



# **The Political Metamorphosis of Lebanon's Civil Society:**

Mapping the  
Change  
Movement



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## List of Acronyms

■	ACT:	Achieve Change Today
■	AUB:	American University of Beirut
■	FM:	Future Movement
■	IMF:	International Monetary Fund
■	LAU:	Lebanese American University
■	LNA:	Lana
■	LRRP:	Lebanese Republican Reform Party
■	MP:	Member of Parliament
■	NRC:	National Rescue Commission

## 1. Executive Summary

While political and societal change in Lebanon might seem impossible, given the tenacious hold of particular interest groups and political actors, there are tangible expressions of a new political and societal movement that has emerged in the country. A key example of this are the 13 new “change” MPs won in the most recent parliamentary elections. Broadly defined as “the change movement” by its activists and wider public, this movement emerged from the 2015 “You Stink” protests, and the 17 October Revolution in 2019. What the movement’s aims are besides opposing the current establishment is difficult to pin down.

This report provides a deeper look into the emerging opposition politics in the country through an analysis of 30 political groups that are prominent in the loosely formed Lebanese change movement and that have emerged recently. The study draws from research conducted on each group to decode their policy positions and relationships with other groups within and outside of the movement, including surveys and in-depth interviews with members of each group.

The key findings of our research revealed the following insights on emerging political contenders in the country:

### Political Orientation

- The Lebanese change movement’s political centre of gravity lies slightly left of centre, with only 2 right-wing groups among the 30 groups surveyed, compared to 8 leftists and 20 centrists.
- While leftist change groups deem the issue of Hezbollah less urgent than centrists, as per popular perception, all agree that Hezbollah must be disarmed. More generally, the movement reflects the international understanding of the left-right political spectrum with their economic, administrative, and social policies.
- It is the movement’s left-most wing, rather than its more centrist groups, that was most successful in obtaining votes and landing MPs in the recent parliamentary elections.

### Policy Priorities

- Change groups share four core policy priorities: addressing the current economic crisis and its impact on food, health, housing, and education (mentioned by 89.7% of the groups), the independence of the judiciary and dealing with corruption, with particular mention of accountability for the Beirut port explosion (72.4% of groups), resolving the issue of Hezbollah (58.6%), and abolishing political sectarianism and building a civil state (51.7%). Addressing the first two issues is seen as key to resolving the latter two issues, and others besides them.

### **Relationships with Groups outside the Movement**

- Popular categories of “pragmatist” and “purist” are difficult to maintain when capturing change groups’ relations with opposition parties that have adopted the banner of “change” and are controversial within the change movement, like the Kataeb and the Communist Party. Pragmatists tend to be politically centrist and to collaborate with controversial right-wing groups. Purists tend to be leftist, and some purists collaborate with controversial left-wing groups. The purist/pragmatist dichotomy has therefore more to do with the political left-right spectrum than with the general question whether to collaborate with controversial opposition groups.
- In the recent elections, change groups performed better on lists that excluded candidates from controversial opposition groups, than on mixed lists.

### **Relationships within the Movement**

- Relationship data reveals that there are several tightly knit clusters of groups within the movement: one of prominent purists, one of prominent pragmatists, and one of successful regional groups.
- Although most groups explicitly stated having good relationships with the other groups in the movement, there are also problematic relationships. Citizens in a State is most distinguished in this respect, with eight groups specifically mentioning having a bad relationship with the group. In contrast, some groups stand out in the data as particularly well connected, as a large number of other groups mentioned having good relationships with them: Tahalof Watani, Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, LNA, the National Bloc, Taqaddom, LiHaqqi, and Mada.

### **Plans and Challenges**

- The movement’s main challenge is securing acceptable funding to continue its work, as groups have been significantly impacted by the crisis. It is today harder both to find volunteers and to pay salaries to professionals.
- The movement’s foremost plans are to follow up with and to support the “change” MPs, and to work towards larger, more unified parties and coalitions for the next parliamentary elections.

### **Engagement with the Voter**

- Most of the change movement refuses to directly provide aid or welfare support for the public, as they want to avoid the vote-buying clientelism that traditional parties engage in. However, they actively engage the voter in awareness raising, street protests, and campaigns related to elections.
- While the movement’s electoral gains speak positively of the public attitude towards the change movement, it is unclear to what extent Lebanese voters are truly in favour of “change.” Electoral data show that the movement’s gains would likely have been much

smaller had Hariri's Future Movement (FM) run for election, as close to half of the current change seats were formerly occupied by FM members.

### Gender

- Although a record number of female candidates ran in the recent elections, the Lebanese political landscape is still far from gender equal, with only 11.3% of electoral candidates and 6.8% of MPs female.
- Opposition groups considered controversial within the change movement fielded significantly more female candidates (16.9%) than the national average, but landed no female MPs. The change movement proved most gender equal, although it is still far from full equality, with its 25% of female candidates and 30.8% of female MPs. Furthermore, women on purist lists from the change movement obtained almost twice the number of votes as their counterparts on lists that included candidates of controversial opposition groups.
- Change groups report 46.5% women in leadership on average, although interviewees and survey respondents in this research were only about 20% female, suggesting focal points in leadership are still much more male-dominated.
- Survey respondents ranked women's rights second only to corruption as the most important rights issue to tackle.

The findings of this research project point to a promising new possibility in Lebanon: a space for new political expressions and ideas that move beyond sectarian blocs and traditional political gatekeepers. However, it also highlights how these promising new starts need time, support, long term planning and robust organisational development and deeper networks across society. Providing groups and individuals within the change movement chances and networks to deepen their skills and reach would play a significant role in supporting a healthier direction for Lebanese politics.

## 2. Introduction

The various parties active on Lebanon's political scene have changed little in the three decades since the end of the Civil War. Most of these groups were active participants in this sectarian war, and until today are deeply immersed in the country's sectarian politics. However, in recent years, Lebanon has witnessed the emergence of a political alternative, sometimes known as "civil society" (mujtama3 madani), although its members prefer the term "change movement" (7arakat al-taghyir).

This change movement finds its roots in the 2015 "You Stink" protests triggered by a major waste crisis in Beirut, from which emerged some of the first groups that are still active in the movement today. While the seeds of the movement were planted in 2015, it is in the "17

<sup>1</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 2022, 4. One of our interviewees was very clear on this subject: "We are not a civil society. We seek political power to run the country."

October Revolution” in 2019 that it firmly took root, as the revolution catalysed far greater support among Lebanese voters for the movement’s cause and witnessed exponential growth of partaking groups. Recently, in May 2022, the change movement made its first major political gains as 13 of its candidates entered Parliament.<sup>2</sup> While the movement is clearly making political gains, there are still gaps in our understanding of which groups precisely make up the movement, who they are, and what their aims are beyond opposing the status quo.

The purpose of this report is to provide a map of the change movement’s landscape (a “who’s who”) accompanied by an analysis of the movement’s diverse stances on policy issues and of the complex relationships between the various groups. Seeking to capture the common understanding of what this change movement is, the following definition is adopted:

The Lebanese “change movement” refers to those groups that are not part of the current political establishment, did not partake in the civil war, and have not contributed to the present collapse of the state. These groups are reform-focused, have partaken in and/or derive from the movement ignited in the summer of 2015 and escalated on 17 October 2019, and thus tend to have emerged in recent years. Finally, these groups are seeking to achieve their political goals by working to bring key people into political office.

This definition excludes certain groups, some of them traditional parties, which claim to be part of the change movement, but are not considered so by many newly emerging groups.<sup>3</sup> This definition does not represent a judgement on the opposition groups it excludes, as other plausible definitions for the movement could have been adopted that would include such groups, as some actors in the change movement have argued. However, the focus of this study is to explore the newly emerging groups.

### 3. Methodology and Limitations

This mapping results from a three-stage research process. After drawing up a list of groups that fit the above definition of “change movement,” desk research harvested information on vision, mission, and political program from the groups’ official websites and social media when available. Secondly, a quantitative survey was sent out to members of each group, with preference given to leadership and electoral candidates. The survey focused on stances on various policy issues, the nature of relations with other groups, and the approach to change. Finally, key informant interviews were held with leading members of each group: the group’s leader, a member of the leadership team, or an electoral candidate. Interviews sought to add depth to survey responses on policy issues and intergroup relationships<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This commonly accepted number assumes a narrow definition of the change movement as adopted in this report. On the change movement’s recent electoral gains, see for example Democracy Reporting International, “Lebanon’s Parliamentary Elections: A Fragile Step in the Right Direction,” 2022, <https://democracy-reporting.org/en/office/lebanon/publications/lebanons-parliamentary-elections-a-fragile-step-in-the-right-direction>.

<sup>3</sup> The definition excludes the Kataeb, Ossama Saad’s Popular Nasserist Organisation, the Communist party, Moawad’s Independence Movement, Makhzoumi’s National Dialogue Party, and Neemat Frem’s Project Watan. On the other hand, we have included the National Bloc, or Kitle Wataniyye, a traditional party that made a significant structural break with its past, effectively becoming a new party. See The Policy Initiative, “Lebanon’s Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition,” 2022, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Both the survey questionnaire and the interview guiding questions can be found in Appendix 4. The data collected for this research is published here: <https://actionresearchassociates.org/mapping-lebanons-political-change-movement/>.

The triangulation of data from three sources and the multiplicity of sources from within the groups, along with data drawn from several recent papers on the movement,<sup>5</sup> ensures the greater validity and robustness of the analysis. The research spans across the 2022 elections. Most of the desk research was carried out before the elections. 26 survey responses were obtained before the elections and 9 after. The 32 interviews took place in the weeks after the elections. This timing captures a unique post-elections view on the movement which previous research could not investigate.

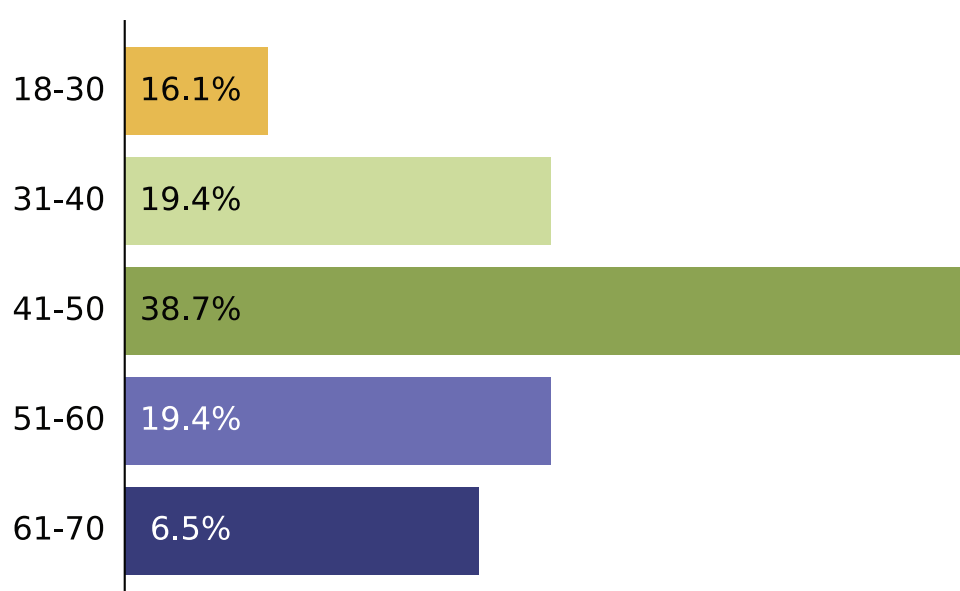


Figure 1: Survey respondent ages.

Among the interviewees, 81% were male and 19% female. Among the survey respondents, 80% were male and 20% female, while two respondents chose to remain anonymous.<sup>6</sup> Survey respondents' age distribution is displayed in **Figure 1**, which suggests the change movement may not be as young as commonly thought. Respondents represent all voting districts except North 1 and South 1.<sup>7</sup> The majority of groups claimed that their work covered all of Lebanon. Those who specified governorates most mentioned Beirut, the Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, and the North. Akkar, Baalbek-Hermel, Kesserwan-Jbeil, Nabatieh, and the South, on the other hand, were least covered. In total, 30 groups were mapped.

To establish a wider understanding of the change movement, this report presents a “who’s who,” included in Appendix 3, where a profile of each of the groups is given. In the main body of the report, the “change movement” is analysed as a whole, as well as the groups composing it, from the angles of the left-right spectrum, policy priorities, intergroup relations and affinities, plans and challenges, and gender.

<sup>5</sup> Huda Usta Kaskas, “The State of Civil Society in Lebanon,” 2021; Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement”; The Policy Initiative, “Lebanon’s Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition.”

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 5 for the names of interviewees and survey respondents for each group.

<sup>7</sup> The survey statistics on age and region exclude survey respondents from whom we were unable to collect this information. These are the survey respondents from Jibhet 17 Tishreen, Mada, the 10452 Party, Nahwal Watan, Kulluna Irada, and Tawlet Al-Hiwar.

This report presents several limitations. Firstly, the post-election research process means that some groups were still processing election results, so that some of the data might change in the near future. The following groups specifically mentioned in their interviews that they were still planning to review their work in light of the elections: Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, Tahalof Watani, Sabaa, Shamaluna, Kulluna Irada, Madinati, and LiHaqqi. Secondly, although the study covers a larger section of the movement than previous research, there are dozens more groups, although many of them only have a grassroots presence. These groups are left out for the sake of space and clarity. Furthermore, the report lacks data for two groups that featured in previous research, as attempts to make contact were unsuccessful: Lubnan Yantafed and Tayyar Al-Mujtamah Al-Madani. At the same time, several prominent groups dissolved shortly after the elections, including Aamiyet 17 Tishreen, Al-Haraka Al-Shababiye Lil-Taghyir, and Sawa; therefore, the data collected from these groups was discarded. Thirdly, the data collected is not as rich as desired, and contains some gaps. Although interviews were secured with all groups covered, for all but LiHaqqi and Madinati, this was limited to a single interview, due to groups' time constraints. Similarly, only 7 groups provided more than one survey response. The interviewee and survey respondent were sometimes the same person. This limited the possibility of triangulating the data. While the interview data is complete, with at least one full interview from each group, 7 groups only offered partial survey data,<sup>8</sup> while 1 did not provide any.<sup>9</sup> While we did obtain an interview with Citizens in a State, leadership later requested us not to use this data, as the party had decided it did not want anything to do with this report, asking "why must the international community know this information?" We have nevertheless constructed a profile of the group relying on other sources, as it is an important and unique player in the change movement. Furthermore, an important limitation of open-ended questions is that interviewees or survey respondents do not tend to be exhaustive in their responses. For example, when asking Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi – the Popular Observatory to Fight Corruption – about their priorities, the group did not mention corruption. Hence, it must be assumed that there are some gaps in the data. Finally, when analysing electoral results, candidates' political affiliations are not always apparent. Hence, some of the derived results are limited to those candidates for whom an affiliation can be established with greater certainty.

## 4. Mapping the Change Movement

The following sections contain figures in which the movement is represented along various dimensions using circles of different sizes. These sizes represent each group's self-reported data on the number of group members and volunteers, and thus may deviate from reality. Furthermore, in most of these figures, only groups relevant to the surrounding discussion are labelled, to avoid overcrowding the visualisations with text. To identify the groups not labelled, the reader may refer to Appendix 3, where this data is presented for each group. Furthermore, since the colours used to visualise each group are consistent throughout the

<sup>8</sup> LNA, Jibhet 17 Tishreen, Mada, the 10452 Party, Nahwal Watan, Kulluna Irada, and Tawlet Al-Hiwar.

<sup>9</sup> Citizens in a State.



report, the reader may keep track of a group by keeping in mind the group's assigned colour. Finally, to help the reader process this long report, each section begins with a summary of the key takeaways on the topic at hand, followed by an extensive presentation of the arguments and evidence.

#### 4.1. The Left-Right Spectrum

*Key takeaways: The left-right spectrum in Lebanon, when considering the change movement, is not substantially different from the way it is understood internationally, despite common perception indicating otherwise. While centrists are more urgently concerned with the issue of Hezbollah than leftists, all agree that the group must be disarmed. The movement generally agrees that decentralisation and desectarianisation respectively are non-negotiable. These two issues are key elements of the post-Civil War Taef accords<sup>10</sup> whose implementation has long been postponed and has been one of the main demands of the change movement. Finally, left leaning groups were generally more successful in the recent elections than centrist and right-wing groups.*

**Figure 2** visualises the change movement's spread across the left-right spectrum based on the survey data.

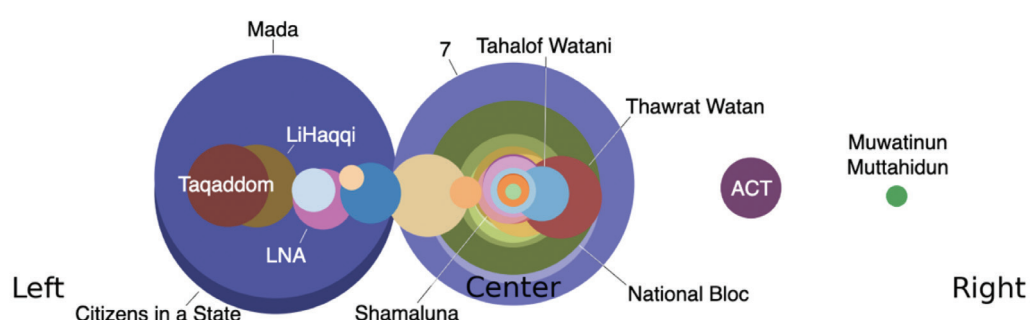


Figure 2: The change movement laid out from the political left to right.

The vast bulk of the groups identifies either as firmly centrist (66.7%), or as centre-left (26.7%), while only a minority identifies as leaning right (either centre-right (3.3%) or right (3.3%)).<sup>11</sup> This matches earlier findings on a smaller selection of groups from the movement which were described as tending more towards the left than the right.<sup>12</sup>

Since the left-right spectrum can be reductionistic, one must ask what it means in the Lebanese context, and what it means for this movement. Internationally, the left-right political spectrum tends to associate the left with redistributive economic policies, social progressivism, and secularism, while capitalism, social conservatism and a more positive view of religion tend to be associated with the right.<sup>13</sup> However, Lebanese politics is commonly believed not to fit this spectrum. Indeed, many of our interviewees, all leaders from the

<sup>10</sup> The Taef accords sought to end the Civil War, extend Lebanon's sovereignty in South Lebanon, and return to political normalcy.

<sup>11</sup> To attribute these labels, we split up the survey data ranging from 0-100 as follows: left 0-19; centre-left 20-39; centre 40-59; centre-right 60-79; right 80-100.

<sup>12</sup> The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 20.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Knapp and Vincent Wright, *The Government and Politics of France: Fifth Edition*, The Government and Politics of France: Fifth Edition, 2006, 6, 9, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203003497>.

change movement, stated that the concepts of left and right are not relevant to Lebanon. One of them expressed it thus: “The concept of right-wing and left-wing in its traditional sense no longer exists. In the war, the Christian camp was considered to be right-wing whereas the Muslim camp was labelled as left-wing.” Today, according to another interviewee, “there is the left that is close to Hezbollah, meaning that they are the people who do not have a problem with the party’s weapons and consider that the party is not involved in corruption, while the right has priority in removing the party’s weapons.” Conceptualising politics of Lebanon through a language of left vs. right is therefore open to challenge.

Recent data published by Atlas Assistance indicates that the change movement generally is in agreement about the need to remove Hezbollah’s weapons,<sup>14</sup> and that whereas there are differences regarding the approach to this end, there is no recognisable left-right pattern.<sup>15</sup> However, when asking our interviewees an open-ended question about which issues their groups prioritise in general, 43% of the groups on the centre-left mentioned Hezbollah as an important issue, 70% of centrists did so, while none on the (centre-) right did. If one ignores the right wing of the movement, which only consists of a statistically insignificant two groups in this mapping, there seems indeed to be a left-right pattern, with significantly fewer left leaning groups prioritising the question of Hezbollah compared to centrists. Yet this left-right pattern is correlated with the level of urgency attributed to the issue, rather than the issue itself, about which there is unity in the movement.

While there is a certain correlation between the question of Hezbollah and the change movement’s self-positioning on the left-right spectrum, this correlation appears to be far less significant than interviewees and common perception would indicate. Are there then no better ways to characterise the change movement’s self-identification on the left-right spectrum than the question of Hezbollah?<sup>16</sup> One of the main characteristics of the left-right spectrum as internationally understood is a correlation with economic policy. Figure 3 plots the left-right spectrum against a group’s economic policy, specifically regarding the issue of nationalisation vs. privatisation.

<sup>14</sup> *Citizens in a State* may be the only group that views Hezbollah’s military capabilities as an asset to Lebanon, although the group also argues that these must be integrated into the Lebanese Armed Forces. Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 41.

<sup>15</sup> Atlas Assistance, 88, 102.

<sup>16</sup> Note that the question of Hezbollah may indeed be more pertinent in placing the traditional Lebanese political parties on the left-right spectrum.

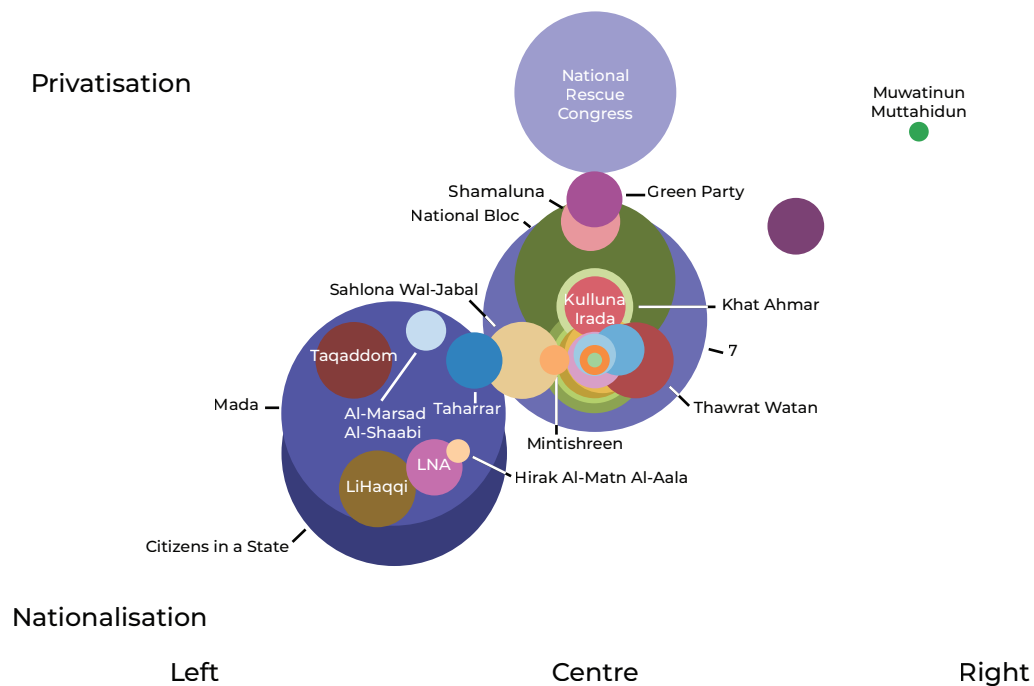


Figure 3: Change groups' political stance and economic policy are highly correlated.

Despite a supposed Lebanese exceptionalism, the international understanding of the spectrum regarding economic policy holds very well for the Lebanese change movement, with few exceptions<sup>17</sup>: leftist parties tend towards nationalisation, while right-wing parties tend towards privatisation.

A second characteristic of the international left-right spectrum is its correlation with the social progressivism-conservatism spectrum, with progressivism today being mostly characterised internationally by social justice issues, and specifically LGBTQI+ rights. In the interviews, 57% of the centre-left groups referred positively to the importance of these issues, while only 15% of centrists did, and none of those on the right. These numbers would suggest that also the social aspect of the left-right spectrum in the Lebanese change movement follows the international understanding.

A third characteristic of the international left-right spectrum regards the place of religion in society, with the left favouring secularism, while the right tends to grant an important role to religion in society. Regarding this topic, the change movement is exceptional in its unified and clear stance: nearly every group surveyed states it pursues a politically desectarianised, civil state.<sup>18</sup> Leftist groups appear only slightly more concerned with political sectarianism: 57% of leftist groups mentioned the issue as a priority, while 50% of centrists did so, and 50% (one of the two groups) on the right. On the other hand, where groups disagree about whether civil personal status laws should be made optional or compulsory, based on results presented in a different study,<sup>19</sup> there is no discernible left-right pattern.

<sup>17</sup> Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.658.

<sup>18</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 102. Another study likewise found that none of the groups surveyed was opposed to a civil law code. The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 16.

<sup>19</sup> The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 16.

A final defining characteristic of the international left-right spectrum is that groups on the economic right tend to be more supportive of administrative decentralisation than those on the left.<sup>20</sup> The following figure verifies whether also this correlation holds for the Lebanese change movement.

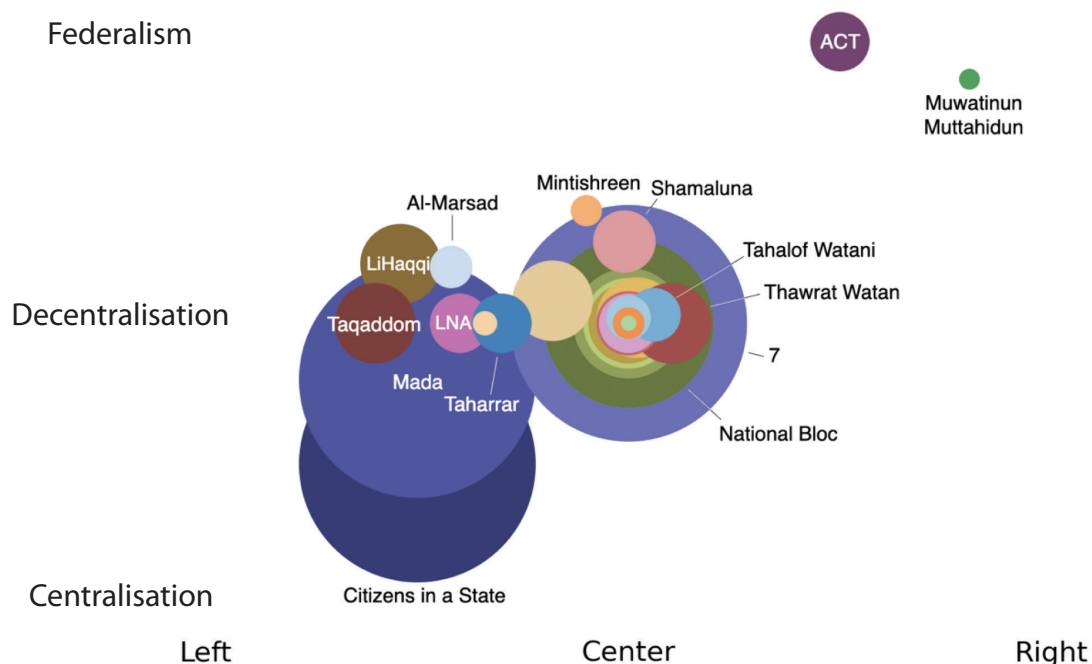


Figure 4: Change groups' political stance and administrative policy are highly correlated.

There is indeed a correlation,<sup>21</sup> as all change groups actively seek administrative decentralisation, except for Citizens in a State, with right-of-centre groups even favouring federalism.

The left-right spectrum may be used to interpret the results of the recent parliamentary elections. Figure 4 visualises the correlation between the left-right spectrum and the number of votes obtained by a group. Specifically, it displays the proportion of votes obtained by a group's highest scoring candidate relative to the total votes in the district.<sup>22</sup> There is a slight correlation, as leftist groups generally gathered more votes than centrist and right-wing groups.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, the number of MPs obtained by a group is also correlated with the left-right spectrum, as leftist groups were more likely to land an MP than centrists and right-wing groups.<sup>24</sup> Thus, leftist change groups have been most successful in convincing the Lebanese change voter in the recent elections. On the side, this figure also demonstrates the skewed nature of the current electoral law. In the figure, green edges indicate a group landed an MP, while a red edge indicates the group did not. Citizens in a State did not land an MP, although they had the best performing change candidate across the country,<sup>25</sup> who obtained

<sup>20</sup> Simon Toubeau and Markus Wagner, "Explaining Party Positions on Decentralization," *British Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 1 (2013): 97, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123413000239>.

<sup>21</sup> Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.606.

<sup>22</sup> Rather than an average of all candidates' votes, to allow for a fairer comparison between groups, as some fielded many candidates and some very few (e.g., Citizens in a State fielded 55 candidates, compared to Taqaddom's 2 candidates).

<sup>23</sup> On average, a leftist group's most voted for candidate received 5.2% of votes in their district, while for centrist groups, that was only 3.4%, and 3.5% for rightist groups. Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.354. Note that the average number of votes a group's candidates obtained is similarly correlated with the left-right spectrum, though less strongly: a correlation coefficient of -0.276.

<sup>24</sup> Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.322. Which change groups landed an MP is visualised in Appendix 1.

