CONFLICTS AFFECTING THE EFFICACY OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
in Lebanon

Analysis of Conflicts in the Lebanese Water Sector

A Research Paper presented by:

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:
GDP

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The Hague, The Netherlands
November 2021

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ADELNORD	Appui au Developpement Local du Liban Nord (Support for Local Development in North Lebanon)
CDR	Council for Development and Reconstruction
CNB	Charbel Nahas Bureau (Consultancy Firm)
Dar	Dar El Handassah (Consultancy Firm)
LRA	Litani River Authority
MoEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
NERP	National Emergency Recovery Program
PEWNL	Public Establishment of Water of North Lebanon
PCM	Project Cycle Management

ABSTRACT

In this research, I attempt to develop a different angle to analyzing the impact of sectarian conflict in Lebanon. To explain long-standing challenges that have been aggravated by a devastating crisis, this research aims to follow the full project cycle management which frames development projects in Lebanon. With a focus on the water sector, this paper focuses on types of conflict that development practitioners in Lebanon face when dealing with the socio-cultural and political realities on the ground.

I. Introduction

My choice of topic for this research paper was mainly guided by an observation that became apparent during my field research in Lebanon: a significant number of development projects, especially in the water sector, are either canceled or remain unused, despite an established process for project selection and the availability of the required technical expertise. Furthermore, Lebanon's geo-political position has, for a long time, attracted funding and assistance for development from western and neighboring countries. While being the world's 3rd most indebted country (Shawish 2019), Lebanon still ranks 130 out of 137 countries (and lowest in the Arab region) in terms of "Quality Of Overall Infrastructure" (World Economic Forum 2017). Rather than relying on state institutions for the provision of services and infrastructure, residents in Lebanon rest on a "multiple balance-of-power between the various groupings within the country" (Salamey 2009: 83). These clan-based networks operate as individual nations within the Lebanese state, and the public administrations act as a negotiation arena between sectarian elites. "Each group enjoys some degree of self-government; it maintains its own elected bodies, institutions and competencies. Only few issues have therefore to be coordinated with other segments of society" (Schneckener 2002: 205).

This results in the weakening of state institutions and governance. "It allows the concentration of power in the hands of few political/confessional leaders. Thus any agreement among these "powerful lords" applies to the state/public institutions while their disagreement paralyzes them" (Abdel Samad 2016: 313). Through a long process of historical sectarian frictions, 15 years of civil war (from 1975 to 1989), and periods of relative peace, the sectarian-based ecosystem in Lebanon continuously clashes with any attempts to improve access to public resources and services.

During the reconstruction period of Lebanon and more so after the withdrawal of Syrian troops, Lebanon developed intricate processes for the identification, planning, and implementation/maintenance of infrastructure and service provision projects. Being a major recipient of foreign funding, Lebanon developed various processes and tools to absorb and attract funds. The development practitioners interviewed for this research have worked extensively in the development and application of these tools and processes throughout the "project" timeline. Thus, their professional positions act as intermediaries between various social forces that impact the efficacy of development projects.

This research investigates the types of conflict that arise in the implementation of development projects as a result of a weakened state and frictions between semi-autonomous sectarian groups. While the embeddedness of sectarianism within social

practices, public administrations and political processes is widely discussed in literature about Lebanon (Weiss 2008), fewer authors focus on the specific types of conflict that accumulate and result in inefficiencies, gaps, and deep-end fragmentation in the provision of public resources and services. The low performance and efficiency of the Lebanese state to find adequate solutions for problems of land planning, resource distribution, and infrastructure can be attributed to a "clan-based" elite class, a power-sharing model of governance, and social/cultural frictions. Through this research, I aim to explore the experience of various development actors, and analyze the types of conflicts that arise within the framework and timeline of project planning and implementation.

As mentioned by Verdeil (2008) "the fragmentation of basic services supply (in Lebanon) is a long term process" (2). Through this paper, my goal is to lay the grounds for more research that looks into the specific types of conflict that arise throughout the framework and timeline of project identification, planning, implementation, and maintenance.

For this, I will first discuss the relevance of this research topic and define the research question and objectives. I will then explain my choice of research method. Then, I will provide contextual information about sectarian conflict in Lebanon, the history and functioning development policies in Lebanon, the relevance of looking into the project cycle, and the water sector in Lebanon. Finally, I will present three case studies, which will be analyzed.

II. Relevance of Research

The scope of this research focuses on conflicts that development practitioners in Lebanon face when dealing with the socio-cultural and political realities on the ground. As Lebanon descends into an unprecedented and disastrous economic and political crisis, the access of residents to the most basic services (electricity, water, sanitation and education) is becoming a major daily challenge encountered by many. In a report effectuated by the World Bank, this can be linked to two major reasons: "(i) [the crisis] has significantly increased poverty rates, with a higher number of households unable to afford private substitutable, and thus becoming more dependent on public services; and (ii) it has threatened the financial viability and basic operability of the sector by raising its costs and lowering its revenues" (World Bank 2021). More specifically, "the water sector is being squeezed to destruction by the current economic crisis in Lebanon, [and failure to respond to this crisis] could force households to make extremely difficult decisions regarding their basic water, sanitation and hygiene needs" (UNICEF 2021).

In this context, the following points explain the relevance of my research:

- The existing networks for channeling foreign funding and responding to arising needs are likely to persist and play an important role during and after the economic and political crisis in Lebanon. The public institutions that are investigated in this research, work in close partnership with foreign agencies, local authorities, contracting companies, and other key stakeholders in the provision and delivery of services and resources. The majority of interviewees work within or with the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), which is the "the major state institution to finance and implement large infrastructure projects" (Mahmalat et al. 2021).

