AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

POLITICAL PARTIES' POSITIONS ON WOMEN QUOTA IN THE LEBANESE PARLIAMENT: LESSONS FROM THE IRAQI AND ALGERIAN CASES

by
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ABSTRACT
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The persistent underrepresentation of women in Lebanese politics has spurred discussions on women quota as a potential solution. This thesis examines the positions of Lebanese political parties on the adoption of women quota in parliament through five political parties taken as case studies and interviews with political and civil society actors. Also, this thesis followed a comparative approach with two Arab countries that have adopted women quota to analyze what lessons Lebanon can take from the experience of these two countries. Key themes emerging from the interviews include the influence of lobbying, the effectiveness of quotas in a patriarchal context, the need for women to expand their focus beyond issues of women and children, and the enriching experience of working within a political party structure. The comparison with the two Arab countries highlights the importance of bottom-up mobilization and the role of women's organizations. The findings emphasize the necessity of uniting efforts between women in political parties and external women's organizations and gender activists to create a comprehensive, sustainable approach to enhancing women's participation in the Lebanese parliament.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War in 1991 opened the door for new issues to occupy the global agenda. The new global system allowed states to listen more to marginalized groups, and non-state actors started to address issues related to human rights, democracy, poverty, and women's rights. In Lebanon, the government started to be interested in general women issues again after the Civil War at the beginning of the 1990s. Lebanon had been absent on the stage of international relations and international conferences from the mid-1970s to the end of the civil war. In 1995, the Lebanese government formed a delegation to take part in the Fourth World Conference in Beijing and prepared a national report on the position of women in Lebanon. After this, the issue of women's absence on the scene of political life started to be more discussed, but women participation in public life was not addressed on the agenda of the government and the political parties until after the 2005 parliamentary elections. Women's participation in parliament has increased slightly from 2.3% in 2000 to 4.7% in the 2005 parliamentary election. In addition, unlike previous female members of parliament who were often linked to male relatives, in 2005, Ghinwa Jalloul made history as the first woman to reach parliament in Lebanon without a kinship affiliation to a man. The first woman to enter the Lebanese parliament, Mirna Boustany, gained her seat in 1963 after the death of her father. After Boustany, women with familial connections to men were the one being able to win seats. For example, Bahia Hariri through her brother Rafik Hariri, and Sethrida Geagea through her husband who was not able to run due to being imprisoned (Khatib, 2008). Women's increasing presence in the 2005 parliament led to the placement of women participation in public life as part of the 2005 government's ministerial statement for the first time. The ministerial

statement states that “the Government will strive to focus on issues of woman as an essential and active partner in public life by creating the appropriate legal environment to strengthen her role in various sectors and will lay the foundations for the incorporation of the concept of gender in all fiscal, economic and social policies, in line with new international thinking in this respect. The Government will also implement all obligations entered into by Lebanon under the recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995)” (CEDAW Committee, 2006).

However, until now, no real reforms or actions have been endorsed to boost women’s participation in the Lebanese parliament. Despite that, there were some prepositions and policy recommendations for enhancing women representation in the Lebanese parliament, but the majority of the propositions focused on passing the 30% reserved quota.

Women quotas are manifested in three dominant models in the world. The first form is reserved quota through reserving a certain percentage of seats in parliament for women. The second form is based on political parties introducing women’s quota into their organizational framework, and the third form is the legislation of regulations that require political parties to have women on their lists with specifying the position of women on the lists in terms of order compared to men names (Hussein, 2017).

An example of the 30% reserved quota proposal is the draft law presented by the former minister of interior Marwan Charbel. Marwan Charbel drafted a law for the 2013 parliamentary election. The draft law entailed reserving 30% of the seats in parliament for women (Hussein, 2017). In addition, the literature on women participation in parliament in Lebanon addresses the need for quota adoption for an enhanced representation of women in parliament, but also stresses that quota alone is not enough.

It should come with other reforms. Also, the literature does not go over political parties' views and does not give other solutions given the fact that no quota was introduced until now.

As such, this thesis will take the angle of political parties while analyzing women quota as members from these political parties will be the ones voting for quota proposals. This thesis will try to dig deeper about the position of Lebanese political parties concerning women quota in the Lebanese parliament in addition to looking at how Lebanon can benefit from the experience of two Arab countries that have adopted women quota: Iraq and Algeria.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW, PROBLEM STATEMENT, RESEARCH QUESTION, AND METHODOLOGY

A. Literature Review

1. Political rights

As this thesis addresses women's political representation in the Lebanese parliament, it is necessary to start framing the discussion around political rights. Political rights are central to democratic governance and citizen participation. Political rights include: the right to vote, the right to stand for election, freedom of political expression, and freedom of assembly and association. Political rights are considered first generation rights that derive from the 17th and 18th century and are associated with the English, American, and French revolutions.

Looking deeper at the political right of voting, men and women did not have the right to vote until the middle of the 19th century. At that time, political rights were only granted for men. New Zealand was the first country to grant women the right to vote in 1893. Then, more countries began to give women political rights during the 20th century (Herre, 2024). Scholars like John Stuart Mill and Mary Wollstonecraft emphasized political rights not just for men, but for women as well. Women's suffrage was seen as essential to achieve gender equality in the political sphere.

2. First and second wave feminism

After starting by addressing political rights and their historical development, it's essential to come across the first and second wave feminism and the ideologies raised throughout every movement. First wave feminism was during the period of 1950s. First

wave feminism focused on the suffrage right. The momentum of the first wave feminism started to demolish after the ratification of the 19th amendment in 1920. This led to the second wave of feminism starting in the 1960s. The period between the two waves marked the rising of a prominent French author Simone De Bouvouir. De Bouvoir published in 1949 her book "The Second Sex" that laid the foundation for the next wave of women's rights activism. In this book, De Bouvoir explained how women were treated as second to men. During this period, women were advocating for women's social and political equality ("Feminism: The Second Wave," 2020)

During the second wave Boston and San Francisco were hubs of the feminist movement. Among the collections of these hubs were projects on affirmative actions or women quota ("Second Wave Feminism: Collections," n.d.). Scholars like Ruth Lister and Anne Phillips have explored how political quotas are often proposed or implemented to address gender disparities in political representation.

3. Forms of women representation

As women quota came to the floor to address gender disparities in women representation, it's important to come across the development of women's representation. The forms of women's representation have developed based on development in history and demands, and researchers have mainly identified three forms of representation: formal representation, descriptive representation, and substantive representation (Paxton and Hughes, 2007). Under formal representation, women must have the same opportunity as men to participate in politics. However, in the last decade of the 20th century, feminist political theorists argued that a different conception of equal representation is needed. Descriptive representation stipulates that women should not just have the right to vote

and to run for office. Accordingly, reforms in terms of electoral laws and gender quotas must be introduced to make sure that women are represented in proportion to their presence in the population. Taking a step further, advocates of substantive representation think not just about the number of women represented, but more about the willingness and the ability of female officials to represent women's interests. In this respect, Salameh (2014) gives an example from the Lebanese context: the example of Gilberte Zwein when she was a member of the committee discussing a draft law on protecting women from domestic violence did not support the demands of women's organizations, and her presence did not prevent the committee from distorting the content of the law. As such, women quotas fall under the second descriptive form of representation.

4. Women quota in the Lebanese parliament

Digging deeper in Lebanon to look at how women quota in Lebanon is addressed in the literature, we can see that the majority of authors agree on the idea that quota is needed to promote women's political participation in Lebanon, but they also agree that women quota should be accompanied by other types of reforms. Hussein (2017) argues that men continue to dominate decision-making processes due to lack of laws that protect women's status. At the same time, he argues that it's not sufficient to issue laws that require the inclusion of a fixed quota, but lists must also place candidates in a gender-sensitive order. Similarly, El-Makari (2009) argues that the under representation of women goes back to Lebanese legislators not applying a policy of affirmative action, but at the same time he states that the effectiveness of quota depends on many factors including the electoral system.