<sup>25</sup> Jad Ghosn in Mount Lebanon II. is visualised in Appendix 1.



8526 votes, or 9.2% of total votes in the district. Likewise, the National Bloc, Madinati, Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi and ACT outperformed most groups, but did not land an MP. Compare this with RELebanon, who did manage to obtain a seat in Parliament: the RELebanon candidate with the highest number of votes obtained only 514 or 1.1% of votes, and it was in fact another candidate of RELebanon that became MP with still fewer votes: 486 or 1.0% of total votes in the district.

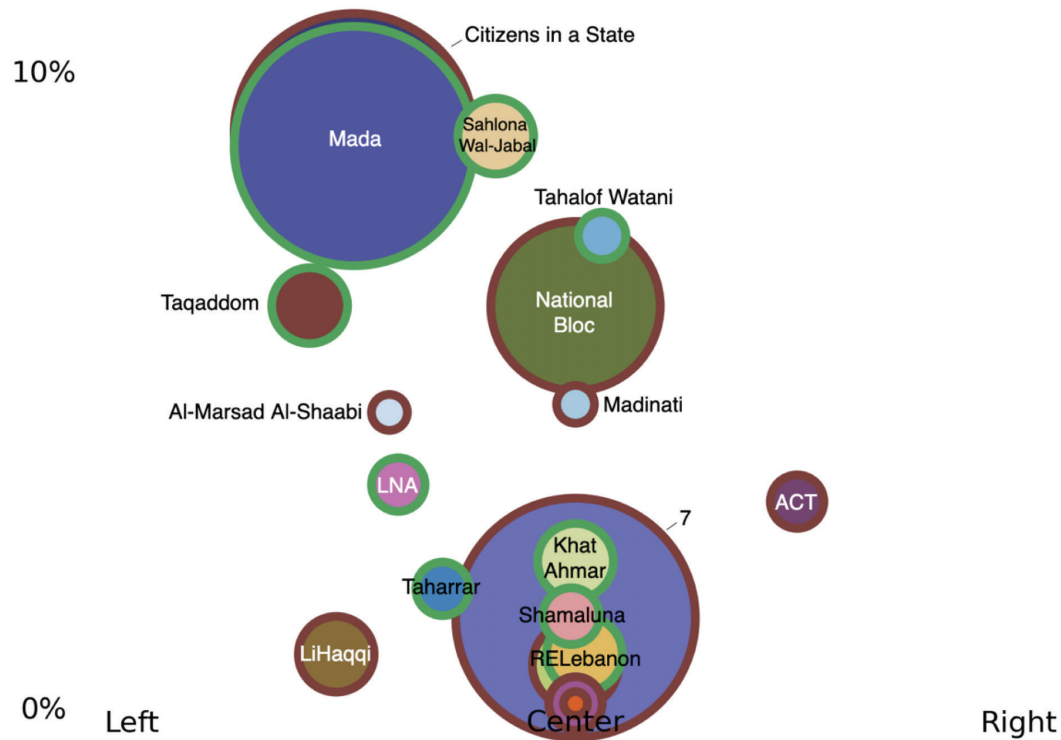


Figure 5: Correlation between the left-right spectrum and the percentage of district votes obtained by a group's best-scoring candidate in the recent elections.

#### 4.2. Policy Priorities

*Key takeaways: Change groups shared four core policy priorities. Listed in descending order of importance, these are: addressing the current economic crisis and its impact on food, health, housing, and education (mentioned by 89.7% of the groups), the independence of the judiciary and dealing with corruption, with particular mention of accountability for the Beirut port explosion (72.4% of groups), resolving the issue of Hezbollah (58.6%), and abolishing political sectarianism and building a civil state (51.7%). Addressing the first two issues is seen as key to resolving the latter two issues, and others besides them.*

When it comes to the change movement's priorities, decentralisation and desectarianisation are key demands, shared by nearly all. However, the question remains: to what extent are these viewed as priorities among all the other issues that pertain to Lebanon's situation today? When asked about each group's priorities, interviewees referred to a variety of issues.

## The Economy

The main priority for the movement, as mentioned by 89.7% of the groups,<sup>26</sup> is addressing the current economic crisis, and its social impact on food, health, housing, and education. The interviewees' comments on the situation echo a common assessment that the situation is very grave and urgently needs to be addressed: they believe the country is "in total collapse," that the economic situation is "dire," and they lament how citizens are "humiliated at hospitals, bakeries, and gas stations."<sup>27</sup>

One of the main questions on this topic – raised by interviewees from Taharrar, Sahlona Wal-Jabal, and Mada – is how to distribute the losses of the 180 billion dollars missing from the banking system, which LiHaqqi sees as the core reason for the collapse. Different groups offer different responses. The National Rescue Congress (NRC) and the Green Party insist that these funds must be recovered; the Green Party specifies that an independent panel of judges should be able to investigate where the money went, upon which the respective countries of destination that tend not to have bank secrecy laws should help return the money. On the other hand, some of the left-leaning groups discussed the options of privatisation and the sale of government assets, as opposed to the nationalisation of banks. The former is the preferred option of the government and the banks, says LiHaqqi, who favour the latter option, on the grounds that the banks profited for thirty years from the government's financial policy. Moreover, the sovereign wealth fund proposed by these banks for the management of state assets was strongly rejected by left-leaning groups like Mada, Taqaddom, and Madinati.<sup>28</sup> The National Bloc and Taqaddom emphasise the need for the banks to be restructured, with the latter group specifying that bank secrecy should be lifted for all, to prevent further smuggling, money laundering, and corruption. Taqaddom further added that neither the sovereign wealth fund, nor the sale of government assets, is a solution: only implementing the structural reforms demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) can save Lebanon's economy; the group's newly elected members of parliament are set to work on legislation in accordance with the IMF plan. Mintishreen agrees that the IMF reforms, specifically regarding transparency and corruption, must be implemented. The government has until recently avoided implementing the IMF plan, allegedly because it would mean that depositors would lose their money. According to Taqaddom, the government is unwilling to execute the reforms for their own sake. Kulluna Irada adds that it is sectarian dynamics that have caused IMF negotiations to fail.

The question of what should happen with depositors' money, which today is lost or frozen, concerns many groups<sup>29</sup> Nahwal Watan, however, warns against what it sees as a sometimes-populist focus on financial issues, such as the recovery of depositors' money, which will not resolve the current situation as long as the solutions proposed are not built on a fundamental and well-integrated economic rescue plan.

<sup>26</sup> Tahalof Watani, Nahwal Watan, Kulluna Irada, National Bloc, Thawrat Watan, Taqaddom, LiHaqqi, RELebanon, Madinati, Sabaa, Mintishreen, Khat Ahmar, ACT, the Green Party, Shamaluna, LNA, Sarkhet Shaab, National Rescue Congress, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, Taharrar, the 10452 Party, Sahlona wal-Jabal, the Lebanese Republican Reform Party, Mada, Tawlet Al-Hiwar, and Jibhet 17 Tishreen.

<sup>27</sup> Compare World Bank, "Lebanon Economic Monitor, Fall 2021: The Great Denial." (Washington, DC, 2022).

<sup>28</sup> While the Madinati survey respondent put the group squarely in the centre, he acknowledged during the interview that the group is "in a middle position, closer to the left."

<sup>29</sup> Taqaddom, Shamaluna, the National Rescue Congress, Mada, Khat Ahmar, Jibhet 17 Tishreen.

Taqaddom sees legislation to foster economic growth as key to overcoming the current collapse, stating “if we do not reach economic growth, no one dreams that our money will return.” In a similar vein, the 10452 Party has long focused on building a free, productive economy, and on creating a viable labour market. In line with their roots in the world of business, ACT agrees that strengthening the private sector is imperative, as a thriving private sector will be able to sustain the economy by creating jobs and bringing money to the government through taxation. Taharrar and the Green Party see specific investments in productive local sectors as key, such as tourism, banking, health, and agriculture (e.g., olive oil). Faithful to its roots, the Green Party adds that a green economy is important, and that Lebanon does not need petroleum as it already has “enormous natural and human resources.”

Finally, a large portion of the movement<sup>30</sup> emphasises the need for a social safety net to protect the Lebanese people from the collapsing economy. LiHaqqi argues that food, health care, and education are basic rights that need to be available to all, and claim they have already started working towards parliamentary action with change MPs on this issue. The Lebanese Republican Reform Party (LRRP), on the other hand, has for the past few years been focusing specifically on the mismanagement of the current social security institution, taking legal action against those responsible.

Considering the change movement’s economic spectrum, its high correlation with the left-right spectrum as shown in **Figure 2**, and in turn the left-right spectrum’s correlation with the social progressivism-conservatism spectrum, the above discussion is not surprising. Left-leaning groups oppose the sovereign wealth fund, which amounts to a form of privatisation of government assets. Along with some centrist groups, they prefer to restructure the banking sector; LiHaqqi even proposes to nationalise it. Furthermore, proportionally more left-leaning groups prioritise the establishment and strengthening of a social safety net, in accordance with leftist tendencies. On the economic centre and right, various groups, such as ACT, the Green Party, the 10452 Party, and Taharrar argue for strengthening the private sector as a means to save the economy, agreeing with tendencies on the economic right.

Atlas Assistance equally found that both leftist and centrist groups favour a socially equitable restructuring of public debt, a major restructuring of the banking sector, and universal basic services, with centrists preferring investments in the private sector and public-private partnerships but opposing full privatisation. Atlas furthermore noted that the movement’s political right lacked any discourse on these restructuring measures or on a social safety net and that some on the right did not rule out privatising public assets.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> LiHaqqi, *Citizens in a State*, the Lebanese Republican Reform Party, Madinati, RELebanon, LNA, and the 10452 Party.

<sup>31</sup> Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 89.

## The Judiciary and Corruption

The second most important issue for change movement groups relates to judicial independence, accountability, and corruption, as mentioned by 72.4% of groups.<sup>32</sup>

Many change groups argue that the independence of the judiciary is non-existent in Lebanon, since 8 out of 10 of the highest judiciary body members are directly appointed by the executive branch.<sup>33</sup> Nahwal Watan and Tawlet Al-Hiwar pointed out how this is a constitutional issue, since Article E of the preamble to the Lebanese Constitution stipulates that the Constitution is built upon the separation of judicial and executive powers, or, in Tawlet Al-Hiwar's words: "the separation of the prosecution and the ministry." The political authority is highly resistant to ensuring this independence, however, says Lubnan Hawiyati: "[it has] obstructed by all means the issuance of this decision, but we will continue our work to reach the independence of the judiciary." The National Bloc, Madinati, and Tawlet Al-Hiwar believe that the independence of the judiciary is in fact intimately linked with achieving a solution to the economic crisis, the movement's highest priority: "Anyone who says that he can change something without the independence of the judiciary is wrong, as even the welfare fund is corrupt," says Madinati. Indeed, the fight against corruption is also said to depend on the independence of the judiciary, "[as] we cannot hold the corrupt accountable and return the looted funds without an independent judiciary," argues Jibhet 17 Tishreen. Lubnan Hawiyati therefore focuses on "activating oversight institutions and the National Anti-Corruption Commission," while the Green Party seeks to protect employees from various governmental committees and institutes that serve in the fight against corruption by ensuring these employees have salaries and cannot be arbitrarily laid off. Furthermore, Lubnan Hawiyati joined the Judicial Appeal Coalition, which seeks to effect judicial independence.

As such, many groups<sup>34</sup> attach great importance to the independence of the judiciary. They see it as crucial to the highly symbolic investigation into the Beirut port explosion on 4 August 2020. Holding its perpetrators accountable, as well as the political perpetrators of corruption and theft, are important demands for many in the movement. In this regard, the National Rescue Congress states several lawsuits were launched, specifically against the Governor of the National Bank Riad Salameh.

## Hezbollah

The third most mentioned priority (58.6%)<sup>35</sup> was Hezbollah, either referred to explicitly (65%), or implicitly through the mention of "weapons" or "sovereignty" (35%).

It is the opinion of Madinati that since its establishment in 1982, Hezbollah has been building their own state whilst destroying the Lebanese state in the process. Tahalof Watani adds that Hezbollah's Secretary General "Hassan Nasrallah's comments about there being no country

<sup>32</sup> Nawal Watan, Kulluna Irada, National Bloc, Thawret Watan, Taqaddom, Lubnan Hawiyati, Madinati, Sabaa, Khat Ahmar, Shamaluna, National Rescue Congress, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, Sahlona Wal-Jabal, LRRP, Tawlet Al-Hiwar, Jibhet 17 Tishreen, Tahalof Watani, RELebanon, Mintishreen, the Green Party, and the 10452 Party.

<sup>33</sup> Karim Merhej, "Towards an Independent Judicial Branch in Lebanon? Part 1: The Civil Judiciary," *The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy*, 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Kulluna Irada, Taqaddom, Madinati, Khat Ahmar, Shamaluna, Sahlona Wal-Jabal, and Jibhet 17 Tishreen.

<sup>35</sup> Tahalof Watani, Nahwal Watan, Kulluna Irada, National Bloc, Thawrat Watan, Taqaddom, RELebanon, Madinati, Sabaa, Mintishreen, the Green Party, Sarkhet Shaab, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, the 10452 Party, Mada, Tawlet Al-Hiwar, and Jibhet 17 Tishreen.



to hand over his weapons to are ironic, since it is Hezbollah that contributed to this situation.” This state-within-a-state is therefore seen to challenge Lebanese sovereignty, an issue mentioned by a variety of groups.<sup>36</sup> Among them, Mada considers that “the issue of sovereignty and weapons cannot coexist in a single state.” Sarkhet Shaab adds that the country will not be reconciled before there is a solution to the question of its sovereignty. However, Sarkhet Shaab, along with the 10452 Party, avoids dealing with this issue, since it relates to international affairs and resolutions, which the 10452 Party says they have no control over. Several groups note that the international factor renders the issue of Hezbollah, and other issues, highly complex.<sup>37</sup> For example, pointing out how the question of Hezbollah and their weapons is related to the economic situation, Nahwal Watan argues that an economic and financial rescue plan cannot be drawn up “in the presence of an abnormal reality.” However, “[this] reality of weapons is a topic that deals with international repercussions that are developing day after day.” Similarly, Tawlet Al-Hiwar argues that “the economic situation cannot be amended unless we stop the bleeding from illegal crossings, which are controlled by the weapons of Hezbollah.” Furthermore, they see Hezbollah negatively affecting Lebanon’s interests in the Gulf states and other countries. Tawlet Al-Hiwar therefore demand the implementation of international resolutions 1559 and 1701, which require that all militias be disarmed and disbanded. Finally, Jibhet 17 Tishreen notes how Hezbollah’s arms are even complicit in the issue of maritime border demarcation.

For all change groups, the solution is clear: Hezbollah must turn over its weapons to the state, i.e., to the Lebanese Armed Forces, which should be the only legitimate holder of weaponry in Lebanon. However, Madinati challenges this naivety: “I challenge those who want to remove Hezbollah’s weapons to come and tell me how.” Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala argues that one must first develop “a capable state and a strong army,” which will then be able to take away Hezbollah’s weapons. The Green Party and Sabaa on the other hand emphasise the need for negotiations and dialogue in order to develop a defensive strategy and to reach a sovereign state in which Hezbollah can be disarmed. Sabaa, however, notes that this will take time, but the group is not in a hurry, since it believes that “the citizen today is not upset because Hezbollah has weapons.”

## Sectarianism

The fourth most important priority for groups in the change movement (51.7%)<sup>38</sup> relates to sectarianism and the building of a civil state. This is a topic that has been one of the movement’s main demands for many years. However, not all groups mentioned this among their main priorities. The following discussion only deals with those groups that prioritise the issue.

Tahalof Watani, Madinati, Nahwal Watan, Kulluna Irada, and LNA note how the question of sectarianism is intimately related to the application of the Constitution. The former three groups

<sup>36</sup> Kulluna Irada, Taqaddom, Mintishreen, the Green Party, Sarkhet Shaab, Mada, and Jibhet 17 Tishreen.

<sup>37</sup> Nahwal Watan, Taqaddom, Sarkhet Shaab, the 10452 Party, Tawlet Al-Hiwar, and Jibhet 17 Tishreen.

<sup>38</sup> Tahalof Watani, Nahwal Watan, Kulluna Irada, National Bloc, LiHaqqi, Madinati, Khat Ahmar, the Green Party, Shamaluna, LNA, Muwatinun Muttahidun, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, the 10452 Party, Mada, and Jibhet 17 Tishreen.

argue that Article 95 of the Constitution should be implemented today, as it stipulates sectarian quotas are only provisional measures that should be abolished if found detrimental to the state. Indeed, MP Waddah Sadek of Khat Ahmar has already introduced the proposal since entering parliament in order to activate a National Commission for the Abolishment of Political Sectarianism. Tahalof Watani furthermore seeks the expansion of the mandate of the Constitutional Council to include the interpretation of the Constitution, emphasising the need to also apply constitutional Article 22, which stipulates that with the abolishment of parliamentary sectarianism, a senate with sectarian quotas and limited powers should be established. The National Bloc agrees that Lebanon must transition from a sectarian to a civil state, through legislation. One of the main legal pursuits in this regard, as mentioned by a diversity of groups,<sup>39</sup> is the establishment of a unified personal status law, and more importantly, of a civil marriage law. This is an important demand for many groups since most issues related to marriage, inheritance, and child custody pertain to sectarian-based status laws, making it harder for those in inter-religious or a-religious situations to obtain their rights. Only a civil state will guarantee citizens' rights, argue the National Bloc, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, and Mada. The latter group joins Jibhet 17 Tishreen to call for the establishment of a secular state. It is likely that many more groups would agree with this term, especially if it is understood basically to mean the separation of religion and state. Indeed, Muwatinun Muttahidun mentions the separation of religion and the state, while LiHaqqi refers to the non-interference of religion in politics as a priority, and the National Bloc states that the sect should be a private matter.

Several groups have underlined the deleterious effects of sectarianism over citizenship: the parties in power have for decades been strengthening people's sectarian identities, since the weakness of the state has prevented it from providing the Lebanese with the basics – electricity, water, and employment. This has caused people to turn to their sectarian leaders, points out Muwatinun Muttahidun. LiHaqqi and Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala therefore argue that today the movement must seek to strengthen the people's national identity. Tahalof Watani and the National Bloc add that such a national identity can only be built upon a shared history and a shared project for the future. Madinati argues that the educational curricula must be unified, with the issue of a history book being critical.

### A Priority Roadmap

The above four priorities were ordered according to the number of groups that mentioned them. However, some groups also commented about a specific chronology between these various priorities.<sup>40</sup> This chronological prioritisation looks like the following: the current economic crisis and the independence of the judiciary are intimately linked and must be tackled first. Only then may one move on to the questions of Hezbollah and sectarianism, as well as civil rights, and other topics. "If the people do not have electricity, we cannot tell them that we want to work on issues such as civil marriage," said Shamaluna. Most groups even see the question of the judiciary as being foundational to addressing the economic crisis, with for

<sup>39</sup> Tahalof Watani, National Bloc, LiHaqqi, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, Mada, Jibhet 17 Tishreen, and Kulluna Irada.

<sup>40</sup> Shamaluna, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, the National Bloc, Lubnan Hawiyati, Jibhet 17 Tishreen, Tawlet Hiwar, Madinati.

example Madinati stating that “anyone who says that he can change something without the independence of the judiciary is wrong, as even the welfare fund is corrupt.”

### Groups’ Affinity Based on Policy Stances

It is possible to visualise the change movement in a way that represents the policy affinity between groups. This can be achieved by calculating a “distance” between groups based on how different they score on six metrics: their location on the left-right spectrum, their stance regarding nationalisation-privatisation, regarding administrative policy, their attitude towards cooperation with traditional parties, their priorities regarding civil rights issues, as well as their priorities in general.<sup>41</sup> Based on these “distances” between groups, one may draw a two-dimensional visualisation, which provides an intuitive and easy-to-appreciate proxy for a complex reality.<sup>42</sup> Figure 4 depicts how the various change groups mapped in this report relate to each other policy-wise: the closer two groups are in this figure, the closer they are with respect to the six indicators of policy we selected; conversely, the further they are apart in this figure, the less alike they are policy-wise.<sup>43</sup>

What is useful to note in such figures is both the clusters of groups and the outliers. A

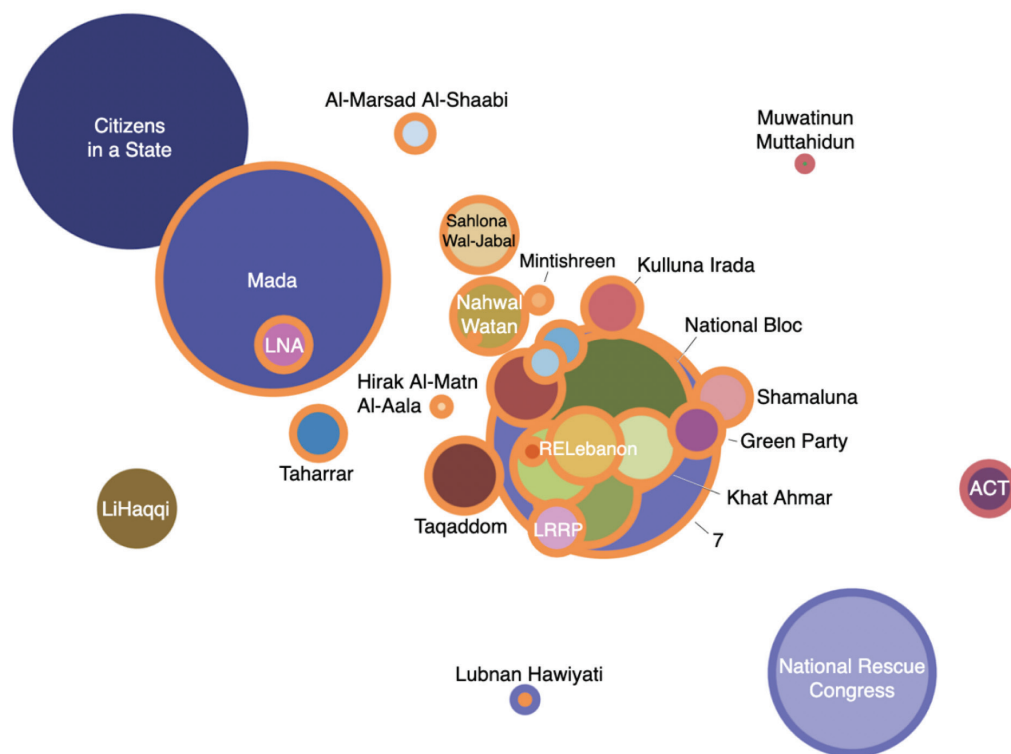


Figure 6: Policy affinities between groups of the change movement. The closer two groups are, the more affinity they have for each other policy-wise. Those groups whose edges are coloured in the same way belong to a cluster with increased affinity between all the groups in the cluster. This automatic visualisation roughly mirrors the left-right political spectrum, with *Citizens in a State*, *LiHaqqi*, *Mada*, *LNA*, *Taharrar* and *Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi*, *Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala* and *Taqaddom* representing the movement's leftmost wing, while *Muwatinun Muttahidun*, *ACT* and the *National Rescue Congress* represent the movement's rightmost wing (while the latter group is politically centrist, it is economically on the far right).

<sup>41</sup> The first 5 factors are derived from the surveys, the final one from the interviews. The first four are calculated by taking the absolute difference between two groups' figures for each factor. The “distance” between two groups' ordering of civil rights issues is calculated by means of the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. The final factor was calculated by summing the number of priorities mentioned by both groups in their interviews, divided by the average number of priorities mentioned by each group in total.

<sup>42</sup> Note that this approach is limited by the selection of measures: measuring other policy stances might suggest different “distances” between groups.

<sup>43</sup> Note that the size of circles may be deceptive, as the distance between two groups is measured between the centres of their circles, and not between the edges.

coloured edge indicates that a group belongs to a particular cluster within which all groups have much affinity for each other policy-wise.<sup>44</sup> This figure suggests that the vast bulk of the change movement belongs to the same policy cluster (orange edge) and is therefore not significantly different policy-wise. There are only a few outliers not included in this main cluster: ACT and Muwatinun Muttahidun form a cluster (red edge) by virtue of being the movement's two most right-wing groups, both strongly in favour of privatisation, and the only two federalists in the movement. The National Rescue Congress and Lubnan Hawiyati (purple edge) is another set of outliers. Both are centrist platforms that distinguish themselves from other centrists by their hard rejection of cooperation with traditional parties, a stance typically associated with left-wing groups in the movement. Finally, LiHaqqi and Citizens in a State are distinct from the bulk of the movement by virtue of being two of its left-most groups. While this automatically generated figure summarises a variety of policy indicators, groups are roughly laid out from the political left (on the figure's left) over the political centre (on the figure's centre) to the political right (on the figure's right). This result further emphasises the usefulness of the left-right spectrum, as it confirms once more its correlation with various policy stances in the movement.

### 4.3. Relationship With Groups Outside the Movement

*Key takeaways: Popular categories of “pragmatist” and “purist” are difficult to maintain when capturing change groups’ relations with opposition groups considered controversial in the change movement, like the Kataeb and the Communist Party. Several so-called “purist” change groups are in fact known to cooperate with controversial leftist groups, while they shun right-wing controversial groups. “Pragmatist” change groups, on the other hand, tend to cooperate with controversial right-wing groups, while shunning controversial leftist groups. The purist/pragmatist dichotomy therefore has more to do with the political left-right spectrum than with the basic question whether to collaborate with controversial groups that have adopted the banner of “change.” In the recent elections, change groups performed better on lists that excluded candidates from controversial groups, than on mixed lists.*

Change groups were asked about their attitude towards traditional parties. The survey responses ranged on a scale from “no cooperation,” over “cooperation on certain issues,” to a complete “openness for alliances,” and are visualised in Figure 7. The largest number of groups reports to be open to cooperation with traditional parties on a case-by-case basis (45%). A significant minority is completely closed to cooperation (24%) and another minority hovers in between these two positions (28%). Only a single group reported being open to alliances with traditional parties: ACT.<sup>45</sup> Taharrar, who hail from south Lebanon, say that “I can ally with Hezbollah for pollution in the Hasbani River, but I will not do that if the topic in question is related to issues we are against.” On the other hand, the National Rescue Congress sticks to the 17 October Revolution’s “all of them, means all of them” slogan, and

<sup>44</sup> Clusters are determined using farthest point hierarchical clustering.

<sup>45</sup> 7 groups responded with a number smaller than 16.67, 8 with a number between 16.67 and 33.33, 13 with a number between 33.33 and 50, and 1 with a number greater than 75.



LiHaqqi notes it was challenging to see other groups “open the door for the traditional parties, that is, the Kataeb.” A group’s attitude towards cooperation with traditional parties is highly correlated with their willingness to join national policy dialogues with governmental instances, with the bulk of the movement being open to such dialogues if the topic is of interest.

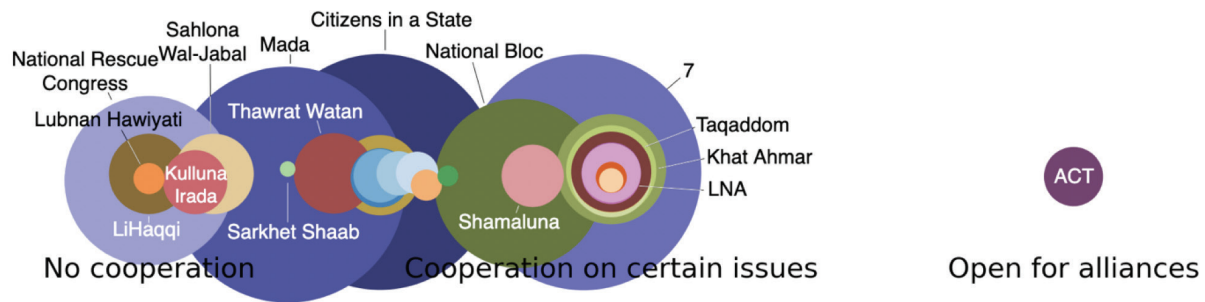


Figure 7: Groups' attitude towards traditional parties.

While full collaboration with traditional parties is out of the question for most change groups, the question of cooperation with opposition groups considered controversial within the change movement has proven more divisive.<sup>46</sup> Change groups have been commonly characterised as “purist” or “pragmatist” based on their willingness to work together with groups such as the Kataeb and the Independence Movement.<sup>47</sup> While some purists like LiHaqqi are principally against working with such controversial groups,<sup>48</sup> seeing them as no different from the other traditional parties, other purists like Tahalof Watani are against allying with such groups for purely practical reasons: before the elections, they claimed that survey data, like that collected by Nahwal Watan, suggested that alliances with the Kataeb would generate fewer votes for change lists. Pragmatist groups, however, like Kulluna Irada, claimed that their survey data suggested the opposite.