- Further, my research explores professional positions that work in a context set by several para-state structures (such as sources of funding, internationally imposed structures for project planning and implementation, local authorities and conflicts, etc.) and are linked to a multitude of networks. The nature of the conflicts that they face in their job sheds light on important aspects of governance in Lebanon.

- The project cycle and timeline has evolved significantly over the past two decades in Lebanon and worldwide. Research about the types of conflict that arise within this setting can help develop more practical ways of understanding how sectarianism impacts access to services and resources in Lebanon. Further, the water sector (which includes drinking/domestic water, waste-water, and irrigation) is a primary example of how sectarianism surfaces through technical problems of land and resource sharing, resulting in a wide array of inefficiencies and gaps in the availability of basic resources.

Understanding these conflicts will enable the various actors involved in the planning, programming, financing and implementation of development projects to take them into consideration during their interventions.

This report is addressed to the Central Government and to national elected officials to raise awareness on how political conflicts, mainly due sectarianism, harm development projects. This research follows concrete examples of development problems through the various steps of the project cycle: planning and identification of projects, the studies and methodologies to assess project feasibility, political negotiations, implementation, and maintenance.

This study also addresses municipalities, unions of municipalities, and other local authorities to stress the importance of their role in mediating social frictions, and shed

light on significant losses in the realization of projects if social conflicts are not taken into account.

This research project is also aimed at public institutions responsible for the operation and maintenance of development projects to ensure their sustainability. It is important to analyze how conflicts with the institutional arrangement surrounding the project cycle can cause project stoppage or cancellation.

III. Research Question and Objectives

The question that drives this research paper is:
What types of conflicts surface throughout the project cycle in the water sector in Lebanon?

Given the embeddedness of sectarianism and ethnic conflict within the Lebanese political arena, public administrations, and social structures, this research aims to investigate how the context and framework of the project cycle results in loss in resources, infrastructural quality/efficacy, and financial revenues. Thus, this research will follow different phases of the project cycle to assess the types of conflicts that arise throughout this timeline. This work can contribute to a better and more practical understanding of the interactions between development actors and the relationships that bind the process of development in Lebanon.

 The scope of study focuses on conflicts surrounding the planning of development projects in the sector of water in Lebanon, and assessing three main components:

- Political Elite: this is to show how the involvement of the political leaders can shape the course of project planning. This also includes political alliances to international powers.
- Institutional Framework: this looks at the different institutional bodies and sets of rules that govern project planning in the sector of water in Lebanon. This includes foreign aid agencies and Lebanese governmental agencies (specifically the Ministry of Electricity and Water and the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR))
- Local/Regional Conflict: Identitarian conflict between local communities can become violent and call into question the rights legally acquired by one of these 2 communities. The resolution of this conflict takes place at the community level in the absence of institutional bodies, and has a direct implication in planning of projects.

IV. Methodology

To investigate these questions, my field work will include semi-structured interviews with different stakeholders and experts that are involved in the planning of development projects. the interviews were divided into three case studies, each relating to one of the defined components of conflicts (political, institutional, and social). Through these interviews I aim to better define the various problems that stakeholders in the sector of water and land face in Lebanon.

- o Case study 1: Political conflict: The personal and sectarian agenda of political figures plays a considerable role in shaping the development landscape in the country. Following the end of the civil war in 1990, Lebanon relies on international bodies to finance structural projects at the national level. The "Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR)" is the state body responsible for preparing the financing agreements and proposing priority projects in coordination with the relevant ministries responsible for sector policies. The interviews related to this case study were conducted with: (i) Dr. Wafa Charafeddine, Director of financement division at CDR, and (ii) M. Assem Fidawi, Director of president office and former national coordinator of water and wastewater sector at CDR.

- o Case study 2: Institutional conflict: In Lebanon, legal institutions do not clearly manage or designate responsibility to ensure the sustainability of projects. This case study follows the Adelnord project, which was financed by a grant from the European Union, and was carried out in close collaboration between the central institutions and local authorities. This project aimed to develop rural infrastructure in the Akkar region located in the north of Lebanon. Thus, in this context, the management of irrigation networks is governed by the "Public Establishment of Water of North Lebanon (PEWNL) which operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW). In practice, this entity does not hold the expertise or budget to take on such a responsibility. To remedy this institutional gap, an independent committee was formed. This included the completion of trainings and the drafting of the necessary administrative and legal protocols. Despite close coordination with PEWNL and MoEW to abide by existing legal structures, these efforts were rejected. The interview related to this case study was conducted with Mrs Faten Adada who was the operational responsible of Adelnord Project.
- o Case study 3: Social conflict: 2 examples were developed with two different stakeholders:
    - Example 1: This example follows the sabotage of an irrigation project, which harmed all parties involved. This project was conceived under the Adelnord

project, which was previously mentioned. The selection of a hill lake and an irrigation network was done in close cooperation with local authorities, including members of 4 rival families (or tribes), who own the land that would collectively benefits from this project. Just before starting the implementation of the project, the four families actively opposed the public consultation, and demanded to cancel the project. An interview with Mr. Abou Ibrahim Allaw was conducted. Mr. Allaw is member of one of the families who participated in the selection and canceling of the project.

- Example 2: This example investigates another social conflict which sabotaged an irrigation project. However, in this case, the build of a large infrastructural project was completed and abandoned. This conflict was sparked by a conflict between two branches of the same family. The cancellation of the project had a significant impact on other communities that would also benefit from this project. The interview related to this example was conducted with Mr. Rawoul Zebaydi an engineer who lives in one of the affected villages, and who participated in its construction.

