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Migration and political elite formation: The case of Lebanon

By

Wahib Maalouf

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THESIS APPROVAL FORM

Student Name: WAHIB MAALOUF I.D. #: 201408705

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School: ARTS & SCIENCES

The undersigned certify that they have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis and approved it in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

MA in the major of MIGRATION STUDIES

Thesis Advisor's Name Paul TABAN | Signat

DATE: 02 / 11 / 2018
Day Month Year

Committee Member's Name SAMI BAROUDI | Signat

DATE: 02 / 11 / 2018
Day Month Year

Committee Member's Name Connie Christiansen | Signat

DATE: 02 / 11 / 2018
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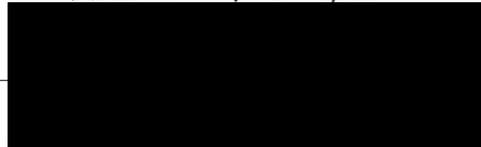
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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents and sister

I am grateful for their endless love and support throughout my life

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Migration and political elite formation: The case of Lebanon

Wahib Maalouf

ABSTRACT

Migration has been impacting political elite formation in Lebanon since the 1930s, yet its role in that matter remained understudied. The main reason behind this is the relative prevalence in elite studies of “methodological nationalism”, which, in one of its variants, “confines the study of social processes to the political and geographic boundaries of a particular nation-state”. As such, these studies fail to account for “cross-border” activities which have an impact on political processes in the country of origin. Hence, this study has a twofold objective. First, it aims to fill a gap in the scholarly migration literature by conceptualizing the role played by migration in political elite formation in the countries of origin. Second, it seeks to provide an in-depth analysis of the impact of migration on the formation and transformation of Lebanon's political elite in the postwar period (1990-2018). I focus on the postwar period as one which has witnessed an increasingly important role for Lebanese return migrants on the domestic political scene. This study argues that adopting a “transnational lens” that captures “cross-border” activities reveals a significant role for migrant economic capital in the processes of acquiring elite status in Lebanon by the respective migrants. The study invokes sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s notions of “capital” and “convertibility of capital”, and argues that extending the Bourdieusian framework beyond the contours of the nation-state allows us to understand how one

(or more) form of migrant capital could later be converted into political capital (and hence elite status) in Lebanon.

Keywords: Political elite, Migration, Transnationalism, Methodological nationalism, Bourdieu, Postwar Lebanon, Political capital, Diaspora, Return migration.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The impact of migration on political elite formation in Lebanon is an understudied topic for two main reasons: the first reason is the ideology associated with Lebanon since its inception in 1920, and which has romanticized migration and portrayed it as solely indicative of the Lebanese individual's quest for upward social mobility. The second reason is the relative prevalence in elite studies of "methodological nationalism", which, in one of its variants, is a "territorial limitation which confines the study of social processes to the political and geographic boundaries of a particular nation-state".¹ In 2003, Andreas Wimmer and Nina Schiller highlighted the need to transcend methodological nationalism when conducting social science research related to migration.² Since then, many scholars have overcome this methodological obstacle by studying the impact of migration on various social processes in the country of origin. However, no studies as of yet have approached the impact of migration on political elite formation in the country of origin, a topic that I will address in this study.

The shortcomings of the aforementioned elite studies lie in failing to account for the dynamics occurring beyond national borders (what I will call here "cross-border activities"), and which have an impact on the political scene

¹ Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism, the Social Sciences, and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology", *International Migration Review*, vol. 37, no. 3 (Fall, 2003), p. 578.

² See, Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism, the Social Sciences, and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology", *International Migration Review*, vol. 37, no. 3 (Fall, 2003), pp. 576-610.

in the countries of origin. In their book, *The Age of Migration*, Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas, and Mark Miller captured the increasing political significance of migration over the past decades:

While movements of people across borders have shaped states and societies since time immemorial, what is distinctive in recent years is their global scope, their centrality to domestic and international politics, and their considerable economic and social consequences.³

Hence, “cross- border activities”, such as return migration and diaspora activities towards the homeland are factors impacting politics in the country of origin. More precisely, in the context of this study, these are factors that contribute to political elite formation in the country of origin. In this regard, Lebanon is an excellent case study as a country historically shaped by migration but where the latter's impact on the country’s elite formation still warrants rigorous academic study. It is worth noting here that certain scholars have indirectly discussed the impact of migration on political elite formation in Lebanon. In his article “Roots of the Shi’ite Movement in Lebanon”, Salim Nasr addressed the social effects of emigration on the Shiite community in Lebanon:

Local power relations in the villages shifted. Traditional notables and religious families lost ground in favor of the wealthy returning migrants who purchased land and orchards, established new commercial networks and carved out their own spheres of social influence. A new Shiite bourgeoisie emerged... In the early 1970s, this Shiite bourgeoisie began to expand its activities. Shiite overseas capital now entered the banks,

³ Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas, and Mark Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 5th ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 5-6.

industries and large business concerns. Finally, a new Shiite elite emerged, including religious figures, politicians and financiers.⁴

Following Nasr's article, studies addressing the impact of migration on Lebanese politics have been surfacing for the past decade or more, yet they remain conceptually underdeveloped.

Hence, this study has a twofold objective. First, it aims to fill a gap in the scholarly literature on migration by conceptualizing the role played by migration in political elite formation in the countries of origin. Second, it seeks to provide an in-depth analysis of the impact of migration on the formation and transformation of Lebanon's political elite in the postwar period (1990-2018). I focus on the postwar period as one which has witnessed an increasingly important role for Lebanese return migrants on the domestic political scene.

I should stress here that this study by no means implies a causative relation between migrating and acquiring elite status in the country of origin. In other words, not every Lebanese return migrant – who is interested in entering the political field of course – was able to become a member of the country's political elite. As will be shown later in the study, certain wealthy return migrants failed to acquire elite status in Lebanon and hence remained within the category of what I call “aspiring elites”. That being said, this study aims to prove that migration is a systematic and enduring phenomenon that continuously impacts political elite formation in Lebanon. In other words, my contention is that political elite formation in

⁴ Salim Nasr, “Roots of the Shiite Movement”, *MERIP Reports*, vol. 15, no. 133 (May/June 1985)

Lebanon cannot be fully studied or analyzed without considering migration as one of its contributing factors.

1.1 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1: What role does migration play in the formation and transformation of the political elite in Lebanon?

Research Question 2: What are the various forms through which migration impacts the formation of the political elite in Lebanon?

1.2 Methodology

This study aims to engage with the mainstream scholarly literature on migration, which, to a large extent, is still characterized by “methodological nationalism”. By accounting for the role of migration in elite formation in the country of origin (in this case Lebanon), this study aims to highlight the shortcomings of “methodological nationalism”, and thereby the need to bring in different research strands into the scholarly debate. This study argues that a “corrective” to “methodological nationalism” lies in adopting a transnational lens to the study of social processes or phenomena. Although one doesn’t need to move to be part of this transnational social field, the scope of this study covers only one facet of transnational activities, precisely the activities associated with cross-border mobility and occurring outside the boundaries of a particular nation-state (or “cross-border activities”). That being said, this study by no means downplays the role played by the nation-state in regulating and valorizing the activities taking place within its boundaries.

This study predominantly relies on qualitative analysis of the data collected through semi-structured interviews I conducted with various Lebanese political elites (MPs and cabinet members) who had a migration experience before returning to Lebanon in the postwar period and entering the political domain. All of my interviewees meet the definition of a “migrant”, which is referred to by Castles, de Haas, and Miller, “as people living outside their country of birth for at least a year”.⁵ Because of time limitations and feasibility considerations, I mainly targeted a specific number of Lebanese elites who fit the aforementioned criteria. These were members of Lebanese parliament who won seats in the elections of 1992, 1996, 2000, 2005, 2009, and 2018, in addition to cabinet members who held office in the post-1992 period. My restricted target sample of interviewees (10 MPs and ministers) was chosen in a manner representing the nearest manifestation of the subject under study. I also interviewed an official responsible for the diaspora sector in a major Lebanese political party for further information on my topic.