Despite its popularity, the “purist-pragmatist” dichotomy is misleading. Rather than characterising a change group’s general attitude towards controversial parties, in actuality, it only captures their attitude towards controversial right-wing groups. Citizens in a State, for example, ran on several electoral lists with members of the Communist Party, and reportedly has good relations with Ossama Saad’s Popular Nasserist Organisation.<sup>49</sup> Even though these two leftist groups are considered controversial, Citizens in a State, also a left leaning party, is labelled “purist,” because the party refuses to work with the right leaning Kataeb and Independence Movement. Madinati and Mada likewise collaborate with controversial left leaning parties, and yet are called “purists.” Generally, “purists” tend to be politically left-of-centre (39 on average), whereas “pragmatists” are politically centrist (51 on average). It is therefore not surprising that “purists” are more lenient to left leaning controversial groups than such right leaning groups. Since the common understanding of the “purism-pragmatism”

<sup>46</sup> Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 92.

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix 2 for a classification of groups in this survey as purist or pragmatist.

<sup>48</sup> The interviewee from Taharrar, ex-LiHaqqi, says that LiHaqqi paid a high price for their purism, as “there were enormous interests linking some groups and individuals in the change movement with Neemat Frem [of Project Watan] and the Kataeb.” This reportedly resulted in LiHaqqi being shunned and not being able to be part of electoral lists in all constituencies. LiHaqqi is currently reviewing its relationships with other groups and is seeking to be more open.

<sup>49</sup> See for example *مواطنون ومواطنات في دولة*, “أسامة سعد التقى وفدا من حركة مواطنون ومواطنات في دولة,” accessed August 16, 2022, <https://mmfidawla.com/2019/01/02/oussama/>.

dichotomy mainly refers to a group’s stance towards alliances with right-wing controversial groups,<sup>50</sup> it is more indicative of a group’s position on the left-right spectrum than of their stance towards controversial groups in general,<sup>51</sup> and the usefulness of this language must be questioned.

The recent parliamentary elections provide a useful way to evaluate the question of collaboration between change groups from what could be called the “narrow” change movement, which are the subject of the current report, and groups that also run under the flag of change, or of “opposition,” but are considered controversial, such as the Kataeb and the Communist Party. In most Lebanese districts, multiple change lists were registered for the elections, despite efforts to achieve unified lists. These change lists may be classified as “narrow,” “controversial,” or “mixed,” depending on whether they respectively included only candidates from the “narrow” movement, i.e., from groups considered in this report, only from “controversial” groups, or from both camps. Thus, we find 26 “narrow” lists, 8 “mixed,” and 8 “controversial” ones, making for a total of 42 change lists.<sup>52</sup> Pragmatist Kulluna Irada’s pre-election surveys suggested that “mixed” lists would be strategically most successful for change groups from the “narrow” change movement.<sup>53</sup> Purist Nahwal Watan’s surveys, on the other hand, suggested that the narrow change movement would be more successful by excluding candidates from controversial groups and running its own “narrow” lists.<sup>54</sup>

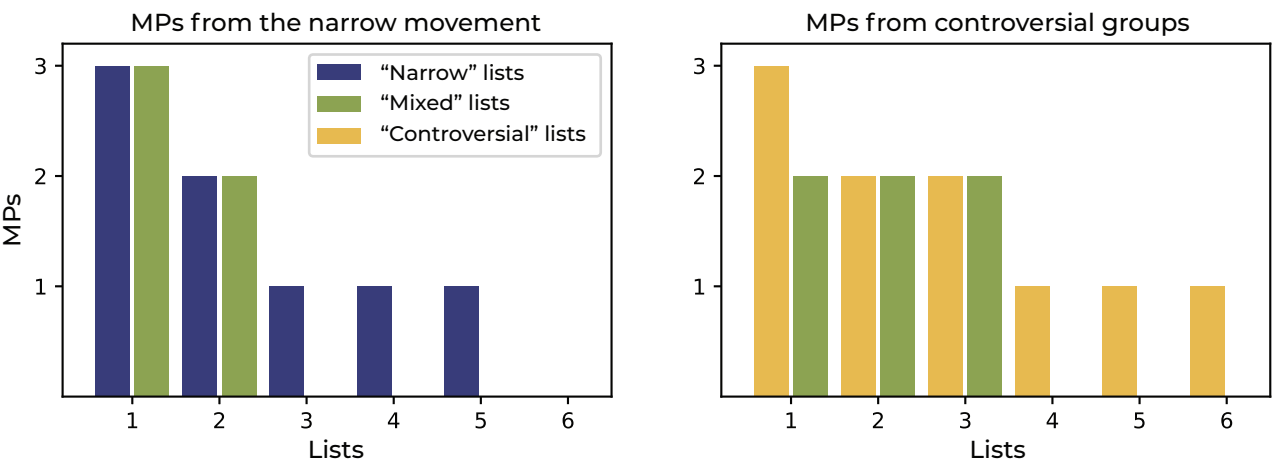


Figure 8: The number of MPs landed by different types of lists, with lists arranged in descending order of MPs.

<sup>50</sup> Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 92.

<sup>51</sup> In another study conducted among key change groups in the summer of 2021, the left-wing Communist Party and the Popular Nasserist Organisation were generally considered more acceptable than the right leaning Kataeb, Project Watan and Independence Movement. If the change movement generally lies left-of-centre, it is not unsurprising that it is more lenient to left-wing than right-wing controversial groups.

<sup>52</sup> In fact, we identified 52 change lists. However, we were unable to classify 10 lists as none of the candidates’ allegiances were apparent. Hence, we left out these lists, which did not yield any MPs and garnered relatively few votes. The lists and our classification, as well as a list of all candidates and their affiliations is included in the dataset we publish alongside this report. Note that identifying the affiliation of candidates is not always straightforward. Although the dataset is based on a best effort at combining multiple sources, it is incomplete, as many candidates’ affiliation is highly obscure, sometimes candidates have multiple affiliations, and finally there are contradictions between the various sources. Besides own relationships within the change movement, the following sources were used to build this dataset: Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 103–5; The Policy Initiative, “Seat Distribution by Political Affiliation of Lebanon’s Newest Parliament in Comparison to That of 2018,” 2022, [https://twitter.com/TPL\\_Lebanon/status/1527294603577069568](https://twitter.com/TPL_Lebanon/status/1527294603577069568); The Policy Initiative, “The Map of Alliances across the Competing Political Groups,” 2022, [https://twitter.com/TPL\\_Lebanon/status/1522547404586823680](https://twitter.com/TPL_Lebanon/status/1522547404586823680); The Policy Initiative, “Lebanon’s New Political Landscape Broken down by Affiliation and Sect.,” 2022, [https://twitter.com/TPL\\_Lebanon/status/1526943189516566532](https://twitter.com/TPL_Lebanon/status/1526943189516566532); Free & Fair Lebanon, “Learn More About Your District’s Independent Political Groups and Their Candidates,” accessed June 16, 2022, <https://www.enough.movie/freeandfairlebanon/>; Sawti, “Electoral Lists,” accessed June 16, 2022, <https://www.sawtvoice.org/lists>; Thawra Map, “2022 Lebanese Parliamentary Elections Guide,” 2022, <https://thawramap.com/>.

<sup>53</sup> Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 68.

<sup>54</sup> Atlas Assistance, 68. Note that Nahwal Watan also refused to cooperate with the Communist Party and the Popular Nasserist Organisation. Atlas Assistance, 71.

**Figure 8** shows for each type of list how many MPs were landed by respectively change groups from the “narrow” movement (left) and controversial groups (right). Thus, the left plot represents the commonly accepted list of 13 change MPs.<sup>55</sup> 5 of them ran on 2 of the 8 “mixed” lists,<sup>56</sup> while the other 8 change MPs ran on 5 of the “narrow” lists. The plot on the right shows that 16 candidates from controversial groups won a seat in parliament.<sup>57</sup> 6 of them emerged from 3 of the 8 “mixed” lists, while 10 ran on 6 of the 8 “controversial” lists. In both cases, the “mixed” lists underperformed compared to the lists with respectively only “narrow” change candidates, or only candidates from controversial groups.

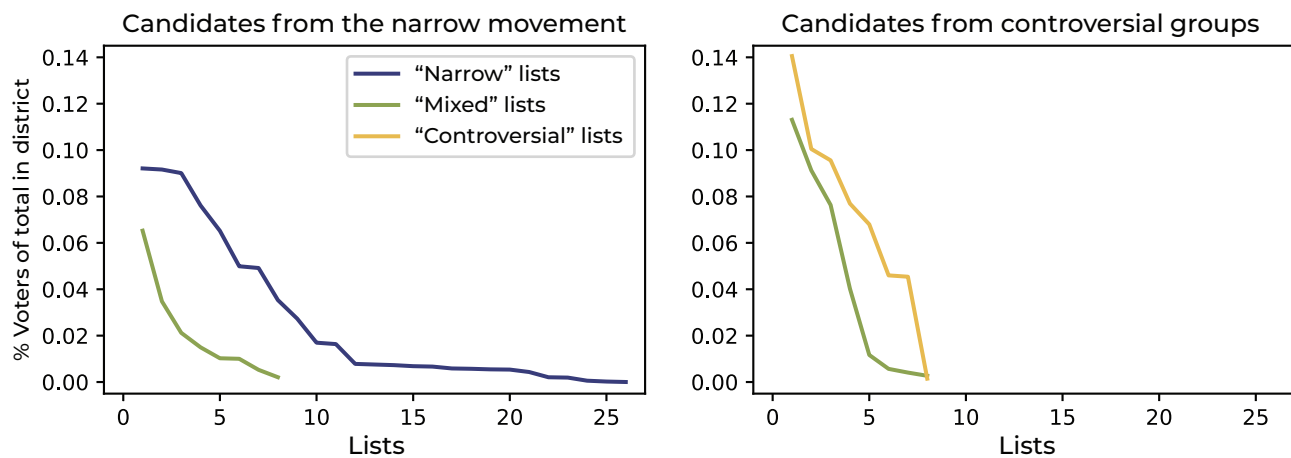


Figure 9: The percentage of votes obtained by different types of lists, with lists arranged in descending order of votes. Only the candidate with the most votes in a list is counted, to allow for a better comparison between lists with different numbers of candidates. Nevertheless, the results are similar when averaging votes for all candidates on a list.

The percentage of votes that candidates from both camps obtained paints a similar picture, as seen in **Figure 9**.<sup>58</sup> Candidates from change groups obtained proportionally far more votes on “narrow” lists than on “mixed” lists (left plot). The same is true for candidates from controversial groups, who obtained more votes on “controversial” lists than on “mixed” lists (right plot).

Together, these results indicate that electoral alliances with controversial parties were less successful for both emergent “narrow” change groups as well as the controversial groups themselves.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Najat Aoun Saliba (Taqaddom), Mark Daou (Taqaddom), Waddah Sadek (Khat Ahmar), Halime Kaakour (LNA), Ibrahim Mneimneh (Beirut Tuqawim/Mada), Cynthia Zarzir (RELebanon/Tahalof Watani), Yassine Yassine (Sahlona Wal-Jabal), Paula Yacoubian (Tahalof Watani), Firas Hamdan (Taharrar), Michel Douaihy (Shamaluna), Elias Jarade (Communist-affiliated), Melhem Khalaf (Independent), Ramy Finge (Independent).

<sup>56</sup> Mark Daou, Najat Saliba, and Halimé Kaakour ran on a list in Mount Lebanon IV that also included affiliates of the Kataeb and the Communist Party, while Elias Jarade and Firas Hamdan ran on a list in South III that included Communist Party members and affiliates.

<sup>57</sup> Nadim Bashir Gemayel (Kataeb), Samy Gemayel (Kataeb), Elias Hankash (Kataeb), Salim Sayegh (Kataeb), Michel Mouawad (Independence Movement), Fouad Makhzoumi (National Dialogue Party), Neemat Frem (Project Watan), Osama Saad (Popular Nasserist Organisation), Adib Abdelmasih (Koura Al-Thawra), Farid Jean Heiykal Khazen (Independent), Nazih Bizri (Independent), Charbel Masaad (Independent), Michel Daher (Independent), Ihab Matar (Independent), Firas Salloum (Independent), Jean Talouzan (Independent).

<sup>58</sup> Note that we only count votes for candidates whose affiliation is known to us, i.e., 54% of candidates.

<sup>59</sup> This is especially true if one notes that the two most successful “mixed” lists, which supplied 5 change MPs, did not include very controversial candidates, and may have been viewed by most voters as “narrow” lists.

#### 4.4. Relationships Within the Movement

*Key takeaways: While groups in the movement often speak of having good relations with other groups, in practice, there are frictions between different groups and the favourability of particular groups varies. A clustering based on the relationship data reveals a relational network among pragmatist groups, another cluster of relationships among purist groups, and a third cluster among successful regional groups and coalitions.*

Although most change movement groups explicitly stated having good relationships with the other groups in the movement, there are clear expressions of friction and varying degrees of working relationships.

Citizens in a State is most distinguished in this respect, with eight groups specifically mentioning having a bad relationship with them,<sup>60</sup> while only one group (Mada) positively mentioned Citizens in a State by pointing out how two of their candidates ran on the same list in Mount Lebanon II. The recent parliamentary elections specifically sparked much controversy around Citizens in a State, as the group decided to create its own change lists in every electoral district, thus often running against other change lists. Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, RELebanon and LiHaqqi argue that the party thus negatively affected the change movement's electoral results by dividing the votes. Shamaluna, whose work was confined to North Lebanon and who landed an MP, believe they succeeded because they were able to avoid these tensions with Citizens in a State. Taqaddom stated they never had problems with Citizens in a State but were surprised to find the party running on an opposing list. Finally, Nahwal Watan, LiHaqqi, and Madinati lamented that Citizens in a State refuse to cooperate or ally with any other group. While the Citizens in a State representative we interviewed responded to some of these issues, the group unfortunately asked us later not to use the collected data.

A second group that sparked controversy within the movement due to the elections is Madinati, formerly Beirut Madinati. After tensions with Tahalof Watani over list formation in Beirut I, Madinati decided to run their own list in that district and to do the same in Beirut II. However, they later withdrew the latter list, although too late to have it removed from the ballots. Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, RELebanon and Lubnan Hawiyati argue that Madinati's behaviour over the elections hindered the change movement, with Mada specifying that they used to have good relations with Madinati before the elections, implying this is not the case today. Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi indicate that they were initially willing to collaborate with Madinati, but today criticise the group's reported lack of communication and "disruptive internal situation." Nahwal Watan believe that Madinati made "a mistake in their calculations in the last stage, but we do not want to wrong them more than necessary." Nahwal Watan argues that Tahalof Watani is also not without blame, and that, without wanting to justify Madinati, we should not forget Madinati's history and work, and not put them in the same box as Citizens in

<sup>60</sup> Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, Nahwal Watan, Taqaddom, LiHaqqi, Lubnan Hawiyati, ACT, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, Tawlet Hiwar.



a State. From Madinati's side, their survey respondent indicated that the group specifically has a bad relationship with Tahalof Watani, presumably due to the tensions surrounding list formation in Beirut. The two groups were formerly allied, along with a number of other change groups, in what is known as the April 13<sup>th</sup> Call. However, "we were not able to create a joint action plan," says Madinati, and the alliance fell apart. According to Atlas Assistance, however, the April 13<sup>th</sup> Call fragmented over the purism/pragmatism question, as some groups reached out to the Lebanese Opposition Front, the coalition formed by Kataeb that includes a number of pragmatist change groups.<sup>61</sup> Recalling how they were allied with a variety of groups, such as the National Bloc, Mintishreen, LNA, Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, and "even Tahalof Watani," Madinati wonder today what will come of these alliances.

A third group that has a longer history of controversy within the change movement is Sabaa. Its image had been tarnished in recent years by several scandals,<sup>62</sup> and an earlier survey from the summer of 2021 found that Sabaa was the least liked change group, even less than Citizens in a State.<sup>63</sup> However, our surveys and interviews indicate that this situation might be different today, as groups see Citizens in a State and Madinati in a far more negative light than they do Sabaa. In fact, few groups mention Sabaa at all when asked about positive and negative relationships: 5 groups referred to Sabaa in a mixture of positive and negative comments, compared to 11 for Citizens in a State, and 7 for Madinati, all negative or neutral. Sabaa appears less controversial today because it no longer stands in the spotlight. While Lubnan Hawiyati sees Sabaa as obstructing the work of the movement, and the Lebanese Republican Reform Party were severely disappointed by Sabaa's proposal to merge with all groups,<sup>64</sup> others like Sarkhet Shaab, Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, and ACT mention having good relations with Sabaa. The party itself notes that it neither has good relations with anyone ("especially after the electoral alliances"), nor negative ones. The Secretary General, in his former position in charge of political relations, "tried to work on pressure and activism with the groups, and to have periodic and monthly meetings to bring viewpoints closer... I visited everyone and presented the idea to them, and I am still trying, but they are not taking it seriously." The party reports never having refused to sit with anybody, and to actively be seeking to meet with others, but it reportedly keeps receiving the proverbial cold shoulder: "We tried to contact all of them, but they don't respond, and none of them gave a reason." As noted by the Lebanese Republic Reform Party, Sabaa is therefore ready to give up its identity and merge with as many other groups as possible, under a new name, slogan, and identity, to "create a large, organised group with cadres that understand politics and take on partisan responsibilities."

Two final focal points of controversy within the movement are Nahwal Watan and Kulluna Irada, the two "platforms" of the movement. Both are non-party organisations dedicated to change by supporting others in their political pursuits, rather than operating as political parties themselves.<sup>65</sup> In many ways, both groups functioned as "incubators" or electoral machines for

<sup>61</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 23.

<sup>62</sup> Atlas Assistance, 44.

<sup>63</sup> The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 22.

<sup>64</sup> For more, see the section on Challenges and Plans.

the change movement, whose groups often lacked “the resources, manpower and expertise for an efficient electoral campaign.”<sup>66</sup> These platforms’ activities included conducting surveys of the electorate on behalf of the movement, organising various trainings, doing political marketing, and running fundraising campaigns.<sup>67</sup> As the two groups were set to merge in late 2021, it is reportedly their differences regarding alliances with controversial groups that caused the merger ultimately to fail.<sup>68</sup> Madinati complained that the platforms “contributed to dividing the movement into a side that wants to deal with the traditional parties and a rejectionist side,” as pragmatist Kulluna Irada pushed for the first option and purist Nahwal Watan for the other. Without these platforms’ role, the purist/pragmatist issue might have remained a question of “mere differentiation,” instead of division. The ex-LiHaqqi interviewee at Taharrar believed LiHaqqi was the only group “who addressed the issue of platforms and their political role in managing the elections.” LiHaqqi reportedly paid the price for this battle, since they did not benefit from these platforms’ electoral funding as other groups supposedly did. However, purist LNA pointed out that they were also among the few groups to refuse “any funding from any platform.” Furthermore, Tahalof Watani and Madinati complained that the platforms failed to deliver what was promised, raising the question of which groups were effectively supported by these platforms. Kulluna Irada pushed back by pointing to the divisions within the change movement, stating that “many donors did not provide the support we promised when they saw this fragmentation in the scene.” They furthermore respond to LiHaqqi and LNA’s stances that “those who do not deal with us because we are involved with the traditional opposition do so by their own choice.”

On the more positive side, most groups report having good relationships with the other change groups. **Figure 10** visualises how often each group is mentioned by other groups in our surveys and interviews, and to what extent these mentions are positive.<sup>69</sup> Among these, some groups stand out in the data as particularly well connected, as a large number of other groups mentioned having good relationships with them: Tahalof Watani, Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, LNA, the National Bloc, Taqaddom, LiHaqqi and Mada.

<sup>65</sup> Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 64.

<sup>66</sup> Atlas Assistance, 69.

<sup>67</sup> Atlas Assistance, 68, 70.

<sup>68</sup> Atlas Assistance, 68.

<sup>69</sup> Each mention was classified as either positive (100%), neutral (50%), or negative (0%).

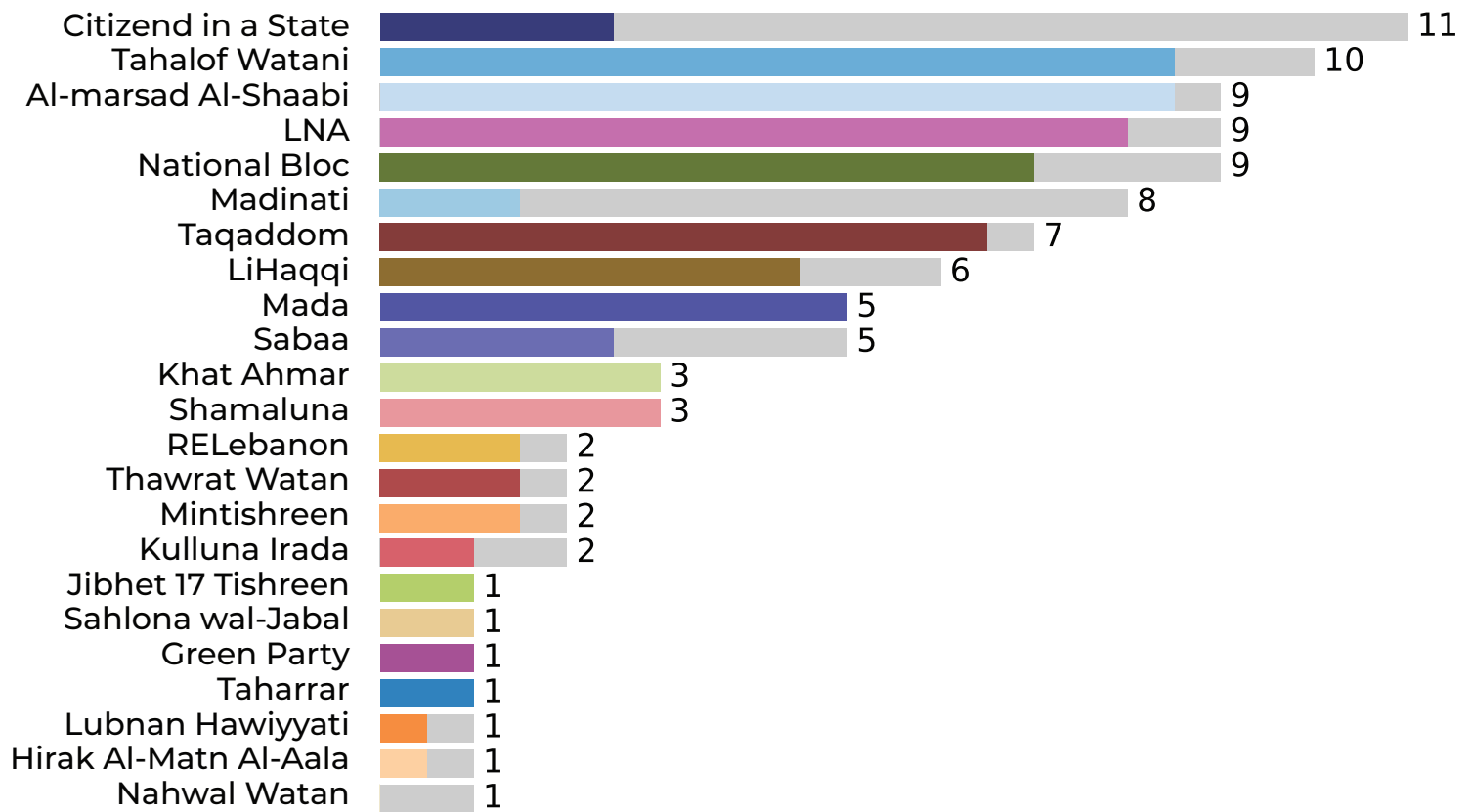


Figure 10: The number of times a group is mentioned by other groups in the survey or during the interview. The proportion of the bar that is coloured indicates to what extent the mentions were positive. A fully coloured bar indicates that all mentions were positive. A fully grey bar indicates that all mentions were negative. 7 groups in this survey were never mentioned by other groups and are therefore not included in this figure.

It is useful to compare this relationship data with data collected by The Policy Initiative in the summer of 2021,<sup>70</sup> even though a direct comparison is not possible due to different data collection methods. In that study, groups were asked to rate their own closeness to other groups on a scale from 0 to 10. Among the groups also considered in the present study, Tahalof Watani scored highest (6.6), then the National Bloc (6.3), Mintishreen (6.2), Madinati (5.9), Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi (5.9), LiHaqqi (5.4), Khat Ahmar (4.9), Taqaddom (4.7), RELebanon (4.5), Citizens in a State (3.7), and finally Sabaa (1.2). The main differences between the data from this year-old study and the present one are as follows:

- Madinati fell out of favour compared to one year ago, while Citizens in a State's already low status worsened.
- Sabaa is presently seen in a more neutral light than one year ago, when all groups reported bad relations with Sabaa.
- Mintishreen is only mentioned by two groups today, even though many groups reported to be close to Mintishreen one year ago.<sup>71</sup>
- Taqaddom is viewed more favourably today than one year ago.

<sup>70</sup> The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 25.

<sup>71</sup> This may be an artifact of the difference in data collection methods used by the two studies. The Policy Initiative required each survey respondent to report how close they were to Mintishreen, whereas in the present study, the data is derived from qualitative data: mentions in interviews. The former method seeks to be exhaustive, the latter not. Hence, it may be that today groups would also report good relations with Mintishreen when asked specifically, or that in the past they would not have mentioned Mintishreen unsolicited in an interview.

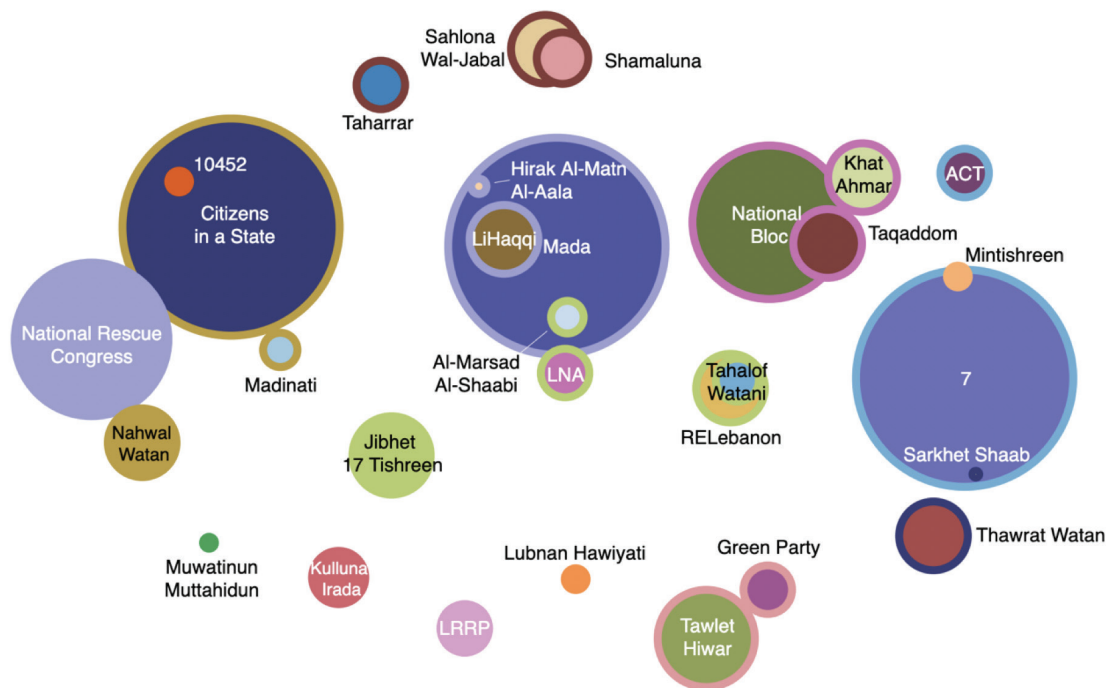


Figure 11: Relationships between groups of the change movement. The closer two groups are, the stronger their relationship. Those groups whose edges are coloured in the same way belong to an automatically detected cluster of groups with strong relationships amongst each other.

Finally, the relationship data collected may be used to draw an approximation of the relational network that exists within the change movement. To do this, the relationships between groups are scored based on groups' responses in interviews and surveys,<sup>72</sup> as well as on data from the recent elections on which groups ran with or against which other groups.<sup>73</sup> This data is visualised in **Figure 11**,<sup>74</sup> where again both clusters and outliers are noteworthy, and automatically detected clusters are indicated using coloured edges. One such cluster (pink edge) is formed by the National Bloc, Taqaddom, and Khat Ahmar, three pragmatist groups related to the Lebanese Opposition Front, the alliance led by Kataeb: Taqaddom and Khat Ahmar are members of the front; and the National Bloc gravitated towards the front when the purist/pragmatist division started to play up in their own April 13<sup>th</sup> Call alliance.<sup>75</sup> Pragmatists ACT and Sabaa form their own cluster (blue edge), although they are close to the former pragmatist cluster, as ACT was started by Khat Ahmar co-founder Samir Saliba, who

<sup>72</sup> A positive mention is scored 1, a neutral mention is scored 0.5, and a negative one 0. If a group does not mention another, the worst is assumed. The relationship between two groups is scored by averaging the two group's perceptions of the relationship. While our data is not exhaustive, as we did not ask each group to describe their relationship with each other group, we rely on the assumption that mentions indicate important relationships, and that mentions are not random. Thus, the relationships that we do capture are only a sample, but presumably skewed towards important relationships, both positive and negative.