In addition, Sharif (2016) argues that there is a necessity to introduce a temporary women quota as advocacy and lobbying campaigns have failed to lead to any tangible results. However, Sharif also believes that women quota should come with a gender mainstreaming strategy that includes electoral and institutional reforms such as adopting a political representation system.

On the other hand, international and local organizations calling for quota adoption is clear from their published reports. For instance, a case study prepared by UNDP under the title: Advocacy Campaign to Support the Introduction of Gender Quotas in the National and Local Parliaments in Lebanon (NGO) comes across UNDP emphasis on quota endorsement as part of awareness campaigns on gender inequality in Lebanese politics conducted with Women in Front (Nissa' a Ra' idat) organization before the 2018 parliamentary elections. Moreover, a report by UN Women under the title: "A Gender Analysis of the 2017 Lebanese Electoral Law" stresses the point that quota adoption is not enough alone but reforms to the electoral system are needed. Interestingly, this report stresses the importance of involving political parties for enhancing women representation. The report mentions how the voters vote for women if they are endorsed by their party's leadership. In the same realm, at the local level, Fifty Fifty maps women representation within Lebanese political parties in a research study under the title: "Patriarchy and Sectarianism: A Gendered Trap-Baseline of Women in Politics: The Case of Lebanon. Interestingly, this research study is the statement of some Lebanese political parties' adoption of women quota into their organizational framework, but the report does not dig deeper into the logic of political parties' adoption of women quota into their organizational framework without supporting quota adoption on the national level.

5. Factors hindering women political participation

Mapping the literature shows that a number of factors like social relations, economic power, and civic skills have hindered women's participation in political life. Paxton and Hughes (2007) highlight seven factors that intervene in women participation in politics: money, time, civic skills and community participation, education, work, economic power, and informal networks. Moreover, Lowndess (2004) in her article: "Getting On or Getting By? Women, Social Capital and Political Participation" addresses women's access to social capital and the way they use it. The author states that men spend more time than women on socialization while women are spending time on domestic work and childcare. Thus, she argues that women rely on their hard-earned social capital to gain support in their family lives' issues, and as such little remains to be spent on politics. Furthermore, in her article, "Working Women and Political Participation, 1952-1972," Kristi Andersen focuses on how women are socialized to be disinterested in politics. Interestingly, this article addresses this factor in the context of America. The study shows that employed women begin to gain more confidence in their political efficacy and are therefore more likely to participate in politics. Jobs not only provide women with social networks outside the home, but also offer organizational bases for political activity.

Looking at such issues around women in the Lebanese context, the literature addresses the point of the family being the central unit of society. Salameh (2014) argues that all social and personal aspects are centered on the family unit. Besides, Suad Joseph in the article: "Connectivity and Patriarchy among Urban Working-Class Arab Families" comes across the fact of how in a culture like Lebanon where the family is more important than the individual, connectivity contributes to the reproduction of patriarchy. Besides, in

courts, the man is considered the head of the household (Sharif, 2017). This complicates the abilities of women to operate outside the scope of the family, and Lebanese women are more active in informal or lower politics.

Similarly, Sharif (2017) in his thesis under the title: "The Origin of Women's Segregation in Lebanon's Political Life between Patriarchy and Consociational Democracy" stresses the impact of patriarchy and the sectarian system on women political participation. He looks at the educational status of women. He points out that the education rates of Lebanese women have improved after the Lebanese government opened branches of Lebanese universities. Before the 1970s, most universities were located in Beirut, and hence girls had to commute daily or live alone in Beirut, and few families used to accept this. However, regardless of their high educational level, women still have low representational levels in the labor force. The high costs of electoral campaigns and candidacy fees hinder the ability of women to run for elections without the support of a political party or their families. As such, Sharif puts the burden on the sectarian patriarchal system more than on educational and economic factors. He shows how the Consociational Democracy system that was operated after the war played a crucial role in settling political elites and families.

Another factor that is repeated in the literature is how the control of the media by political parties stands as a barrier in front of female candidates having equal opportunities with their male counterparts to promote themselves and their electoral programs (Sharif, 2017 and El Helou 2009).

6. Political Parties as a leeway

Sharif (2017) argues that there is a recognition of the role of political parties in increasing women's political participation through being the channel of candidates to be elected. In the same context, Kunovich and Paxton (2005) argue that women's inclusion in parties is important in helping women to become candidates and elected officials. They state that parties can support candidates by placing them in favorable list positions in addition to improving a candidate's chances of election by providing additional financial and institutional resources for campaigning. Remarkably, this article also comes across the role of the political and electoral system in enhancing the ability of women to promote their own interests. Similarly, Roza (2010) in her dissertation under the title: "Gatekeepers to Power: Party-Level Influences on Women's Political Participation in Latin America" also stresses on the institutional role. She comes across how not only parties shape political outcomes such as the number of women in elected positions but also the institutional context shapes party behavior toward women's political participation. She claims that "the rules and procedures of political systems structure the behavior of political parties by creating incentives and constraints for the integration of women in electoral lists".

Furthermore, Roza 2010 agrees with the other authors that political parties are the main gatekeepers to women's advancement in politics. Even though she addresses in her dissertation Latina American countries, the thesis gives many insights towards women's participation within political parties. She comes across Lovenduski (1997) argument stating that women's membership in a party, by itself, is not enough to promote their advancement in the party. Women's advancement is done more effectively when they are organized into women's branches. She stressed the importance of women mobilizing and

coordinating their efforts. Another main point that can be highlighted from this piece is how the historical period of crisis created an enabling environment for women participation in politics.

B. Problem Statement, Objectives, and Research Question

The key actors advocating for women's political representation in Lebanon include ministers of the interior, parliamentarians, and feminist NGOs. Notably, the majority of proposed reforms center on reserving parliamentary seats for women. However, while the literature emphasizes the need for adopting gender quotas, it largely overlooks the perspectives of Lebanon's political parties on this issue. This gap in the research presents an opportunity to explore how different political parties perceive the impact of women quota on enhancing women representation. Some parties have integrated gender quotas into their structures, while others have women in leadership roles without formally adopting quotas. My research aims to analyze the reasons behind this variance and investigate why, despite the inclusion of female candidates on electoral lists, no formal quota proposal has been enacted. During the last parliamentary elections in 2022, 118 women continued with their candidacy, joining 64 out of 103 electoral lists. From the 103 electoral lists, 65 lists have at least one-woman candidate (“Women Candidates,” 2022). In 2018, the number of women candidates was 86 distributed on 77 electoral lists. Understanding these dynamics is crucial to assessing the broader implications of political party strategies for women’s political participation in Lebanon. Mainly my research objectives are understanding the positioning of political parties as per women quota in Lebanese parliament and to analyze how Lebanon can benefit from the experiences of two Arab countries, Iraq and Algeria, in adopting women quota. As such, this research

aims to address two main questions: **(1) How do Lebanese political parties position themselves on the adoption of a women quota in the Lebanese parliament? (2) What lessons can Lebanon draw from the experiences of Iraq and Algeria in adopting women quota?**

C. Methodology

1. Five political parties as five case studies

I have adopted a qualitative methodology by taking five political parties as five case studies. The Phalanges party is one of these political parties as they introduced a 20% percent quota for women in their political bureau (Wehbeh, 2016). The Progressive Socialist party is the second case study as the party adopted a 33% quota in its organizational framework. This measure led to 4 out of the 8 members of its political bureau to be women ("Alnisai'i Altakadomi: Nonaoh," 2023). The third political party is the Lebanese Forces. The Lebanese forces is the only political party to have a female secretary general, and it is the political party with the highest percentage of women participation in its political bureau (40%). The Amal movement is the fourth case study as they say in public that they are with reserved quota, but they didn't vote for the quota law proposed by their member of parliament: Inaya Ezzedine. Also, the Amal movement has a special center that focuses on women's issues ("Patriarchy and Sectarianism", 2017). The fifth political party is Lana as a party from the civil society that adopted women quota in its organizational framework. This way also I can have political parties from a variety of Lebanese sects. I mapped the information available online about these political parties through their websites and the news channels. Moreover, I did five interviews with active women from the political parties taken as case studies to look at

their views concerning women quota and its effect on women representation. I conducted interviews to explore the views and experiences of women within the political parties selected as case studies, focusing particularly on the discrepancy between the statements of political party leaders and their actual actions toward enhancing women's political participation.