One limitation of the study was the difficult process of obtaining interviews with MPs and cabinet members. This limitation imposed including members of the local elite (heads of municipalities) in the sample. After conducting a certain number of interviews (especially with heads of municipalities), I encountered a saturation in the collected data, evidenced by the repetitive emergence of a general pattern. This prompted me to put a halt to the number of interviews conducted with this certain type of elite.

The chosen sample consists of 13 elites and 9 local elites (22 elites in total). The 13 elites include 9 MPs (current and former), one former

⁵ Castles, de Haas, and Miller, *The Age of Migration*, p. 7.

minister, and three aspiring elites.⁶ The sample sought to be “balanced” by taking into account the sectarian and regional diversity characteristic of Lebanese politics. Although by no means an exhaustively representative one, the sample can be seen as a fair reflection of the issue raised in this study. What may be seen as a gender-bias in the selection of interviewees is certainly not the case, but rather a reflection of the male-dominated political scene in Lebanon.

Another limitation of the study occurred when addressing the role of money in Lebanese political processes. Although such a sensitive issue can rarely be addressed through conducting interviews (in addition to the lack of primary data on the role of migrant wealth in Lebanese politics), it is widely acknowledged that money plays an important role in Lebanese politics (especially because there is yet no legal restrictions on such a role). Here, the study relied on available secondary sources.

The semi-structured interviews with the aforementioned elites provides rich and reliable qualitative data that complements the available secondary sources and leads to a much better understanding of the impact of migration on elite formation in postwar Lebanon. Semi-structured interviews also have the advantage of allowing the interviewees to freely express their views in their own terms. Since discussions in such interviews may often diverge from the interview questionnaire, the interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed for analysis. The questionnaire that guided my interviews revolved around the interviewee’s political activity prior to, and during his migration period; his political activity after returning to Lebanon; his economic activities during his migration period; the kind of activities he

⁶ Four out of the nine MPs were also former ministers at certain points in their trajectories.

initiated after returning to Lebanon. The study also refers to a good number of secondary sources such as biographies of politicians, works by social scientists and historians, chapters in academic books, journal articles, as well as graduate student theses.

1.3 Mapping the thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the main outline of the thesis. Chapter two provides a review of the scholarly literature pertaining to political elite formation, with a special focus on the Lebanese case. In chapter three, I provide a historical background to the study, and discuss the impact of migration on elite formation in Lebanon during various episodes, starting from the late 1930s until the civil war order (1975-1990). In chapter four, I lay out the data collected through my interviews and other pertinent secondary sources, especially biographies written about return migrants who became political elites in postwar Lebanon. In this chapter, I also analyze the collected data with a preliminary emphasis on the concept of “capital” formulated by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. This concept allows us to better understand how migrants were able to transform their migrant capital (economic and diasporic) into political capital in the country of origin. I will also explore the different ways in which migrant capital (economic and diasporic) contributed to the formation and transformation of postwar Lebanon's political elite. Chapter five lays out the general outlines of my findings and the conceptual framework used in interpreting them. It also indicates the way forward for any future research in line with the work done in this study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review: Theorizing political elite formation

This chapter aims to fulfill the following objectives: First, to address the various treatments of the concept of “political elite” in the scholarly literature so far, and second, to discuss the sources of elite recruitment (formation) in the current literature, and conclude the discussion with the need to treat migration as a source of elite formation in the country of origin. The latter claim is rendered much more pertinent in the “age of migration”, and more particularly so in third world countries where migration constitutes an enduring and systematic phenomenon (of which Lebanon is an excellent case study). More specifically, I will be studying the different forms of migration in relation to elite formation in the country of origin, namely: return migration, transmigration and diaspora. In doing so, I will draw on sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s notions of “capital” and “convertibility of capital”. I argue that extending the Bourdieusian framework beyond the contours of the nation-state enables us to understand how economic capital accrued through migration could later be converted to delegated political capital (elite status), and other politically relevant capitals in the country of origin.

2.1 Studying political elite recruitment through the lens of "methodological nationalism"

2.1.1 Defining political elite

The subject of political elites has been studied through different approaches, leading to a theoretical and methodological controversy. The basic concept of political elite was first introduced by Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto

in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Both Italian scholars contend that in any society there is always a group that rules and a group that is ruled, and that the former is numerically smaller than the latter.⁷ Mosca called the ruling group a "political class", while Pareto named it a "governing class", differentiating it from a non-governing elite.

However, today's common understanding of a "political elite" is best defined by Tom Bottomore as comprised of "individuals who actually exercise political power in a society at any given time".⁸ Bottomore maintains that the "political elite" is a smaller group within the "political class" which includes "all those groups which exercise political power or influence, and are directly engaged in struggles for political leadership".⁹

2.1.2 Politically relevant elite (PRE)

More recently, Volker Perthes advanced the concept of "politically relevant elite", in an effort to account for the largest stratum of actors (individuals and groups) that influence political processes in a given nation-state. This stratum encompasses the political elite, but reaches beyond it to "include groups and segments that contribute to political processes or influence them from various sidelines".¹⁰ An example to be included within this group are "temporary elites", or "people who gain a position of political relevance but do not maintain elite status once their job is done".¹¹

⁷ George Lenczowski, "Some Reflections on the Study of Elites", in G. Lenczowski (ed.), *Political Elites in the Middle East* (Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research), 1975, p. 1.

⁸ Tom Bottomore, *Elites and Society*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Volker Perthes, "Politics and Elite Change in the Arab World", in V. Perthes (ed.), *Arab Elites: Negotiating the Politics of Change* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), p. 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

The concept of politically relevant elite also extends beyond "political class", and may include, in addition to government, administration and the military:

individuals or groups who are not competing for political leadership, but rather use their influence to set or influence political agendas and define the themes of national discourse.¹²

These latter are opinion makers rather than decision makers, advisors and lobbyists. Accordingly, Perthes argues that:

Top businessmen, members of the media, and religious leaders, among others, are not per se considered part of the PRE; they are only included if their contribution to political processes is considered relevant.¹³

Hence, for Perthes, the PRE model comprises three categories (circles) with different degrees of influence: the first, or inner circle, comprises the core elite, or "those who make decisions on strategic issues".¹⁴ The second circle comprises the intermediate elite or "groups and individuals who exert considerable influence on, or make, decisions of lesser importance, but do not have the power to make decisions on strategic issues unless they are delegated to them".¹⁵ The third circle comprises what Perthes refers to as "the sub-elite", or "the less influential elites capable of indirectly influencing strategic decisions or contributing to national agenda setting and national discourses through their position in the government and administration, interest organizations and lobbies, the media, or other means".¹⁶

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

This study will adopt the concept of "politically relevant elite" as one which is more comprehensive and convenient, since it also includes the actors (individuals or groups) who are not competing to reach political office, but rather use their leverage to influence political agendas or to financially support members of the elite.

2.1.3 Sources of political elite recruitment

In his 1976 seminal work, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*, Robert Putnam shifts the discussion on political elites from the conceptual definitions to the sources of elite recruitment in a given nation-state. In his study, Putnam addresses political elites that can be categorized under what Volker Perthes terms "intermediate elite" and "sub-elite": these are mainly cabinet members and members of parliament. Putnam identifies three basic "institutional" channels of recruitment into the political elite: political parties, bureaucracies, and local governments. In the United States, for instance, most aspiring politicians see affiliation with one of the two major parties as "a prerequisite for advancement to national elective office".¹⁷

Putnam argues that, in many countries, the bureaucracy, in addition to its administrative function, also "serves as a primary channel of recruitment into the top political elite".¹⁸ The author notes that out of the 186 cabinet members who governed Egypt between 1952 and 1973, more than half had served in the civil bureaucracy before entering cabinet. The presence of public administrators in the political elite is not, however, peculiar to developing

¹⁷ Robert Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1976), p. 49.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

countries. Putnam argues that civil servants have usually constituted approximately a quarter of the parliaments of countries such as Sweden, Germany and Japan.¹⁹

A third institutional channel of recruitment into the political elite is local government. In many countries, getting elected to local office is typically the first step of the "political ladder" for aspiring politicians. Putnam notes that in centralized systems, such as France and Sweden, as in the federal systems of Austria and the United States, "more than two-thirds of all national legislators have served previously in local or regional government".²⁰

Putnam also cites other social institutions which can play an important role in political recruitment, such as educational institutions. He observes that schools like the Oxbridge colleges of England and the elite *grandes ecoles* of France, among others, have traditionally supplied a rather uneven share of those students who are ultimately recruited to their respective national elites. Putnam concludes that graduation from one of these schools increases significantly a student's chances of succeeding politically, so that "the educational and political recruitment systems are virtually merged".²¹

While Putnam's analysis of the sources of elite recruitment was a landmark study in the 1970s and 1980s, it's been rendered rather problematic today in "the age of migration". For his study to hold generally credible today, it needs to include migration as one of the sources of political elite recruitment in the country of origin. Migration is seen as a factor of political elite

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

recruitment (cabinet members, members of parliament, aspiring elites) in the country of origin:

First, when return migrants (or trans-migrants) capitalize on their migrant wealth and convert their migrant economic capital into delegated political capital in the homeland, hence acquiring elite status in the country of origin.