<sup>73</sup> If two groups ran on the same electoral lists, their relationship is scored 1. If they only ran against each other on different lists, their relationship is scored 0. If they ran with and against each other in various districts, their relationship is scored as follows: the number of districts in which they ran with each other is divided by the total number of districts in which both groups ran (with or against each other). This data is combined with our own relationship data using a weighted sum, with one quarter of the weight attributed to the elections data, and three quarters to our own relationship data. Furthermore, if two groups did not run for elections in the same districts, or did not run at all, their score is only based on the relationship data excavated from the surveys and interviews.

<sup>74</sup> Compared to the similar policy affinity visualisation in Figure 4, this visualisation is more limited because the relationship data does not satisfy what is called the triangle inequality. Basically, this means that, if groups A and B are relationally close, and groups B and C are close, A and C are not necessarily close as well; they might in fact report to have a bad relationship. The result is that this visualisation is an approximation rather than an exact representation. The distances are less exactly representative of the relationships than they were in the policy visualisation, although still approximately correct.

<sup>75</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 82.

retains good relations with his former group, and furthermore mentioned having a good relationship with the Lebanese Opposition Front. Moreover, Sabaa ran together with Khat Ahmar and Taqaddom on electoral lists. Although Mintishreen is not included in either of these two clusters, it is also close to them, since, like the National Bloc, it is a pragmatist group that gravitated away from the April 13<sup>th</sup> Call towards the Lebanese Opposition front, and the group reports having good relations with the National Bloc and Taqaddom.

Another cluster (purple edge) is formed by a set of purist leftists who all mention having close relations with each other: Mada, LiHaqqi and Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala. Close to them lies another cluster of purists (green edge), formed by Tahalof Watani, LNA, and Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi. These are joined by pragmatist RELebanon, a key member of Tahalof Watani. Note that in these two closely related clusters, 4 out of 6 groups are current or former members of Tahalof Watani. These two purist clusters, along with the two pragmatist clusters discussed above, represent much of the mainly Beirut-based change movement.

A further cluster (dark red edge) is constituted by three of the successful regional groups and alliances: Shamaluna, Sahlona Wal-Jabal, and Taharrar. Each of these managed to land an MP, respectively in the North, the Bekaa, and the South. Not only individually distinguished from the former clusters in their regional focus, each of these three groups also report to have good relationships with the others. Finally, there are several smaller clusters. One is constituted of Madinati and Citizens in a State (golden edge), two groups currently shunned by the rest of the movement. They ran together on electoral lists in some districts, and “meet in some places,” according to Madinati, although they are not officially allied since “Citizens in a State do not ally with anyone.” Two other small clusters are formed by Thawrat Watan and Sarkhet Shaab (dark blue edge), and Tawlet Hiwar and the Green Party (salmon edge).

Next to all these clusters, there are various individual groups that are little mentioned by others, and also did not mention many relationships themselves. For example, there is Muwatinun Muttahidun, a group only recently established and currently confined to Zahle. Kulluna Irada, Nahwal Watan, Lubnan Hawiyati, and the National Rescue Congress likewise were barely mentioned by others, presumably because all four are platform-like groups, unlike the typical change group that seeks to resemble a political party.

#### **4.5. Challenges and Plans**

*Key takeaways: The main challenge obstructing change groups in their work is a lack of funding. Most groups run on volunteers, who cannot donate all of their time due to the severe economic crisis in the country. Since the recent elections, several groups have started to reorganise and will focus on supporting the 13 change candidates that entered parliament. Looking forward to the next parliamentary elections, many groups see the need to consolidate the movement into a small number of solid political parties, perhaps one leftist, one centrist,*



*one rightist. In the mid-term, the municipal elections of 2023 are considered highly significant, as some see change starting there rather than in Parliament.*

Addressing the current economic situation was identified as the most common priority among change groups. The economic situation not only affects the Lebanese people in general, of course, but also the groups themselves. Lubnan Hawiyati, Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi and Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala for example relate how the rise in fuel prices has affected the group's members' ability to meet, especially those not located in Beirut. Hence, most groups (79.3%)<sup>76</sup> identify their main challenge as being financial. Smaller groups like Sarkhet Shaab and Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala complain that they have weak capabilities. Taharrar, who landed one MP in the elections, confess having no money at all. Mintishreen does not have a bank account to be able to work. In general, most groups indicate that they are severely short of funding. Some point to their very strict funding policies that exclude many sources of funds,<sup>77</sup> while ACT complain about the far lower yields of funding campaigns today due to the crisis. Furthermore, several groups point specifically at Nahwal Watan and Kulluna Irada when discussing their funding issues, with Madinati complaining about the platforms' monopoly on funding, Tahalof Watani pointing to their own excessive reliance on these platforms that in the end failed to produce the promised funds, while LiHaqqi points to their own refusal to be financed by these platforms. The above reasons drive some groups, such as Madinati, to rely almost exclusively on member contributions to fund their work, which often do not amount to much. Finally, Sahlona Wal-Jabal mentioned the very high cost of running an elections campaign, and Shamaluna, who were able to land an MP, noted that they ran their campaign 100% volunteer-based, except for a single person functioning as a call centre for 100\$.

Regarding volunteers and party members, RELebanon mentions an inability to secure salaries for important people in the party, who therefore are unable to give much time to the group. Taqaddom and LiHaqqi likewise point out that volunteers do not suffice in political work, and that "there are people who need to be hired and receive a salary" (Taqaddom), since "mature, sophisticated and serious political work must be professional" (LiHaqqi). The Green Party has been working to secure extra funding to increase their employees' wages, while Tawlet Al-Hiwar note that to run workshops in several villages, "it seems that we have to pay [the volunteers]." Indeed, the crisis leaves little spare time for most people to volunteer for change groups, says LiHaqqi. In Shamaluna, who relied nearly 100% on volunteers, the complaint is that "we were not able to give 100% of our time to our political work because we are all working, and we are not able to quit our jobs." The situation at LNA and Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala is similar, with the interviewee from the latter group pointing out how he had to take his interview while at work, to underscore the level of pressure they experience.

<sup>76</sup> Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, Tahalof Watani, the National Bloc, Thawret Watan, Taqaddom, LiHaqqi, Lubnan Hawiyati, RELebanon, Madinati, Mintishreen, Khat Ahmar, ACT, the Green Party, Shamaluna, LNA, Sarkhet Shaab, Taharrar, the 10452 Party, Sahlona Wal-Jabal, LRRP, Jibhet 17 Tishreen, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, and Tawlet Al-Hiwar.

<sup>77</sup> Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, Tahalof Watani, LNA, and Jibhet 17 Tishreen.

Another challenge emerging from the current crisis in Lebanon is the feelings of despair among many Lebanese, say Madinati and Jibhet 17 Tishreen. “They witnessed the divisions in the parliamentary elections and our failure to present the image that the Lebanese citizen dreams of,” says the latter group, noting that it will not be easy to gain people’s trust again. A further challenge mentioned by some groups<sup>78</sup> is the immaturity of other change groups, and the difficult relations with them. LiHaqqi says that such groups “are unclear about their positions; only their presence at the table is important to them, while they do not participate in the discussions.” Sarkhet Shaab agrees, saying that their efforts to create networks of communication were thwarted by change people seeking to preserve their own status and position. And Muwatinun Muttahidun complain that most groups in Zahle do not have a clear political vision, which led to the great fragmentation seen in that district’s electoral lists. LiHaqqi, Sabaa, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala and Sahlona Wal-Jabal furthermore confess a need for training opportunities, on issues such as “administrative decentralisation and federalism, concepts that everyone uses but no one understands” (LiHaqqi). Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala specifically needs training opportunities because they have significantly grown in membership over the elections. On the other hand, Shamaluna reports to have enough expertise, while the Lebanese Republican Reform Party (LRRP) has its own platform for connecting experts with training opportunities.

Furthermore, Sabaa, Mintishreen and ACT mention slander and pressure campaigns against them, which challenged their work. Finally, the pressure of the whole system fostered by the traditional parties complicates various groups’ work, as their members are individually pressured (Shamaluna), or because the traditional parties have an unfair advantage as they engage in clientelist service provision (Sahlona Wal-Jabal). On the other hand, the LRRP was encouraged by the fact that attacks on polling stations noticeably dropped compared to previous elections, leading them to consider “opening regional centres for the party in the provinces.”

When conducting interviews in the weeks after the elections, many groups indicated they were in the process of assessing their performance in the elections, to understand “where we succeeded and where we failed” (Shamaluna), in order to regroup and develop plans for the coming stage. Many groups see the need to structurally reorganise themselves. Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi will adopt a new coordinating body, Tahalof Watani are wondering how to proceed with their unique structure that allows both individual and group members, Madinati will reconsider their flat structure which reportedly weakens decision-making, and Shamaluna ask themselves whether they should transform from being a coalition into being a political movement. Moreover, various groups insist on the importance of creating larger parties and coalitions with the elections of 2026 in mind. Nahwal Watan commends Shamaluna and Sahlona Wal-Jabal as “stable regional coalitions,” believing that decentralisation is essential in

<sup>78</sup> LiHaqqi, *Citizens in a State*, Mintishreen, Muwatinun Muttahidun, Sarkhet Shaab.

Lebanon. Therefore, they will seek to encourage the emergence and work of such coalitions by “accompanying them from a central board that may be composed of representatives of all regional coalitions.” Furthermore, the group sees the need for the movement to organise itself into a small number of big political parties with clear vision, perhaps one leftist, one centrist and one rightist. When Sabaa was founded, the vision was to become such a party, and the current leadership still believes in this model: we need “3 or 4 large parties facing the traditional parties in the country.” Therefore, they are “ready to merge with the largest number of groups under a new and unified name, slogan and identity.” The National Bloc even goes so far as to argue that a single large national opposition party should be established by all groups together, to overcome the egocentrism they see among the change groups. Meanwhile, Khat Ahmar and Liqaa Tishreen are in the process of creating a new party called “Amam” (“Ahead”), while Jibhet 17 Tishreen are working on building a broad revolutionary coalition for the 2026 elections. Finally, Kulluna Irada says it will help groups to build “a real national front pushing change,” Taharrar are convinced that local frameworks such as theirs are not sustainable and “must be linked to common national issues at the country level,” while Taqaddom are focused on developing their own party to grow in membership and to be able to “field the largest number of candidates in the 2026 elections and to be present in at least two or three regions, not just one region... but across Lebanon.”

Given the recent electoral success, several groups will focus on supporting change MPs in Parliament. Nahwal Watan argue that it is crucial that these MPs be accompanied, which “cannot be achieved outside an organised situation with a certain level of control on them,” implying that they might provide such structure. Sister platform Kulluna Irada also emphasise the importance of the 13 MPs for the movement, stating that they are “ready to support the 13 new MPs... to provide them with expertise.” Sarkhet Shaab is forming a working group to follow up on the representatives whose election they contributed to by virtue of being members of Tahalof Watani. Likewise, Taharrar is securing a work team for their MP Firas Hamdan, to “protect him from any traps set by other parties, and to work with him on various issues.” Similarly, Taqaddom reports it will follow up on its two deputies. Finally, Mintishreen and Mada will seek to collaborate with MPs to develop laws on issues relevant to their work.

Most groups are already looking forward to the next parliamentary elections and are organising accordingly. However, there are other elections in Lebanon prior to the 2026 ones. For Mada, who are firmly rooted in the universities by means of a network of secular clubs, the university elections are crucial. The National Bloc also considers the student elections, beside the union ones, as a priority. However, most of the electoral focus within the change movement lies on the 2023 municipal elections, which are considered of utmost important. RELebanon, ACT, and LiHaqqi even rank their importance higher than that of the parliamentary elections, since “fundamental

change starts with the municipal elections,” according to LiHaqqi. Indeed, ACT sees mayors as “presidents of their town or city.” According to Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi and Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, mayors use their power to support traditional parties at the national level, as seen in the parliamentary elections; instead, they should focus on local administration based on local social issues. Municipal administration, says RELebanon, “has dissolved as political partisanship took over.” Given the importance attached to the municipal elections, several groups explicitly stated that their members will run for election,<sup>79</sup> while others currently only commit to offering support, as they cannot yet say whether they will have their own candidates.<sup>80</sup> Many groups, however, regionally qualified their intentions, noting that they will not work uniformly across the nation: Madinati, whose original impetus was an important win in the 2016 Beirut municipal elections, hopes to expand by building on parliamentary successes in the south; LiHaqqi, Sabaa, and the National Bloc prefer to work in the regions where they already have a presence;<sup>81</sup> and Sahlona Wal-Jabal, Sarkhet Shaab, and Muwatinun Muttahidun will work in their native districts of the Western Beqaa, Aley and the Chouf, and Zahle respectively. These regional limitations are partially attributable to the higher cost of running in municipal elections, as each municipality requires additional work. The National Bloc and Mintishreen indicate therefore to strategically limit the number of regions they will engage in. Finally, several groups emphasise the importance of uniting all change groups in these municipal elections.<sup>82</sup>

#### 4.6. Relations with the Voter

*Key takeaways: In their approach to change, groups prefer to engage the voter in activities related to awareness raising, protest, and bringing people into political office, rather than provisions of welfare or aid services that in principle the state should organise. The main reason for this is that such work resembles too much the vote-buying clientelism that traditional parties engage in. Despite the recent electoral success, with 13 MPs for the change movement, it is unclear to what extent the Lebanese voter is in favour of “change.” Nearly half of the new change seats were formerly occupied by members of Saad Hariri’s Future Movement, which refrained from running in the elections. This raises the question of how many seats change candidates would have obtained had Hariri run. Furthermore, a large proportion of change votes came from the diaspora. On the other hand, it is supposed that many potential change voters stayed at home due to the fragmentation of the movement in the elections.*

Change groups prefer to be referred to as “change movement” rather than “civil society.” The interviewee of Lubnan Hawiyati stated quite bluntly: “We are not a civil society. We seek political power to run the country.” This reflects in general the movement’s approach to change and its relationship to the Lebanese citizens. Possible approaches to change may be classified into the following three categories: “occupation,” “influence,” and “substitution.”<sup>83</sup> Those who seek change by participating in elections and attempting to occupy key positions

<sup>79</sup> Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, Tahalof Watani, National Bloc, Sabaa, Mada, Muwatinun Muttahidun.

<sup>80</sup> Lubnan Hawiyati, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, Nahwal Watan, Sabaa, the Green Party, Taqaddom, the 10452 Party, LNA.

<sup>81</sup> LiHaqqi: “Tripoli, the north, Baalbek, Kesrouan, Jbeil, Baabda, the Chouf, Aley, the south, Beirut, the western and central Bekaa.” Sabaa: “where there are shadow municipalities according to our concept of the party.” The National Bloc: “Jbeil, Baabda, Kesrouan, and Matn, probably also Beirut, Tripoli, Mina, and Zgharta.”

<sup>82</sup> The National Bloc, LiHaqqi, Lubnan Hawiyati, Madinati.

<sup>83</sup> Steven Klein and Cheol Sung Lee, “Towards a Dynamic Theory of Civil Society: The Politics of Forward and Backward Infiltration,” *Sociological Theory* 37, no. 1 (2019): 62–88, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275119830451>.

in the state, such as in Parliament or the municipality, are considered to be engaged in “occupation.” On the other hand, “influence” refers to those approaches that seek change through lobbying, advocacy, and protest. Finally, “substitution” refers to the implementation of services and functions that in principle the state should implement, such as food relief, medical security, and public transport. With respect to the citizen, “occupation” seeks to obtain their vote, “influence” seeks to shape the citizen’s thinking and to mobilise their strength in protest, while “substitution” seeks to directly alleviate the citizen’s needs. When asked to what extent each change group is engaged in each of these three approaches, groups rate “occupation” 81%, “influence” 83%, and “substitution” only 30%.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, most change groups emerged during the 2015 and 2019 protest movements (“influence”) and engaged in the recent elections (“occupation”).

Groups tend to put far less energy towards initiatives that offer welfare support and relief (“substitution”). Several groups suggest that such work too much resembles the traditional-parties’ vote-buying clientelism. Sahlona Wal-Jabal decided not to enter the “service game,” not wishing their representative “to sit in an office where people visit to request a job or service.” The Lebanese citizen is unfortunately used to this type of politics, reports the coalition. The 10452 Party agrees that the citizen considers that “a politician is obliged to pay them money at the time of the elections.” The party laments that despite 4 years of serving 4,000 families in Akkar, they did not see any electoral results as two months before the elections others appeared with lots of money to buy votes. The party also noticed that other more successful change candidates did not have such a popular base as they have. Therefore, the party leader has decided to stop her service association and devote herself fully to politics. Like Sahlona Wal-Jabal, the National Bloc reports to refuse to “enter into a clientelistic network and act like the traditional parties.” However, seeing the needs of Lebanese communities, the party has developed an action platform that brings together citizens that can alleviate each other’s needs. Thus, the party facilitates social work while avoiding to be directly a part itself. Similarly, Madinati works on practical development projects in particular communities to “connect people and introduce them to the possibility of change that stems from people and this foundation,” and LiHaqqi works to develop local solidarity networks among citizens, which it sees as essential to the process of change. While Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala raised funds from abroad to provide food aid during the COVID-19 period, they prefer not to be engaged in such work, as “we will enter into a losing battle with the traditional parties that are supported from abroad and have considerable funding.” Furthermore, the group lacks the financial capabilities to engage in such work anyway, as reportedly Madinati also does. These two groups, along with Tahalof Watani, mention that building the state is the preferable alternative to engaging in “substitution,” which amounts to picking up the state’s slack and doing its work. Madinati argues that strengthening the state will in fact weaken citizens’ dependency on traditional parties. Generally, most groups

<sup>84</sup> When asked to what extent each group would like to be engaged in each of these approaches in the future, groups report on average 93% for occupation, 93% for influence, and 43% for substitution, representing an 10-13% increase in each category. Thus, groups generally want to increase and improve their work.



indicated not being in favour of, or to flatly refuse this type of work. Atlas Assistance equally found that no change group was engaged in direct social work, except for Sabaa. However, they report that several of the opposition groups that are considered controversial within the change movement, such as the Kataeb and the Independence Movement, are engaged in direct social work.<sup>85</sup> This willingness to engage in social work that some in the narrow movement avoid as “clientelism” is an important feature that distinguishes controversial opposition groups from the narrow change movement.

While the movement generally prefers to avoid “substitution” work, it fully engages the citizen using both “occupation” and “influence” approaches. One of the main channels for this type of social engagement is through meetings, workshops, and seminars.<sup>86</sup> The National Bloc regularly organises political discussions in their offices and online, “to give the citizen an opportunity to participate and discuss new points of view.” Similarly, LiHaqqi allows anybody to join their political discussions and deliberations in the various local “roots.” This participation is a precursor to people joining the decentralised party and begin participating in decision making. Sabaa organises workshops throughout the country, though the party complains that people in Beirut appear too busy to participate compared to other regions. Several groups focus specifically on engaging students in the university.<sup>87</sup> Sabaa has clubs within universities such as the LAU or the AUB, while Mada is built around a core network of 19 secular clubs in various universities, with about 200 people in each club. Sabaa engages students by organising activities such as hiking trips, during which the students learn about the party’s projects and are able to raise questions about the party’s opinion on various issues. The National Bloc furthermore provides training for students on public speaking and policy-making, preparing them to become student leaders. In a similar way, the National Bloc and LiHaqqi engage the union sector, to develop union leaders.

Groups further report a variety of other types of citizen engagement: the Lebanese Republican Reform Party organises monthly cultural sessions unrelated to politics, to bring people together despite their political differences; Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi keeps direct contact with the families of the 4 August 2020 explosion in Beirut while it works on this file; and the National Bloc has a platform that allows citizens to submit proposals to improve or adapt the party’s political program. Mada, and especially LiHaqqi, are the only groups mentioning the continued importance of engaging the citizen through direct action on the street, such as “demonstrations, sit-ins, [and] strikes.” LiHaqqi continues these initiatives “to confront the regime on political, economic, and societal issues, as well as that of the port explosion.” Finally, a small number of groups report that they are unable to engage the Lebanese citizen well. RELebanon reports that “the Lebanese always need an emotional event,” like the 17 October Revolution, the port explosion, or the recent elections. During these times the group is “close to the people;” at other times, it is not. Jibhet 17 Tishreen also reports that there is

<sup>85</sup> Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 101.

<sup>86</sup> The National Bloc, LiHaqqi, Citizens in a State, Sabaa, Mintishreen, and Jibhet 17 Tishreen.

<sup>87</sup> Kulluna Irada, the National Bloc, Mada, LiHaqqi, and Sabaa.

generally a distance between them and the people, which is “a shortcoming on our part” and from the movement in general.

After years of a growing change movement’s engagement with the Lebanese citizen, it is useful to ask to what extent the Lebanese citizen desires political change. The recent and unexpected electoral victory for the change movement would indicate that a significant minority is indeed in favour of change, and ready to vote for the movement. This is especially so when comparing the 13 MPs landed by groups from the narrow change movement with the single MP that was landed in the 2018 elections. Furthermore, the percentage of votes obtained by narrow lists doubled from 4.5% in 2018 to 9.2% in 2022.<sup>88</sup> However, some context qualifies this positive picture. Looking at the seats obtained by the 13, and by which parties these were occupied before, one notices that 6 of the 13 seats were formerly held by Hariri’s Future Movement.<sup>89</sup> The former occupants of the remaining 7 seats are uniformly divided among a number of other traditional parties. The fact that Hariri decided not to run in these elections with his party therefore turned out to be highly advantageous for the change movement, as it disproportionally conquered seats from Hariri’s party. For many voters, the absence of their only viable sectarian option may have opened the way to voting for change. It is unclear how many of these voters would have voted for change, and consequently how many MPs the movement would have obtained, had Hariri decided to run for elections. There are strong dynamics that push voters to vote for their sectarian representative: habit, financial incentives, and a commitment to sect, region, and family.<sup>90</sup> The apparent greater willingness of the Lebanese citizen to vote for change may therefore to an extent be an illusion attributable to a happy coincidence.

In addition, the Lebanese diaspora voted for change in far greater proportion than Lebanese residents in several districts, suggesting that those who live in the country are less open to the change movement.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, many Lebanese did not vote in the recent elections, making it harder to assess the Lebanese’s attitude towards the change movement through electoral data. Indeed, Nahwal Watan’s surveys suggested that a significant section of the Lebanese change voter would stay at home on election day in the case of “mixed” change lists. This would suggest that there might yet be more willingness to change among the Lebanese than is apparent.

<sup>88</sup> The 2018 lists were classified as such if in the following report they were listed as “Independent”, “Civil Society”, or “Kulluna Watani”, and did not include traditional parties: European Union Election Observation Mission, “European Union Election Observation Mission to the Republic of Lebanon 2018,” 2018. The 2022 electoral lists were classified as narrow according to the criteria laid out above. Note that this count is rather conservative, as it does not count votes for narrow candidates on mixed lists, such as of the 5 MPs emerging from such lists. However, due to the lack of a dataset for the 2018 elections with candidates’ affiliation, comparing the narrow lists is the best, although a conservative, approximation.

<sup>89</sup> In North 2, Ramy Finge obtained a Sunni seat from among 7 Sunni seats, 5 of which were previously held by the Future Movement, 1 by Azm, and 1 by the Arab Liberation Party. For the sake of simplicity, we assume he obtained the Future Movement seat, although to be exact one should say he obtained 5/7th of a Future Movement seat.

<sup>90</sup> Connor Kanso, “Path Dependence: Why Voters Turn to Traditional Parties over Independents in Lebanon’s Election,” 2022, <https://www.thinktriangle.net/path-dependence-why-voters-turn-to-traditional-parties/>.

<sup>91</sup> Salah Hijazi, “How the Lebanese Diaspora Voted in Constituencies Where It Carries the Most Weight,” L’Orient-Le Jour, 2022, <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1300590/how-the-lebanese-diaspora-voted-in-constituencies-where-it-carries-the-most-weight.html>; “قراءة في نتائج الانتخابات النيابية-2022-دائرة الجنوب الثالثة,” Information International Monthly Magazine, 2022, [https://monthlymagazine.com/ar-article-desc\\_5173\\_](https://monthlymagazine.com/ar-article-desc_5173_) دائرة الجنوب الثالثة, “قراءة في نتائج الانتخابات النيابية-2022-دائرة الجنوب الثالثة,” Information International Monthly Magazine, 2022, [https://monthlymagazine.com/ar-article-desc\\_5171\\_](https://monthlymagazine.com/ar-article-desc_5171_) دائرة الشمال الثالثة, “قراءة في نتائج الانتخابات النيابية-2022-دائرة الشمال الثالثة,” Information International Monthly Magazine, 2022, [https://monthlymagazine.com/ar-article-desc\\_5171\\_](https://monthlymagazine.com/ar-article-desc_5171_) دائرة الشمال الثالثة.

Thus, although the change movement actively engages the Lebanese citizen, mainly through activities that have to do with elections, awareness raising and street protests, and has made significant electoral gains, it is unclear to what extent the Lebanese citizen is on board with the movement. Incomplete data make such an assessment partial guesswork.

#### 4.7. Gender

*Key takeaways: Although a record number of female candidates ran in the recent elections, the Lebanese political landscape is still far from gender equal, with only 11.3% of electoral candidates and 6.8% of MPs female. Opposition groups considered controversial within the change movement fielded significantly more female candidates (16.9%) but landed no female MPs. The narrow movement proved most gender equal, although it is still far from full equality, with its 25% of female candidates and 30.8% of female MPs. Furthermore, women on narrow movement lists obtained almost twice the number of votes as their counterparts on lists emerging from controversial groups. Moreover, change groups report 46.5% women in leadership on average, although interviewees and survey respondents in this research were only about 20% female, suggesting focal points in leadership are still much more male-dominated. Finally, survey respondents ranked women's rights second only to corruption as the most important rights issue to tackle.*

Despite Lebanese women having gained suffrage in 1953, only 17 women have served in parliament between then and the most recent elections.<sup>92</sup> In these elections, 118 women out of a total of 1,043 candidates ran for a seat, the highest number ever, representing a 37% increase compared to the 2018 elections. However, only 8 women acceded to parliament. It appears therefore that women are still mostly a token presence, as only 11.3% of the candidates were female and only 6.25% of female candidates were successful in obtaining a seat. Indeed, female candidates were about half as likely to accede to parliament than their male counterparts (8 MPs out of 118 female candidates, or 6.8% vs. 120 MPs out of 925 male candidates, or 13%). These results stand in sharp contrast to the pre-elections survey carried out by women-rights organisation Abaad, in which 84% of voters indicated that a candidate's gender did not affect their choice, while 89% indicated they were likely to vote for a female candidate.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Lynn Mounzer, "The Smallest of Silver Linings In Lebanon's Elections: Women Candidates," Lebanon Ideas Forum, 2022, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/smallest-silver-linings-lebanons-elections-women-candidates>.

<sup>93</sup> Abaad and The United Nations Democracy Fund, "National Survey Highlighting the Choices of Voters and Candidates in Lebanon and Their Attitudes towards the Political Participation of Women in the Elections," 2022, <https://www.abaadmena.org/documents/ebook.1651752982.pdf>.

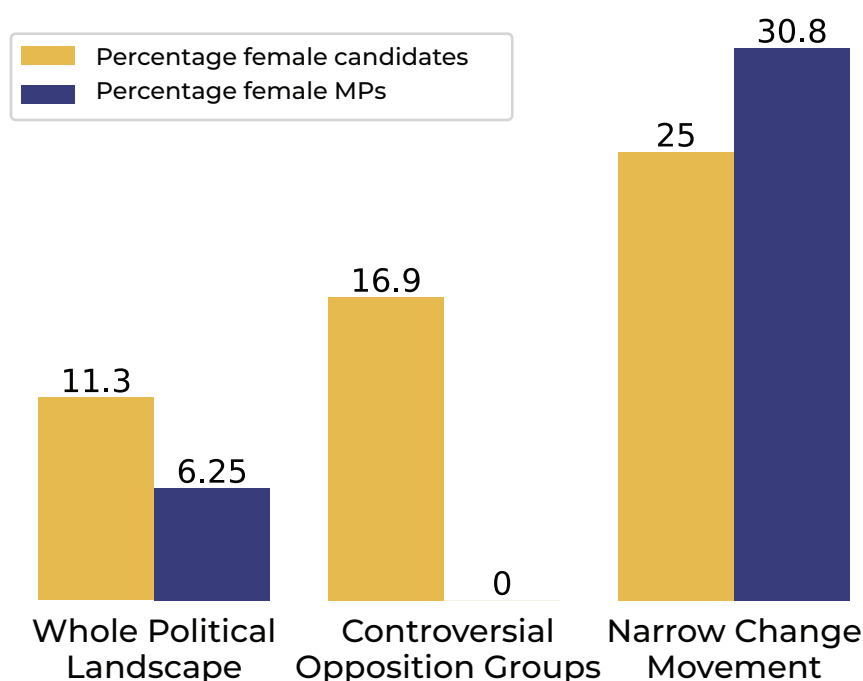


Figure 12: Female participation in the recent parliamentary elections. This figure compares the fractions of female candidates (darker color) and MPs (lighter color) in the Lebanese political landscape in general, among controversial opposition groups, and in the narrow movement.