This way, I can compare the situation and actions of women under the political parties that adopted women quota whether in their organizational framework on all levels and all branches or in their political bureau with the situation and actions of women under the other political parties that did not adopt any form of women quota. In addition, I looked at how these political parties came to introduce women quota in comparison to the logic of the other case studies behind not supporting women quota.

Mainly, I asked the interviewees with the women under the political parties taken as case studies the following questions:

- More details about women in the political party?
- How do the parties come up with a women quota in their organizational framework or in their political bureaus? (To the parties that have adopted women quota)
- How did women's presence within the political parties change after the quota adoption? (To the parties that have adopted women quota)
- Why the political party didn’t introduce women quota into its political bureau or its organizational framework? (The parties that have not adopted women quota
- What are the women supporting laws that the political party has developed and or proposed? Did they change after the quota adoption?

- What is the political party's future plan and long-term goals towards enhancing women representation?
- What do the interviewee think about the different forms of women quotas? Reserved, on the level of electoral list, inside parties' systems.
- What do the interviewee think about the electoral system that is better for enhancing women's representation?

I asked the above questions specifically to examine the following:

- Changes in women's representation: to assess the impact of quota adoption on enhancing women's representation in political parties and decision-making processes.
- Conditions leading to quota adoption: to understand the factors and circumstances that led certain parties to adopt women quota, providing insights that could inform strategies for women activists in other parties.
- Comparative analysis of parties: to investigate the differences in conditions and dynamics between parties that adopted women quota and those that did not, identifying any patterns or barriers to quota adoption.
- Women's actions within parties: to explore the initiatives and actions women are undertaking within these parties, shedding light on their strategies, challenges, and contributions under varying party frameworks.

2. Interviews with civil society actors

In addition to the interviews with the political parties, I did an interview with a member from the Lebanese NGO: Fifty Fifty, as Fifty Fifty prepared the law proposal presented by MP Inaya Ezzedine. This proposal consists of reserving 26 seats in

parliament for women: 13 for Christians and 13 for Muslims in addition to introducing a 40% quota on electoral lists. However, they gave more focus on the 26 reserved seats part. As such, I will ask the interviewee from Fifty Fifty why they focus on reserved seats, and I will look at their approach with political parties and the political parties' reaction to their proposal. Also, I took the views of a gender expert and policy actor regarding the effects of quota on women representation and which form of quota is best for women representation in the Lebanese case.

3. Comparison with two Arab Countries

In addition to the five case studies and interviews, I employed a comparative approach with Iraq and Algeria, both of which have implemented women quota. This comparison allowed me to analyze the effects of quota on women representation and to examine the views of political parties regarding the quota system in these Arab countries. Ultimately, the comparison with Iraq and Algeria offers valuable insights for Lebanon in considering the adoption of a women quota.

CHAPTER III

WOMEN POLITICAL RIGHTS IN LEBANON

A. Political Rights in the Legislations

Article 7 of the Lebanese constitution asserts that "all Lebanese are equal under the law, they enjoy equality in civil and political rights and they assume duties and responsibilities without any difference between them." However, the personal status laws that regulate gender relationships go against these principles of equality and non-discrimination. When addressing the personal status laws, it's interesting to come across how "the personal is the political" was one of the most prominent statements of second wave feminists. In this regard, Lebanese women have been considered second level citizens compared to men (Khatib, 2008).

Lebanese women gained the right to vote in 1952, and Lebanese women voted for the first time in the history of the Republic and obtained the right to run for election in 1953 (khatar, 2014). In 1997, Lebanon ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1997. However, the Lebanese government expressed reservations about Articles 9 (2), 16(1) (c) (d) (f) (g) and 29 (1), dealing with nationality, marriage rights, divorce rights, child custody, parenting, and the same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation.

Ten years later after granting the suffrage right, Myrna Boustani made history when she became the first woman elected to Lebanon's Parliament. Across the years the number of women elected to parliament was very low and elected women were mostly from political families. During the latest parliamentary election in 2022, 8 women were elected

for parliament. Around every parliamentary election, discussions around the need of introducing women quota comes to the floor.

B. Previous Quota Prepositions in Lebanon:

There were various prepositions for introducing a women quota in the Lebanese parliament. Hussein (2017) mentions the 2012 draft law proposed by the former minister of interior Marwan Charbel that stipulates the inclusion of a minimum 30% quota by either gender in the 2013 parliamentary elections. Hussein (2017) also argues that the branch committee of parliament's Administration and Justice Committee, which is responsible for looking into electoral reform, has become paralyzed.

Furthermore, while talking about proposed laws under female political participation, a main agency: The National Commission for Electoral Law known as the Boutros Commission comes to the floor. After a widespread dissatisfaction with the framework for the 2005 elections, the by then Prime Minister Sinoria established the National Commission for Electoral Law (NCEL) with a specific mandate to "propose means to reform the electoral system by preparing a new elections law." The NCEL was headed by minister Fouad Boutros and was later known by his name "The Boutros Commission" (Foregn Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, 2008).

The Boutros Commission was the first to think of women quota on political parties' lists. The commission presented a draft law in 2006 to the cabinet that stipulates in Article 64 that lists must include at least 30% women. On the other hand, the Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform in 2011 was the only institution that appeared in my research to propose the stepped suggestion of ordering female names on electoral lists.

Besides, the main recent quota proposal was the one proposed by MP Inaya Ezzedine in 2021. This quota proposal was developed by the Lebanese feminist NGO "Fifty Fifty". This proposal is based on reserving 26 seats in parliament for women: 13 for Christians and 13 for Muslims in addition to introducing a 40% quota on electoral lists. Ezzedine withdrew from the parliamentary session after parliamentarians claimed that there was no time to discuss her proposal (Antonios, 2021).

This review shows that none of these proposals take into account the relevance of these quotas towards enhancing Lebanese women representation according to Lebanon's political parties.

C. Formal or Descriptive Representation

As such, in principle Lebanon has achieved formal representation of women by giving them the right to vote and run for elections. However, formal representation was not efficient to secure women representation in Lebanese parliament. This pushed civil society actors and gender activists to call for the need of an affirmative action, and it is still under question if Lebanon will be able to achieve descriptive women representation.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN WITHIN LEBANESE POLITICAL PARTIES

A. Mapping Women under the Five Case Studies

As political parties are central to this research, this chapter provides an overview of women's roles within the five political parties selected as case studies. It explores how these parties accommodate women in their organizational structures and to what extent. Additionally, it examines each party's official stance on the women quota. Specifically, this chapter offers historical insights into the presence of women within these parties, women placement on electoral lists, the women-related laws proposed by each party, and the representation of women in parties' electoral programs.

1. The Phalanges Party

A main female figure within the Phalanges Party was Laure Moghaizel. Moghaizel was a member of the Phalanges students' group. In 1948, the by then founder of the Phalanges political party called Moghaizel to join the women's committee. As such, it's interesting how the Phalanges party has been involved in women's matters since the 40s. Moghaizel focused her work under the women's committee on increasing Lebanese women's political awareness and participation. Moghaizel contributed to shifting women's work from charity to political activism as she organized a conference on women hosted by the Phalanges Party and attended by the two major women's advocacy groups that existed at that time in Lebanon: The Lebanese Women Union and the Christian Women Solidarity Association (CWSA). After the conference, a joint executive

committee for the union and the association was formed. The joint committee produced a shift from charity to political activism (Stephan, 2010).