Second, when wealthy return migrants or expatriates financially support the political activities (electoral campaigns, etc) of aspiring elites in the country of origin (in this case, the former acquire the status of politically relevant elites).

Third, when wealthy return migrants or expatriates financially support the activities (electoral campaigns, building institutions such as schools, etc) of current members of cabinet and parliament in the country of origin, hence reinforcing the elite status of these members (in this case also, the former acquire the status of politically relevant elites).

Fourth, when diaspora organizations (such as branches of “homeland” political parties and family associations) financially support the activities (especially electoral campaigns) of a certain political party in the homeland; or when these organizations financially support the electoral campaign of a family member running for elections in the homeland. Also, when individuals or groups in the diaspora (such as branches of “homeland” political parties) send donations to political parties in the country of origin.

Fifth, when members of above diaspora organizations visit the country of origin during parliamentary elections and vote for a party candidate or for a family member running for elections.²²

Sixth, when members of a certain diaspora vote from abroad in the national elections taking place in their country of origin.

2.1.4 Sources of political elite formation in Lebanon

Studies of the political elite in the Lebanese context started to emerge in the 1970s, focusing primarily on the country's parliamentary elite. The first such study was Iliya Harik's 1972 landmark study, *Mann Yahkum Lubnan*, which analyzed the sources of parliamentary elite formation in Lebanon, particularly in the aftermath of the 1968 and 1972 national elections.

Harik maintained that "the principle of choosing the political elite is predicated on the basis of direct popular referendum (parliamentary elections) once every four years".²³ He identified four major factors that have a direct influence on elections, and hence, on choosing the political elite in Lebanon:

First, political parties, which were responsible for the election of one third of the members of the 1972 parliament.

Second, the private electoral apparatus established by parliamentary candidates which is comprised of independent individuals close to the candidate by way of kinship or friendship or interest (and it could be a combination of all these), and who run his electoral campaign under his

²² See in this regard, Paul Tabar, "Political Remittances': The Case of Lebanese Expatriates Voting in National Elections", *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 35, no. 4 (June 2014), pp. 442–460.

²³ Iliya Harik, *Mann Yahkum Lubnan* (Beirut: Dar Annahar, 1972), p. 78.

supervision. Harik stresses that candidates who are not affiliated with political parties (and thus lack in organization) are obliged to establish their personal apparatus in which kinship relations become more salient and play a very important role in running the electoral campaign, a thing which is expected in a society where relations of kin still have weight in social and economic affairs.²⁴

Third, the phenomenon of political inheritance "which is directly related to the domestic trend in the Lebanese system". What plays in favor of kinsmen inheriting a political post, according to Harik, is "domestic factionalism, political followers and clients who find it convenient to transform their loyalty to the heir among the kinsmen".²⁵ Furthermore, when a member of parliament passes away, his political apparatus controlled by his kinsmen remains in place, so that one of them steps in to continue the work of his predecessor, building on a political capital that is already established.²⁶

Fourth, the formation of electoral lists and the ability of a candidate to secure a place on an electoral list. Harik notes that "it's almost impossible for a candidate to win if he/she wasn't a member of an electoral list".²⁷

Harik mentions that the very high cost of running electoral campaigns led some political bosses (zuama) to ally themselves with wealthy personalities, most of whom have no political credentials, but aspire to reach parliament for reasons related to acquiring prestige and "being in the spotlight". He gives examples of the numerous electoral lists which included seats for "funders" in the 1968 elections, adding that many of them played the same

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

role again in the 1972 elections. Harik notes, in passing, that "a group of those funders became wealthy as expatriates, especially the Shiites among them".²⁸ However, the author's study falls short of thoroughly treating migrant wealth as a factor having a considerable influence on political processes in Lebanon.

In a more recent study, political scientist Farid el-Khazen transcended Harik's focus on the Lebanese parliamentary elite by examining the history of what he terms "elite-making" and "elite-breaking" in modern Lebanon. El-Khazen observes the following:

In pre-civil war Lebanon, political elites emerged as an outcome of the political process, through "elections, party politics, or in the wake of particular crises and events".²⁹ In post-1975 Lebanon, el- Khazen adds, "elites emerged as a result of the war".³⁰ In the post-Taif era, however, the author notes that "the landscape of elitist politics acquired characteristics of its own, different from those of pre- and post-1975 Lebanon".³¹ Referring to the Syrian hegemony over Lebanon at the time, el –Khazen argues that political elites in post-Taif Lebanon are being "manufactured" by a *force majeure* intent on homogenizing the elites and keeping them under its control. (He advances the novel concept of "elite- manufacturing" to describe the process of elite emergence that dominated the post-Taif political scene under Syrian hegemony). El-Khazen's study is insufficient on two levels: First, it doesn't account for the migratory factors which played a role in

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

²⁹ Farid el-Khazen "The Making and Unmaking of Lebanon's Political Elites from Independence to Taif", *The Beirut Review* (Fall 1993), p. 64.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

funding different militias during the Lebanese civil war, hence contributing to the emergence of war-related elites in the postwar period (an aspect which will be addressed in the following chapter). Second, and more importantly, the study fails to identify migration as a factor in elite recruitment in postwar Lebanon, and which took the following manifestation at the time of el-Khazen's writing: The Prime Minister at the time, Rafik Hariri, was himself a return migrant from Saudi Arabia whose migrant wealth and close ties with the Saudi royal family were key factors in his reaching political office.

In a more recent study of the Lebanese political elite, political scientist Rola el-Husseini focused on the postwar elite, tracking the changes affecting the elite's characteristics as compared to the pre-civil war period. Addressing Perthes's circles of influence model in the Lebanese context, el-Husseini notes that "the core elite are primarily the presidents of the republic, the Council of Ministers (the cabinet), and the Chamber of Deputies (the parliament)".³² The second circle or the intermediate elite "is composed of cabinet members, influential political and communitarian leaders, and religious leaders".³³ The third circle or the sub-elite, comprises, according to el-Husseini, "mainly the members of parliament, advisors of political leaders, and the Christian opposition".³⁴

The sample of interviewees adopted in this study intersects with el-Husseini's definition by including cabinet members and MPs, but extends beyond it to include politically relevant elites, aspiring elites, and local elites (all of whom have migration experiences of course). As mentioned earlier,

³² Rola el-Husseini, "Lebanon: Building Political Dynasties", in V. Perthes (ed.), *Arab Elites: Negotiating the Politics of Change* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), p. 240.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

the difficult process of obtaining interviews from MPs and cabinet members prompted me to include heads of municipalities, or local elites, in the sample (whereby access to interviews was much easier).

El-Husseini identifies five groups that comprise the elite in postwar Lebanon: former warlord-turned-politicians, "religious rebels" (the example of Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah and the party's MPs), Syria's clients (the example of Michel el Murr), entrepreneurs (the example of Rafik Hariri) and military personnel (the example of former president Emile Lahoud). The author rightly observes that, during his time in office, Hariri became "the foremost representative of a new trend in politics – the importance of wealth".³⁵ In a later study, el-Husseini refines her previous conclusion by stating that "the postwar elite is largely made up of warlords, rich entrepreneurs from the Lebanese diaspora, Syria's clients, and notables who have retained or regained political influence".³⁶ Furthermore, the author sharpens her previous account of Rafik Hariri's political ascendancy: "He (Hariri) was the precursor of a new trend in Lebanese politics, in which financial wealth could be translated directly into political capital".