Considering the broader change movement, including both emerging groups (the “narrow” movement), as well as opposition groups considered controversial within the change movement, the picture is slightly better. 23.5% of its candidates were female, and 13.8% of its MPs. However, “narrow” and “mixed” lists fielded more female candidates than “controversial” lists (respectively 25%, 25.8%, and 16.9%).<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, women received on average only 42.5% of the number of votes men received on “controversial” lists, while that figure nearly doubles to 74.8% and 76.4% for “narrow” and “mixed” lists. Finally, 4 out of 13 of the narrow movement’s MPs are female (30.8%), while none of the 16 MPs from controversial opposition groups are female (0%). These various findings suggest that women are far less of a token presence in the narrow movement than among controversial opposition groups, let alone in the general Lebanese political landscape.<sup>95</sup> In the narrow movement, female candidates appear to have been taken more seriously both by their groups, who gave them places on their lists with a good chance of obtaining a parliamentary seat, as well as by the change voters, who gave these women their confidence.

That the change movement cares about gender equality is further emphasised by the surveys conducted, which indicate that within the movement, leadership is on average 46.5% female. While this number is based on the groups’ self-reported data, and not on an objective count, it accords well with a previous study that found 41.6% women among leadership in a

<sup>94</sup> We are only counting among the 36 lists on which we were able to identify the political allegiance of at least one candidate, in order to classify the list as belonging to the narrow movement or to controversial groups. The figure of 23.3% female candidates in the earlier paragraph is based on the 51 change lists, 15 of which we were unable to identify as either narrow or controversial.

<sup>95</sup> Note for example how women received far less airtime in the lead up to the elections. Maharat and UNESCO, “The Electoral Media Performance During the Parliamentary Elections,” 2022; The Policy Initiative, “2022 Parliamentary Elections: Media Watch (I),” 2022, [https://twitter.com/TPI\\_Lebanon/status/1519323083462565888](https://twitter.com/TPI_Lebanon/status/1519323083462565888).

selection of groups from the movement.<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, survey respondents and interviewees, mostly members of the change movement's leadership, were only 19% and 20% female respectively, less than half of the reported percentage of women in leadership.<sup>97</sup> This may indicate that while leadership in general is close to gender equal, focal points in leadership are not as much.

When asked to rank rights issues according to their group's priorities, survey respondents ranked women's rights on average second only to the issue of corruption.<sup>98</sup> Taqaddom, LiHaqqi, and the 10452 Party specifically mentioned how women currently lack the right to pass on their Lebanese citizenship to their children, which they seek to amend. Furthermore, Shamaluna, Taharrar, and Tahalof Watani complained that women are often prevented from running in the elections, as, according to the latter group, "in the villages, women are subjected to terrible pressure from their family and society." Tahalof Watani therefore proposes to put gender quotas in place: 30% of the electoral seats pre-allocated for women, and an equal amount for men. "If there is a quota allocated only to women, society's perspective will gradually change because men cannot compete for these seats in the first place, which facilitates women's access to society, and people will get used to it with time." On this subject, Taharrar prefers not to "open a discussion on the issue of feminist inclusion and then have conservatives and sheikhs confront us without a result in the end." Their approach is rather to "avoid this discussion, nominate, and adopt women, and let the people who embrace us be our defence. We should not start mock fights." Furthermore, the group acknowledges they truly need women in the municipalities, and not merely for the sake of freedom or women's rights: "if we manage [to elect women in all municipalities] no one will be able to stand in our way." The 10452 Party, founded to be an all-women party, works for the protection of women against domestic violence and has proposed a bill to ensure said protection. In fact, the party has been working for women in politics since 2013 along with groups such as 50-50 and Women in Front, and various embassies. However, "for all the workshops that were held on these issues ..., they abandoned us in the middle of the road," says the party, as these groups reneged on their various promises, which "raised big question marks." Finally, the Green Party who have a high ratio of women in leadership (70%) seek to foster such female leadership among its youth as well; Taqaddom desires to adopt all projects submitted by women's groups in their pursuit of full rights for female citizens; and the National Bloc provides training to prepare women for public work.

<sup>96</sup> The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 8.

<sup>97</sup> Unfortunately, we did not have the luxury to push for more female respondents and interviewees, as with many groups we were lucky to have any respondents at all.

<sup>98</sup> Women's citizenship rights were found to be the most agreed upon issue among a number of change groups in an older study. The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 19.



## 5. Appendix 1: Groups with Members in Parliament

The following groups landed one or two MPs during the recent parliamentary elections. The names of their MPs are indicated below the group.<sup>99</sup>

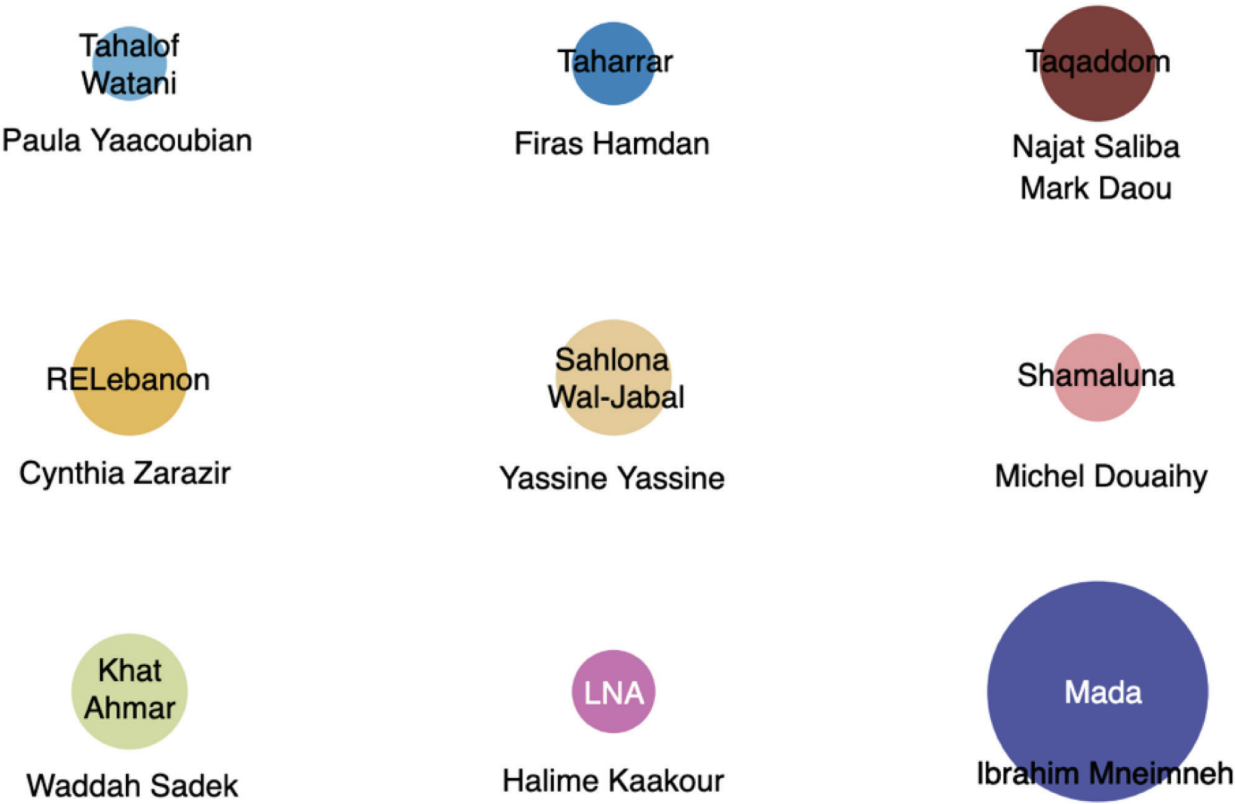


Figure 13: Change groups that landed an MP.

## 6. Appendix 2: Purists and Pragmatists

The following two figures display which groups in the movement are considered purist (Figure 9) and which pragmatist (Figure 10).<sup>100</sup> This distinction does not hinge so much on whether a group is generally willing to collaborate with groups that are considered controversial, as on a willingness to collaborate with controversial right-wing groups, such as the Kataeb and the Independence Movement, see Section 4.3.

<sup>99</sup> The remaining three change MPs (Elias Jarade, Melhem Khalaf and Ramy Finge) are independents, although the former is considered affiliated to the Communist Party.  
<sup>100</sup> We were able to classify 20 out of the 30 groups in this survey.

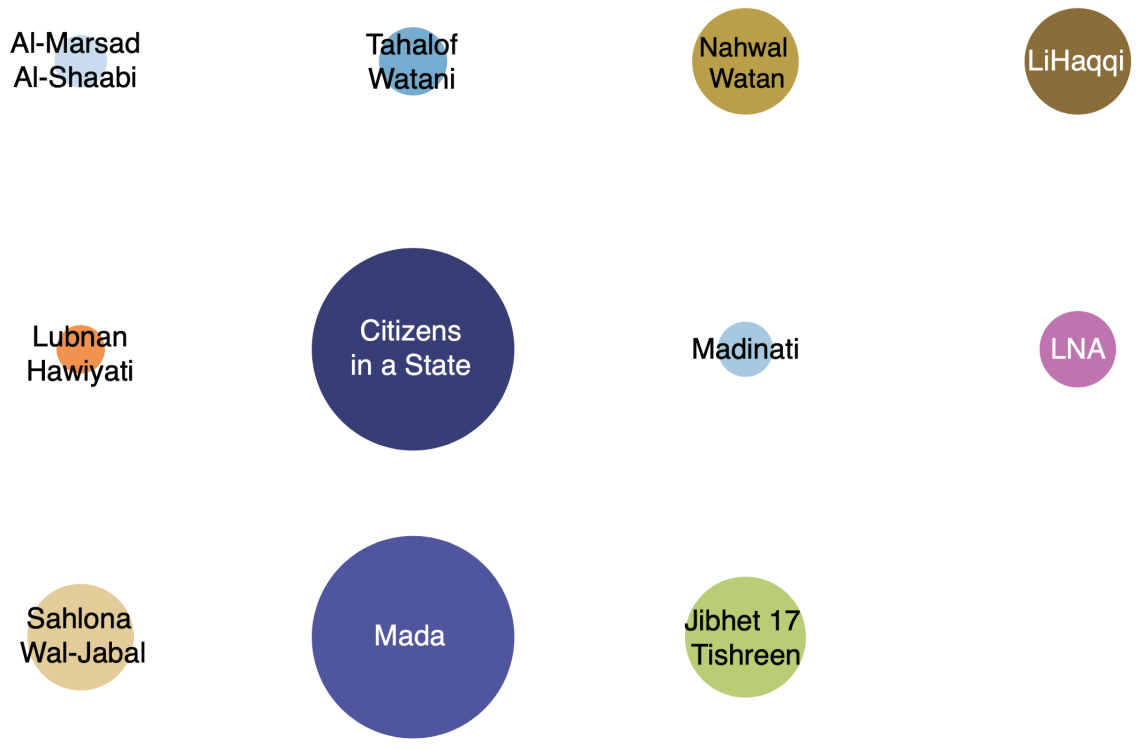


Figure 14: Purists



Figure 15: Pragmatists

## 7. Appendix 3: A “Who’s Who” of the Movement

This section presents each group individually through the collected quantitative data and a brief narrative summarising some of the qualitative data. We note where the data differs with that obtained from other sources, or where there existed significant discrepancies between survey respondents and/or interviewees from the same group. Minor discrepancies are resolved by averaging numbers or merging numerical ranges.<sup>101</sup> Where we lack data due to incomplete surveys, we indicate from which source we have supplemented the data. Finally, for each group, we indicate a number of other groups, if any, that the group has great affinity with, based on the policy and relationship data.<sup>102</sup>

### 7.1. Hezb Al-10452 Al-Siyasi (The 10452 Political Party)

The 10452 Party was conceived in 2014 and intended to be the first women-only political party in the Arab world, although today its leadership is reportedly split perfectly between men and women. While the party’s activities are currently confined to the North of the country, its name (referring to the size of Lebanon in square kilometre) implies national ambitions. Besides women’s rights, the party’s main priorities are constitutional, judicial and economic. The party seeks to build a free and productive economy freed from progressive taxes, with a strong labour market for “economic players to pump money so that we can solve the crisis.” Like most groups, the 10452 Party has financial challenges: “the elections proved that money is the basis of the electoral process, and we, as an emerging party, do not have this luxury. When there is money, everything is solved.” Therefore, the party frankly acknowledges that they seek for foreign parties to adopt and strengthen them, which is their main action priority in the coming months, besides continuing their activism.

Arabic name: حزب الـ10452 السياسي

Members: 20

Volunteers: 500

Headed by: Roula Mourad

Funding sources: No Data.

Leadership Gender Ratio: 50%

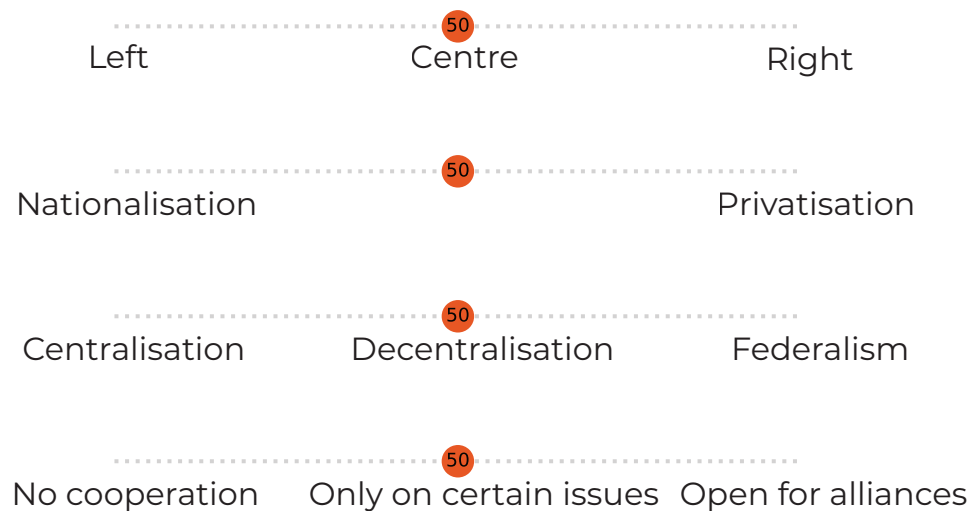
Active in: North Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

Great affinity with: /

<sup>101</sup> For example, one respondent may claim the group’s membership ranges between 51-100, while another selected 101-500. This gets aggregated into 51-500.

<sup>102</sup> The calculation averages the policy and relational distances calculated for earlier sections in the report.



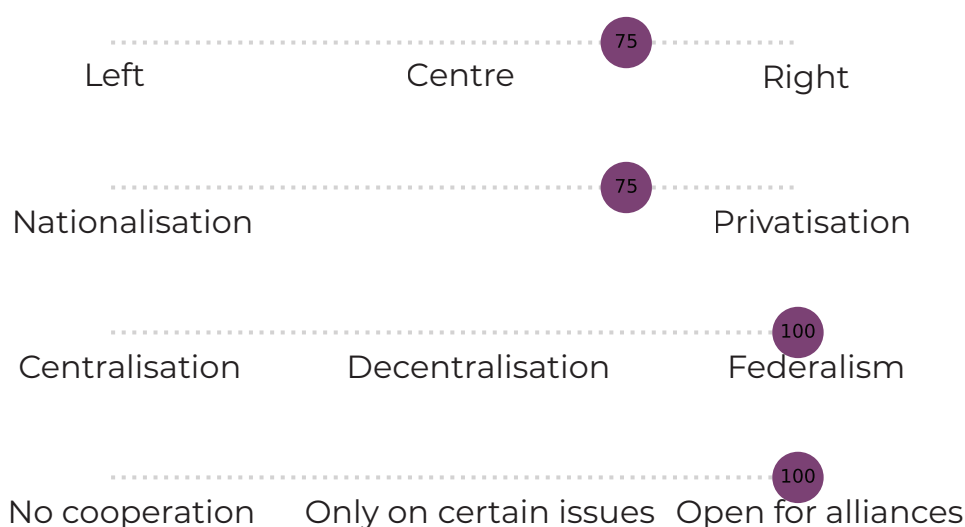
Website: <https://www.facebook.com/10452party>

## 7.2. ACT (Achieve Change Today)

ACT brings together a significant number of leaders from the private sector, many of them businessmen and women. ACT is unique within the change movement for placing itself firmly on the right politically and economically, which fits their focus on the private sector. However, the group does not pursue extreme privatisation, but rather seeks healthy partnership between the public and private sectors.<sup>103</sup> The group distinguishes itself further within the movement for favouring federalism rather than decentralisation, and for being open to cooperation and alliances with traditional parties, which was seen in the recent elections where ACT's head Samir Saliba ran on a list with members of the Kataeb. ACT's main priorities are protecting and preserving the private sector, decentralisation (federalism), dealing with corruption, and developing private initiatives to deal with pertinent issues, such as water, electricity, and waste. The greatest challenge to ACT's work is a lack of time and money, which feed into each other, as today people need to work more to maintain the same level of income, and therefore have less time and money to contribute to the group's work. In the future, ACT seeks to further put into practice its openness to traditional parties by seeking to play a role in bringing together members of the traditional opposition parties and members of the new change groups.

<sup>103</sup> For example, ACT seeks to facilitate the establishment of private electricity companies, since the state clearly fails to provide electricity through its national company; however, ACT notes that this demands collaboration between public and private instances.

Arabic name: /  
 Members: 51-100  
 Volunteers: 1000+  
 Headed by: Samir Saliba  
 Funding sources: Member contributions.<sup>104</sup>  
 Leadership Gender Ratio: 40%  
 Active in: Beirut, Kesrwan-Jbeil, Mount Lebanon  
 Members in Parliament: /  
 Purist/Pragmatist: Pragmatist<sup>105</sup>  
 Great affinity with: /



Website: Website: <http://actlebanon.com/><sup>106</sup>; <https://www.facebook.com/ACTsForLebanon>

### 7.3. Hezb Al-Akhdar (Green Party)

Among the older change parties, established in 2000, the Green Party is obviously characterised by its pursuit of an environmentalist agenda. It further distinguishes itself by a focus on women's rights, which can be practically seen in the high ratio of women in the party's leadership. Although generally centrist, the party leans more than most change groups towards privatisation economically. The group is concerned with most salient issues that the change movement prioritises: abolishing sectarianism, administrative decentralisation, rooting out corruption, moving towards "a balanced, green, productive economy," and dealing with the issue of sovereignty and weapons. However, like most groups, the party is affected by the financial situation, and is working to secure funding to raise its employees' wages.

<sup>104</sup> "We do not receive donations from anyone. Until today, we collect funding from the group as people to carry out all our steps, from media, to events on the ground, to campaigns... and we believe in this."

<sup>105</sup> Founded by Samir Saliba, co-founder of pragmatist Khat Ahmar; reports to have good relationships with the Lebanese Opposition Forces, of which Khat Ahmar is a part; is open to alliances with traditional parties.

<sup>106</sup> Under construction at the time of writing.



Arabic name: حزب الأخضر

Members: 51-100

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: Fadi Abi Allam

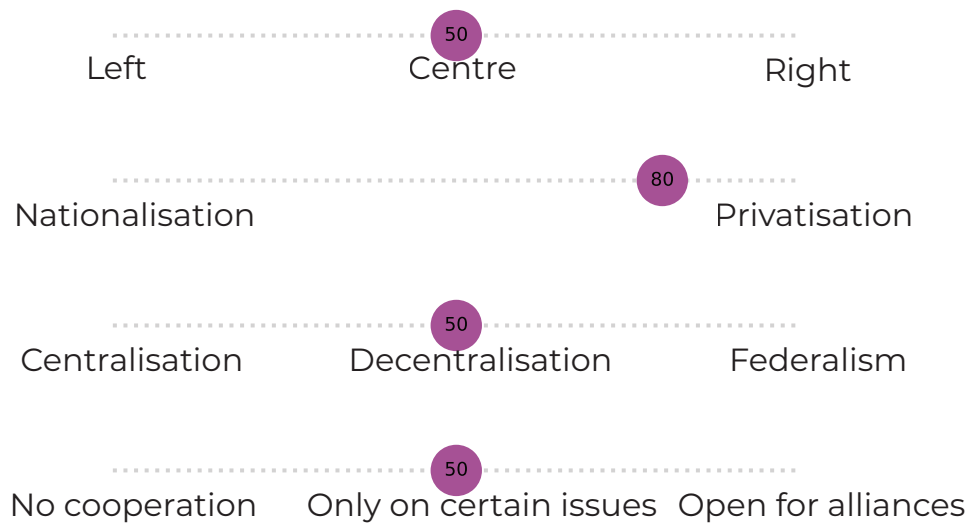
Funding sources: Member contributions and project-specific funding sources.

Leadership Gender Ratio: 70%

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

Great affinity with: Tawlet Al-Hiwar



Website: <https://greenpartylebanon.org>

#### 7.4. Hezb Al-Islah Al-Jamhoury Al-Lubnany (Lebanese Republican Reform Party)

Officially registered since 2008, the Lebanese Republican Reform Party is a centrist party seeking administrative decentralisation. It is willing to cooperate with traditional parties on certain issues in pursuit of its main priorities: judicial independence, social security, refugees, and the development of a book on Lebanon's bloody recent history. However, a lack of funding is a challenge to the production and distribution of this book, while the party's limited capabilities prevented it from adopting electoral candidates and funding an electoral campaign. By the 2026 elections, however, the party aims to have its members run under its own name.

Arabic name: حزب الإصلاح الجمهوري

Members: 51-100

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: Sheikh Charles C. Chidiac

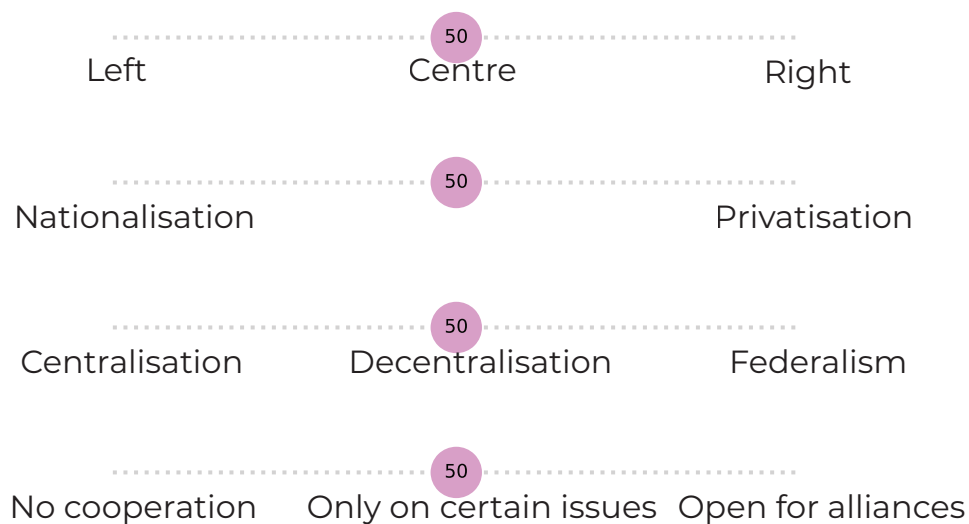
Funding sources: Member contributions.<sup>107</sup>

Leadership Gender Ratio: 17%

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

Great affinity with: /



Website: <https://lbRepublican.org/>

### 7.5. Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala (The Upper Matn Movement)

One of Tahalof Watani's founding members, and a member until today, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala as a group is most active in Mount Lebanon, as its name indicates. Left-of-centre politically and economically, the group seeks a desectarianised and decentralised state. In this pursuit, the movement is open to cooperation with traditional parties on specific issues. Its priorities are "the basic things of life for the people," which are severely lacking today, followed by the independence of the judiciary, and finally the issue of weapons not in the hands of the army. The group currently does not have a clear plan on going forward, despite having grown significantly over the elections, as the rising cost of living is preventing the group from meeting. Furthermore, the new members are in need of "training and preparation for the upcoming elections."

<sup>107</sup> "Partisans undertake commercial projects, the proceeds of which go entirely to the party, and they are sufficient, allowing us to be independent of external funding."

Arabic name: **حراك الفتن الأعلى**

Members: 51-100

Volunteers: 101-500

Headed by: Collective leadership

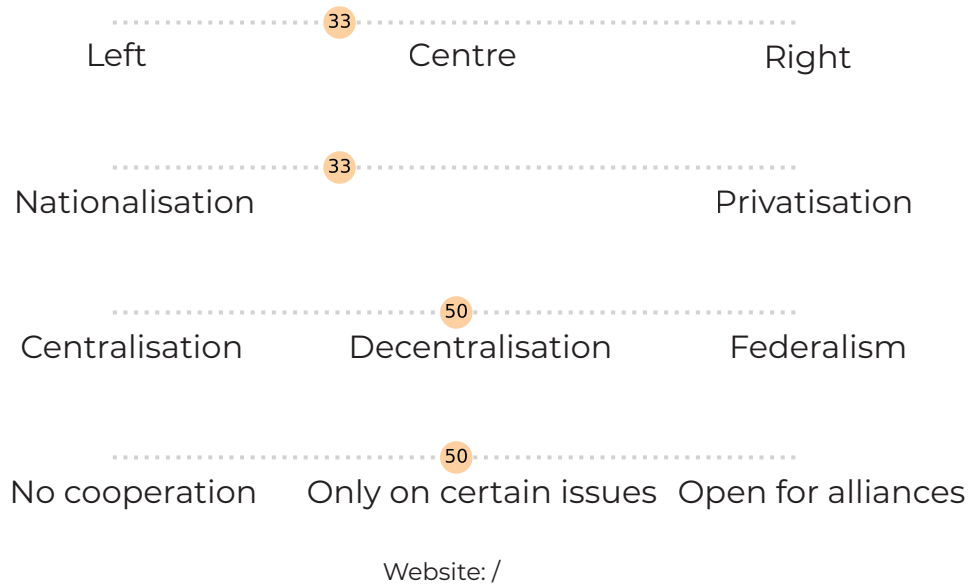
Funding sources: Member contributions.

Leadership Gender Ratio: 13%

Active in: Mount Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

Great affinity with: Tahalof Watani, LNA, LiHaqqi



## 7.6. Jibhet 17 Tishreen (17 October Front)

This firmly centrist group is one of the few groups in our interviews to explicitly call for a secular state and to self-identify as “secularist.” They prioritise the issue of Hezbollah, the independence of the judiciary, the depositors’ money and the economic situation in general. The group expects that the latter issue will lead to hunger and “a violent revolution,” during which “we must be present to direct this anger towards the officials, their homes and their interests, and not against the bank manager, the supermarket owner, the bakery, and anyone who owns the money.” As the group refuses money from any embassy or country, funding is a challenge in its work.

Arabic name: **جبهة 17 تشرين**

Members: 101-500

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: No Data

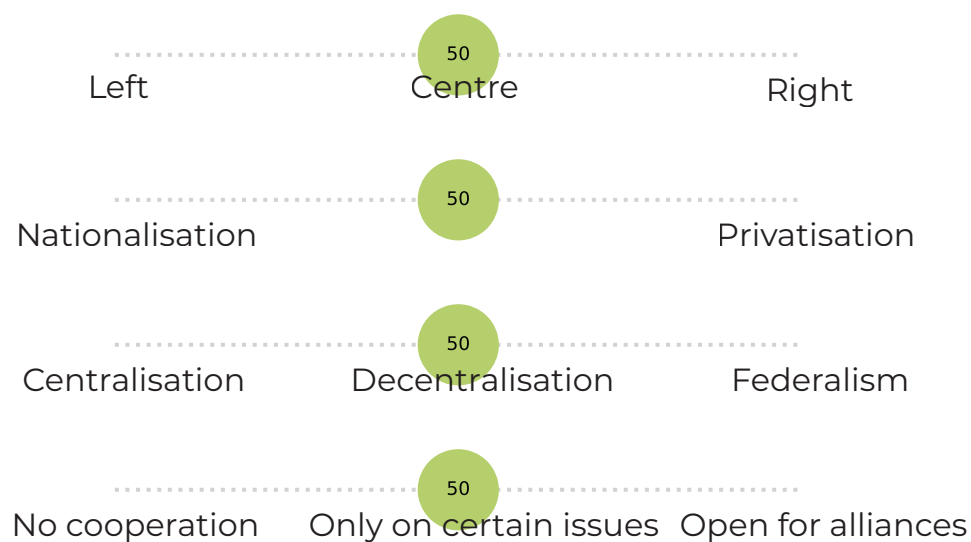
Funding sources: No Data

Leadership Gender Ratio: 40%

Active in: No Data

Members in Parliament: /

Great affinity with: Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, Tahalof Watani



Website: <https://www.facebook.com/Jabhat17Oct/><sup>108</sup>

### 7.7. Al-Kitle Al-Wataniyye (The National Bloc)

Founded in 1946, the National Bloc has long been part of the traditional political landscape in Lebanon. However, in 2019, the party reinvented itself after 10 years of inactivity, and democratised its leadership as the Eddé family left after dominating the party since its inception. Today, a centrist party with slight economic leanings towards privatisation, the National Bloc calls along with most other change groups for decentralisation and a deconfessionalised, civil state. It does not completely close the door on cooperation with traditional parties on specific issues, although currently “there is no work that unites us.” The National Bloc is furthermore a pragmatist regarding rightist opposition groups, as it ran on a list with the Kataeb in Byblos/Kesserwan. The party’s three main priorities are sectarianism, Hezbollah, and a financial rescue plan, the latter being the most urgent. A shortage in funding and young volunteers, however, is rendering the party’s work more challenging. In the longer term, the National Bloc seeks to bring all groups together into a single national opposition party, in order to overcome the egotism they see among the change movement players.