V. A Literary Overview of Sectarian Conflict in Lebanon

Sectarianism in Lebanon, which is constituted by an assemblage of legal systems, social practices, cultural identities and practices, etc. Thus, when studying sectarianism, scholars and researchers have a hard time differentiating between the different layers that constitute the phenomenon. Max Wiess's paper, The Historiography of sectarianism Lebanon, provides a strong overview of the study of sectarianism as a phenomenon and as a discourse. Wiess (2008) divides literature about Lebanon into four major categories:

- One school of thought considers sectarianism to be unique to Lebanon, and rooted in primordial cultural, political, and economic systems. These identities were later "incorporated into the Lebanese constitutional system" (142).
- The second category views sectarianism as an "invented traditions imposed by external forces and agents" (142). At the peak of the Lebanese civil war, beginning 1980, several historians and social scientists questioned the nature of sectarianism in Lebanon, showing the negative impact that it has had on the country over time. These theorists portray sectarianism as the failure of competing groups to co-exist. (142).
- The last category of literature, which rose towards in the late 1990s, comprises writings that "undertook a more thoroughgoing critical analysis of the cultural, social, and institutional underpinnings of Lebanese sectarianism" (143).

In consequence of the rise of the Lebanese civil war, more recent scholars ``integrated critical analysis of the origins, genealogies, and effects of Lebanese sectarianism, considering the cultural, discursive, and institutional ways in which sectarianism has been and continues to be reproduced over time". This category of literature aims to find a middle ground between the previously mentioned literature "by identifying both the material and cultural factors that have contributed to the perpetuation of sectarian systems and sectarian society" (Wiess 2008, 150).

More practical research has also been undertaken to form comprehensive understandings of sectarian conflict in Lebanon. Joanne Randa *Nucho's Everyday Sectarianism in Urban Lebanon: Infrastructures, Public Services, and Power* (2016) looks at sectarianism as being created by "networks and interconnectivities between various institutions, though these institutions, in turn, legitimate and ossify notions of sectarian community". Nucho looks at the case of private Power Infrastructure in an Armenian neighborhood in Beirut to analyze how sectarian relationships are formed and reproduced.

Rather than analyzing the root causes of sectarian conflict in Lebanon, this research aims to understand the different ways in which it can surface and affect the efficacy of development projects in Lebanon

VI. An analysis of development policies in Lebanon

The first step in setting the agenda for development projects is done at the level of ministries and central administrations. Strategic studies, policies and sectoral master plans are drawn up and integrated into a list of projects. The selection of priority development projects is carried out according to the concept of the Project Cycle Management PCM (Dar & CNB 2005: 95).

According to European Commission, The Project Cycle Management (PCM) follows the life of a project from the initial conceptualization to its completion. It "is a complex and creative process – as much art as science – involving the negotiation of decisions acceptable to key stakeholder groups. Teamwork, negotiation and communication skills are thus central to effective PCM, as is an appreciation of the political context within which decisions are being made (European Commission 2004: 2). The chart below breaks down the stages of the PCM as such:
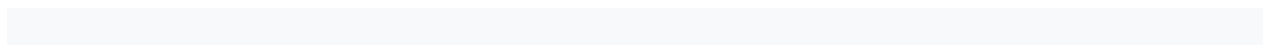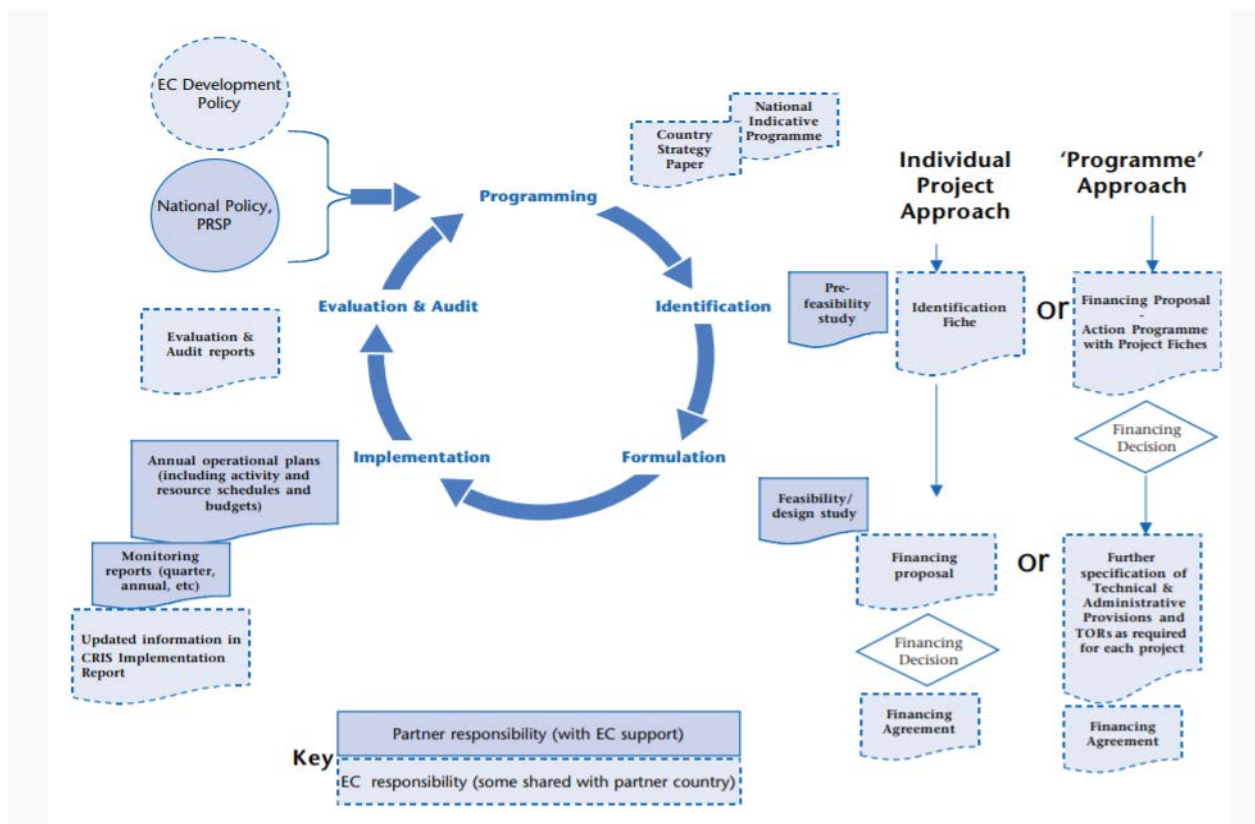
(European Commission 2004: 19)