El-Husseini's study remains lacking on two levels: First, while she emphasizes "the importance of financial wealth" in the politics of postwar Lebanon, she fails to state that such wealth is mostly *migrant* wealth.³⁷

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

³⁶ Rola el-Husseini, *Pax Syriana: Elite politics in postwar Lebanon* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2012), p. 121.

³⁷ Examples of wealthy return migrants who became political elites in postwar Lebanon include Rafik Hariri, Isam Fares, Najib Mikati, and Muhamad Safadi.

Second, she doesn't elaborate further upon the mechanisms that enabled Hariri to “translate directly his financial wealth into political capital”.³⁸ The different pathways through which migrant wealth (or migrant economic capital) can ultimately be converted to delegated political capital (or other forms of politically relevant capitals) in the country of origin, are:

First, a somewhat direct conversion of migrant economic capital³⁹ to political capital in the country of origin. For example, when a wealthy return migrant “buys” a winning parliamentary seat on the electoral list of a *Zaim* (political boss) or *Qutub* (major leader); or when a wealthy return migrant is appointed cabinet member by a *Zaim* or *qutub*; or when a wealthy return migrant is nominated by a *Zaim* to become head of municipality in the latter’s area of influence.

Second, an indirect conversion of migrant economic capital to political capital in the country of origin. This happens when a return migrant uses his migrant wealth to initiate charitable, social, cultural or civic activities in his electoral district in the country of origin. These activities lead to the possession of “personal political capital” by the respective migrant. The latter capital is converted to “delegated political capital” when the respective migrant is either appointed prime minister, or elected MP, or elected head of municipality (hence acquiring elite status in the country of origin).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

³⁹ According to Bourdieu, economic capital refers to the possession of “money and property” by a certain individual. See, Swartz, *Symbolic Power, Politics, and Intellectuals*, p. 50.

Third, a conversion of migrant economic capital to social⁴⁰ and cultural⁴¹ capital in the country of origin. The latter capitals are eventually mobilized by the respective migrant in his attempt to possess delegated political capital, and hence acquire elite status in his/her country of origin.

Fourth, when a diasporic wealthy businessman uses his economic capital to financially support different members of the political elite in his country of origin. As such, he is “buying” social capital amongst a network of homeland politicians, or what can be called here “politically relevant” social capital.

2.1.5 Social composition of Lebanon's political elite

In his study, "Political Elite of Lebanon", Iliya Harik analyzed the social composition of the parliament and the occupational background of deputies in seven Lebanese parliaments, from 1943 until 1968.⁴² Harik noted a change in the social composition of parliament manifested in the decline of descendants of feudal aristocracy and notable families, and the gradual ascendancy of deputies with more "plebian and patrician" social origins.⁴³ The occupational background also revealed a significant shift from landowners to lawyers, professionals, and businessmen. Harik concluded that although their occupational characteristics have changed since 1943, the Lebanese political elite "still belong to the high status occupations and stand

⁴⁰ According to Bourdieu, social capital refers to the cultivation of “acquaintances and networks” by a certain individual. *Ibid.*

⁴¹ According to Bourdieu, cultural capital refers to possessing “information, knowledge and educational credentials”. *Ibid.*

⁴² Iliya Harik, “Political Elite of Lebanon”, in G. Lenczowski (ed.), *Political Elites in the Middle East* (Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975), pp. 201-3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202.

out from the rest of society in terms of wealth and skills".⁴⁴ In the same vein, sociologist Samir Khalaf later observed that the Lebanese parliamentary elite “are highly educated and enjoy elevated social origins”, while emphasizing the persistent divergence between the deputies’ impressive socioeconomic background and their clientelistic behavior.⁴⁵ Khalaf concluded that this disjunction is a reflection of the salience of political patronage and primordial allegiances in Lebanon.⁴⁶

Although Harik and Khalaf agree in their studies that members of the Lebanese parliamentary elite stand out from the rest of society in terms of professional skills and socioeconomic status, both authors don't identify any possible role for emigration in the formation of the elite's socioeconomic standing.

2.2 Migration as a factor in political elite formation in postwar Lebanon

In his study, "The class formation of political power in postwar Lebanon", Fawwaz Traboulsi is arguably the first scholar to refer to the role of migration in the formation of Lebanon's political elite.⁴⁷ Traboulsi notes that the continuing role of migrant money in the formation of political power is one of the defining characteristics of Lebanon's postwar ruling class. In this sense, the author continues, Rafik Hariri, the most prominent representative of migrant wealth in postwar Lebanon, is not a unique phenomenon in the history of Lebanese politics. Rather, Hariri is very similar in his personality and role to Hussein Uwayni in the 1940s and 1950s in Lebanon. Uwayni

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁴⁵ Samir Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 142.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁴⁷ Fawwaz Traboulsi, “al Takawun al Tabaki li al Sultah al Siyasiyah Baad al Harb”, *Aaks el Sayr: Kitabat Mukhtalifa* (Beirut: Riad el-Rayyes Books, 2002), pp. 175-200.

ascended from a humble social origin similar to Hariri's, and became prime minister, propelled by the fortunes he accumulated in Saudi Arabia through his connections with the Saudi royal family as well as his close ties to French capital.⁴⁸

The role of migration in Lebanese politics received a more elaborate analysis in 2012 in Hannes Baumann's article "The 'New Contractor Bourgeoisie' in Lebanese Politics".⁴⁹ For Baumann, this new bourgeoisie consists of Lebanese emigrants who had become wealthy contractors in the Arab Gulf, before returning to Lebanon as politicians in the 1990s. The most notable examples are Rafik Hariri, Najib Miqati, Issam Fares and Mohammad Safadi. Baumann goes beyond the conventional definition of elites as 'decision-makers', and invokes Bourdieu's definition of elites as "those with a high degree of social, symbolic, economic and cultural capital".⁵⁰ The author argues that as Hariri monopolized the centers of decision-making, other contractors were forced to focus more on building networks rich in "cultural capital" which wield symbolic power – the power to confirm or transform the social order. This, according to Baumann, was partly to compensate for their failure to gain control of institutional centers of decision-making.⁵¹

In the same vein, Wendy Pearlman addressed the recurrent pattern by which "migrants find success abroad, return to Lebanon, and seek to consecrate

⁴⁸ Uwayni was the manager of Jeddah branch of "The Bank of Indochina", a private French bank. See Traboulsi, "Al Takawun al Tabaki", pp. 164-165.

⁴⁹ Hannes Baumann, "The 'New Contractor Bourgeoisie' in Lebanese Politics", in A. Knudsen & M. Kerr (eds.), *Lebanon: After the Cedar Revolution* (London: Hurst & Company, 2012), pp. 125-144.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

their wealth by obtaining public office".⁵² Pearlman adds that, in pursuing political power, many wealthy return migrants become engaged in conventional politics by literally buying their seats on the parliamentary electoral lists of the traditional political bosses. Hence, when old landed patron-client relationships weakened, migrant wealth enabled the formation of new patron-client networks. The author concludes that even today, emigration allows someone to impose himself on political life in Lebanon.⁵³

While the above studies provide a much-needed and valuable entry into studying the role of emigration in Lebanese politics, they still treat this role as tangential and not as one requiring systematic analysis as an enduring phenomenon in the political history of Lebanon since independence.