Moving to women's presence within the party, in 2015, the Phalanges Party introduced a 15 percent women quota in its political bureau. However, this quota did not lead to women's representation in the parliament. The current president of the Phalanges Party, Samy Gemayel, stated in a seminar on the occasion of International Women's Day organized by the Women's Affairs Department in 2023 that the women quota created dynamism inside the political party ("Nadwa Fi Al Sayfi," 2023). In 2016, 48.9 percent was the percentage of women affiliated with the Phalanges Party (Wehbeh, 2016). Currently, the women quota has increased to 20 per cent. The Kataeb has 5 women out of 22 members in its political bureau ("Nadwa Fi Al Sayfi," 2023). The Phalanges party has a female Public Policy and Legislative Affairs Advisor, Lara Saadeh. The Phalanges Party had 3 women on its electoral list in Beirut one electoral district during the 2022 parliamentary elections. Moreover, in Mount Lebanon 2-Matn district, the Phalanges had two women on its list with Samy Gemayel. On the other hand, in the 2018 parliamentary elections, the party had 2 women with Samy Gemayel in the Matn district. Similarly, the Phalanges had two women with Nadim Gemayel in the Beirut-2 electoral district.

The Phalanges has proposed a number of women supportive laws. The Phalanges Party proposed a draft law to include a 30 per cent women quota in the parliamentary elections, and Samy Gemayel argues that the Phalanges were the only ones to vote with this proposal in 2018 ("Nadwa Fi Al Sayfi," 2023). Also, the party presented a proposal to add the feminization letter to all Lebanese laws, which, despite its symbolism, eliminates discrimination against women. It was also proposed to exempt women running

for elections from the nomination fees to encourage them to engage in political life (“Al Jmayel: Hakakat Almar’a,” 2021).

When it comes to the electoral programs, the party’s 2018 and 2022 electoral programs don’t have any reference towards enhancing women’s political participation. They only state the need to push towards providing women with their social rights.

2. The Progressive Socialist Party

The founder of the Progressive Socialist Party, Kamal Jumblatt, was a great believer in women’s capabilities, and he called for giving room for the women to also play their role like men. Interestingly, Kamal Jumblatt proposed the draft law for granting women the right to vote and run for municipal and parliamentary elections. As such, Jumblatt pushed the parliament to ratify his proposal in 1952, and Lebanon was a pioneer in the Arab region in granting Lebanese women their political rights (“Hakaza Daa,” 2020).

Looking at women’s commissions within the party, Wafaa Abed, the commissioner of women's affairs in 2015 stated that women were always given importance within the Progressive Socialist Party. The women's branch was established after a period from founding the Progressive Socialist Party when women began their political work within the party. Then, women's committees were formed and started working to raise awareness and support women’s issues. After that, the Women's Affairs Commission was established within the party's structure and set its goals, most notably improving opportunities for women's representation and creating legislation to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women (“Alhezb Altkadomi Alechtiraki: 16%,” 2015).

Furthermore, the Progressive Women's Union was established in 1975 as an independent association affiliated with the party, but existing on its own to advocate for

feminist issues and work to activate the role of women in leadership positions inside and outside the party. The Union is very active and called for quota adoption within the parliament. The Union has a center in Badaro under the name of "House of Progressive Women" to constitute a safe and comfortable space for every woman who visits the association and for every feminist association that does not find a safe space to organize its meetings or activities.

Moving to women's presence within the party, The Progressive Socialist Party introduced a 33 per cent quota to its organizational framework in 2021. Secretary General of the Progressive Socialist Party, Thafer Nasser, mentions that the quota falls on all sectors and the Progressive Women's Union is involved in the party's general conference at the level of central leadership. One of the two vice presidents of the party is a woman. He argues that the opinions and suggestions of the women are taken into account. In 2023, the results of the elections for the Leadership Council of the Progressive Socialist Party met gender parity, as 4 women won out of 8 seats in the council's membership, and a woman and a man won by acclamation in the position of vice-president of the party ("Alnisai'i Altakadomi: Nonaweh Belmonasafa," 2023). Moreover, the Progressive Socialist Party had two women candidates during the latest parliamentary election: Habouba Aoun in Chouf district and Afraa Eid in Tripoli District ("Bein Aldawrayn Alfaael Walchakli," 2023).

On the other hand, examples of women-supportive laws presented by the Progressive Socialist Party are amending the Social Security Law to amend maternity leave and grant Lebanese women the right to provide security services to their husbands ("Alnisai'i Altakadomi…Nasawiya," 2022).

3. The Lebanese Forces

Initially, women were taking some part in the military period of the party through what is known as the "Nizamiyat", a group of women who were taking part directly in the field combat. However, these women came back to the traditional serving work after the war. In addition, a study published by Lebanon Support mentions that the party did a documentary on the party's military history and the fighters' training program, but this documentary doesn't mention at all "the Nizamiyat". The women had a bigger role in the Lebanese Forces after the war through the students' activism and within the party's media and research institutions. There were also training programs for the women members through intellectual development courses. However, women's roles decreased after the arrest of the party leader, and women were not part of the internal system of the party after the comeback of the party leader. After that, the role of women within the party became limited to student's activism, the Social Affairs Agency, the Authority for the Martyrs, Wounded and Injured, and surely the Authority for Activating the Role of Women.

Moving to women presence within the party, in the Lebanese Forces, women's presence has a different stand as Setrida Geagea, the wife of the party leader, is an active member who led the party during the assassination of Samir Geageaa. In 2016, the Lebanese Forces appointed Dr. Chantal Sarkis as secretary-general becoming the first woman to hold the post in a major Lebanese political party. On the other hand, women hold positions in some offices like the office of public policies and the office of relations with international political parties. In the latest parliamentary election in 2022, 30% of the candidates on the party's Zahle's electoral lists were women including Ghada Ayoub who won a seat in parliament becoming the first woman member of parliament with the

Lebanese Forces other than Sethrida Geageaa ("Lika'a Lelkouwat Fi Zahle," 2022). Ghada Ayoub argues that equality is achieved not through legal texts but through communal awareness. Similarly, the Lebanese Forces had 3 women on its list in the North 3 district. On the other hand, during the 2018 elections, the Lebanese Forces had one woman in the Jbeil-Keserwan electoral district and three women on the Matn electoral list (Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, Parliamentary Elections Website). Also, the Lebanese Forces had previously appointed female ministers. For example, May Chidiac was appointed minister of State for Administrative Development Affairs in 2019, and Alice Chabtini was appointed as minister of displaced in 2014.

The party has an interesting point to stop at while looking at women's commission within the party. The website of the Lebanese forces states that the women's committee aims to make women play a pioneering and advanced role in social and political life away from the usual stereotypical image of associations.

Moving to the party's stand on women's quota, the Lebanese Forces' position remains firm concerning women's quota. The party rejects adopting women quota into its organizational framework and is neutral on quota on the national level.

The party presented some women-supportive laws like a draft law to amend the provisions of articles 503 and 504 of the Penal Code, which relate to rape and marriages and a law to protect against the marriage of male and female children ("Ben Eksa'a Alkiyanat Alsiyassiya," 2018). In addition, the Lebanese forces presented a law proposal for giving the imprisoned mother the right to care for and watch her children ("Mo'tamar Sahafi," 2023).

4. The Amal Movement

A woman was at the core of founding the Amal Movement. The head of women's affairs in the Amal Movement in 2015 stated in an interview with the "Southern Affairs" magazine the presence of a woman in the founding core of the Amal Movement. This woman is Nouhad Alhussaini who was close to Rabab Alsader, the sister of Imam Alsader ("Al Maraa Fi Harakat Amal," 2015). In addition, the Father of Harakat Amal, Al Imam Moussa Al Sader, recognizes the importance of the social, intellectual and humanitarian role of women, which he dedicated by establishing the "Girl's House" with the aim of educating and developing women's capabilities. He used to consider that women have a great role in the building of society ("Al Sayida Randa Berri: Li Agenda," 2014).

Looking at women's commissions within the party, the Amal has women agencies on both the national and local levels. There is the Central Women's Affairs Officer and women's matter officers for every province. The movement insists on showing the resistant role of women. The current central women's affairs officer "Souad Nasrallah" stresses the role of women in defeating the enemy and raising children on the resistance and its ideology in a speech she gave as part of a meeting on the occasion of Resistance and Liberation Day organized by The Women's Affairs Sector of the Amal Movement, Beirut Region ("Al Foaani fi Zekra Altahrir," 2023).