In an attempt to understand the application of the PCM within the context of development projects in Lebanon, an Interview with Mr. Sami Feghali was conducted. Below is Feghali's take on the application of each phase of the PCM:

Programming Phase: Lebanon relies heavily on foreign donors to finance development projects and public investments. Further, medium and long-term visions and strategies are rarely approved by political bodies (Council of Ministers and Parliament). For several years, the programming phase has been reduced to a list of projects stemming from the ministries' sectoral policies.

Identification Phase: The identification of projects is also dependent on the strategy of international donors. Usually, each donor has a specific strategy, and this will define sectoral plans and determine the regions which will benefit from projects. A first identification of projects is made on the basis of a compromise between national priorities (defined by the sectoral policies of the ministries) and donor strategy. The final identification of projects follows pre-feasibility and feasibility studies. The selected projects are accounted for in the financing agreement proposal which is approved by the Council of Ministers and ratified by the parliament.

Financing Phase: In most applications of the project cycle management, the financing phase follows the formulation phase. But in Lebanon, since the majority of funding

comes from international donors, the approval and ratification of the proposal for the funding agreement occurs before the details of the projects have been developed.

Formulation Phase: This phase involves carrying out detailed studies of the selected projects and preparing the tender documents. These studies take into consideration the recommendations of the feasibility studies

Implementation Phase: This involves the execution of the project work. This is unique to each project.

Evaluation Phase: During this phase, the project is reviewed and evaluated based on its initial objectives. This is an important aspect of ensuring the sustainability of projects. However, this process in Lebanon is done through the guidance of international donors, and does not result in national efforts to improve results.

Historical Overview of Development Policies in Lebanon

In the case of Lebanon, a significant majority of nation-wide studies were developed during the period between 1960-1975 (before the war). "The development policies of Fouad Chehab, President of the Republic (1958-1964) sought to achieve the universalization of basic infrastructure and much progress had been accomplished in the following years" (Verdeil 2009: 2). During this period, the concept of balanced development, aiming to resolve regional inequalities, became an important political tool in mobilizing development efforts. The ministry of planning, which was later divided into smaller sectoral ministries, was created for the provision of equipment and infrastructures in the poorer regions of Lebanon. In collaboration with the IRFED mission "conducted between 1959 and 1963, a scientific reflection is developed on the whole national territory" (Harb El-Kak 1999: 119). This resulted in the implementation of complex national level projects (major infrastructure, airport, port, etc.).

During the rise of the civil war, much of the development progress that was achieved in previous years was undone: "infrastructure provision has been used as a political weapon in the hands of the militias that controlled the fragmented country. The deliquescence of the management has led to the development of informal and substandard provision means, like electrical generators, private wells or private water supply" (Verdeil 2009: 2)

During the reconstruction period (1990-2000), recovery from the war and the revival of a vision for development were the priority. The National Emergency Recovery Program (NERP), which was put in place in 1991, was the main document for identifying priority projects. These projects were financed by the national budget and by international donors. The execution of the public facilities proposed by the NERP plan was practically completed in 1998. Also, during this period, the CDR (main administration in charge of planning and programming) produced other plans to anticipate the period of

development (2000-2019). Since then, these plans are still pending approval, and programming in Lebanon is constantly blocked by political authorities to avoid long-term visions or strategies (Dar & CNB 2005: 5).

During the development period (2000-2019), lack of state funding led the CDR to rely mostly on international donors. Also, considering continuous deadlock to approve large-scale projects, the CDR broke down the developed plans into a list of priority projects. These are agreed upon by the concerned ministries and submitted to donors to obtain funding. It is therefore on the basis of this list that the selection of projects is made after negotiation with the donor agencies (Dar & CNB 2005: 12). Political powers are involved in the selection process when discussing the financial proposal which needs approval from the council of ministers and ratification by parliament for it to be effective (Dar & CNB 2005: 13).

Historical Review

1960-1975 **The aspiration towards a balanced Development**

- Technical mapping of the needs of Lebanon and elaboration of sectarian politics and master planning
- Implementation of complex national level projects (major infrastructure, airport, port, etc.)
- Creation of important public establishments and institutional bodies.