In 2002, Paul Tabar gave an initial contribution to studying the role of emigration in Lebanese politics in the aforementioned vein. In a paper entitled “Migrant Capital and Political Elite in Lebanon”, Tabar argues that the topic of Lebanese migration has so far been researched in ways that justify the dominant political system or reflect the current political conjuncture in the country.⁵⁴ However, the author adds, Lebanese migration is a complex and multi-faceted topic that requires academic study free from any ideological or political constraints. In this context, Tabar identifies a new topic of research, namely the impact of return migration on the process of political elite formation in Lebanon. The author notes that the parliamentary elections of 2000 witnessed the election of 21 MPs, all of whom were major

⁵² Wendy Pearlman, “Emigration and the Resilience of Politics in Lebanon”, *Arab Studies Journal*, vol. 21, no. 1 (Spring 2013), p. 206.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁵⁴ Paul Tabar, “Migrant Capital and Political Elite in Lebanon”, *The Millennial Lecture Series* (Beirut: Notre Dame University, 2002).

businessmen who accumulated migrant wealth, with the latter playing varying roles in their winning of electoral seats. Such a percentage, the author adds, is a very high one, attesting to the increasing role of migrant capital in the transformation of Lebanon's political elite. Tabar concludes that migrant economic capital is a necessary but not sufficient factor in the electoral success of these MPs, since its holders need to convert it into what Pierre Bourdieu calls "political capital", "social capital", and sometimes "symbolic capital".

This study will build on the above analysis, aiming to develop it further into a conceptual framework that explains, more broadly, the role of migration in Lebanese political elite formation.

Chapter Three

Historical background to the study (1943-1990)

Lebanese emigrants began to play a political role in their homeland since the beginning of the 20th century, when Lebanon was still under Ottoman rule, and then later during the French Mandate. Of particular importance in this regard is the role played by various Lebanese émigrés in theorizing and lobbying for an independent Lebanese political entity. For instance, Bulus Nujaym⁵⁵ (in France) and Yousef al Sawda (in Egypt) played crucial roles in formulating the idea of Greater Lebanon. Likewise, Lebanese members of al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah (The Pen League) in New York wrote about, and lobbied for, Lebanese independence from Ottoman rule. In the late 1930s, Shiite community leader Rashid Baydoun traveled to Africa to solicit expatriates' donations for the purpose of building educational institutions that supported and represented the Shiites in Lebanon. With independence (1943) and the end of the French mandate, the political role of emigrants expanded both in scope and nature. This chapter provides a historical overview of the role played by Lebanese emigration in affecting domestic political processes in the period spanning the years 1943 (initiation of the “First Republic”) to 1990 (beginning of the “Second Republic”). By highlighting the relation between various presidential eras and their associated migratory influences, this chapter aims to delineate the forms through which these influences impacted the process of elite formation in Lebanon between 1943 and 1990. I will draw on Bourdieu’s notion of capital to account for the different forms of capital (economic, social, or cultural)

⁵⁵ Bulus Nujaym wrote under the pseudonym of Paul Jouplain.

accrued by elites through migration, and which played varying roles (ranging from secondary to decisive) in their attainment of elite status in the country of origin.

3.1 The presidency of Bishara al-Khoury (1943-1952)

3.1.1 Rashid Baydoun and the Lebanese diaspora in West Africa

One of the earliest influences of migration on the Lebanese political process can be traced to 1936 when poet and journalist Muhammad Ali Humani visited West Africa on behalf of the Jamiyya al-Khayriyah al-Islamiyya al-Amiliyya (The Amiliyya Society of Beirut), a voluntary religious benevolent association founded in 1923 in Beirut by Shiite notable Rashid Baydoun.⁵⁶ In 1929, the Society established the Amiliyya elementary school in the Beirut quarter of Ras al-Nabaa. Humani was entrusted to raise funds from Lebanese migrants in West Africa in order to finance the expansion and development of the school.⁵⁷ Furthermore, in 1937, the Society obtained a permit for the opening of 48 schools in the villages of southern Lebanon.⁵⁸ This decision was, as Evelyn Early notes, partly driven by the fact that “villagers and immigrants to Africa and the West who still possessed strong village ties, were the source of at least half of the Society’s contributions”.⁵⁹ It is within this context that Society president Rashid Baydoun was first elected deputy to represent South Lebanon in 1937.⁶⁰ In 1938 Baydoun made

⁵⁶ Andrew Arsan, *Interlopers of Empire: The Lebanese Diaspora in Colonial French West Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 2014), p. 212.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213.

⁵⁸ Evelyn Early, “The Amiliyya Society of Beirut: A Case Study of an Emerging Urban Zaim” (unpublished M.A. thesis, American University of Beirut, February 1971).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.49.

⁶⁰ In 1937, Baydoun also founded *al-Talai* (The Vanguard), a Shiite paramilitary organization. See Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), p. 102.

his first trip to West Africa to raise funds for the building of a high school, an educational project the Society saw necessary in meeting the needs of its supporters in Beirut.⁶¹ Baydoun and the delegation he headed spent around four months touring Senegal, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and the Gold Coast. On his return, the Society purchased land for the project, and the construction of the first Shiite high school in Beirut began in 1942.⁶² After Baydoun's second trip to West Africa in 1948, debts from the original building were repaid and a further expansion to the high school was completed.⁶³ The funds obtained in 1953-54 after Baydoun's third trip were used to pay debts and open the kindergarten and girls' primary school.⁶⁴

Rashid Baydoun was born into a family of successful merchants in Damascus, who after settling in Beirut around 1910, were among the wealthiest Shiites in the city.⁶⁵ He assumed presidency of the Amiliyya Society in 1925, following a brief presidency of the organization by his brother Muhammad. As such, his family position was central to his qualification for Society president. The success of the Amiliyya Society during its first decade can be attributed to donations coming mainly from the Baydoun family, as well as from other wealthy Shiite merchants in Beirut. However, starting 1936, a substantial portion of donations to the Society came from Lebanese Shiite immigrants in West Africa. As shown previously, each of the four fundraising trips to West Africa (the first one by a representative on his behalf, and the following three by Baydoun himself)

⁶¹ Early, "The Amiliyya Society of Beirut", p. 49.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 52; see also Arsan, *Interlopers of Empire*, p. 213.

⁶⁴ Early, "The Amiliyya Society", p. 74.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

provided necessary funds for the initiation of a new educational project by the Society. All of these projects enabled Baydoun to cultivate, and later sustain, a broad clientele of supporters (in South Lebanon and especially later in Beirut) by providing a basic service – education – which was particularly lacking within the Shiite community in the 1930s and 1940s. Baydoun’s popular following was key in his election as deputy for South Lebanon in 1937, and later as deputy for Beirut in 1947, thus embodying the characteristics of what Early calls “an emerging urban zai’m”.⁶⁶

3.1.2 Hussein Uwayni: the first manifestation of Saudi migrant wealth in Lebanese politics

The role of migrant wealth in the formation of the Sunni Lebanese political elite can be traced to the election of Hussein 'Uwayni as deputy for Beirut in the parliamentary elections of 1947. Uwayni's rapid rise to wealth and influence in Lebanon in the late 1940s and early 1950s is inextricably linked to his migration experience in Saudi Arabia, where he nurtured special relations with the Saudi royal family and amassed a large fortune through his business endeavors. Born in Beirut into a lower middle class Sunni Muslim family, Uwayni emigrated in 1921 to Jiddah in Saudi Arabia where he worked as a textile merchant.⁶⁷ In the mid-1920s, he met with 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Saud and was favored by the latter, who, in 1926, was declared king of

⁶⁶ Rashid Baydoun was elected deputy in 1937 and 1943 (South Lebanon), and in 1947, 1951, 1957, and 1964 (deputy for Beirut). He was appointed a member of cabinet in 1951 (Yafi government), 1953 (Salam government), 1958 (Sami Solh government), and 1968 (Yafi government).

⁶⁷ Fawwaz Traboulsi, “Saudi Expansion: The Lebanese Connection, 1924-1952”, in M. al-Rasheed (ed.), *Kingdom without borders: Saudi Arabia’s Political, Religious, and Media Frontiers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 66.