<sup>108</sup> It is unclear whether this indeed is the group's Facebook page.

Arabic name: الكتلة الوطنية

Members: 501-1000<sup>109</sup>

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: Secretary General Pierre Issa

Funding sources: Gifts from residents of Lebanon and Lebanese expatriates.<sup>110</sup>

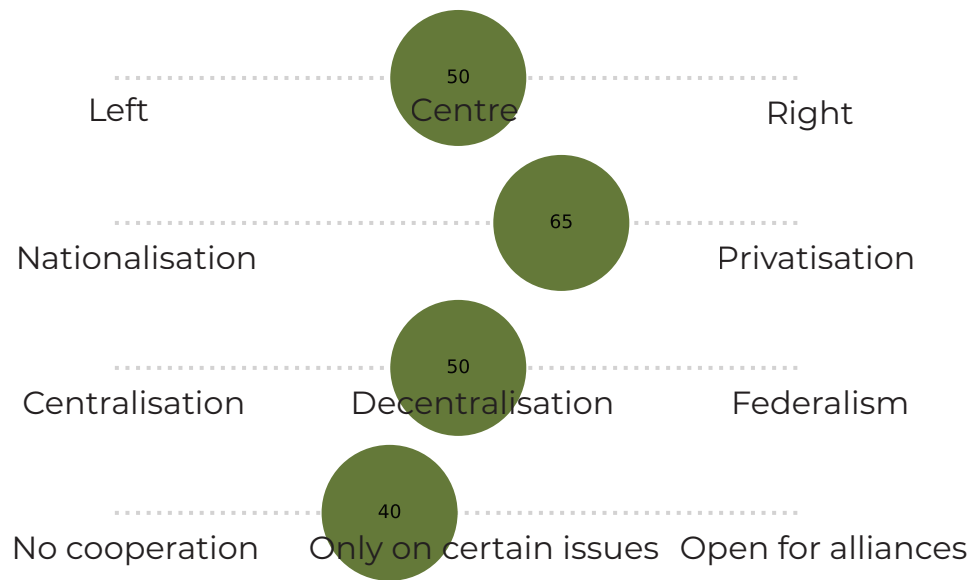
Leadership Gender Ratio: 40%<sup>111</sup>

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

Purist/Pragmatist: Pragmatist<sup>112</sup>

Great affinity with: Taqaddom, Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, Khat Ahmar, Shamaluna, RELebanon, Mintishreen



Website: <https://www.nationalbloc.org/>

## 7.8. Khat Ahmar (Red Line)

Founded in 2020, following the 17 October Revolution of the previous year, Khat Ahmar is a centrist group politically and economically, seeking decentralisation and a civil state. It is open to collaborate on a case-by-case basis with traditional parties, mentioning such parties as the Lebanese Forces, the Progressive Socialist Party, Hezbollah and Amal, while the group is a part of the Lebanese Opposition Front along with the Kataeb and the Independence Movement. In the recent elections, the group's leader managed to secure a parliamentary seat on a "narrow" list in Beirut II. Already shortly after the elections, the MP presented a proposal for the abolition of sectarianism, one of the groups priorities along with fighting corruption, accountability regarding the Beirut explosion, and the recovery of depositors' money. While funding is a challenge for the group, it looks forward to the establishment of Amam (Ahead), a new political party it is setting up together with Liqa Tishreen.

<sup>109</sup> Another source puts this at 6,815 members. Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 20.

<sup>110</sup> These are independently audited and vetted. Atlas Assistance, 20.

<sup>111</sup> The same figure as in the summer of 2021, see The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 8.

<sup>112</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 102.



Arabic name: خط احمر

Members: 101-500

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: Waddah Sadek

Funding sources: Member contributions

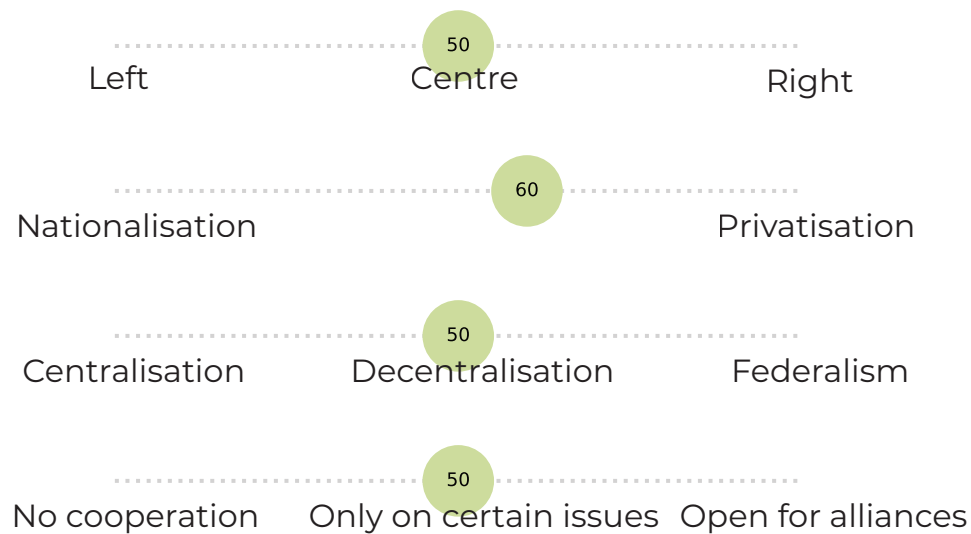
Leadership Gender Ratio: 40%<sup>113</sup>

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: Waddah Sadek

Purist/Pragmatist: Pragmatist<sup>114</sup>

Great affinity with: Taqaddom, National Bloc, Tahalof Watani



Website: <http://anakhatahmar.com/>

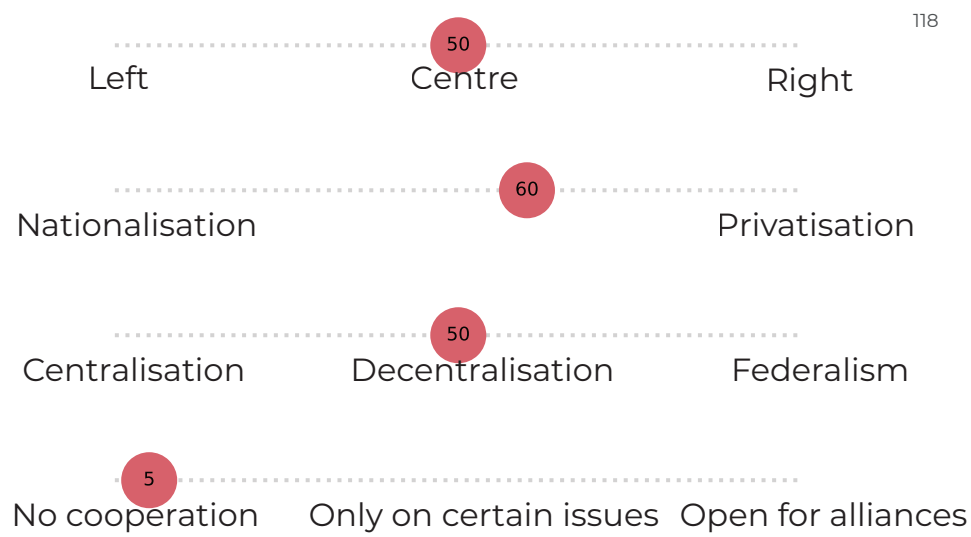
### 7.9. Kulluna Irada (We All Have a Will)

Describing itself as “a facilitator but not a political actor,” this formerly more traditional lobby group switched gears when the 17 October Revolution happened, in order to support the change movement. They provided electoral support for change groups that emerged since 2015 and pushed for unified electoral lists that would include members of controversial elements of the change movement, such as the Kataeb. The three pillars of its vision are “building a new social and economic contract, ... implementing a civil state according to the constitution, ... the indivisible sovereignty of the state, without exception of Hezbollah.” In the next stage, Kulluna Irada will focus on supporting the 13 change MPs, and preparing for the 2026 elections.

<sup>113</sup> Reportedly up from 33% in the summer of 2021, see *The Policy Initiative*, “Lebanon’s Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition,” 8.

<sup>114</sup> Member of the Kataeb’s Lebanese Opposition Front

Arabic name: كلنا إرادة  
Members: 60  
Volunteers: No Data<sup>115</sup>  
Headed by: An executive team running under a board of 15 directors who are elected by the group’s global council.  
Funding sources: Exclusively funded by the members of its global council.  
Leadership Gender Ratio: 80%<sup>116</sup>  
Active in: All of Lebanon  
Members in Parliament: /  
Purist/Pragmatist: Pragmatist <sup>117</sup>  
Great affinity with: /



Website: <https://kulluna-irada.org/>

<sup>115</sup> The survey respondent noted that this category is not relevant to the group.  
<sup>116</sup> This refers to the executive team. The group’s board of directors consists of 4 women out of 13, i.e., 30.8%. In the group’s global council, there are 3 women among 31 members, i.e., 9.8%.  
<sup>117</sup> Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 68.  
<sup>118</sup> Regarding Kulluna Irada’s economic position, the survey respondent did not respond with a number, but commented as follows: “Our organisation is in favour of restoring the role of the state as regulator and investor in key infrastructures in order to boost private investment, which must be the engine of growth. Privatisation and public-private partnerships must be preceded by sectoral reforms with new regulations. We are opposed to any privatisation carried out by the current political system.” Therefore, we assigned an economically centrist position, though leaning towards privatisation: 60. While the survey respondent responded “5” to the question regarding attitude towards traditional parties, meaning “no cooperation”, the pragmatist group’s interviewee had noted that “as a pressure group, we are interested in the presence of the traditional opposition, and we communicate with them at conferences, and we are interested in them adopting these positions. ... A political actor must reach out to everyone with a specific political position, and we are in dialogue with everyone, and it is the content and political orientation that determines the parties we communicate with.” The response to this survey question therefore obviously depends on who is considered as “traditional” and what the word “cooperation” specifically means.

### 7.10. LiHaqqi (For My Right)

LiHaqqi originated in the 2015 protest movement and became an established organisation in 2017 to run in the following year's elections as one of the founding members of Tahalof Watani.<sup>119</sup> A leftist group, leaning economically towards nationalisation and administratively towards a strong form of decentralisation, it pursues a desectarianised, civil state in Lebanon. Furthermore, LiHaqqi is highly purist regarding cooperation with traditional parties, refusing to collaborate not only with those same traditional parties, but also with change groups that are more pragmatic on this issue.<sup>120</sup> The most urgent issue for LiHaqqi is the current economic collapse, which affects food, health, housing and education, with the group urgently calling for a social safety net in the country. Furthermore, it attaches great importance to women's rights and environmental issues. The main challenges LiHaqqi lists are the political immaturity of other groups, who are unclear about their positions and merely want a place at the table, a lack of funding, and its decentralised organisational structure.

Arabic name: **لحقي**

Members: 101-500

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: Decentralised structure of regional "grassroots," though with a general assembly which may revoke decisions made at the grassroots level.

Funding sources: Member contributions, Gifts from private individuals, External funding<sup>121</sup>

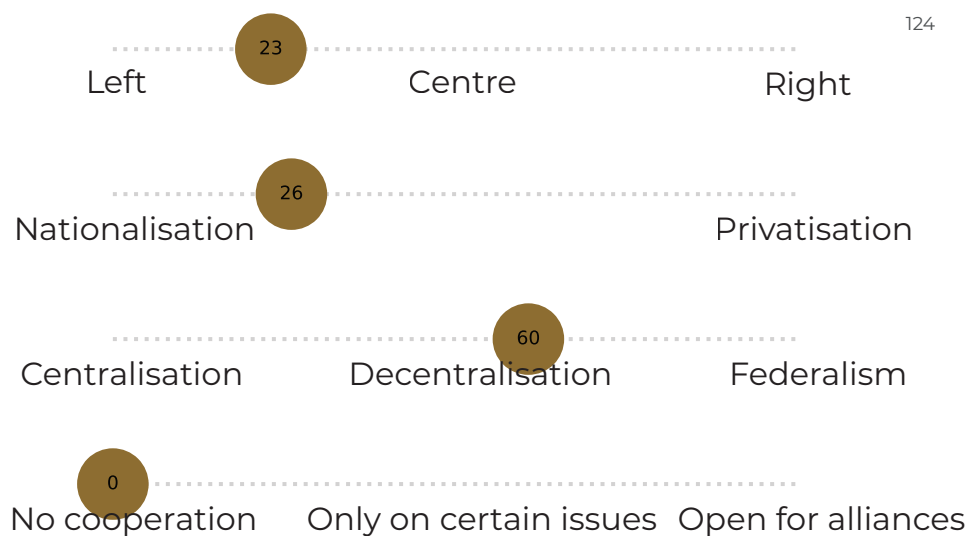
Leadership Gender Ratio: 58%<sup>122</sup>

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

Purist/Pragmatist: Purist<sup>123</sup>

Great affinity with: Mada, Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala



Website: [lihaqqi.org](http://lihaqqi.org)

<sup>119</sup> The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 5.

<sup>120</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 58.

<sup>121</sup> This vague term should be qualified by the following statement by one interviewee: "we reject funding from any party that contradicts or is politically conditioned, or with a party that we do not agree with in politics or that has no clarity in the political process."

<sup>122</sup> Reportedly up from 45% in the summer of 2021, see The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 8.

<sup>123</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 102.

<sup>124</sup> One survey respondent indicated 0 ("Absolutely no cooperation"), the other 68 (somewhere between "cooperation on certain issues" and "open for alliances"). Presumably the latter is a mistake, given that LiHaqqi is known as highly purist, far more so than Tahalof Watani for example. Hence, we adopted the first respondent's response only, as the average (34) would make LiHaqqi less purist than Tahalof Watani (25).

### 7.11. LNA (For Us)

Though only launched as an official political party in September 2021, LNA (alternatively, Lana) has been in the works since the early days of the 17 October Revolution. Being social democrats, the party finds itself left-of-centre, pursuing a financial rescue plan and attempting to secure “an economic and social protection network for the community.” In coordination with their newly elected MP, LNA furthermore pushes for an overhaul of Lebanon’s political system that goes beyond desectarianisation and decentralisation. Because it does not accept external funding, besides what members and friends give,<sup>125</sup> LNA struggles to secure the funds it needs, while its members are not able to work full-time for the party.

Arabic name: **لنا - حزب ديمقراطي اجتماعي**

Members: 51-100<sup>126</sup>

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: A political bureau elected by the general assembly.<sup>127</sup>

Funding sources: Member contributions.<sup>128</sup>

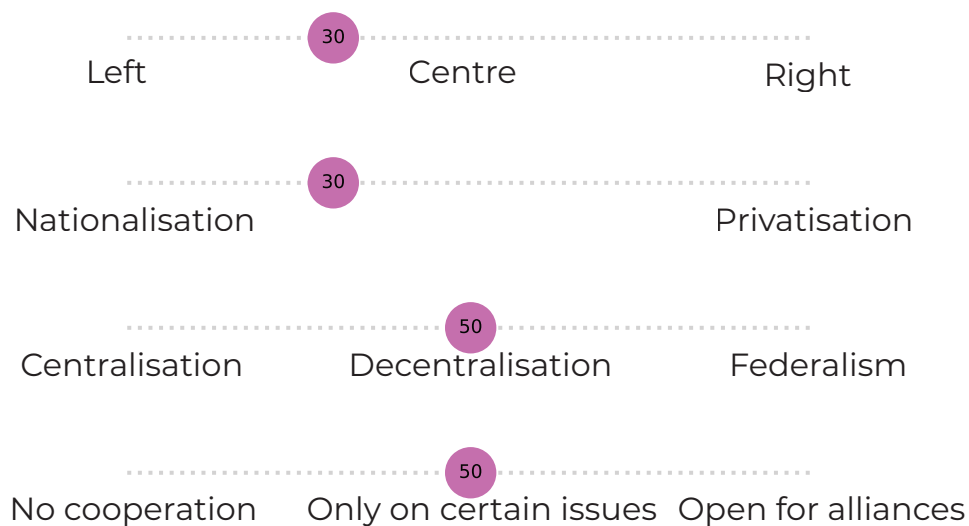
Leadership Gender Ratio: 50%

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: Halima Kaakour

Purist/Pragmatist: Purist<sup>129</sup>

Great affinity with: Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, Taqaddom



Website: <https://lnalebanon.org/>

<sup>125</sup> Atlas Assistance writes that most of LNA's funding comes from local Lebanese donors, although there are also expatriate donors. Donors are vetted and their contributions are capped at 10% of total funding. Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 84.

<sup>126</sup> Atlas reports 150 members for LNA, see Atlas Assistance, 84.

<sup>127</sup> Atlas Assistance, 84.

<sup>128</sup> These are voluntary. Atlas adds that most of LNA's funding comes from local Lebanese donors, although there are also expatriate donors. Donors are vetted and their contributions are capped at 10% of total funding. Atlas Assistance, 84.

<sup>129</sup> Atlas Assistance, 102.

### 7.12. Lubnan Hawiyati (Lebanon My Identity)

Lubnan Hawiyati is a politically and economically centrist group that sees itself “as more of a platform than an organised political group and candidates.” They favour decentralisation and desectarianisation, and are purists regarding the traditional parties, being completely against any cooperation. The group’s current policy priorities are securing the independence of the judiciary, activating oversight institutions by the Anti-Corruption Committee, and involving expatriates more in the change movement. The group’s main challenges are a lack of live, off-line meetings, due to its many expatriate members and the high transportation costs within Lebanon, and a lack of funding, which would otherwise help in supporting candidates, establishing a call centre, and developing the needed software and databases. In the next stage, Lubnan Hawiyati will work on the municipal elections as a candidate platform, and will seek to facilitate unified change lists.

Arabic name: لبنان هويتي

Members: 101-500

Volunteers: 101-500

Headed by: Ziad Akl

Funding sources: Gifts from residents of Lebanon and Lebanese expatriates.

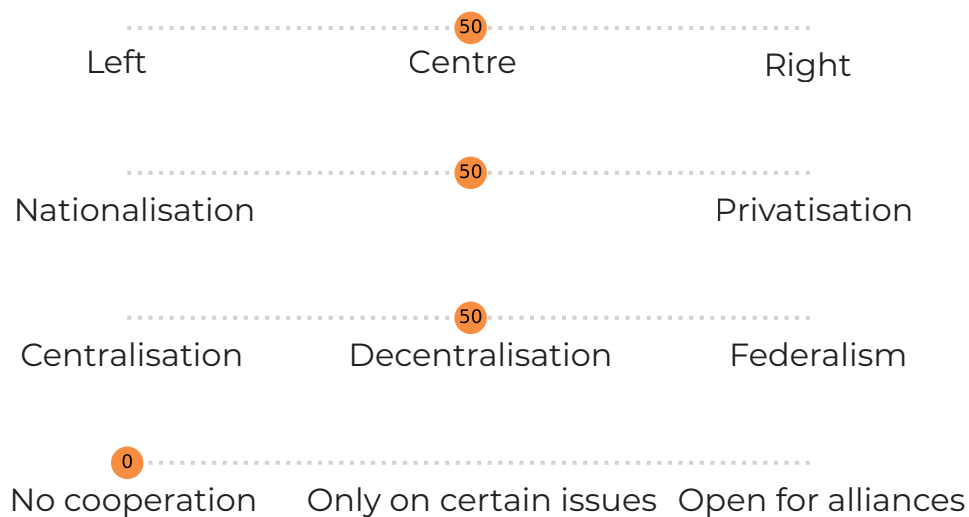
Leadership Gender Ratio: 45%

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

Purist/Pragmatist: Purist<sup>130</sup>

Great affinity with: /



Website: <https://www.facebook.com/loubnanhawiyati>

<sup>130</sup> Lubnan Hawiyati consider “groups that admired sectarian parties as having changed” to obstruct the work of the change movement.



### 7.13. Mada (Extent)

Mada is a youth network and collective of secular university clubs that since 2008 stands for secularism, democracy, and social justice, making Mada a typical leftist group. Like other leftists, Mada is purist and highly averse to cooperation with traditional parties. The group places high priority on social justice, “an issue we are very sensitive to,” besides dealing with the issue of weapons, a civil law code, and the proposed sovereign fund and privatisation of state property. In the elections, Mada partnered with Beirut Tuqawim and saw one of their candidates ascend to Parliament. Hence, Mada will focus now on coordinating with the change MPs, “many of whom are friends of ours,” besides focusing on electoral battles in universities, Mada’s core activity. However, the group confesses being in need of media support in their work.

Arabic name: مدي

Members: 1000+

Volunteers: 1000+<sup>131</sup>

Headed by: Elected board of 5 directors presided over by president Isabelle Peillen

Funding sources: /

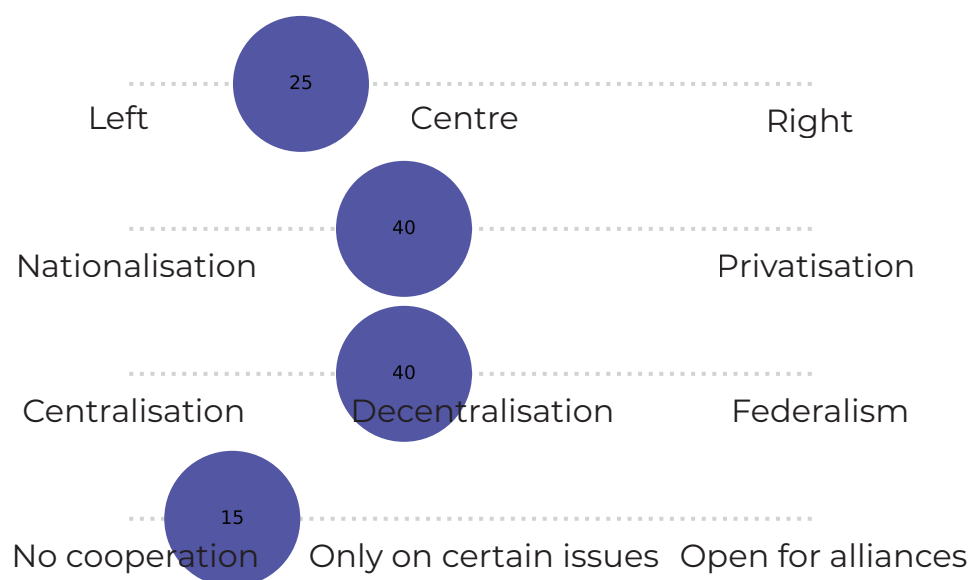
Leadership Gender Ratio: 43% <sup>132</sup>

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: Ibrahim Mneimneh (Beirut Tuqawim)

Purist/Pragmatist: Purist <sup>133</sup>

Greatest affinity with: Taqaddom, LiHaqqi, Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi



Website: <https://mada.org.lb/>

<sup>131</sup> The survey respondent responded “can’t assume.” Given the trend of other groups in the movement, we assumed the group’s volunteer base is not smaller than its member base.

<sup>132</sup> This is the survey respondent’s response. However, the Mada website writes that 4 out of the 5 board members are women.

<sup>133</sup> Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 72.

### 7.14. Madinati (My City)

Emerging from the 2015 You Stink protest movement, Madinati (then Beirut Madinati) was one of the early success stories of the change movement, as it successfully challenged the traditional parties in the 2016 municipal elections in Beirut. Having dropped the regional label late 2021, Madinati went towards the 2022 elections with national ambitions, although with little success as it was forced to run on its own change lists in its Beiruti stronghold due to problems with Tahalof Watani. Firmly centrist, the group shuns traditional parties, although it is only a purist with respect to other opposition groups for pragmatic reasons. As the party seeks to urgently confront the economic situation with a social safety net, it looks further ahead towards the abolishment of sectarianism, the independence of the judiciary, and dealing with Hezbollah's weapons. The group's flat structure impedes efficient decision-making, causing the group to currently reconsider this structure. Funding and the lack of hope among Lebanese are reportedly additional struggles for the group.

Arabic name: **مدينتي**

Members: 51-100

Volunteers: 501-1000

Headed by: Council of citizens elected by the general assembly

Funding sources: Member contributions, Gifts from residents of Lebanon and Lebanese expatriates.

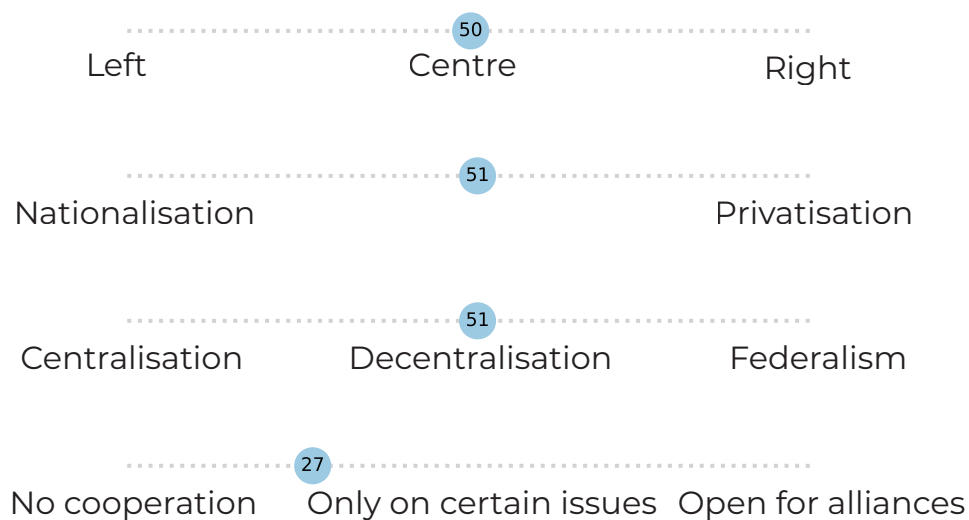
Leadership Gender Ratio: 40%<sup>134</sup>

Active in: Beirut<sup>135</sup>

Members in Parliament: /

Purist/Pragmatist: (Practical) Purist<sup>136</sup>

Greatest affinity with: /



Website: <https://beirutmadinati.com>

<sup>134</sup> Reportedly down from 57% in the summer of 2021, see The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 8.

<sup>135</sup> While the Madinati survey respondent only indicated Beirut, one of the interviewees noted Madinati's minor successes in the parliamentary elections in regions other than Beirut.

<sup>136</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 102.

### 7.15. Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi Li-Mouharabat Al-Fassad (Popular Observatory to Fight Corruption)

Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi has been participating in protests since the anti-sectarian protests in 2011, and has been heavily involved in the subsequent movements of 2015 and 2019. However, it was only officially established in 2018,<sup>137</sup> when it was one of the founding members of Tahalof Watani.<sup>138</sup> The group leans politically left, because of its affinity with the left's conception of social justice, basic rights of the people, and the role of the state. Regarding economic policy, Al-Marsad is centrist, and like most change groups it favours decentralisation of the Lebanese state and seeks the establishment of a civil state. Its attitude towards traditional parties is that of a purist, as it is disinclined to cooperate even on specific policy issues. Finally, the group prioritises the fight against corruption, as its name indicates, women's rights, the issue of weaponry not held by the state, and the border issue. The main challenge for Al-Marsad is financial, as it does not have a fixed source of income, but depends on donations from members and other "change" people. Given the worsening economic situation, this greatly affects the group's work. For the coming stage, Al-Marsad is seeking to reorganise itself internally, as it seeks to establish a new coordinating body and a membership strengthened with new relationships initiated over the parliamentary elections.