Moving to women's presence within the party, in 2015, four women were present in the political bureau of the Amal movement which consists of 28 members. In addition, there was one woman in the executive council consisting of 21 members (Al Mara'a Fi Harakat Amal, 2015). While addressing the Amal Movement, it's definitely important to come across their main female political actor, Innaya Ezzedine. Ezzedine is the sister of Hassan Ezzedine, a member of the Amal Movement who was killed during the Israeli

invasion of 1982. The Amal Movement appointed Innaya Ezzedine as Administrative Reform Minister in 2016, and she was elected a member of parliament in 2018 (Chamaa, 2022). As stated previously, Ezzedine presented the main recent quota proposal that was drafted by the feminist Lebanese NGO Fifty Fifty. This proposal is based on reserving 26 seats in parliament for women: 13 for Christians and 13 for Muslims in addition to introducing a 40% quota on electoral lists. In 2021, Ezzedine withdrew from a joint parliamentary committee's session after its members refused to discuss her proposal to introduce a women quota. After this, the speaker of Parliament placed a revised version of the proposal on the agenda of a parliamentary session at the end of October 2021. The revised version removed the 40% quota on the level of the electoral list's part of the law. However, the amendment was sent back to the committee for further study, which is usually seen as a death sentence for proposed legislation (Tabbara, 2021).

On the other hand, The Amal Movement's Women's Affairs Officer organized a central celebration on the occasion of Arab Women's Day. Mrs. Randa Barri was representing the party's leader: Nabih Berri. During her speech, Mrs. Berri called for the implementation of a national agenda that presses for the demands of Lebanese women and at the forefront of this agenda is the introduction of women quota ("Al Sayida Randa Berri: Li Agenda," 2014). As such, Amal party members appear to be supporting the women quota, but they didn't show their support in practice.

Similarly, it seems women matters are absent in general on Amal's electoral program. The party's electoral program of the latest parliamentary election in 2022 had no reference to any point related to women's issues ("Berri A'alan Alaanawin," 2022)

5. Lana Party

Lana was established in 2022 as a political party from the civil society. A woman, Halima Kaakour, is the main female figure in the political party. She is an advocate for gender equality, and she is experienced in political work with women and youth. From the very beginning, the party adopted a gender quota for the candidacy of 50 per cent as part of its organizational framework. The political bureau of Lana is composed of five members: 3 women and 2 men. Lana took part in the 2022 Lebanese parliamentary elections with 3 candidates (one woman and two men): Halima Kakkour in Chouf District, Hassan Sano in Beirut, and Yehya Mawloud in Tripoli. The responsible for the electoral commission of the party is a woman: Zeina Al Helou (Al Dhaybi, 2022). Interestingly, Lana's 2022 electoral program comes across the patriarchal structure of the Lebanese system and calls towards women quota adoption in parliament and municipal elections.

B. Analyzing the Online Mapping

This review reveals that women were central to the founding of some of the political parties examined in the case studies. Leaders such as Kamal Jumblatt and Pierre Gemayel not only recognized the importance of women but also assigned them significant roles within their parties.

On the other hand, mapping these case studies leaves us with main conclusions. First, adopting a quota inside the political parties does not reflect in women representation in the Lebanese parliament. For example, even though the Phalanges has adopted a women quota in its political bureau since 2015, the Phalanges don't have a woman member of parliament until now. Similarly, while the Progressive Socialist Party has

nominated two main figures for the latest parliamentary elections: Habouba Aoun in Chouf district and Afraa Eid in Tripoli district, they did not reach seats in the parliament. This is the case while these political parties appoint women in leadership positions like Lara Saade as a Public Policy and Legislative Affairs Advisor in the Phalanges Party and one of the Progressive Socialist Party vice presidents is a woman. At the same time, one of the parties taken as case studies that is strongly against women quota has appointed women in high leadership position. The Lebanese Forces appointed in 2016 Dr. Chantal Sarkis as secretary-general becoming the first woman to hold the post in a major Lebanese political party.

Another point to stop at is women placement on the political parties' electoral programs. Even though the Phalanges has adopted women quota in its political bureau, the party's 2018 and 2022 electoral programs don't have any reference towards enhancing women's political participation.

Moreover, there are two other interesting points from this mapping. Even though Lebanese Forces clearly state they are against women quota, the website of the Lebanese Forces states that the women's committee aims to make women play a pioneering and advanced role in social and political life away from the usual stereotypical image of associations. In the same context, the Amal Movement's Women's Affairs Officer organized a central celebration on the occasion of Arab Women's Day. Mrs. Randa Berri was representing the party's leader: Nabih Berri. During her speech. Mrs. Berri called for the implementation of a national agenda that presses for the demands of Lebanese women and at the forefront of this agenda is the introduction of women quota. As such, it was interesting to look in the interviews at how the Lebanese Forces will make women play a pioneering and advanced role in social and political life away from the usual stereotypical

image of associations. In addition, it was inciting to look at the interview with Amal Movement how members from Amal party say publicly they are with women quota but did not vote for the quota proposal presented by their MP Inaya Ezzedine, especially as their 2022 electoral programs had no reference to any point related to women's issues.

CHAPTER V

INSIGHTS FROM ALGERIA AND IRAQ

A. Shared Factors

Algeria and Iraq provide valuable comparative examples for analyzing the women quota in Lebanon, as all three countries share similar factors influencing women's political participation. These factors are: the public-private boundary, patriarchy, and the role of women organizations which intertwines with the point of international interventions.

An example of the public-private boundary in Algeria can be given from the 1988 protests. In Algeria, in 1988, there were protests against the adjustment plans after the massive Algerian foreign aid. The protests led to some political reforms, among them was the creation of new political parties. The FIS was among these new political parties. The FIS believes that Muslim women have the right to education, voting, and freedom of opinion, but not to work outside the home or become political leaders. The boundary between the political-public and the private is clearly relevant in Lebanon as the personal status laws govern what is referred to as private but the personal status laws affect to a great extent women's participation in the public field whether economic or political participation. In Lebanon, politics is considered a public space that is more suitable for men.

The public-private binary is directly related to the second shared factor that can be highlighted, patriarchy. Patriarchy is extensively manifested in the three countries. Patriarchy in Lebanon was addressed extensively above, but the Civil War in Lebanon also contributed to reinforcing patriarchy and moving women's rights to the margin

(Khatib, 2018). When it comes to Algeria, patriarchy is highly institutionalized as the Algerian regime tried to restore the Arabic-Islamist identity that had deteriorated after 130 years of colonialism (Djerbal, 2014). Moving to Iraq, just as the family is the central unit in Lebanon, citizenship in Iraq is based on the tribes (Fischer-Tahir, 2010), which contributes to setting patriarchy. Also, women were at the center of indoctrination and nation-building in Iraq. However, between 1990 and 2002, Baath changed its platform from Arab nationalism to tribalism and Islamization. The previously implemented gender equality programs were cancelled and the regime institutionalized patriarchy in exchange for loyalty (Longo, 2008). This repression leads to the third factor in the comparison "the role of women organizations" which intertwines with the point of international interventions.

The United States rhetoric used women's rights as part of the validation for the Iraq War and as a barometer for successful democracy in Iraq. Since the US invasion of Iraq, women's organizations have expanded across Iraq at a time when the international community was working to advance women's position in Iraq. Looking at Algeria, women were oppressed a lot during the civil war by extremist Islamic groups. In response, thousands of active new Algerian NGOs were established. Trip 2016 as cited in Aissa 2023 considers that the presence of a strong women's movement played a key role in pressuring the regime to adopt and implement the gender quota in 2012 (Aissa, 2023). The women NGOs played on the momentum of the crisis when there was tensions against the regime, so president Bouteflika addressed the opposition groups and the international community by advancing women rights (Lorch & Bunk, 2016).