1975-1990 **Rise of the civil war**

- Sectarian militia groups replace major governmental roles.
- Party based access to resources and infrastructure and attempts to achieve regional autonomy
- Weakened public institutions across the board

1990-2000 **Recovery and Reconstruction**

- Revival and creation of new public institutions commissioned to undertake the country's economic, social, and infrastructural reconstruction.
- Enhanced relationships with donor agencies
- Elaboration of new planning documents to adhere to the country's recovery and reconstruction based on the pre-existing plans (since the 1960s).

2000-2019 **From Reconstruction to Development**

- Dependency on foreign agencies to fund the planning and implementation of projects
- Elaboration of new sectarian plans and adaptation towards more participatory planning
- Surfacing of a multitude of conflicts faced during project implementation

2019 – 2021 **National Collapse**

VII. Water and wastewater sector management
(water, irrigation, sanitation)

"More than 80% of the population concentrated in a narrow coastal strip with Beirut at its centre, sandwiched between the sea and limestone mountains rising to over 3000 m. Water resources in Lebanon are subjected to severe pressures acting on both the quantity aspect in terms of over exploitation and wasteful use and on the quality of resources with polluting practices proliferating in all sectors" (Comair 2007: 7).

Before discussing the case studies for this research, it is important, first, to explain the current legal/institutional structures that frame water management in the sectors of domestic use, irrigation, and wastewater. The majority of information in this chapter are extracted from a study effectuated as a collaboration between Dar al Handasa (Dar) and Charbel Nahas Bureau (CNB) in December 2005: Towards a new multiannual State investment program - Vision of planning for 10-15 years. This chapter is concerned with water supply for domestic, irrigation use, and wastewater sectors. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the legal and institutional framework of these sectors, and deducts important gaps and challenges faced to find adequate solutions.

According to this study, an array of studies and assessments show that the availability of water resources in Lebanon barely covers the country's demands for domestic, industrial, and "medium term" irrigation water use. Problems with water infrastructure run across the board:

- Most large scale municipalities have sewage treatment plants that are either under construction or in the pipeline of planned projects. However, very few of the treatment plants are able to operate, thus discharging water waste without treatment.
- A large number of rural communities neither have sewerage networks nor treatment plants. These municipalities present a considerable risk of groundwater contamination. The communities in the rural areas use the onsite sanitation (which are not regulated by any authority).
- The quality of groundwater reserves are contaminated to unacceptable levels because of waste water discharges. The lack of treatment facilities for wastewater constitutes major reasons for the pollution of water resources and the mediocre quality of the drinking water.
- Water losses due to the poor maintenance of water infrastructure are estimated at 50% of the water distributed by water authorities: a considerable majority of the water supply networks are over 30 years old.
- The management of large-scale irrigation projects is defined under the responsibility of the Litani River Authority. Other smaller-scale projects fall under

the responsibility regional water authorities. Given the lack of human and financial resources, these water authorities are not capable of delivering the agreed upon services.

- The integration of militia politics into the role of the state causes the prioritization of private/community interests over the general interest. This results in deep fragmentations and inefficiencies in water provision.

Furthermore, the management of water in Lebanon suffers from a deep administrative, institutional and financial dysfunction. Before May 2000, drinking water was mostly managed by 21 Water Authorities under close tutelage from the Ministry of Energy and Water. The jurisdiction areas of these Authorities were defined according to physical, administrative, or social boundaries rather than hydrologic limits. The Authorities had the responsibility of the operation and maintenance of the water systems and fee collection. However, because of the gaps in coverage, a significant number of municipalities and 209 local committees were managing independent domestic and irrigation systems.

In May 2000, the introduction of the 221 law created four Water Establishments (Beirut and Mount-Lebanon, the North, the South and the Bekaa). Since this date, the definition of responsibilities is still being developed and finalized. The law states that these Establishments have financial and administrative autonomy. They have the duty of the operation and maintenance, the construction and the rehabilitation of domestic water, wastewater and irrigation systems (for the exception of the Bekaa and South Establishments, which fall under the responsibility of the Litani River Association (LRA)).

The new law did not significantly modify the responsibilities of all stakeholders. In the case of the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW), it still has the responsibility of water resources planning at the national level, the administrative and financial control of the establishments, as well as monitoring of the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater resources. Further, the MoEW is responsible for large-scale activities and projects exceeding the limits of the Establishments. Prior to the introduction of the Law, the MoEW was responsible for the preparation of master plans, designs and monitoring the construction of the water supply projects.

The Litani River Authority (LRA) that kept its responsibility over the management of the Litani River's water and the measurement of the river's flows nationwide. Thus, its responsibilities in terms of water resources management, wastewater management and water production overlap with those of the two Public Establishments of the South and the Bekaa for irrigation.

The Council for the Development and Reconstruction (CDR) contributes to planning the rehabilitation and development of water projects by providing expertise in the

preparation of designs and tender documents, negotiation with the international funding agencies, and monitoring construction activities and Operation and Management (O&M). However, the CDR is not involved in all water projects; some have been handled independently by the Ministry.

The wastewater sector was until 2004 the responsibility of the Municipalities. Since then, the Regional Water Establishments are charged with the operation and maintenance of main sewer collectors/trunks, and wastewater treatment plants. The Municipalities being the owners of the collection networks are charged with operation and maintenance of the house connections and collection networks. The interface among the two administrations is not clearly defined and would require greater precision of responsibilities.

Overall, it is clear that several public administrations have identical functions in the designs and execution of projects. In some cases, there is an overlap of duties and lack of coordination among them. As for the water resources management, Law 221 is ambiguous in terms of allocation of responsibilities. The MoEW is responsible for the preparation of studies pertaining to the management of the water resources, while the Litani River Authority is responsible for the hydrologic measurements at the national scale. The Law does not establish the cooperation means and mechanisms. The same applies to the water resources shared among two adjacent establishments.