Hijaz, and, in 1932, king of Saudi Arabia.⁶⁸ Uwayni soon became part of a group of Lebanese and Syrian merchants and advisors working for the Al Saud family. After working for around twenty years in Saudi Arabia, Uwayni accumulated a large fortune, mainly through representing French interests in the kingdom (he was CEO of the Banque Indochine of Jeddah), and becoming the first importer of cars and pharmaceuticals into Saudi Arabia in the 1930s (through his two companies Societe Husein Aoueini and Societe commerciale arabe respectively, which were established in partnership with the Lebanese Druze Najib Salha and the Saudi businessman Ibrahim Shaker).⁶⁹ After finally settling in Beirut in 1947, Uwayni was arguably the richest man in Lebanon, and, in the words of his biographer, "the de facto ambassador and the banker of the Saudi royal family".⁷⁰ By force of his imposing migrant wealth, Uwayni was able to infiltrate the predominantly Christian Lebanese oligarchy, becoming the only Muslim in President Bishara el Khouri's "clique", around which a wider circle of some thirty families was formed, comprising what the opposition press at the time called the "Consortium".⁷¹ During the presidential term of Bishara el Khouri (1943-52), Uwayni was among the thirteen oligarchy members to be elected members of parliament, the five to hold cabinet posts and the one to be named prime minister (Uwayni himself): he was elected a member of parliament in 1947; held the posts of minister of finance and minister of

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-69.

⁷⁰ Cited in Traboulsi, "Saudi Expansion", p. 68.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

foreign affairs in 1948 (Raid Sulh's government) and 1951 respectively; and was named prime minister in 1950 and 1951.⁷²

On a continuum measuring the role of migration in the formation of political elite in Lebanon – varying between the two extremes of secondary and decisive – Baydoun's trajectory reveals a rather “complementary” role for migration (in this case diaspora). During each of his three visits to West Africa (1938, 1948 and 1953-54), Baydoun received substantial financial support from the Lebanese diaspora, enabling him to implement the Society's projects and pay the incurring debts. Building the first Shiite high school in Beirut⁷³, its further expansion, and opening a kindergarten and a girls' primary school (both were almost free education) made Baydoun the undisputable provider of affordable educational services within the Shiite Beirut community.⁷⁴ Accomplishing these activities bestowed upon Baydoun a “good reputation” and “recognition” among the Shiite Beirut community, which according to Bourdieu, translate into possessing “personal political capital”.⁷⁵ With his election for the first time as deputy for Beirut in 1947, Baydoun converted his personal political capital into delegated political capital.⁷⁶ (The same attributes apply to Baydoun when his

⁷² Between February 14 and June 7, 1951, Uwayni held both posts of prime minister and minister of foreign affairs. See Traboulsi, “Saudi Expansion”, pp. 72-76.

⁷³ The secondary school was built at a time when there were no government secondary schools in Beirut. See Early, “The Amiliyya Society”, pp. 51-52.

⁷⁴ According to Early, the majority of tuition students paid less than one-half the official tuition rate.

⁷⁵ Bourdieu defines personal political capital as a personal type of “‘fame’ and ‘popularity’ based on the fact of being known and recognized in person” and of having a “good reputation”. See David Swartz, *Symbolic Power, Politics, and Intellectuals: The Political Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), p. 65.

⁷⁶ According to Bourdieu, delegated political capital refers to the authority granted by a political organization. See Swartz, *Symbolic Power, Politics, and Intellectuals*, p. 66.

society was opening village schools in South Lebanon between 1937 and 1944).⁷⁷

Hence, although Baydoun's status as a member of a rich commercial family served as a stepping stone for him towards elite membership, it was the diasporic financial support he received that complemented his trajectory as a member of the Lebanese political elite for an impressive duration of 31 years.

On the other hand, Ouwayni's trajectory reveals a decisive role for migration in the process of acquiring elite status in the homeland. Unlike Baydoun, Uwayni's modest social background meant that he didn't possess any sizable capital (social or economic) to rely on in the homeland. It was his migration experience, however, that enabled him to accrue both economic and social capital (his close ties with the Saudi royal family), both of which he relied on to acquire elite status in Lebanon.

3.2 The presidency of Kamil Chamoun (1952-1958)

3.2.1 A partnership between the president and migrant economic capital

The era of Kamil Chamoun's presidency witnessed the emergence of a new group of Lebanese entrepreneurs and investors – most of them return migrants – who flocked to the president: the Sahnawi brothers (Syria), Emile Boustani (Palestine, Iraq), Najib Salha (Saudi Arabia), Hussein Uwayni (Saudi Arabia), and Toufic Assaf (Venezuela).⁷⁸ Most of the aforementioned return migrant entrepreneurs became bankers in “BLOM bank”, “Societe

⁷⁷ By 1944, the village schools of the Society in South Lebanon were closed, as the society took the decision to centralize its activities in Beirut. See Early, “The Amiliyya Society”, p. 50.

⁷⁸ See Fawwaz Traboulsi, *Social classes and political power in Lebanon* (Beirut: Dar al Saqi, 2016), p. 162.

Generale”, “Intra Bank”, and “BBAC”, while some others established, for the first time in Lebanon, publicly listed companies (a business owned by shareholders).⁷⁹ Chamoun was arguably the first Lebanese president to become the business partner of entrepreneurs: he imposed himself as a shareholder in publicly listed companies in return for granting them establishment licenses.⁸⁰

3.2.2 The rise of Emile Boustani

Of particular significance in the Chamoun presidential era was the rise of Emile Boustani, an ally of the president, and a businessman-turned-politician whose trajectory was largely shaped by emigration. Boustani was born in 1907 in the small village of Dibbiyeh to a (lower) middle class family. His father was a mathematics teacher who had converted from the Maronite sect to Protestantism. Boustani went on to study at the American University of Beirut courtesy of a scholarship from a Lebanese emigrant, graduating in 1928 with a degree in sciences. After graduation, Boustani worked for year as a teacher in Ramallah (Palestine), before returning to AUB to complete a Master’s degree in astronomy. He then taught astronomy for a year before travelling to the US to study engineering. In Boston, Boustani met with his friend Charles Malek, who advised him to enroll at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and helped him finance his studies through a

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ A notable example in this regard is the license granted by Chamoun to the sugar refinery plant in the Bekaa region and whose owner was Hussein Uwayni. See Traboulsi, *Social classes and political power in Lebanon*, p. 162. Boustani, Salha, and Assaf all became deputies and cabinet members in the 1950s.

scholarship from an immigrant of the Bustani family. Emile graduated in June 1933 with a Master's degree in civil engineering.⁸¹

After returning to Lebanon, Boustani was employed by the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) to work on the construction of a pipeline from Kirkuk to Haifa. He worked for two years in Kirkuk (Iraq) before resigning from IPC in 1936 and relocating to Haifa (Palestine) where he embarked on establishing his own engineering company. In Haifa, Boustani began cultivating relations with his former employers (IPC), in order to secure future contracts for his company.⁸² In 1937, he formed, with his first partner Kamel Abdul Rahman, "The Contracting and Trading Company" (CAT), which was registered in Haifa. In 1941, Boustani formed a new partnership with Abdallah Khouri in Haifa, and in the same year both returned to Beirut where they opened a branch for CAT (they were joined in the same year by a third partner, Shukri Shammass). In Lebanon, CAT obtained lucrative work from the British army, including building pillboxes and improving the roads to Baalbeck and Homs. Boustani's first foray into politics was during Lebanon's battle for independence in 1943, when he organized demonstrations against the French mandate authorities, as well as financing the printing and distribution of pamphlets.⁸³

In 1948, in light of the Arab loss of Palestine, and after CAT lost its assets in Haifa, Boustani's company entered Kuwait to execute work for the Kuwait Oil Company. It was through CAT's operations in Kuwait that

⁸¹ Marwan Iskandar, *Rafik Hariri and the fate of Lebanon* (London: Saqi, 2006), pp. 21-22.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁸³ Pierre Sarraf & Zalfa Chehab (November 30, 2015). *Beyond Sea & Sky, The Life and Story of Emile Bustani* [video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JryExfom_c.