B. Women Quota in Iraq

After addressing why Iraq and Algeria can be relevant cases to look at while considering women quota in Lebanon, this section will detail women quota adoption in Iraq. After the fall of Saddam Hussein, there was a rise in women's organizations. Academics, physicians, artists, and journalists participated in debates on women's issues (Fischer-Tahir, 2010). In 2005, the new constitution adopted in Iraq stated that women must comprise no less than one-quarter of the representatives in the assembly. Besides, the electoral law passed later in 2005, states that no fewer than 1 out of the first 3 candidates on the list must be a woman (Women Quotas in Iraq, 2005). The first election after the quota reforms in 2006 took place under the 'closed list' proportional representation system ("Strengthening Women's," 2020). The first parliamentary election after quota adoption led to women holding 31% of the seats in comparison to 7.2 percent in the latest election before quota adoption. Then, in 2010, there was a transition to open-lists. After the 2010 elections, only 25.23 percent women were elected to the Council of Representatives, which is the minimum number required by the quota. The percentage remained constant around 25 percent until the 2018 elections (Tamimi, 2018). In the latest parliamentary election in 2022, the percentage of representation increased slightly to 28.9% ("Gender Analysis," 2022).

A report by UNAMI under the title of "Gender Analysis of Iraq's October 2021 National Elections" shows how political parties are the main entry point for women in parliament as during the latest parliamentary election in Iraq in 2021, out of the 95 seats won by women, 90 were affiliated with political parties. It's difficult for women to find a place within Iraqi political parties as Iraq is dominated by a small number of big patriarchal political parties. Also, political parties in Iraq do not support women

candidates financially even women who won through the quota (“Women Running,” 2020).

An important point to stop at while trying to have insights about women political participation in Iraq for Lebanon is the 2019 protests. Like Lebanon, protests took place in 2019, and women started to have bigger representation in the structures of new parties established after the protests (“Women's Political Participation,” 2023).

C. Women Quota in Algeria

Moving to Algeria, the women quota in Algeria came after the Arab Spring as part of the electoral reforms in 2012 (Ben Jilani, 2018). The Algerian regime tried to legitimize itself in front of the protestors and the international community in 2012 through women’s rights as an indicator of the regime’s modernization and democratization (Lorch & Bunk, 2016). The uplifting of restrictions on associations in 2011 contributed to the expansion of women’s organizations, and women were actively participating in protests that took place in May 2012. The government responded by introducing a reserved quota. Even though the reserved quota law led to a high percentage of women representation (31.6%), it was criticized on the basis that women were still absent from decision making especially at the political level (Marwane, 2021). Then, in 2021, after two elections with reserved seats, Algeria dropped the reserved seat system and moved to a “gender parity law” that requires gender parity on party lists after two elections with reserved seats. After holding 145 seats in 2012, women held just 34 seats after the adoption of the parity law (Marwane, 2021). Marwane 2021 argues that following open lists was a negative point of the system as in a patriarchal society voters prefer men over women. In addition, under Article 317, even lists that do not meet the gender parity standard were still registered.

Given that the percentage of women representation decreased after the adoption of a parity system, it is worth mentioning that the percentage started to decrease since the 2017 elections. On the other hand, the case of the placement of the violence on the agenda is worth stopping at as it can give insights on how women issues come to the parliament. The bill was first introduced in 2012 by a woman deputy, but the government decided to put it on the agenda three years after, in 2015, when president Bouteflika was sick to show that the regime is still standing still.

Algeria's case gives insight that addressing women issues in times of crisis might lead to some good results as the regime tries to introduce reforms to improve its image. While addressing Algeria, it's important also to look at the 2019 protests. The protestors were opposing a fifth term for president Bouteflika as the economic situation was deteriorating, and as Boutefika was operating from behind doors. After the protests, women's representation decreased. At that time, activists were facing a lot of suppression ("Algeria: 3 Years On," 2022). Women were actively participating in the 2019's protests (Tripp, 2019). However, women were not supported by the Hirak as the protestors didn't want anything to take the attention away from the core objective of the protests. This resulted in women refusing to participate in many events organized by the opposition groups on the basis that women's demands are not taken into consideration. For instance, feminists boycotted the First National Conference on Civil Society Dynamics conducted on 15 June 2019 that bought together associations and unions to work on a roadmap for the transition period. The feminist square in the protests has faced many physical and verbal attacks and online campaigns. However, the protests helped in circulating the word feminist across the media (Haddag, 2021). As such, after getting a bit deeper into the

literature, it can be said that a lot of reasons might have affected the decrease in women representation in Algeria and not just the 50% quota on electoral lists.

Interesting to this research is looking at women participation in a leading political party in Algeria, the Islamic Action Front (IAF). Women's participation in the party dramatically increased over the 1990s, and the women have participated and secured leadership positions in a main political party in Algeria. Clark and Schwedler attribute women's gains in the IAF to internal party disagreements unrelated to gender, which created an opportunity for women to have a larger say within the party's decision-making bodies (Clark & Schwedler, 2003).

D. Lessons for Lebanon from Iraq and Algeria's quota experiences

Many lessons can Lebanon take into account from the Iraqi and Algerian experiences with women quota. First, addressing women issues in times of crisis can lead to good results in terms of enhancing women representation in parliament. This coincides with a second point: "bottom-up mobilization". These two points are linked to the third most important factor "the role of women's organizations". Before the quota adoption in Iraq, there was a rise in women's organizations after the fall of Sadam Hussein. Similarly, in Algeria, the uplifting of restrictions on associations in 2011 contributed to the expansion of women's organizations, and women were actively participating in protests that took place in May 2012 to which the government responded by introducing a reserved quota. This shows that women's organizations and bottom-up pressure from women activists can play a crucial role in advancing women political participation. Lebanese organizations should carefully consider this point. Women NGOs benefitted from the after-crisis and international pressure moments in both Iraq and Algeria to unify and call

for quota adoption. However, even though Lebanon was passing through a crisis before the latest parliamentary elections in 2022, women quota was not introduced in Lebanon until now. Daou (2015) in an article entitled “The Role of Women NGOs in Empowering Women in Lebanon: A Life-long Partner to Gender Justice?” addresses how the work of women NGOs in Lebanon is scattered and duplicated. Daou also states how women’s organizations focus on short-term projects mainly income-generating activities like embroidery and food-making instead of working on long-term cross-disciplinary empowerment.

Another takeaway that can be taken from the Iraqi and Algerian experiences is how women participation is affected by the type of quota and the electoral system within which the quota is applied. When Algeria adopted the reserved quota law, even though it led to high percentage of women representation (31.6%), it was criticized on the basis that women were still absent from decision making especially at the political level. This leads us to question the efficacy of reserved quota in enhancing women's political representation.

Moreover, it was shown that the adoption of a 50% quota on the level of electoral lists in Algeria led to decrease in women’s representation. This was linked to the adoption of open-lists electoral systems, and it was addressed in the literature how the following of open-lists was not efficient due to the prevalence of patriarchy. Also, women representation decreased after the transition to open lists from closed lists in Iraq in 2010. Iraq and Algeria experiences show that quota did not lead to efficient representation as even after quota was adopted, patriarchy still prevailed and women did not reach leadership positions.

On the other hand, the role of women participation in political parties can also be highlighted from the Iraqi and Algerian cases. It was stated above how during the latest parliamentary elections in Iraq in 2021, out of the 95 seats won by women, 90 were affiliated with political parties. Likewise, as stated previously women participation in one of the leading political parties in Algeria that was originally against women quota led to women reaching leadership position within the party at later stages.

CHAPTER V

INTERVIEWS

As stated in the methodology section, interviews were conducted with women from the political parties taken as case studies in addition to an interview with a member from the feminist NGO: Fifty Fifty and an interview with a gender expert.