Arabic name: المرصد الشعبي لمحاربة الفساد

Members: 51-500

Volunteers: 101-1000

Headed by: A coordinating body elected by the general assembly

Funding sources: Member contributions, Gifts from Lebanese residents (only "change" persons)

Leadership Gender Ratio: 45%<sup>139</sup>

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

Purist/pragmatist: Purist<sup>140</sup>

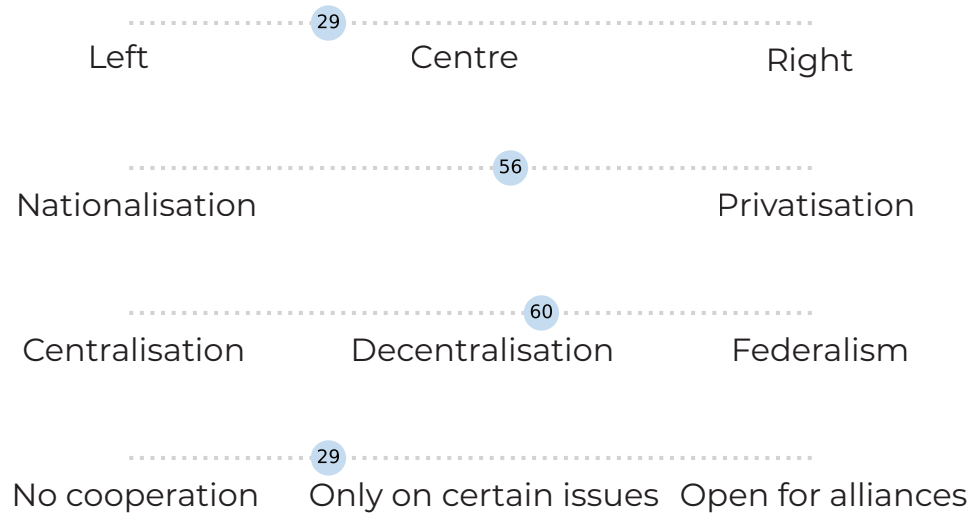
Greatest affinity with: National Bloc, Mada, Jibhet 17 Tishreen, LNA, LiHaqqi, Tahalof Watani

<sup>137</sup> The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 5.

<sup>138</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 59.

<sup>139</sup> Reportedly up from 29% in the summer of 2021, see The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 8.

<sup>140</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 82.



Website: <https://www.facebook.com/Marsadshaabi>

### 7.16. Mintishreen (Wordplay: From October/Spread Out)

Mintishreen progressively took shape as 17 October activists first became a loose protest movement, and later, after the Beirut blast in August 2020, a more consolidated political movement. After co-signing the April 13th agreement with other centrist change groups, Mintishreen drifted towards other pragmatists when the coalition became divided over collaboration with opposition parties such as the Kataeb. However, in the end, Mintishreen did not run for elections due to outside pressure and tensions within the movement. The group inclines against cooperation with traditional parties as it seeks to protect society in the face of the current crippling economic crisis. Further priorities for the group are the combat against corruption, decentralisation, and the issue of sovereignty. The main challenge facing Mintishreen is, like for most groups, a lack of funds, besides the kind of pressure campaigns carried out against them that stopped its candidates from running for elections. Securing funding, therefore, is one of the more important next steps to take, says the group.

Arabic name: **منتشرين**

Members: 101-500

Volunteers: 101-500

Headed by: An elected executive council currently headed by Hussein Ashi

Funding sources: Member contributions.<sup>141</sup>

Leadership Gender Ratio: 60%<sup>142</sup>

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

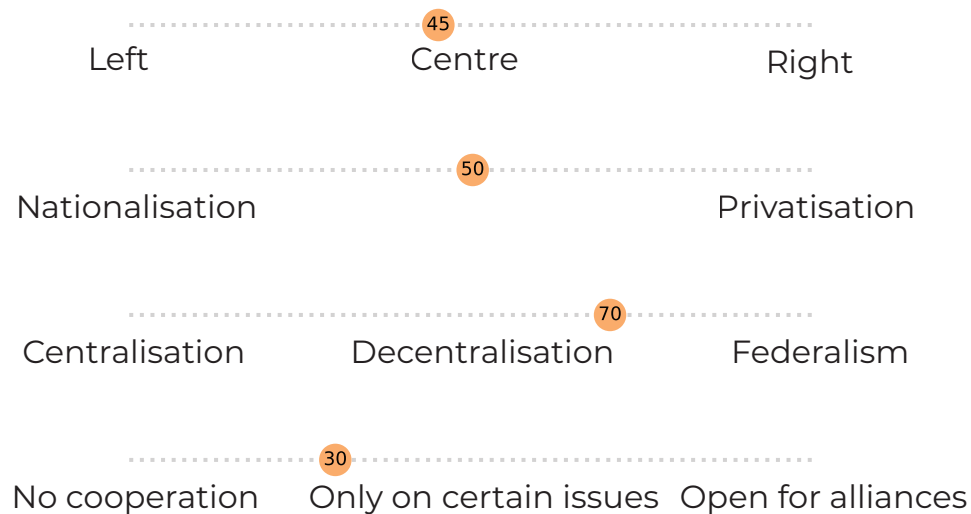
Purist/Pragmatist: Pragmatist<sup>143</sup>

Greatest affinity with: Taqaddom, National Bloc, Tahalof Watani

<sup>141</sup> Supposedly supplemented by small donations, see Atlas Assistance, 79.

<sup>142</sup> The same figure as in the summer of 2021, see The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 8.

<sup>143</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 102.



Website: <https://www.minteshreen.com/>

### 7.17. Al-Mu'tamar Al-Watani Lil-Inkaz (National Rescue Congress)

The National Rescue Congress (NRC) aims to be a platform for the change movement to facilitate dialogue between its various groups, “a mini council for the leaders of the revolution.” A first congress meeting was held on 25 October 2020, and produced a number of recommendations for the sake of saving Lebanon through a united front. As it emerged from the 17 October revolution, the NRC stands strongly with the “all of them means all of them,” which is reflected in their complete unwillingness to cooperate with traditional parties. Although the group identifies as politically centrist, it is at the extreme right of the economic spectrum. As most groups, the NRC favours decentralisation and the establishment of a civil state. The group’s main priorities revolve around the various issues pertaining to the current breakdown of living conditions in Lebanon. Further priorities concern financial and banking issues,<sup>144</sup> the criminal investigation into the Beirut blast, and the independence of the judiciary.

Arabic name: المؤتمر الوطني للإنقاذ

Members: 501-1000

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: Ziad Bitar

Funding sources: Member contributions.

Leadership Gender Ratio: 50%

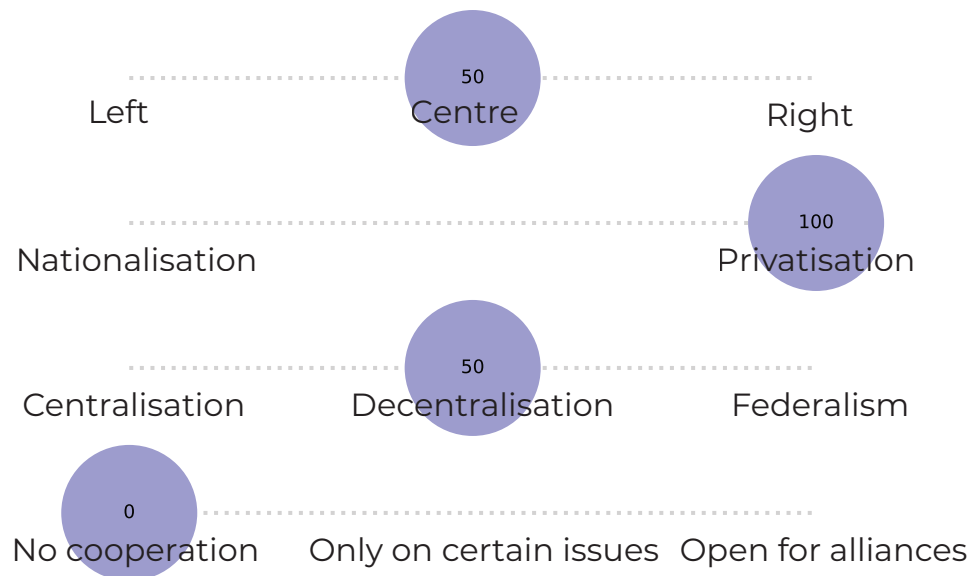
Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

Greatest affinity with: /

<sup>144</sup> “We are concerned with several things, including the rights of depositors, which is one of the most important points, in addition to the recovery of looted funds, because the rights of depositors are indirectly linked to them.”





Website: <https://hrc-lb.com/>

### 7.18. Muwatinun Muttahidun (United Citizens)

Recently established in Zahle, Muwatinun Muttahidun represents the right-most wing of the change movement as mapped in this report. It is the only group to fully endorse federalism besides ACT, and it pursues the most rightist economic policy after the National Rescue Congress. Besides pursuing federalism, the group's main priority is "spreading political awareness of the idea of citizenship in Zahle," in order to undermine sectarian clientelism. Since the group is very new, it is still developing its network of relationships among other change groups. Finally, the group is currently working towards the upcoming municipal elections, as it plans to form a list in Zahle.

Arabic name: **مواطنون متحدون**

Members: 21-100

Volunteers: 51-1000<sup>145</sup>

Headed by: Ghassan Saliba

Funding sources: Member contributions.

Leadership Gender Ratio: 37.33%<sup>146</sup>

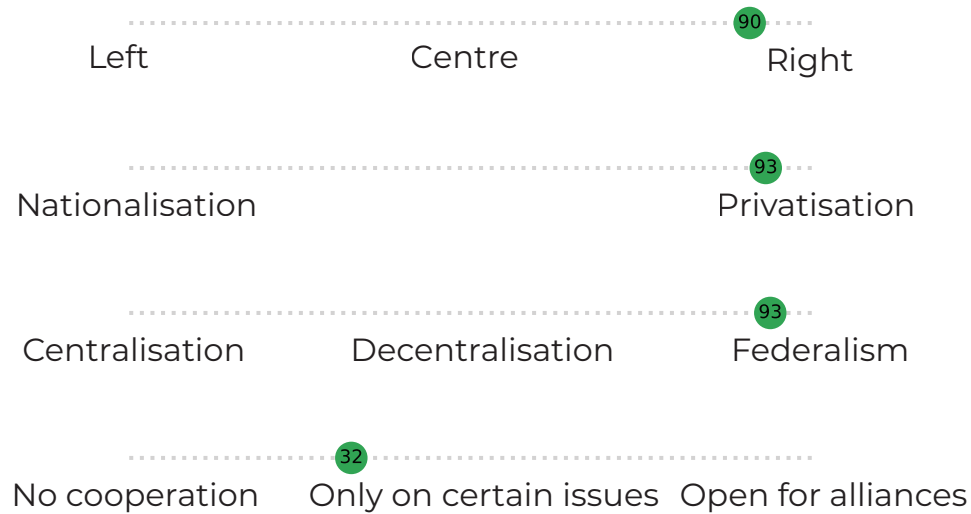
Active in: The Bekaa

Members in Parliament: /

Greatest affinity with: /

<sup>145</sup> One respondent indicated 51-100, a second 101-500, the third 501-1000.

<sup>146</sup> Average of 29%, 40% and 43%.



Website: <https://www.facebook.com/mouwatinounmouttahidoun/>

### 7.19. Muwatinun wa Muwatinat fi Dawle (Citizens in a State)

Founded in 2016 as a socialist party, Citizens in a State distinguish themselves in multiple ways from the remainder of the change movement: they represent the left-most wing of the movement, they are in favour of centralisation; and they believe true change is only possible by radically breaking with the past by means of a transitional government with exceptional powers. While in the past, the party has cooperated closely with other change groups, forming alliances and running on joint lists, today, especially after the 2022 parliamentary elections, in which the party's candidates mostly ran on its own electoral lists, the party appears isolated from the remainder of the narrow change movement.

Arabic name: **مواطنون موطنات في دولة**

Members: 1000+

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: Secretary-General Charbel Nahas, elected by the general assembly.<sup>147</sup>

Funding sources: Member contributions,<sup>148</sup> Gifts from supporters.

Leadership Gender Ratio: No Data

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

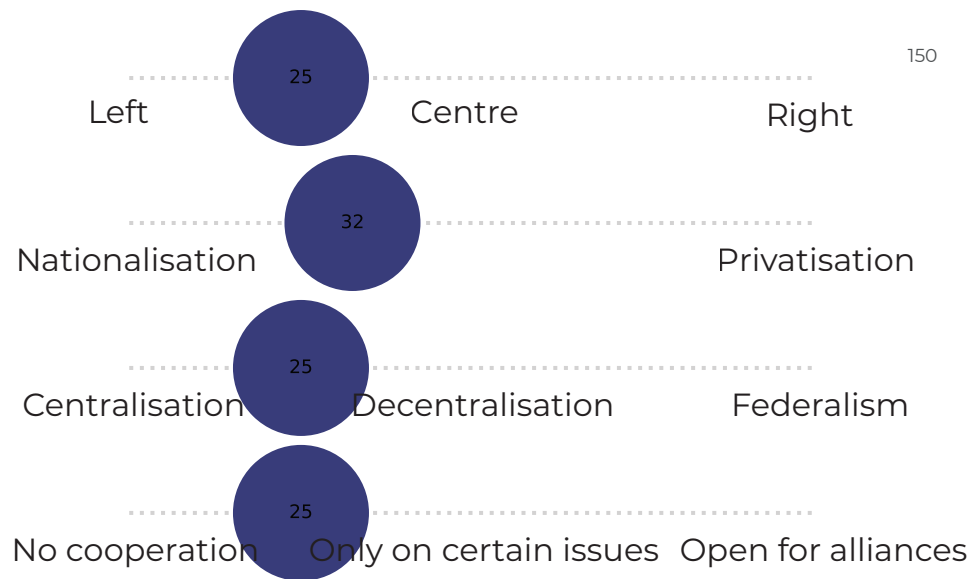
Purist/Pragmatist: Purist<sup>149</sup>

Greatest affinity with: /

<sup>147</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 39.

<sup>148</sup> Notably, this is taken as a percentage of the members' income, "a practical implementation of the progressive tax system the party envisions for Lebanon at large." Atlas Assistance, 39.

<sup>149</sup> Atlas Assistance, 102.



Website: <https://mmfidawla.com/>

## 7.20. Nahwal Watan (Towards the Homeland)

An electoral platform rather than a political group, Nahwal Watan was established in 2020 to help change groups in their political pursuits. After a failed merger with pragmatist platform Kulluna Irada, purist Nahwal Watan continued to push for unified change movement lists that would exclude controversial “change” groups, using extensive survey data to make their case. A centrist group, Nahwal Watan mentioned prioritising all of the main issues prioritised by most of the movement, as “all these issues are urgent and crucial, since the country has reached a complete collapse.” Looking forward, the group wants to facilitate the emergence of strong regional coalitions such as Shamaluna and Sahlona Wal-Jabal, while also taking on the “huge project” of facilitating the consolidation of the movement into a small number of big political parties with a clear vision, e.g., a leftist, centrist, and rightist party. This, however, will require great resources, admits the group.

Arabic name: **نحو الوطن**

Members: 101-500

Volunteers: 1000+<sup>151</sup>

Headed by: Executive board of six

Funding sources: Lebanese individuals at home or abroad

Leadership Gender Ratio: 50%

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

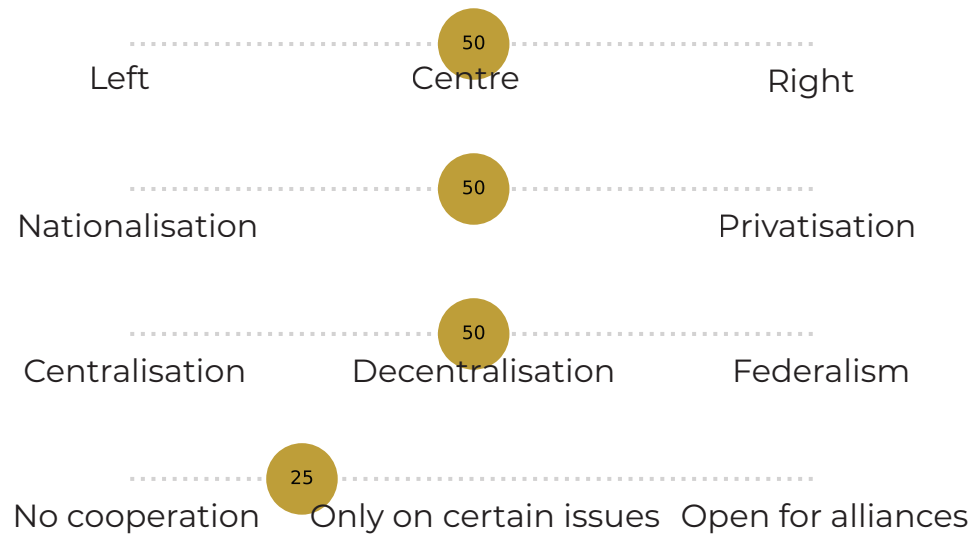
Purist/Pragmatist: Purist<sup>152</sup>

Greatest affinity with: /

<sup>150</sup> Because Citizens in a State did not wish to participate in our survey, we have supplemented this data from other sources. The left-right figure is based on Atlas Assistance, 41. The economic policy figure is based on the table in The Policy Initiative, “Lebanon’s Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition,” 14. The administrative policy figure is based on Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 42; **البرنامج السياسي لـ “مواطنون ومواطنات في دولة”، “مواطنون ومواطنات في دولة”، “في معرض الانتخابات النيابية”، accessed August 16, 2022, <https://mmfidawla.com/2022/02/03/17664/>. The group’s attitude towards traditional parties was determined based on the group’s leftism and high purism, both of which were found to be highly correlated with being closed to traditional parties.**

<sup>151</sup> The survey respondent replied “a lot of supporters in the regions that we cannot quantify,” while Atlas found that “Nahwal Watan is also training a network of delegates and volunteers - aimed at totalling 20,000 on election day.” Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 70.

<sup>152</sup> Atlas Assistance, 102.



Website: <https://mmfidawla.com/>

### 7.21. RELebanon

RELebanon, previously known as “Sa7”, was one of Tahalof Watani’s founding members in 2018, and is today still one of its 8 remaining group members. The group is centrist, favouring a liberal, free market economy with social controls, and like most change groups pursues decentralisation and a civil state. Regarding collaboration with traditional parties, the group does not want to close the door on the likes of the Kataeb, whom they say have “taken steps to try to develop itself over the years”; they are unwilling to work with other traditional parties, however, except on specific issues. In the 2022 elections, one of RELebanon’s candidates was elected to the Lebanese Parliament. Today, RELebanon’s twin priorities are social security, given the state of the economy, and the weapons issue, in that order. Furthermore, the main challenge the group currently faces is financial, as it is unable to secure and keep good people full-time without salaries. In the medium-term RELebanon will work with its MP on developing laws “to address the people’s needs and the electoral system,” and in the long-term it seeks to activate the many voters who stayed at home, as they are likely to vote against the traditional parties.

Arabic name: لبنان عن جديد

Members: 101-500

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: An executive body

Funding sources: Member contributions, Gifts from residents of Lebanon and Lebanese expatriates.

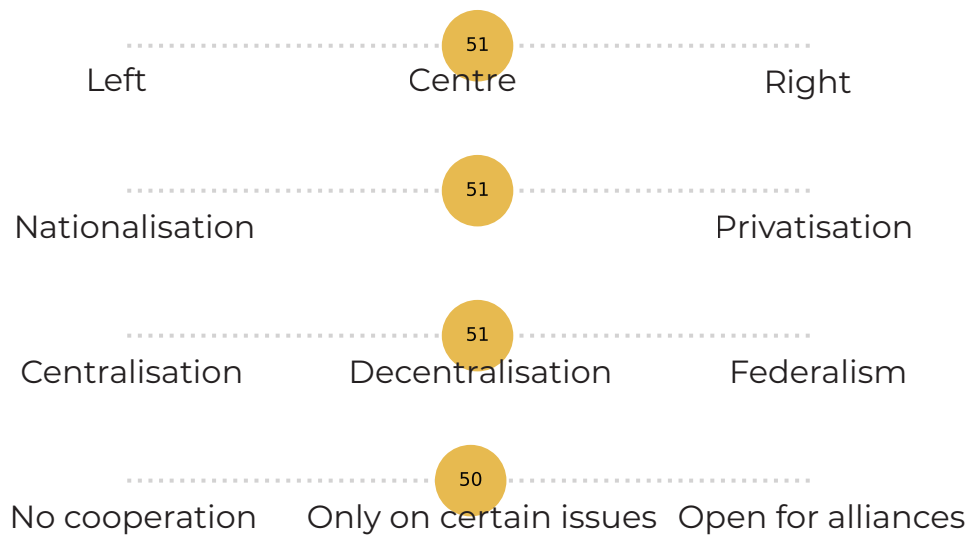
Leadership Gender Ratio: 50.5%<sup>153</sup>

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: Cynthia Zarazir

Purist/Pragmatist: Pragmatist<sup>154</sup>

Greatest affinity with: Tahalof Watani, National Bloc, Taqaddom



Website: <https://relebanon.net/>,<sup>155</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/RELebanonParty>

<sup>153</sup> Reportedly down from 58% in the summer of 2021, see *The Policy Initiative*, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 8.

<sup>154</sup> *The Policy Initiative*, 26.

<sup>155</sup> Under construction at the time of writing.

## 7.22. Sabaa (Seven)

Sabaa, meaning “seven,” refers to the seven 2016 co-founders of this centrist party that sought to become the largest political party in Lebanon in order to successfully challenge the establishment. After obtaining the only change seat in parliament in the 2018 elections, running with most other change parties on a single list, the group became mired in controversy and today perceives itself as shunned by most groups. However, our data suggests that the group is relatively well connected. Its candidates ran on several electoral lists with candidates from other change groups, and three other groups indicated having positive relationships with Sabaa, although two groups indicated having a negative relationship with Sabaa. The group sees the current living conditions in Lebanon as urgently in need of addressing, with the question of Hezbollah a medium-term priority. However, since none of Sabaa’s candidates acceded to parliament, it will continue to pursue its development and reform plans related to electricity, waste, industry and agriculture. The main challenge the group faces regards media coverage, which is expensive and has mainly been negative, as “there has been a campaign against us for four years now and we were not able to respond.” Furthermore, the group needs political and administrative training, while it faces difficulties to find leadership internally. Recalling its initial purpose, Sabaa is today “ready to merge with the largest number of groups and under a new and unified name, slogan and identity,” as they believe the model of a few large parties opposing the traditional ones is most likely to be successful.

Arabic name: حزب سبعة

Members: 1000+<sup>156</sup>

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: A general secretariat of 15 members headed by Hassan Shams.

Funding sources: Member contributions, and gifts from residents of Lebanon and Lebanese expatriates.

Leadership Gender Ratio: 40.5%<sup>157</sup>

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

Purist/Pragmatist: Pragmatist<sup>158</sup>

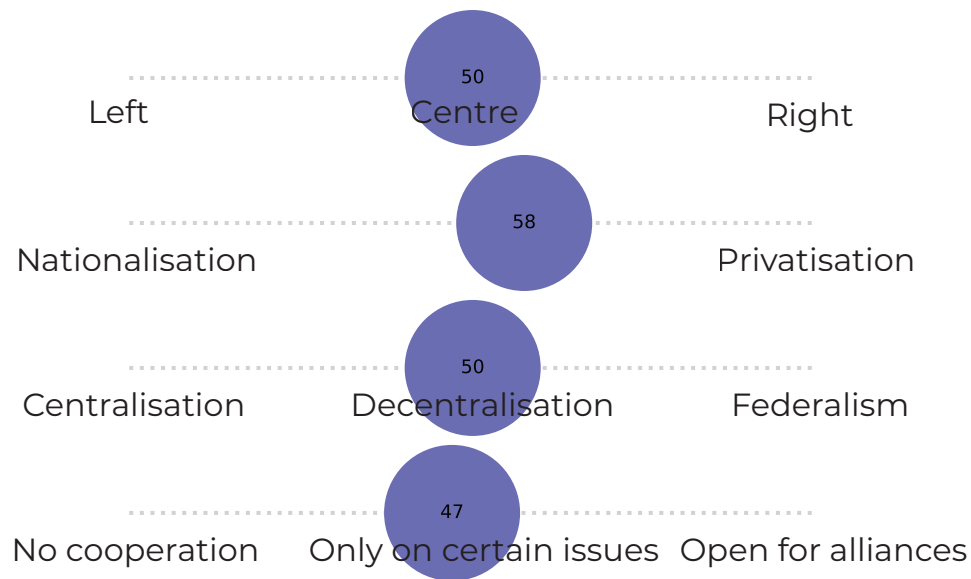
Greatest affinity with: Sarkhet Shaab

<sup>156</sup> One respondent filled out 5-10 and 11-20 respectively for members and volunteers. We presumed this respondent to have mistaken the question, since Sabaa is known to have thousands of members, see Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 45.

<sup>157</sup> The two respondents respectively wrote 35% and 46%. This is reportedly up from 30% in the summer of 2021, see The Policy Initiative, “Lebanon’s Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition,” 8.

<sup>158</sup> Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 102.





Website: [sabaa.org](http://sabaa.org)

### 7.23. Sahlona Wal-Jabal (Our Valley and the Mountain)

“Sahlona Wal-Jabal,” a phrase taken from the Lebanese national anthem, refers to the country’s mountains and plains, suggesting the coalition’s inclusive, national aspirations, despite its current confinement to the Western Bekaa. There, however, this centrist coalition has succeeded in landing a parliamentary seat for one of the candidates on its purist list. The coalition prioritises the border question, on which its interviewee elaborated in great detail, the investigation into the Beirut blast and the related issue of the independence of the judiciary, who should bear the economic losses, and decentralisation. In the next phase, the coalition seeks to adopt a flexible structure so that “all who are within it may be part of the decision-making process.” Both funding and an atmosphere of intimidation and clientelism are challenges to its work, however.

Arabic name: **سهلنا والجبل**

Members: 101-500

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: An elected organising committee.

Funding sources: Member contributions.

Leadership Gender Ratio: 61%

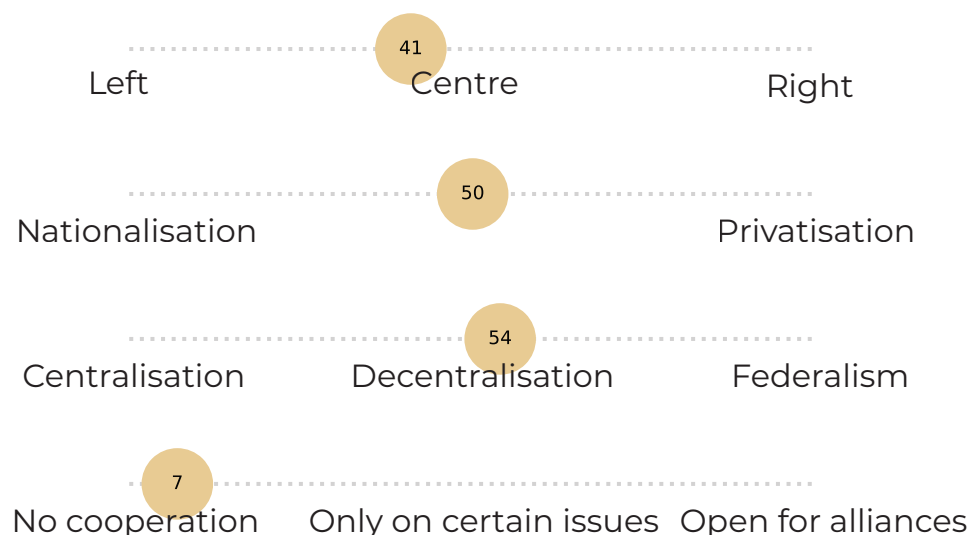
Active in: The Bekaa

Members in Parliament: Yassine Yassine

Purist/Pragmatist: Purist<sup>159</sup>

Greatest affinity with: Shamaluna

<sup>159</sup> Atlas Assistance, 72.



Website: <https://www.sahlonawaljabal.com/>

#### 7.24. Sarkhet Shaab (Cry of the People)

One of Tahalof Watani's 8 constituting group members, Sarkhet Shaab emerged from the 17 October Revolution and is mainly active in Mount Lebanon. Politically and economically centrist, the group favours decentralisation, like most other change groups. Purist Sarkhet Shaab shuns cooperation with traditional parties. The current economic situation is its most urgent priority, besides the general demands of the 17 October Revolution, and the issue of sovereignty regarding Hezbollah, although the group does not deal with the latter issue directly, as it relates to international resolutions and has "a special significance within Lebanon." The main challenges the group faces are the difficulty of gathering various change groups, due to egotism, and funding, given that they have no stable source of income. Currently, the group seeks to form a working group "to follow up on the new elected representatives, whom we had a contribution to making."

Arabic name: صرخة شعب

Members: 51-100

Volunteers: 21-50

Headed by: A constituent body composed of 8 members.