Boustani established his private fortune, and was able, after 1952, to expand the outreach of his company's operations to Iraq, Bahrain, and Qatar. But Boustani's ambition went beyond merely making a fortune. As his biographer Desmond Stewart puts it:

Always at the back of his mind was the notion that money was power...
This notion led directly to political involvement.⁸⁴

In 1951 Boustani ran for parliamentary elections in the Chouf district after converting back to the Maronite denomination. He launched a huge electoral campaign in newspapers and forums, and sent his CAT planes to fly over villages, throwing pamphlets prompting people to vote for him as a "candidate for a better future".⁸⁵ Boustani was elected member of parliament in 1951, and started then working to achieve his ambition of becoming president of the republic.⁸⁶ Boustani was an active deputy with outstanding debating skills, but it was his reaction to two developments in 1956 that undoubtedly enhanced his status as a serious future presidential candidate. In March 1956, an earthquake hit Lebanon, destroying thousands of homes in the Chouf district, Sidon and South Lebanon. In his capacity as Minister of public works (and director of the Reconstruction Board following the earthquake), Boustani introduced modern techniques in organization, management and efficient execution, managing to rebuild most of the damage within two years. And in October of the same year, when Israel,

⁸⁴ Desmond Stewart, *Orphan with a hoop: the life of Emile Bustani* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1967), p. 120.

⁸⁵ *Beyond Sea & Sky, The Life and Story of Emile Bustani* [video file].

⁸⁶ Iskandar, *Rafik Hariri and the fate of Lebanon*, p. 24.

France and England attacked Egypt after the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nasser, Boustani boarded his private plane and flew to London, where “he spent a small fortune” raising objections in the British press to the British government’s anti-Egyptian policies.⁸⁷ Boustani’s efforts were much appreciated by Abdul Nasser, and a friendship evolved between the two. During the early 1960s, Boustani also found time to assume “civil” leadership roles, such as becoming chairman of the Alumni Association of AUB graduates, and contributing to the construction of a young ladies’ dormitory at the AUB campus, in the name of his wife Laura Boustani. At the time of his death in 1963, Boustani was the leading businessman in the Middle East, and enjoyed political influence in Lebanon and the region, including considerable sway over Nasser.

Boustani’s rise to political prominence in Lebanon in the 1950s and early 1960s reveals a decisive role for the migratory influences that shaped his trajectory. Possessing modest economic and social capital, Boustani had to rely on immigrants’ funds in order to complete his university education in Lebanon and the US. This in turn made him a possessor of “cultural capital”, which enabled him to get employed by a major petroleum company after returning from the US. During his work for IPC in Iraq and Haifa, he built connections with his employers, hence accruing a certain degree of “social capital”. After his resignation, Boustani relied on the latter capital to secure contracts for his own company. After leaving Haifa and moving CAT to Lebanon in 1941, Boustani started accruing “economic capital”, and hence was able to finance the printing and distribution of pamphlets during

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Lebanon's independence battle in 1943 (hence accruing a certain degree of personal political capital).

Moreover, it was the significant migrant economic capital accrued by Boustani after CAT started operating in Kuwait (in the wake of the 1948 Nakba) that obviously enabled him to: secure a "winning" candidacy seat on the electoral alliance list headed by major leaders Kamal Junblat and Kamil Chamoun in the Chouf district; market himself widely as a candidate in the Lebanese press, and use his private planes for electoral purposes. After becoming MP in 1951, Boustani capitalized further on his migrant economic capital, thus enhancing his political capital in his quest to become president of the republic: most significant was his introduction of modern techniques that enabled an efficient response to the 1956 earthquake that hit Lebanon; and his flight to London in 1956, where he spent a sizable amount of money lobbying in the British press against the tripartite aggression on Egypt. The latter endeavor enhanced Boustani's reputation and recognition in the eyes of the Lebanese in general, and Muslims in particular, for whom Nasser was the undisputed hero. All this translated into more "political capital" for Boustani on the national level, an asset particularly important for him in his quest to become president of the republic.

3.2.3 South Lebanon: The beginning of the alliance between traditional politicians and migrant economic capital

In south Lebanon, the era also ushered in the alliance between certain migrant strata and the traditional political leaderships, such as the Zein family (in the regions of Zahrani and Nabatiyeh), the Ussayran family (in the regions of Saida and Zahrani) and al-Asaad family (in the districts of

Marjeyoun and Bint Jbeil).⁸⁸ These traditional leaderships/families were aiming for allies within the southern Lebanese nascent bourgeoisie which had its roots in two sources: "First, the wealthy expatriates returning with big money, and thus aiming to impose their leadership, and second, the professional southern Lebanese, particularly the lawyers and physicians".⁸⁹ This alliance manifested itself, at various times, in wealthy return migrants running as candidates in parliamentary elections on the electoral lists headed by traditional politicians, in return for their financing of the list's electoral expenses. As such, the wealthy return migrant was in effect seen as "buying" his parliamentary seat, rather than winning it based on his political constituency.⁹⁰ An example of this trend in the 1951 parliamentary elections is the electoral list in South Lebanon headed by Ahmad al Asaad which included wealthy return migrant Suleiman Arab (Nigeria).⁹¹

The previous example illustrates a decisive role for migration in acquiring elite status in the homeland, since Arab was a newcomer to politics and won a parliamentary seat after being nominated on the electoral list of a traditional political boss, or Za'im (in this case Ahmad al Asaad).

3.3 The Shihabism era (1958-1970)

3.3.1 Shiite migrant capital in the service of Musa al Sadr's "modernizing project"

Camille Chamoun's regime, which ended in 1958 with the outbreak of civil war, was succeeded by a reform-oriented regime headed by the commander of the army Fuad Shihab. The Shihabist regime, upholding a statist vision,

⁸⁸ Mouhsina Serhan, *Migration... and the South: from deprivation to boom* (Beirut: Dar al Farabi, 2015), p. 347.

⁸⁹ Khalil Ahmad Khalil, cited in Serhan, *Migration... and the South*, p. 347.

⁹⁰ Serhan, *Migration... and the South*, pp. 345-6.

⁹¹ The list won in all its 15 members.

was looking for new political figures it could work with in order to check the powers of the traditional leaders.⁹²

The following year, 1959, witnessed the arrival of a newcomer to the Lebanese political scene who was a migrant himself, and whose rise to prominence not only benefited from the new Shihabist regime, but was also closely linked to migrant capital. That year the Iranian-born Shiite cleric Musa al Sadr arrived to South Lebanon from Qom in Iran, carrying with him a political project aimed at securing for the Lebanese Shia a better share of the state vis-à-vis the Maronites and Sunnis. Al Sadr's "modernizing" discourse offered a middle ground between the old politics of feudalism and the extremes of radicalism, appealing in particular to two social strata within the Shiite community who flocked to him: the civil servants and professionals, and the return migrants who had made money in West Africa.⁹³ The civil servants wanted to rectify their inferior position in the state vis-à-vis the Maronites and the Sunnis. As for the Shiite return migrant *nouveau riches*, they were uneasy with the prevalent old-age feudal politics, and were hence searching for a new political voice, and yearning to convert their wealth into political and social power. In fact, al-Sadr was soon to become their representative. As Fouad Ajami writes:

Musa al Sadr grasped the dilemma of the monied Shia, particularly of the majority of them who had prospered out of the country and returned. Shia wealth was inarticulate: it had no channels for political participation or expression. And with a keen scent for their predicament, he was to emerge as their spokesman. He sought them out and traveled to the lands where they

⁹² Fouad Ajami, *The vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 83.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

worked – to Nigeria, Ghana, the Ivory Coast and Liberia, and Sierra Leone. He asked for their financial help. But he had something to offer in return. He gave voice to their own vague resentments and claims.⁹⁴

This Shiite voice found its embodiment in the late 1960s with the creation of the Higher Shia Council (a platform expressing Shia grievances and demands), which Musa al Sadr established with the support of a number of Shiite personalities, among them men with "new wealth" acquired from emigration. Indeed, as political writer Hazem Saghieh observes, "Shia migrant capital came to serve al- Sadr's 'modernizing' political project, aiming to transform the Shia from a community into a sect".⁹⁵

Although al Sadr's ascendancy made considerable inroads into Shiite politics in the 1960s, it was unable to break the hegemony of traditional politicians – also allied with Shiite migrant capital – in South Lebanon, as evidenced by the results of the parliamentary elections of 1960, 1964 and 1968. Significant examples of this alliance in the electoral district of Tyre were: In 1960, wealthy return migrant Suleiman Arab (Nigeria) funded the electoral list of Muhammad Saffiyedine⁹⁶; in 1964, Kazem el Khalil's electoral list – funded by wealthy expatriate Hussein Fawwaz – lost against Muhammad Saffieddine's list, funded by wealthy return migrant Ali Arab⁹⁷; in 1968, Kazem el Khalil's list (funded by wealthy expatriates Yusef Hammoud and Yusef Hashem) lost again against Muhamad Saffiedine's list, funded by Ali Arab.⁹⁸ The same alliance between traditional leaderships and migrant

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁹⁵ Interview with the writer Hazem Saghieh, June 2016.