A. Lobbying inside Political Parties

One of the main points that can be highlighted from the interviews is the role of lobbying inside political parties. It's true that the interviews with women under the Phalanges and the Progressive Socialist Party that adopted women quota in their political bureau and organizational framework showed that there was a leadership decision to promote women's presence within the parties, but it was also clear that internal lobbying by women activists under the party preceded this decision. The role of lobbying supported by statistics about the situation of women inside the political party was another related interesting highlight from the interviews. The interviewee under the Progressive Socialist Party explained how there was a lot of work in the last five years in the party to enhance the role of women within the party. A lot of studies took place in the last two years to show that women cannot reach a place in the party if a quota was not introduced. The interviewee addressed the role of the Progressive Women's Union. The interviewee stated that the Union has its own board, and its main objective is to work with the Progressive Socialist Party to enhance women's role within the party. This institution was working to show the party leaders that there were no women in decision-making positions. The interviewee stated that the Progressive Socialist Party hasn't appointed a minister nor

nominated a member of parliament before. In the latest parliamentary elections in 2022, the Progressive Socialist Party nominated women. This was the result of women's activism within the party and the previously established women's committee within the party. Recently, the women's committee was replaced by the Equality Audit Unit. The Equality Unit has both men and women. This unit was doing a lot of studies including a study that was done for the first time on the political violence directed to women within political parties. The objective of the study was to show that it's not that women are not capable, but there are many obstacles hindering women from joining political parties. The Equality Unit undertook a lot of statistical work to show that women are not present within the political party to prove that a special positive measure is needed to push for women's representation. The Equality Unit did a gender audit through the statistics. This allowed them to propose a women quota. The party's leader and leadership approved introducing a women quota in the latest general assembly in October 2021.

Lobbying played a role even in parties that did not adopt quotas. The interview with Amal party mentioned how in 2001, the first woman was appointed to the political bureau of the party. The lobbying by the women who entered the political bureau during the conferences led to women occupying 6 seats in the political bureau of Amal at one point.

The role of lobbying was also stated in the interview with Fifty Fifty. The interviewee from Fifty Fifty also stated that the quota inside the Phalanges came after lobbying from women activists in the party. Likewise, in the Progressive Socialist Party, the women quota came from strong lobbying from women activists inside the party, and they benefited from a young new leadership, which facilitated the quota introduction. Interestingly, the interviewee from Fifty Fifty came across how lobbying influenced the

Free Patriotic Movement leadership. The Free Patriotic Movement was against quota during the time of the parliament quota proposal, but the party signed the women quota proposal in municipalities' elections, and the party's leadership are saying that they will apply quota on their lists in the 2026 elections.

B. The Efficiency of Quota inside Political Parties' Systems

Even though interviewees agreed on the role of lobbying in pushing for quota adoption, they all agreed that quota inside political parties is not very efficient as it contributes to clientelism through leaders appointing women family members to fill the quota. Also, parties' leaders will make sure to bring women who will not challenge their decisions. The interviewee with the Progressive Socialist Party stated that a women quota within political parties' organizational frameworks is not enough as women can be put in positions only as an image. In addition, the interviewee with Amal movement considers that women quota inside political parties organizational frameworks adds to clientelism inside political parties. She considers that women quota inside political parties organizational frameworks negatively affects women who were active in the party for many years by bringing women with familial ties who don't have any activism record in the party. Even the interviewee under Lana considers that it doesn't lead to fruitful representation, but to a fake one as parties' leaders will bring women who will not challenge their decisions. Similarly, the interviewee with Fifty Fifty believes that a women quota within the political parties' organizational frameworks does not mean that the political party will nominate women for parliamentary elections. In addition, the gender expert argues that the point of political parties following women quota into their organizational frameworks means that these parties still have not reached the level of real

representation. She stated that the political parties are not transmitting the representation inside the party to external levels of representation like representation in parliament.

However, at the same time, the interviews showed that the adoption of women quota in political parties' organizational framework led to good results as it imposed women's representation on all levels of the political parties, which contributed to increasing women's presence across the parties. The interviewee with the Phalanges stated how before the party adopted women quota, there was only one woman in the political bureau of the political party. She also showed how the quota inside the party encouraged more women to run under the party, which made the process more competitive. This has a positive impact as it pushes women to work more on their campaigns and contributes to enhancing the competencies of women who reach positions. Also, there have been more appointments of women to positions, and women have also begun to demand more. The interviewee also stated that currently the number of women in the applications for membership to the party is higher than the number of men. On the other hand, the interviewee representing the Progressive Socialist Party stated that even though the impact of the quota system remains under observation, the first change perceived was during the election of the board as men did not consider voting for women as something awkward. Moreover, the effects of women quota inside political parties' organizational frameworks were shown through the quality of the answers of the women interviewees under the parties that have adopted women quota. Women under these parties look freer to share and more capable of explaining their experience and participation in events.

C. Women Matters Commissions Inside Political Parties

One of the most interesting and surprising interviews was the one with the Amal Movement. It's interesting how the interviewee coming from a conservative party was sharing this much freely. In 2001, Amal had a woman in its political bureau. This shows that the party is not very far from giving women a role. The interviewee mainly stressed on the need for women stepping out of the bubble of women and child matters. She also stated that she is with removing the women matters commissions within the parties. This point was repeated by many interviewees. The interviewee under Lana party tackled how they don't have a women's sector under the party to not limit women's work to women's matters. Similarly, the gender expert emphasized the point of women participating in all national topics and not being only limited to women matters. She agreed with the other interviewees on the need to remove the women's committee from within political parties. In this respect, it is interesting to stop at how the political parties have different names for the women sector. For example, the interviewee from the Lebanese Forces was keen on stressing that the Lebanese Forces doesn't have a women's committee but a women's agency that has a central office and regional offices across the different Lebanese regions. Also, the Progressive Socialist Party has the Progressive Women's Union that has its separate establishment.

D. The Experience of Political Parties' Participation

The interview with Amal marked another underline when the interviewee explained how working under a party structure is enriching for women's candidates, which touches on the central point of analysis in this thesis "political parties". The importance of participation within a party setting was also stressed during the interview with the gender

expert. The interviewee argued that implementing a real political work requires a political culture and formulating this political culture requires participation within a well-established institution like political parties who have the needed expertise to transfer this political work culture to women. Women learn how to formulate policies within the political party's setting. Working under a political party helps women reach larger and faster. The interviewee argued that political work is like any other job. As such, women should not be politically active only during the election period.

E. Patriarchy Being the Main Obstacle

On a different note, all the interviewees agreed that patriarchy is a fundamental obstacle facing women's political representation. Even interviewees from political parties that have adopted women quota in their organizational frameworks stated that people are still not ready to vote for women. That's why the majority of the interviewees consider reserved quota to be better than quota on the level of electoral lists or inside political parties. The interviewee supporter of the Phalanges stressed that within the patriarchal system in Lebanon, a quota is needed to push for women's presence on all levels. The interviewee under the Progressive Socialist Party argued that people will vote for men in the absence of a reserved quota. She gave the example of the latest parliamentary election in 2022 when political parties were introducing women to their lists, but the preferential vote was going to men candidates. From a different approach, the interviewee under the Amal party discussed how during the latest period, due to all the crises the country is facing, people moved away from political parties to civil society. However, the interviewee thinks that even civil society actors have fooled women. Thus, the interviewee considers that the problem is not with political parties but with the prevailing

patriarchal and dominating spirit. Even Lana's interviewee argued that a 30% quota on the level of electoral lists does not yield any result as within the patriarchal system in Lebanon, voters will not vote for women on the lists. Also, Fifty Fifty's interviewee argued that within the electoral law currently endorsed in Lebanon, especially within the preferential vote, 40% women's quota on the level of electoral lists will not lead to results in terms of representation as voters will give their preferential vote to men instead of women.

F. Enhancing Women Representation in Practice

As the mapping of the political parties came across the addressing of the website of the Lebanese Forces on the objective of the women's committee to make women play a pioneering and advanced role in social and political life away from the usual stereotypical image of associations, I asked the interviewee from the Lebanese Forces how the women committee works towards this objective. The interviewee stated that the women committee is working on empowering women economically, socially, and politically through empowerment programs. The interviewee stated that the women committee is working on keeping the women up to date with the national political topics in addition to supporting women being aware about the local characteristics.