VIII. Case study 1

Political conflicts affecting the development of the water sector
Interviews with Ms. Wafa Charaffeddine and Mr. Assem Fidawi

The interviews with Ms. Wafa Charafeddine (Director of the financing division at CDR) and Mr. Assem Fidawi (Director of the office of the president of CDR and former national coordinator of the water sector) aim to verify, on the basis concrete examples, how lobbying and political conflicts negatively affect the development process:

The selection of development projects in Lebanon is made on the basis of four factors: urgency, planning vision, political lobbying and the availability of external financing. Considerations of urgency and programming visions should be the only ones to prevail in the context of a reasoned planning and programming procedure. But, in the case of Lebanon, political lobbying and the availability of external funding are also perhaps even more influencing factors in final decision-making. This situation directly affects the smooth operation of the development process (Charaffeddine 2021).

The identification of a development project in the water sector is based on a Master Plan drawn up by the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW). This Mater Plan is a purely technical document, which has to be approved by political institutions to be

implemented. According to Charafeddine (2021) the public authorities avoid approving a Master Plan or a precise investment program and stick to it. This is why the national planning agent (in this case the CDR) has always had to keep a list of priority projects in line with the recommendations of the Master Plan, in order to be able to submit it to donors and obtain funding from them.

Politicians force the CDR to balance the list of projects between the regions according to the principle of "balanced development"; each politician defending the "share" of his region. Thus, little account is taken for macroeconomic or financial constraints. The practice of listing priority projects is not healthy. Once registered with a Ministry or at CDR level, a project is almost never canceled even if, for special circumstances, this project is no longer a priority. Each ministerial change leads to the addition of projects to the list, resulting in an endless accumulation of projects (Charafeddine 2021).

Given the financial situation of the Lebanese State since 1998, the vast majority of development projects are financed by international donors in the form of credit (mostly) or subsidies. At the technical level, and in the case of a wastewater treatment plant project for example, the national planning agent (in this case the CDR) prepares a complete study of an integrated project and submits it to the donor for approval. In addition to the station project itself, these studies include extensive assessment of the sewer networks to bring wastewater to a given station. It also presents an economic, environmental and institutional feasibility study which takes into account the availability of human capital and financing for the operation of this station. After approval by the donor to finance the project, a financing agreement is signed. For it to be effective, it needs to be approved by the Council of Ministers and then ratified by Parliament (Charafeddine 2021).

According to both of these interviewees, this is where lobbying and political conflicts come into play. The main consideration the politician is looking at is the location of this project. Since parliamentarians and national representatives, are elected on the basis of regional constituencies and religious communities, their interests' remains stuck at these two levels. Therefore, the main debate of parliamentarians, before the ratification of the financing agreement, mainly focuses on the share of the region and the community of each of them and becomes a kind of bargaining that does not take into account the national interest. This debate ends with a fragmentation of the proposed project and which no longer respects the rational definition of a project as mentioned above.

"To understand this situation, you must first know that an integrated development project is not only defined by the realization of a physical object, but it must also include all the infrastructure, human capital, and funding to do so function. The concrete

example of a sewage treatment plant project and the steps in the approval process reflect the circumstances of the final decision-making process and show how political conflicts end up hampering the smooth running of the development process" (Fidawi 2021).

The parliamentarians reached a compromise which consisted in distributing the budget originally allocated for the construction one integrated project to be split into 2 or 3 fragmented wastewater treatment plants in several regions. This results in indefinitely postponing the realization of activities such as sewer networks and the provision of human capital that were necessary for the operation of the initial integrated project. This is why we find in Lebanon, several treatment plants which do not work and which await additional funding to build the sewer networks and ensure the human capital for their operation. The disadvantages of such a situation are numerous:

- A considerable delay in the provision of services to the population,
- A additional cost of these services due to the delay in payments for the recovery of the costs of these facilities, and the costs paid for putting these stations on the back burner pending the construction of sewer networks and their operation, and
- Dissatisfaction of citizens and a lack of confidence in State services.

IX. Case study 2

Institutional conflicts affecting the development of the water sector

In this chapter, the aim is to take a close look at the consideration of the sustainability of local development projects through an interview with Ms. Faten Adada. This case study focuses on the component of local development projects in the irrigation sector carried out between 2010 and 2015 as part of "ADELNORD" (Support for local development in North Lebanon) project, financed by the European Union.

The above-mentioned "ADELNORD" project aimed to develop rural infrastructure in the Akkar region located in the far north of Lebanon. Throughout her interview, Ms. Adada continuously emphasized the rigorous and meticulous process to identify and select priority projects. To analyze the needs of this region, the European Union commissioned a team of international experts which worked in the field for several months. This expertise worked with the central administrations concerned (in particular the Ministry of Agriculture), municipalities and unions of municipalities, agricultural cooperatives, farmers, civil society agents, etc. On the basis of these assessments, a large number of projects, with total costs that far exceeded the allocated budget, were listed. Technical and social criteria were adopted as a second filter to select the priority projects in close consultation with the local authorities.

From these initiatives, the construction of irrigation canals was selected. In parallel with the realization of these projects, we had to ensure the sustainability (management and maintenance) of these new infrastructures.

At the legal level, the sustainability of these installations would fall under the competence of Public Establishment of Water of North Lebanon (PEWNL) which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Energy and Water. Mrs. Adada explains that after consulting with the PEWNL, she realized that, despite recognizing its legal responsibility, this institution possesses neither the administrative structure nor the financial means to manage these new installations. The concerned municipalities also lack the legal authority and the financial means to take this responsibility.