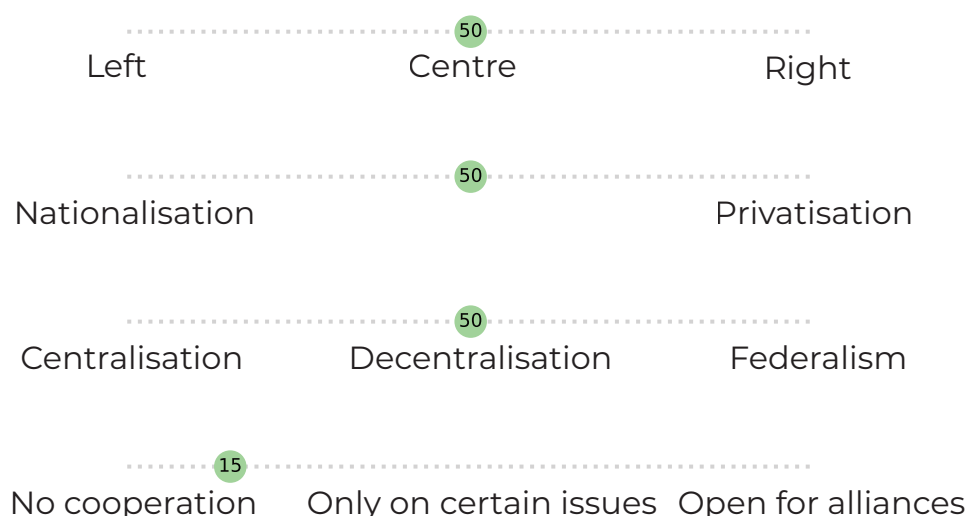
Funding sources: Member contributions.

Leadership Gender Ratio: 25%

Active in: Mount Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

Greatest affinity with: Sabaa, Thawrat Watan, Tahalof Watani



Website: <https://www.facebook.com/people/100069283866748/مصرخة-شعب/>

### 7.25. Shamaluna (Our North)

As the name indicates, this new coalition operates in North Lebanon, specifically in North III. The coalition consists of four independent groups: Osos (Foundations), Koura Independent Community, Al Fekr El Horr (Free Thought), and Al Mashrou' Al Badeel (The Alternative Project). The coalition is politically centrist, leans economically towards privatisation, and is administratively in favour of strong decentralisation. In its pursuit of a civil state, Shamaluna is not averse to cooperation with traditional parties on specific policy issues. In the recent elections, Shamaluna saw one of its candidates enter parliament, where the coalition will push for its main priorities: the independence of the judiciary as it pertains to the Beirut explosion, the economic question regarding depositors and banks, addressing the economic crisis, and specifically the issue of electricity. As with many other groups, the main challenge Shamaluna faces is financial: because of a lack of funds, its members must keep a day job and can only spend their free time volunteering for the coalition. Currently, Shamaluna is assessing the elections, and seeks to work out whether it should transition to being a political movement.

Arabic name: شمالنا

Members: 50-500

Volunteers: 500-1000+

Headed by: No Data

Funding sources: Member contributions, Gifts from residents of Lebanon and Lebanese expatriates.

Leadership Gender Ratio: 61.5%<sup>160</sup>

Active in: North Lebanon

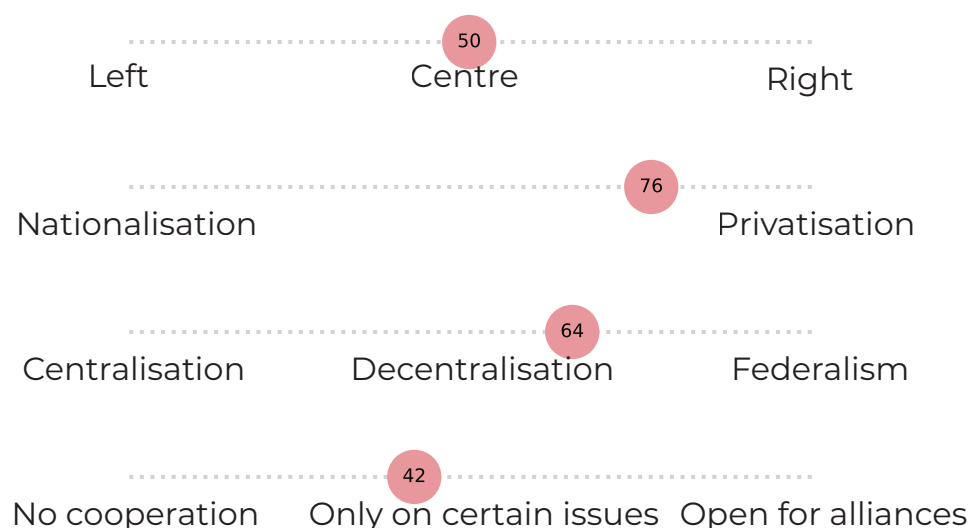
Members in Parliament: Michel Chawki Douaihy (Osos)

Purist/Pragmatist: Purist<sup>161</sup>

Greatest affinity with: Sahlona Wal-Jabal, National Bloc

<sup>160</sup> One respondent answered 40%, the other 83%.

<sup>161</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 72.



Website: <https://shamaluna.org/>

### 7.26. Tahalof Watani (National Alliance)

Tahalof Watani was initially conceived as an alliance of change groups running for the 2018 parliamentary elections, and later transitioned into being a political organisation, which became officially established in 2020.<sup>162</sup> Politically and economically centrist itself, the group attempted to bring together other groups to the centre. Like many, Tahalof Watani seeks a decentralised and desectarianised state. Regarding cooperation with traditional parties, the group belongs to the practical purist camp, being in principle open to collaboration, but declining to do so, believing it not to be strategic. The group fared well in the 2022 elections, with two of its candidates being elected to political office. Tahalof Watani currently prioritises addressing the worsening economy, believing it necessary to call for a rescue government. Further priorities are the application of the constitution, the abolition of political sectarianism, Hezbollah's weapons, and corruption in politics. Finances have been a challenge for the group in recent years, especially after it placed too much hope on funding from Kulluna Iraada and Nahwal Watan, which did not come through. Therefore, Tahalof Watani will re-activate their funding committee as it works towards next year's municipal elections. Post-elections, Tahalof Watani is considering what its organisation should look like in the next stage, whether to expand the number of member groups, with whom to collaborate, etc.

<sup>162</sup> The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 5. The 8 member groups of Tahalof Watani are: Tajamo Ebna Baalbek, Jama'iyye Hak wa Adel, Liqa al-Dawla al-Madaniyya, Relebanon, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, Sarkhet Shaab, al-Tajamo al-Mehni al-Dammaq, and Kitle Thawriyye.

Arabic name: تحالف وطني

Members: 51-500<sup>163</sup>

Volunteers: 51-1000+<sup>164</sup>

Headed by: A political office with 12 members elected by the general assembly for two years

Funding sources: Member contributions, Gifts from residents of Lebanon and Lebanese expatriates.<sup>165</sup>

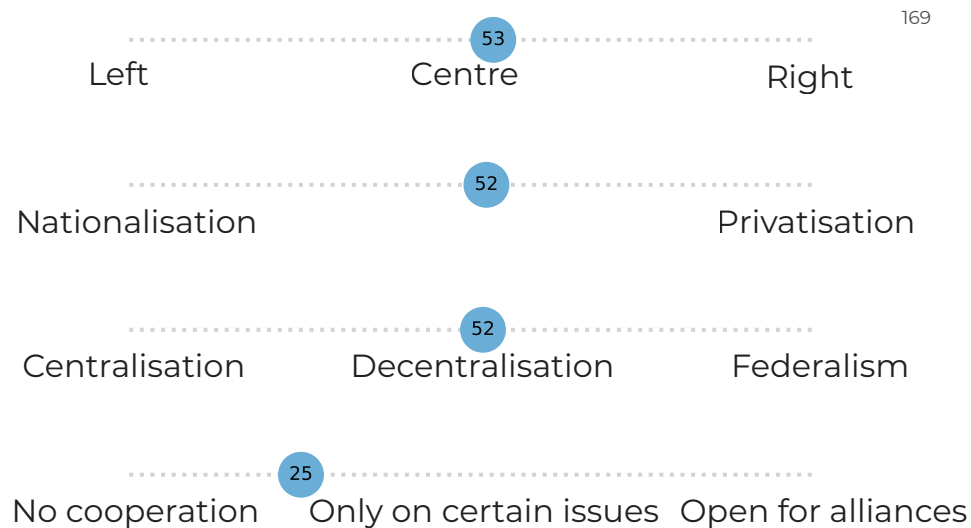
Leadership Gender Ratio: 36%<sup>166</sup>

Active in: All of Lebanon

Members in Parliament: Paula Yacoubian, Cynthia Zarazir (RELebanon)

Purist/Pragmatist: (Practical) Purist<sup>167</sup>

Greatest affinity with: RELebanon, Sarkhet Shaab, Jibhet 17 Tishreen, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala, Mintishreen, Khat Ahmar, Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi<sup>168</sup>



Website: <https://tahalofwatani.org/>

<sup>163</sup> According to Atlas Assistance, Tahalof claims 90 individual members, plus 8 group members. Adding the members of these 8 groups would push the membership close to 1,000. Constituting members such as ReLebanon, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala and Sarkhet Shaab are also surveyed in this mapping separate from Tahalof Watani.

<sup>164</sup> One respondent indicated 51-100, the other 1000+.

<sup>165</sup> Such donations are vetted to ensure transparency regarding the donation's origins. Tahalof has occasionally refused large donations, and generally refuses to work with foreign organisations, such as USAID. Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 60.

<sup>166</sup> Reportedly up from 22% in the summer of 2021, see The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 8.

<sup>167</sup> Atlas Assistance, "Lebanon's Political Change Movement," 102.

<sup>168</sup> Note that RELebanon, Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala and Sarkhet Shaab are current members of Tahalof Watani, whereas Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi is a former member.

<sup>169</sup> Compare this self-reported data with the analysis by the Policy Initiative, which classified Tahalof Watani as centre-left economically and left socially. The Policy Initiative, "Lebanon's Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition," 20.

### 7.27. Taharrar (Liberation)

Taharrar was founded early 2022 in south Lebanon by a former LiHaqqi member in order to run for elections in the South 3 electoral district, in which they managed to secure one seat in parliament. Although the group is still seeking to crystallise its political identity, it confesses leaning left, favouring an economic balance between public and private sectors, and advocating administrative decentralisation. The group is generally averse to collaboration with traditional parties, although this depends on the issue.<sup>170</sup> The group is mainly concerned with the current economic situation, as they seek to foster local development to work “on the strengths and weaknesses of the region, from health, public transportation, agriculture, olive oil and schools.” The main challenges facing the group currently are financial, as all money was spent on the elections, and a need to develop a political identity for this diverse group, which consists of “leftists, rightists, centrists, socialists, Syrian nationalists, ...” In the coming period, Taharrar will focus on supporting their MP, and linking up with other groups on national issues, as the group believes political action is not sustainable if it remains confined to a small geographic area.

Arabic name: تحرّر

Members: 101-500

Volunteers: 501-1000

Headed by: Collective leadership

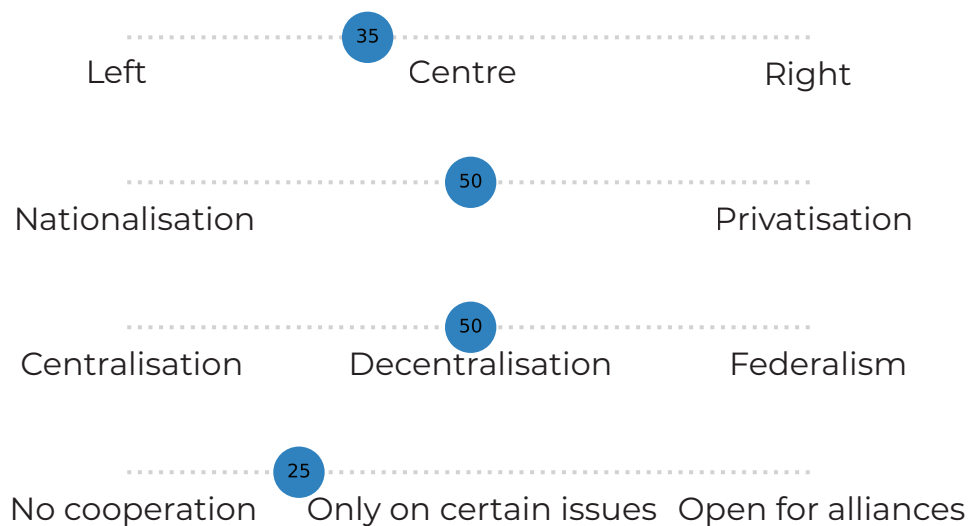
Funding sources: Gifts from residents of Lebanon and Lebanese expatriates.

Leadership Gender Ratio: 40%

Active in: Nabatieh

Members in Parliament: Firas Hamdan

Greatest affinity with: /



Website: <https://www.facebook.com/people/تحرّر-Taharrar/100078999669971/>

<sup>170</sup> “For example, I can ally with Hezbollah for pollution in the Hasbani River, but of course I will not do that if the issue is related to the issues we are against.”



### 7.28. Taqaddom (Progress)

Describing itself as “a democratic progressive secular party working for social justice and sustainable development,” Taqaddom has perhaps been the most successful change group in the recent elections, as its only two candidates both became MPs. Taqaddom is known within the movement for its pragmatism, which is best illustrated by the group’s participation in the Kataeb’s Lebanese Opposition Front. Although funding is an issue, as it is for many groups, Taqaddom is working on a strategic plan for the coming 4 years to develop the party’s relationships with other parties and the international community, to grow its membership, and ultimately to be able to compete at a far larger scale in the 2026 parliamentary elections. Meanwhile, however, the party will follow up on their MPs and assist them in their legislative work. The party’s current policy priorities are focused on addressing the economic crisis, resolving the issue of sovereignty, ensuring accountability for the Beirut explosion, and giving women full rights.

Arabic name: تقدم

Members: 101-500

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: General Coordinator Laury Haytayan

Funding sources: Member contributions, Gifts from residents of Lebanon and Lebanese expatriates, Partnership with FES on specific projects and studies, Social Democrats internationally.<sup>171</sup>

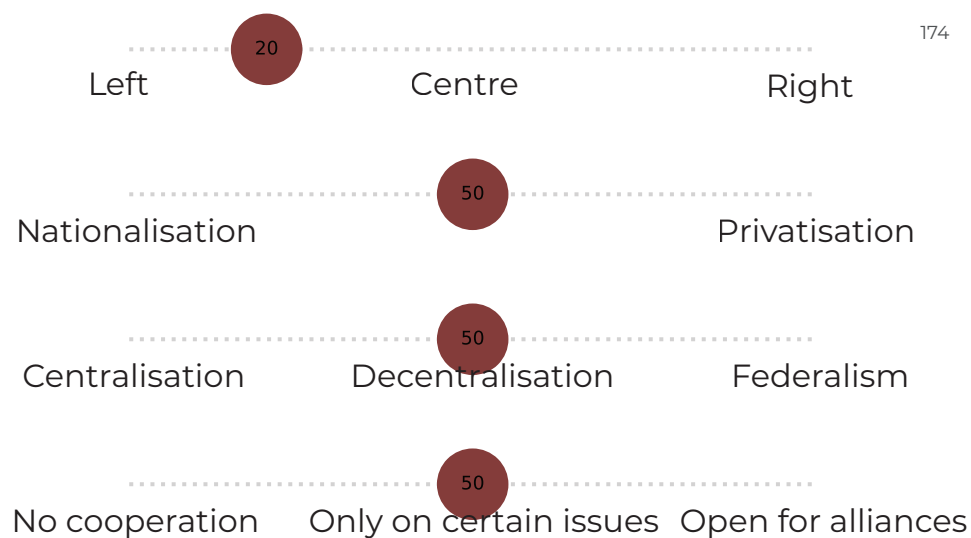
Leadership Gender Ratio: 40%<sup>172</sup>

Active in: Beirut, Mount Lebanon, the North, and the South.

Members in Parliament: Najat Aoun Saliba, Mark Daou

Purist/Pragmatist: Pragmatist<sup>173</sup>

Greatest affinity with: Khat Ahmar, National Bloc, Mintishreen, Mada, RELebanon, LNA



Website: [taqaddomlb.org](http://taqaddomlb.org)

<sup>171</sup> Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 74.

<sup>172</sup> Reportedly up from 27% in the summer of 2021, see The Policy Initiative, “Lebanon’s Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition,” 8.

<sup>173</sup> Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 102.

<sup>174</sup> On the party’s left-right position, the interviewee noted that the party is a “left-wing democratic party on secular progressive tendencies” and that “for the sake of social justice we chose to be leftists.” See also The Policy Initiative, “Lebanon’s Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition,” 20. On the party’s economic policy, compare Atlas Assistance, “Lebanon’s Political Change Movement,” 76, 102; The Policy Initiative, “Lebanon’s Political Alternatives: Mapping the Opposition,” 10.

### 7.29. Tawlet Al-Hiwar (Dialogue Table)

Established by Hayat Arslan, Tawlet Al-Hiwar currently facilitates dialogue among 26 organisations. The group furthermore is working towards the municipal elections by starting workshops in various villages to build their electoral capacity. Tawlet Al-Hiwar's policy priorities are the implementation of the constitution with regards to the independence of the judiciary, the implementation of international resolutions regarding Hezbollah, and addressing the economic crisis.

Arabic name: **تقدم**

Members: 101-500

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: General Coordinator Laury Haytayan

Funding sources: Member contributions, Gifts from residents of Lebanon and Lebanese expatriates, Partnership with FES on specific projects and studies, Social Democrats internationally.<sup>171</sup>

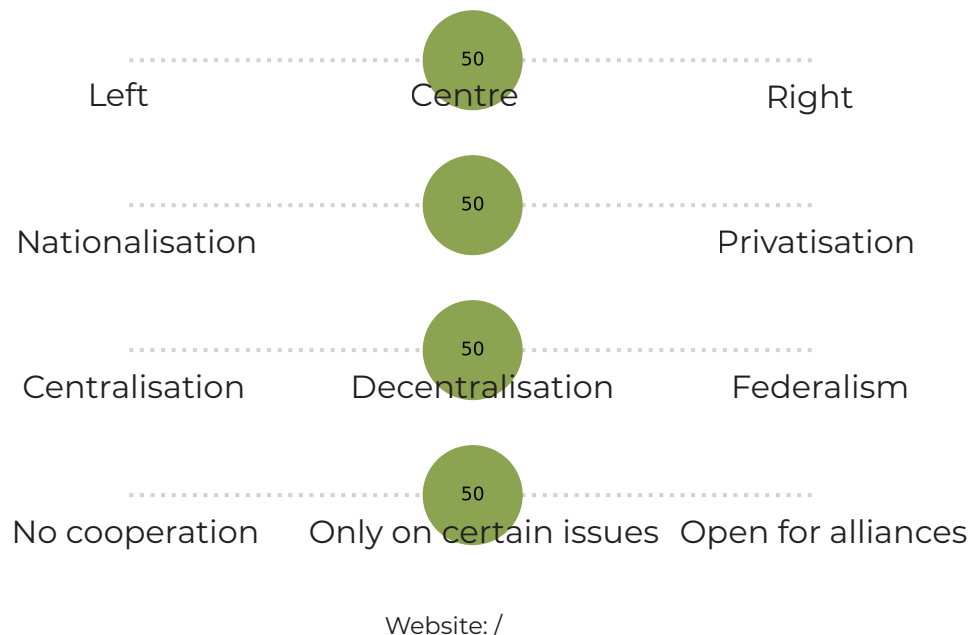
Leadership Gender Ratio: 40%<sup>172</sup>

Active in: Beirut, Mount Lebanon, the North, and the South.

Members in Parliament: Najat Aoun Saliba, Mark Daou

Purist/Pragmatist: Pragmatist<sup>173</sup>

Greatest affinity with: Khat Ahmar, National Bloc, Mintishreen, Mada, RELebanon, LNA



### 7.30. Thawrat Watan (Homeland Revolution)

Another group that emerged from Mount Lebanon with the 17 October revolution, Thawrat Watan is centrist, and prefers not to cooperate with traditional parties, as it is likewise suspicious of change groups that moved into the spheres of the Communist Party and the Kataeb. Their priorities are “to confine arms to the state, the independence of the judiciary, and the creation of new opportunities in the economy,” while funding and time are challenges to its work. A lack of time is particularly challenging because raising awareness is slow work: “building a building takes more time than destroying it, so let us remove ignorance, dependency and special interests from people and direct them towards a homeland that accommodates everyone.”

Arabic name: ثورة وطن

Members: 101-500

Volunteers: 1000+

Headed by: Maher Merhi

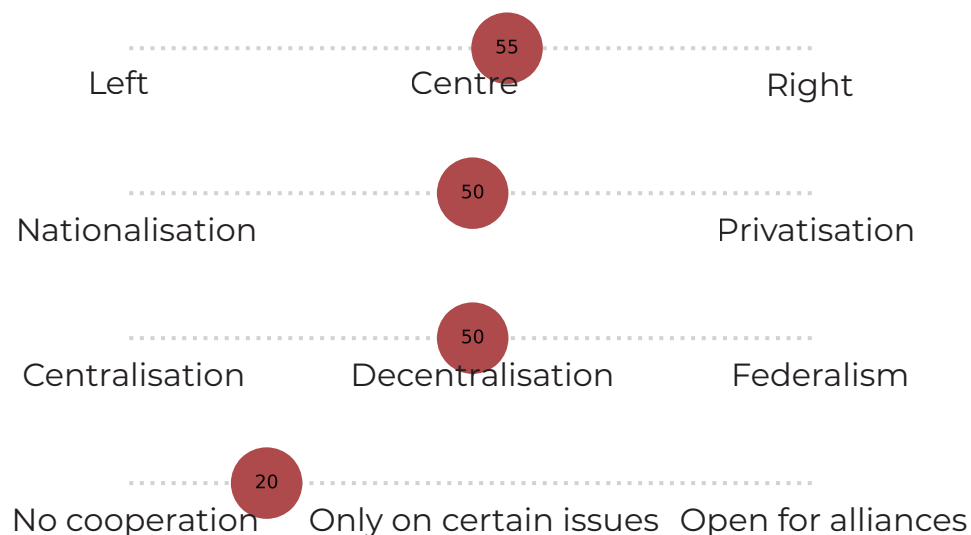
Funding sources: /

Leadership Gender Ratio: 55%

Active in: Mount Lebanon

Members in Parliament: /

Greatest affinity with: Sarkhet Shaab



Website: <https://www.facebook.com/homelandRevolution/>

## 8. Appendix 4: Survey Questionnaire and Interview Guiding Questions

### 8.1. Survey Questionnaire

1. What is your name? [textbox]
2. Please provide an email address or telephone number we can reach you by. [textbox]
3. What is your gender? [dropdown: male, female, other, prefer not to indicate]
4. What is your age? [dropdown: 18-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70, 71-80, 81-90, 91-100]
5. Which district do you vote in? [dropdown: list of districts]
6. To which political group do you belong? [textbox]
7. Who do you consider to be at the head of your group? [textbox]
8. What male-female ratio exists in your group's leadership? [scale: 0-100%]
9. Where does your group's funding come from? [checkboxes: member contribution, donations from inside Lebanon, donations from expats, donations from foreign governments, other]
10. Approximately how many members does your group have? [dropdown: less than 5, 5-10, 10-20, 20-50, 50-100, 100-500, more than 500]
11. Approximately how many non-member volunteers support your group? [dropdown: less than 5, 5-10, 10-20, 20-50, 50-100, 100-500, more than 500]
12. Where is your group's headquarters (if any)? [textbox, optional]
13. How is your group registered? [dropdown: political association, jam3iyyeh, civil company, etc]
14. In which regions is your group most active? [checkbox: list of regions]
15. To what extent is your group engaged in political activities related to getting people elected? (occupation) [scale: 0-100%]
16. To what extent is your group engaged in lobbying and activism? (influence) [scale: 0-100%]
17. To what extent is your group engaged in implementing initiatives that in principle the government should be implementing? (substitution) [scale: 0-100%]
18. To what extent would your group like to be engaged in political activities related to getting people elected? (occupation) [scale: 0-100%]
19. To what extent would your group like to be engaged in lobbying and activism? (influence) [scale: 0-100%]
20. To what extent would your group like to be engaged in implementing initiatives that in principle the government should be implementing? (substitution) [scale: 0-100%]
21. Where does your group fall on the economic policy spectrum? [scale from nationalisation to privatisation]
22. Where does your group fall on the administrative policy spectrum? [scale from centralisation to decentralisation: merkaziyye ... la merkeziyye idariyye ... federaliyye]
23. Please order the following defence issues (qadaya masiriyye) to reflect your group's priorities. [order: who's in charge of making decisions of foreign relations and war and peace, national borders, neutrality, weaponry not held by the army]

24. Please order the following civil rights issues to reflect your group's priorities [order: women, LGBTQI+, child labour, public space, domestic worker contract, dealing with the past from 1975 to today, displaced and refugees, corruption]
25. What is your group's stance towards traditional parties? [scale: absolutely no cooperation, cooperation on certain issues, open for alliances]
26. Where do you see your group on the left to right spectrum? [scale: from left, over centre, to right]
27. Who are your group's closest allies (from the change movement and among traditional parties)? [textbox]
28. Which groups does yours have negative relationships with? (optional question) [textbox]

## 8.2. Interview Guiding Questions

1. What are causes you want to champion (as a group)? (In other words: Which issues are the most important to you) Specifically, provide one for each of the following categories:
  - a. Urgent, crucial issues (e.g. Hezbollah, financial rescue plan)
  - b. Constitutional issues (e.g. desectarianisation, decentralisation),
  - c. Policy issues (e.g. electricity, corruption, economy).
2. Do you have a plan on how to pursue these causes?
3. Who are your allies on these causes? Please be specific! Which groups are you already in conversation with, developing policy with?
  - a. From the change movement
  - b. From among the traditional parties
4. How will you sustain your political work in the long term? What's your medium and long-term plan? Will there be much continuity with the past? What will change? [particularly for smaller groups and groups who do not have members in parliament]
5. After repeating the interviewee's position on the left-right political spectrum (based on their responses in the quantitative survey about the left-right spectrum, economic issues, and administrative issues): why do you believe this approach is best for Lebanon?
6. On civil rights issues filled out in the survey: how do you plan to pursue these? Do you have an action plan?
7. How are your relationships with other groups, positive and negative? Who are you actually working with? Please be specific!
8. How is your group involved in activities related to occupation (getting people into political office), influence (lobbying and activism), substitution (implementing services the government should in principle be providing)? How is your time divided between these three types of activity (divide 100% into three)? How would you like it to be?
9. How much capacity does your group have for engaging and involving citizens in political processes and discussions?

10. What are the challenges and obstacles (internal + external) your group faces today? What are your needs (funding, organisational development, capacity building in certain topics)? What training opportunities would you like to see?
11. Would you be willing to join national policy dialogues with governmental instances [jihat 7ukumiyyeh]? If no, why? If yes, on what topics?
12. What are your group's plans regarding the upcoming municipal elections (alliances, candidates, programs, which areas...)?

## 9. Appendix 5: List of Interviewees and Survey Respondents

1. 10452 Party: Roula Mourad (interview, survey)
2. ACT: Samir Saliba (interview), Sami Saab (survey)
3. Citizens in a State: Chaden Maalouf (interview, later revoked by the party)
4. Green Party: Fadi Abi Allam (interview), anonymous (survey)
5. Hirak Al-Matn Al-Aala: Fayek Zeidan (interview), Jawad Makarem (survey)
6. Jibhet 17 Tishreen: Georges Nader (interview, survey)
7. Khat Ahmar: Maher Al-Dana (interview), Wadah Al-Sadek (survey)
8. Kulluna Irada: Carole Abi Jaoude (interview), Sibylle Rizk (survey)
9. Lebanese Republican Reform Party: Bilal Mahdi (interview, survey)
10. LiHaqqi: Raed Bou Hamdan (interview, survey), Bassel Zeidan (interview), Jad Zeidan (survey)
11. LNA: Yahya Mawloud (interview), Darine Dandashli (survey)
12. Lubnan Hawiyati: Ziad Akl (interview, survey)
13. Mada: Ali Nouredine (interview, survey)
14. Madinati: Tarek Amar (interview, survey), Nahida Khalil (interview)
15. Al-Marsad Al-Shaabi: Hadi Mounla (interview, survey), Wasef Al-Harake (survey)
16. Mintishreen: Husein Ashi (interview), anonymous (survey)
17. Muwatinun Muttahidun: Georges Hrawi (interview), Ghassan Saliba (survey), Amar Klas (survey), Munir Abu Khater (survey)
18. Nahwal Watan: Ali Abdelatif (interview, survey)
19. National Bloc: Mahmoud Serhan (interview), Lin Harfoush (survey)
20. National Rescue Congress: Ziad Bitar (interview), Mireille Bijani (survey)
21. RELebanon: Fadi Jelwan (interview, survey), Cynthia Fadi Zarazir (survey)
22. Sabaa: Hassan Shams (interview, survey), Fatme Ahmad Mashref (survey)
23. Sahlona Wal-Jabal: Jawad Kamal (interview, survey)
24. Sarkhet Shaab: Fadi Yazbek (interview, survey)
25. Shamaluna: Marianne Geagea (interview), Robin Taleb (survey), Michel Darik (survey)
26. Tahalof Watani: Basam Rabiz (interview, survey), Carlos Naffah (survey)
27. Taharrar: Emad Aamer (interview, survey)
28. Taqaddom: Laury Haytayan (interview), Houssam Al-Eid (survey)
29. Tawlet Hiwar: Hayat Arslan (interview), Adel Arslan (survey)
30. Thawrat Watan: Maher Merhi (interview, survey)



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