On the other hand, regarding the previously mentioned Randa's Berri's statement, the interviewee with Amal party when asked about Amal public statements of supporting quota but not voting for the quota proposal presented by MP Inaya Ezzedine, the interviewee answered that the party's leader, the Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri, stated frankly that he is with a 30% transitional quota. She mentioned that Ezzedine adopted the quota proposal, and women in the party were organizing solidarity

campaigns. She argued that the law did not pass because many political parties did not agree on the law, not because of the Amal political party. As such, it can be said that some political parties claim publically that they are with women quota if not with quota, they claim that they are with enhancing women political representation, but in practice they focus like women NGOs on empowerment programs and put the blame on other parties.

G. Good Measures

Some good measures can be taken from the interviews. One of the good measures that can be learned and replicated from the Phalanges party is supporting women locally. The Phalanges are working on women's exposure and visibility in their regions as it contributes to pooling mass voting for the women candidates. Another lesson that can be taken for women interested in expanding their women experiences from the interviews is staying away from their tendency to minimize their role inside the parties. They should try to be present and active as much as possible. This can also play a role in changing the patriarchal mindset as male politicians will start to see that females are capable of doing the party's political work.

From another angle, it is interesting when asked about the women-supportive laws proposed by the political parties, a big percentage of laws presented or signed by the parties were in collaboration with NGOs, and the majority of these laws are not directly related to enhancing women's political representation. The interviewees presented some examples of these laws. The interviewee with the Phalanges mentioned amending the domestic violence law with Kafa, tightening penalties for sexual crimes with Abaad, and civil personal status law with Kafa. In addition, Lana's interviewee mentioned that Lana signed a law against women's violence with Kafa, and they are also working with Kafa

on a women's economic empowerment law. This adds to what was previously stated about the role NGOs have in working on women's political representation and how they should focus more on working with political parties on laws or measures that contribute directly to women's political representation and not focusing mostly on economic empowerment or laws on gender violence.

In addition, the insights from Arab countries showed the role of international support when women's quota was introduced. Many interviewees came across the gender audit that is currently done by UN women with the political parties. The Phalanges did a gender audit with UN women to check where women are still not present. The Phalanges aim to have at least 25% in all areas across the party. Now, they will work on representing women in the areas not represented, but this takes time as they have to wait until the mandate ends for current positions' holders. Like the Phalanges, the Progressive Socialist Party also participated in the audit UN Women is doing. UN Women took data from the party and did focus groups to do an audit. This gender audit is worth looking at while being finalized and might be an opportunity to build on for further efforts from the international community.

H. A Key Takeaway

Analyzing these interviews leads to one main crucial point: the relationship between women inside political parties and between women and external gender activists. In this regard, the interviewee under the Progressive Socialist Party argued that women within the political parties should collaborate with each other to widen the scope of lobbying. Similarly, Amal's interviewee stressed that all Lebanese women must unite on one idea, which is working on calling for involving women in decision-making at the

national and local levels irrespective of the way or the type of quota. The interviewee argued that the women activists within the different political parties are always in touch. The interviewee came across a national document that was signed by the main 8 political blocs under the supervision of the Madaniyoun organization. The document was signed by high-level officials from the political parties. The head of the executive body of the Amal Movement signed the document affirming the right of women to participate in the party's decision-making. This document was signed by the Lebanese Forces, Samy Gemayel from the Phalanges Party, and Ahmad Hariri from the Future Movement. It's a legal document that requires the parties to involve women in the party's decision-making including contributing to passing women quota in the Lebanese parliament. Working on this document took almost a year between 2014 and 2015. After this document, women representatives from the political parties under the 8 blocs met in the Phalanges' headquarters. They also signed a document recognizing the necessity of entering women's quota in parliament and municipalities. However, there was no further work on or reference to this document. In addition, from the interviews I did, I saw that women members from some political parties mention the collaboration with women from other political parties while others try to point out the antagonism and differences of experience across political parties. In this respect, the interviewee from Lana party when asked about the collaboration with women under other political parties was keen on stressing that women in other political parties do not support quota. This was shown in the interviews I conducted. For example, the interviewee with the Lebanese Forces stated directly that she does not support women quota and agrees with the party's leadership that women should reach positions with their capabilities. Lana's interviewee argued if women in the other political parties supported quota and held a gender lens, they would form a

supportive mass. However, Lana's interviewee stated that regardless of women's views regarding quota, she will support women if they face discrimination.

On the other hand, when it comes to collaboration with gender experts or activists, I asked Fifty Fifty's interviewee about their strategies with the other women's organizations to the impact the collaboration between the different women activists had in Iraq and Algeria. The interviewee stated that Fifty Fifty established "Al Tahalof Al Watani Lel Quota" between 2020 and 2021, a consortium of 40 NGOs supporting women quota. The consortium is still operating today. The interviewee stated that Fifty Fifty is taking the first step because it has 10 years of experience. Fifty Fifty presented the parliament's quota proposal to the 40 members of the consortium. They collected feedback and ended up with the version endorsed by MP Ezzedine. No other member presented another quota proposal as they all endorsed the Fifty Fifty's proposal.

The gender expert argued that the main problem is that the civil society actors and gender actors all presented one solution "quota adoption" that was faced by a high level of rejection from parliamentarians and Lebanese politicians. The interviewee stated that quota adoption is one form of these temporarily special measures, but it's not the only one. Focusing on one solution led to no improvement in decision-making and put women activists and civil society actors in a hostile position with decision-makers.

Finally, even though the interviewees were showing the difficulty of applying women quota and were stressing how quota alone is not beneficial as the patriarchal thinking is still very present, no party member presented any other solution. The interviewee from a revolutionist emerging party admitted that quota is not the only solution, but did not present another option. The gender expert only proposed introducing incentives. As such, the relationship between women under the different political parties

should be directed more towards cooperation than antagonism as the interviews showed that they have similar views in many instances. All the interviewees argued that inside-party lobbying can lead to results even under the presence of the patriarchal mindset. Also, they all agreed that women within the different political parties should collaborate to widen the scope of lobbying. In addition, women should work on statistics-driven lobbying. They should do a lot of studies and statistics on women within the parties. Most importantly, women should engage men from inside the party in lobbying, and they should organize meetings with the parties' leaders.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this thesis addresses the position of political parties towards women quota in the Lebanese parliament. The findings were retrieved and the analysis was conducted through five political parties taken as case studies in addition to insights from two Arab countries: Iraq and Algeria.

Concerning the first research question regarding the positioning of political parties on women quota, the research and the interviews showed that some political parties adopt women quota in their organizational framework and have women in leadership positions but without having women members of parliament while other parties that are against women quota have women in leadership positions and have women members of parliament. This proves that patriarchy is still extensively prevalent in Lebanon, and it's a main barrier hindering enhanced women's political participation in Lebanon.

Interestingly, the interviews showed the importance of women working in a party setting which stresses the angle taken in this study. Also, it was shown how political parties play a crucial role in advancing or hindering women's advancement in the political field.

The main interpretation from this research is the importance of collaboration between women from the different political parties on one side and between political parties and external gender activists and civil society actors from another side. This is linked to what was found regarding the second research question. Iraq and Algerian experiences with women quota showed that bottom-up lobbying can push for change.

Women from the different political parties should join efforts and stay in contact with each other to form a mass sharing opinions and expertise and analyze the best strategies that support women in reaching the Lebanese parliament. Moreover, civil society actors should not put themselves in rivalry with the political parties. The comparison with Algeria and Iraq showed that even though Lebanon has similar circumstances affecting women's political representation like patriarchy and the rivalry between the public and the private, there is one main point of difference "collaboration between NGOs". The literature and interviews showed how gender activists don't agree on one form of quota and at one point they were criticizing each other's work.

In brief, the research and the interviews showed the difficulty of passing a women quota in Lebanon. Also, the research and the interviews showed that quota in political parties' organizational framework was not very effective in addressing patriarchy within political parties as women were still not able to reach leadership positions or become members of parliament. The last interview with a gender expert keeps us with a point that requires further research: Does the following of other forms of temporary special measures contribute to effectively enhancing women's representation in the Lebanese parliament?

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