Ms. Adada explains that to fill institutional gaps, there was an attempt to organize the operation and maintenance of irrigation infrastructure at the beneficiary/community level. Beneficiaries were assisted in organizing themselves through associations. To make this arrangement legally binding, the Water Users Associations were required to ensure that the laws in force are respected. However, this did not go according to plan and the creation of the association was rejected. Until today, the association operates without an official legal status. This significantly increases its vulnerability to any external pressures (lack of funding, local's conflicts, etc).

A team of experts worked closely with the beneficiaries on the structure and operation of the Water Users Associations. On the one hand, the experts provided assistance with technical, financial, and administrative/management needs. This would allow the organization to gain some autonomy and competence. On the other hand, the team worked closely with administrative actors (Ministry of Agriculture and PEWNL, concerned municipalities) to find a legal framework for the Water Users Associations to abide the laws in force. Other important collaborations were made with key stakeholders to ensure the legitimacy and effectiveness of the association: this includes the representative of the Ministry of Energy and Water, and the representative of the PEWNL.

The team of experts resulted in proposing the following:
1) Administrative and organizational statute which can be adopted for the creation of Water Users Associations. The board of directors for these associations will be composed of representatives from the beneficiaries (users), a representative of the PEWNL, and a representative of the concerned municipality.
2) A tripartite agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture, the PEWNL, and the Water Users Associations which legalizes its administrative status.

A 1st official request was launched according to all the agreed terms and documents. But the director general of the Ministry of Energy and Water considered that the management of the irrigation networks remains the legal responsibility of the PEWNL and that any other solution would be illegal. "Much work has been done in close collaboration with the representative of the ministry to ensure the total compliance of the water users with current laws. Multiple meetings were held to train water users in the management of the installations. All that was needed to jeopardize the whole process that ensures the sustainability of a project was a institutional hick-up" (Adada 2021).

The drawbacks of such a situation are numerous:
- These infrastructures are currently managed by the Water Users Associations, which do not have a legal status. This makes them vulnerable.
- Public funds, time, and expertise were poured into a project that could not stand on its feet
- This re-affirms citizens' lack of confidence in state services.

X. Case study 3

Social conflicts affecting the implementation of development projects

During the research and investigations for this thesis, two projects caught my attention to portray social conflicts that arise within the framework of development projects:

- The hill lake project (with a capacity of 60,000 m³) with an irrigation network at "Ain el Bayda" (the source of white water) in the region of Hermel in northern Lebanon.
- The "nabeh el Hariq" (the source of the fire) project between the Qobayat region and the Hermel region in northern Lebanon.

X.1. Social conflicts around the "Ain el Bayda" project in the region of Hermel in northern Lebanon

This project was first mentioned by Ms. Faten Adada during her interview, in which she explains that the identification of the Ain al Bayda project was conceived within the framework of the Adelnord project. This was carried out in close collaboration between the central government (MoEW, CDR) and local authorities (in this case the Union of Municipalities of Hermel in North Lebanon). After conducting a participatory assessment for the identification of priority projects (to which members of the benefiting families contributed), a consensus for the build of a hill lake in "Ain el Bayda" was found. This would include an irrigation network to increase the surfaces and the profitability of agricultural areas. Economic feasibility

studies and detailed technical studies have supported the effectiveness and relevance of this project.

Just before launching the call for tenders for the realization of this project, a delegation of four land-owning families (the families: Allaw, Nassereddine, Jaafar and Dandash), belonging to the same religious community in the same region, called for the cancellation of the project (Adada 2021).

To understand the reasons behind the cancellation of project, an interview was conducted with Mr. Abou Ibrahim Allaw, farmer and active member of the Allaw family. Mr. Allaw was part of the discussions in the identification of the projects, as well as in the delegation that requested its cancellation.

Mr. Allaw recognizes the advantages that this project would offer by increasing a considerable amount of irrigation water, which will allow the perimeter agriculture and improve its profitability. He mentioned two major reasons which led to the dismissal of this project:

1) After several years of conflict over the sharing of water between the four families, often involving armed events and killings, they managed to establish an agreement to share water. This new project, although beneficial for the region and provides additional quantities of water, It can upset the balance that has been maintained for several years and risk regenerating old conflicts. This is why these four families unanimously decided to cancel it.

2) Powerful investors at the local level wanted to buy the land around "Ain el Bayda" at a low price. The realization of such a project will greatly increase in the price of the land. And therefore their personal interests will be harmed. This situation should not affect the realization of such a project.

X.2. Social conflicts around the "Nabeh el Hariq" project between the Qobayat region and the Hermel region in northern Lebanon

Nabeh El Harrik is a very abundant water source located between the predominantly Christian village of Qobeyate (in Akkar governorate) and several villages in the predominantly Shia Hermel governorate of the Jaafar Tribe. The inhabitants of Qobeyate and the Jaafar Tribe, who benefit from the water, drafted an agreement that dates back to the Ottoman Empire (19th century) and later the French mandate (early 20th century) for the distribution of water. A "chawi" was appointed for management and compliance with the convention. The water was used in summer for irrigation and in winter to supply the region with drinking water (Zeraybi 2021).

In the 90s, a technical study showed the feasibility of a large water retention project supplied by "Nabeh el Harik" which could, in addition, serve the "Dreib" region (predominantly Sunni, located in the governorate of Akkar and deprived of water sources) in drinking water during the winter season, while continuing to serve the village of Qobeyat and the villages of Hermel according to the convention mentioned above. To avoid sectarian conflicts, consent between the Minister of Water (who was Christian at the time) and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies (Shiite leader) was concluded for the realization of this project.

