. This shows a reformulated approach from the main donors towards the Lebanese government. A case in point is the Monitoring Framework dashboard which tracks the progress of the 3RF commitments in the 3RF document issued in Dec 2020 (3RF working Group, 2021). Even so, the donors of the multi-agency framework need to be better engaged in assisting state institutions in a more practical manner. They need to show a clear plan of action as to how they will facilitate stakeholder and inter-ministerial coordination, link the political-humanitarian-developmental actions, as well as state the strategic and policy direction. The Consultative Group Meetings are not coming up with a durable plan. There is no obvious plan of action with the government, and apparent changes from one meeting to the next are minimal. The framework is to set daily, weekly, and monthly milestones and monitor progress to ensure that members are making the concrete headway expected. The outcomes of the meeting should transpire into a factual conduit for change.

Too much credence is being put on the 3rd by the government and donors alike. Therefore, maximizing the institutional and public outreach is necessary, and doubling down the momentum toward actual results is of the essence. Instead of being managed by multiple agencies, the World Bank Group (WBG), United Nations (UN), and European Union (EU) should develop a centralized website management system that unifies the framework's initiatives in one repository and retain the institutional memory.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Aid success is a two-way street contingent on both party's performance. The blame game between donors and recipient countries regarding the unproductive outcome of aid is counterproductive. (Nwaogu, 2015, p. 101) (Elayah, 2016). Furthermore, the means to ensure that aid is growth-enhancing instead of growth depressing are dependent on the duties and responsibilities of both recipient and donor countries. Besides, the right conditions ought to be put in place before any aid disbursement prescription.

Much evidence supports the argument that effective government institutions stave off domestic conflict. Yet, by developing institutional capacity in fragile and conflict-affected situations, stability will be attained (UNDP, 2019, p. 1). Setting in advance the right conditions through policies and institutional dynamics will influence the effectiveness and impact of aid (Williamson, 2009, p. 18). The lack of collaboration, coordination, and knowledge sharing among donors' foreign aid in developing countries risks having redundant and unsuccessful project resolution (The Economist, 1994).

To be efficiently implemented, recipient aid management systems should be solid in executing aid projects. Country systems aiming to manage aid without the necessary project coordination will encounter double financing and overlapping initiatives. Strengthening recipient country systems beforehand increases the developmental impact of aid funds contrariwise of unprofessionally designed foreign aid, which is likely to be a waste of resources.

In fragile states, donors will fall into the trap of a paradoxical cycle of whether to engage in or retreat from financing. On the one hand, recipients with weak governance

are deemed not worth the support because of their instability. On the other hand, abstaining from helping such countries will aggravate the rampant problem and perpetuate the crisis.

Stabilization assistance is a political endeavor by donor countries to create stable conditions within recipient countries to avoid any instability spillover to their countries. The fixation on the stabilization lens has an impact on the quality and effectiveness of development aid because donors develop a compulsive tendency and an impulse to engage in a spending spree that is not properly structured. Governments do not engage in altruistic acts, and the quid pro quo is identifiable in most aid programs to ensure national/global security and economic gains.

One of the difficulties faced during the research in addressing donor disbursement to Lebanon as a case study is that donors and recipient countries tend to avoid publishing reports about the efficiency and effectiveness of donor projects. The literature on foreign aid to Lebanon is generally scarce. Under-research regarding foreign aid to Lebanon as a recipient country carried with it pitfalls and research challenges, and there is a need to address this issue and generate knowledge about this topic.

What remains to be determined is the drawbacks to Lebanon as a recipient state caught in the crossfire of a multiplicity of donors having distinct ideological perspectives and agendas within the arena of power struggles. Furthermore, how do donors implementing partners in Lebanon manipulate their handlers by diffusing sensational reports, through the ingenuity in creating compelling narrative overlaid with imprecise words of achievement, and through the disposition to portray a thriving image about themselves towards the donor? This is a question that future policy papers must delve deeper into as ineffective aid disbursement will not conduce to stabilization and peace.

Lebanon, a recipient government, and donors as aid disbursers should take the necessary steps to optimize the absorption capacity. Creating a regulatory body to manage foreign aid in a unified repository ensures a viable long-term solution. This new approach will be an opportunity for Lebanon and donors to devote resources to the most crucial problems.

In Lebanon, there is no unified counterpart for foreign aid. Multiple agencies are involved in donor coordination: the presidential palace, the cabinet of ministers, the ministry of foreign affairs, the Council for Development and Reconstruction, the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform.

When presented with a problem with foreign aid policy in Lebanon, donors and governments must ask themselves whether the absorption capacity of foreign aid is optimized or not. Experience shows that foreign aid to date isn't working. Additionally, the absence of a Ministry charged with coordinating foreign aid and aligning them with strategies defined by the Lebanese government will further complicate reform and development goals and threaten the sustainability of any reform process. This different course of action will ensure that donors are more associated with the mandated changes..

The downside of large amounts of securitized aid comes a great deal of risk in embedding a security state that diminishes rights and freedoms. Foreign aid has the power to reshape the future, but ill-constructed aid has the function of disrupting the present. Nevertheless, aid is a new concept and foreign policy necessitates finding fruit in past failures. Foreign aid is an extraordinary opportunity to change the world provided that donors and recipient countries learn and acknowledge mistakes and failings.

Solidly mapped-out projects by the donor community are insignificant unless properly executed. It is not the amount of money disbursed or the number of developmental projects registered that illustrate effectiveness but rather a proper implementation, impact, and sustainability. It is incumbent on recipient governments and the donor community to acknowledge that it is a must to cope differently with the repercussions of the ever-increasing strain on developmental needs. This demands a dynamic and agile approach to follow as things progress. Rapidly deteriorating circumstances necessitate an emphasis on sustainable development, policy strengthening, and reform mainstreaming.

Undoubtedly, donor agencies personnel should become better achievers, and doers, hardwired to make a change and leave an impact and not compete with or marginalize public administrations, but if the Lebanese administration does not implement changes, the donor community cannot turn over a new leaf on behalf of the Lebanese government. One of the main prerequisites for project success is to have resolved and competent public servants with a sense of duty and a hint of rebellion. The Lebanese institutional reputation is deteriorating and donors are already experiencing reception fatigue toward Lebanon.

Lebanon should prove to be a reliable counterpart and set its priorities. Lebanon should be an expert in its own development and stabilization. Lebanon should respect its own sovereignty.

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