The work was finalized several years ago. This cost the state about 5 million USD, but was never put into operation because of social tensions. The interview with Mr. Raoul Zraybi was conducted to understand the forces at work, which hindered the operation of this costly project.

Mr. Zraybi confirmed that this project offered great technical and economic advantages to all the regions served both in terms of drinking water and irrigation; because it proposed a network system that allows water distribution through gravity, without recourse at pumping stations, pressurized water. This allows to increase significantly agricultural areas. In addition, this project makes it possible to serve a new region which is devoid of water, while respecting the quantity of water previously served under the agreement concluded between the village of Qobayat and the Jaafar Tribe.

The real reason that hindered this project from starting are tensions between two sub-branches of the same clan of the Jaafar Tribe (the Kassem and Hajj families). While one would have expected that social conflicts would arise between different communities, this time around, a social conflict within the same family affected a development project that served several different communities. In such cases, certain local actors are able to abuse their power and cause considerable harm to the development of the region regardless of religious or political affiliations.

XI. Analyses of Results

To analyze the results in the interviews, this chapter frames the information provided within the project cycle management timeline.

Programming phase:
Mr. Sami FEGHALI clarified during his interview that programming mostly consists of technical work. It is based on a diagnosis and analysis of the existing situation, then on a reflection on the priority development axes and a long-term vision. This should first be agreed and approved at the political level to allow before proceeding to the identification phase. Ms. Charafeddine considers that because of political considerations, the current

practice of planning and programming loses much of its meaning. This is because policymakers avoid endorsing long-term visions and strategies. This has led planners to always keep a list of priority projects ready, while respecting sectoral policies and ministry strategies. This list is submitted to donors to obtain funding from them. This practice can have many repercussions.

Identification phase:
This phase also consists of technical work between the donors and the programming authorities. Political, institutional, or social conflicts do not affect the course of this phase.

Funding phase:
According to Mr. Assem Fidawi, this stage is subject to political negotiations during the discussions of the financing agreements. The debate amongst political decision-makers focuses above all on communitarian and regional factors. This often results in fundamental modification of the projects identified.

The formulation phase:
This phase is purely technical. It is about developing detailed studies and carrying out projects. Political, institutional, or social conflicts do not affect the course of this phase.

Implementation phase:
The interviews with Mr. Abou Ibrahim Allaw and Mr. Rawoul Zeraybi are clear examples of how social conflicts can cause major inefficiencies in the sharing and distribution of resources. What is interesting about these examples is that a number of participants, which were included in the decision making, also contributed to the cancellation of a project both before or after the build of infrastructure. Further, in both cases, a need to maintain peace was prioritized over the improvement of infrastructure.

The interview with Ms. Faten Adada highlights important conflicts that occur at an institutional level at this stage of the project cycle. Notably, how the lack of coordination and funding amongst the various institutional bodies in charge of water management.

Evaluation phase
The work done during this phase is not subject to any conflict.

XII. Conclusion

Sectarianism is undoubtedly an important phenomenon to study when analyzing conflict in Lebanon. However, as presented throughout the paper, Sectarianism can be used as an umbrella term to describe conflicts that result from the coexistence of competing sectarian communities, a power-sharing institutional framework, and a clan-based political class. Through this research I am able to demonstrate different ways in which conflict in Lebanon surfaces and impede water management. However, the lessons

extracted are descriptive of a significantly larger context, which includes a variety of projects including the sectors of Agriculture, Energy, Urban Planning, and other development areas.

At the level of political tensions, the most important factors that impede development are the decision-making set up, which continuously incentivizes communitarian benefits rather than national development. This can be linked to the power-sharing model of governance and the regional representation of elected officials. Further, the concept of "balanced development" is widely misused, which causes a constant race between regions to access funding. This results in the fragmentation and lack of completion of projects.

At the institutional level, the mismanagement of public administrations and the absence of clear responsibilities results in an array of gaps in the provision of basic services and infrastructure in Lebanon: "several public administrations have identical functions (Public Establishments, LRA, CDR, MoEW and Council of the South) in designs and execution of projects. In some cases, there is an overlap of duties and lack of coordination among them" (Dar & CNB 2005: 19). Further, a number of institutions lack funding, human capital, and incentives to fulfill their required role. This results in an array of inefficiencies in promoting development in Lebanon.

At the social level, the interviews showed that a number of old agreements between families, as well as memories of conflict and war have shaped negotiations during the implementation of projects. The relationships between various communities are continuously feeding into maintaining a fragile balance of peace in a competitive landscape. In many cases, including in two examples provided, beneficiaries of projects willingly opted for less access to water to avoid violent confrontations.

The purpose of classifying these conflicts within the framework of the Project Cycle Management is two-fold:

- The PCM is an important framework, which has become an important aspect of development efforts in Lebanon. Thus organizing conflicts along the project timeline can be helpful for practitioners in various positions to predict and counter the effect of conflicts that they face. Furthermore, the PCM arranges actors and institutions within a specific timeframe, which creates specific types of bottlenecks unique to each phase of the cycle. As mentioned in the previous chapter, political conflict is concentrated in the early phases (programming and funding), while institutional and social frictions are concentrated in the implementation phase. This finding can prompt more research to look into how to change the structure of development processes
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- The PCM is an internationally used system. Thus, it is important to investigate the way that national conflicts can translate within this framework. This can give

way for more research which investigates how social and political frictions translate into gaps in the development process.

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