⁹⁶ Both Saffiedine and Arab were elected MPs.

⁹⁷ Ali Arab was elected MP in 1964 and 1968.

⁹⁸ Serhan, *Migration... and the South*, p. 348.

capital also manifested itself in the 1968 elections in the electoral district of Marjeyoun-Hasbayah where Kamel al Assad allied himself with newly returned migrant Raef Samarah.⁹⁹

3.3.2 Migrant capital financing the *Deuxieme bureau*

The 1961 aborted *coup d'etat* by the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) against the Shihab regime contributed to the strengthening of the latter, manifesting itself in further entrenchment of security agencies in Lebanese politics. In particular, the *Deuxieme bureau* (army intelligence) exploited this opportunity and transformed itself into a new patronage network, thereby exerting firm control over the sociopolitical domain.¹⁰⁰

The parliamentary elections in the spring of 1964 (during Shihab's term), which resulted in a sweeping majority for Shihabists, was one in which money played a key role, especially the money dispensed by return migrant *nouveau riches* who were among the sponsors of Shihabism. Notable examples in this regard were Mikhail Debs and Najib Saliha. Return migrant Debs (Africa) was one of the pillars of Shihabism in the Zahleh district, while Saliha (the business partner of Hussein Uwayni from Saudi days) was a major shareholder in Intra Bank, or "the bank of the Fouad Shihab era": the *Deuxieme bureau* manipulated the bank, and used it to finance parliamentary elections and to extend loans to loyalist journalists and politicians.¹⁰¹

In the wake of the Intra Bank crash in 1966, Saliha became a shareholder in al Ahli Bank which became the bank associated with of the era of Charles Helou (1964-70), Shihab's successor to the presidency. Al Ahli Bank thus

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A history of modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), p. 139.

¹⁰¹ Traboulsi, *Social classes and political power in Lebanon*, pp. 162-3.

replaced Intra Brank as the “*Dexieume bureau bank*” during the Helou era, which witnessed greater control for security agencies over political life.¹⁰²

Economic migrant capital during the Shihabist era in South Lebanon played an important role in the support of both traditional leaders and their competitors who were also previously allied with other traditional leaders (like Muhamad Safieddine who won a parliamentary seat on Ahmad al Asaad’s list in 1951). The decline of certain traditional leaderships like Kazem el Khalil during the Shihabist era resulted in the rise of other “traditional” figures like Muhammad Safieddine who was funded by rich émigrés during consecutive parliamentary elections (Suleiman and Ali Arab). The role of migrant economic capital was decisive in acquiring elite status in the cases of Suleiman and Ali Arab, while it can be seen as “complementary” in the case of Safieddine, since he was previously elected MP in 1947, 1951 and 1953.

In the Zahleh and Matn districts, migrant economic capital played roles in supporting traditional leaders as well as in the emergence of new elites. In the elections of 1960 and 1964, Joseph Skaf was allied with Mikhael el Debs (both won their seats), while Najib Saliha was elected MP in 1964. In the 1968 parliamentary elections, Debs funded the electoral list of Joseph Abi Khater against Skaff whose list was funded by return migrant Hussein Mansour (West Africa). As for Saliha, he funded the “constitutional list” in the South Matn district.¹⁰³

3.3.3 The “millionaires” government

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 163.

¹⁰³ Iliya Harik, *Mann Yahkum Lubnan* (Beirut: Dar Annahar, 1972), p. 101.

The connection of the Helou presidential era to migrant capital also reflected itself in the return of Hussein Uwayni as prime minister in autumn of 1964. The cabinet, nicknamed the “millionaires” government, included, in addition to Uwayni himself, the businessman Ali Arab (a rich Shiite émigré from West Africa), Antoine Sahnawi (a member of the “consortium”), and Najib Saliha.¹⁰⁴

3.4 The presidency of Suleiman Franjeh (1970-1976)

In south Lebanon, the alliance between traditional politicians and migrant capital continued to influence the political process, as evidenced by the winning alliance of Kazem el Khalil and rich émigré Yousef Hammoud (Nigeria) in the parliamentary elections of 1972 in the Tyre district.¹⁰⁵ In the same elections in the Aley district, return migrant Toufic Assaf (Venezuela) won a parliamentary seat on the electoral list of Druze leader Majid Arsalan. However, it was this era that witnessed the first break in the hegemony of traditional leaders over politics in South Lebanon: in the by-elections of Nabatiyeh, in December 1974, Musa al Sadr’s candidate, Rafik Chahine¹⁰⁶, defeated Kamel al-Asaad’s candidate for the parliamentary seat

3.5 The Civil War Order (1976-1990)

The outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in 1975 obstructed carrying out parliamentary elections until 1992, and accordingly it is unfeasible for us to

¹⁰⁴ Traboulsi, *A history of modern Lebanon*, pp. 145 and 269.

¹⁰⁵ Serhan, *Migration... and the South*, p. 348.

¹⁰⁶ Rafik Chahine completed a PhD in the US, and was previously elected MP in 1960 and 1968. He is quite different from the “rich and obscure émigré from Africa” which Fawwaz Traboulsi refers to in his book *A history of modern Lebanon*, p. 180.

provide an analysis of any migratory influences on the formation of Lebanon's parliamentary elite during the aforementioned period.

3.5.1 Lebanese migrant businessmen influencing the political process in the homeland

However, the period following the "oil boom" of 1973 in the Arab Gulf witnessed the emergence of what Hannes Baumann calls the "new contractor bourgeoisie", a group of Lebanese émigrés who became wealthy contractors in the Gulf in the 1970s before returning to Lebanon as investors and politicians in the 1980s and 1990s. The most notable examples are Rafik Hariri, Najib Mikati and Isam Fares. In particular, Hariri and Fares started in the early 1980s to influence the political process in Lebanon as "aspiring elites". Fares supported Maronite Christian leader Bashir Gemayel's bid to become president in 1982 through financing a Washington think tank close to Bashir¹⁰⁷, while Hariri began his quest to become prime minister during the same year: after the Israeli invasion of Beirut in 1982, he put his resources, free of charge, at the disposal of the Lebanese government to clear the rubble and repair roads in the capital.¹⁰⁸ In 1983 and 1984, Hariri participated in the peace conferences of Geneva and Lausanne in Switzerland as the Saudi king's special envoy. These two attempts at ending the civil war in Lebanon did not succeed, but were important means of advancement in Hariri's quest for political power. In 1989, Hariri crowned his activities as an "aspiring elite" by participating in

¹⁰⁷ Baumann, "The 'New Contractor Bourgeoisie' in Lebanese politics", p. 130.

¹⁰⁸ El-Husseini, "Lebanon: Building Political Dynasties", p. 249.

the National Reconciliation Conference (held in Taif, Saudi Arabia) that put an end to the Lebanese civil war.¹⁰⁹

3.5.2 The presidency of Amin Gemayel (1982-1988)

Amin Gemayel, who succeeded his brother Bashir as president of the republic (after Bashir's assassination in 1982), was known for his close ties with the milieu of businessmen, the most important of whom was Roger Tamraz, an Arab and international financial speculator born in Egypt to a Lebanese father and a Syrian mother. After graduating from Cambridge University in the UK, Tamraz worked in an American financial company, before working for Saudi businessmen and becoming the general manager of "Commonwealth bank" in Detroit (USA) in 1982.¹¹⁰

Gemayel appointed Tamraz on top of "Intra Invest Company" (the heir to Intra Bank) during the period 1983-1988. Through his position in "Intra Invest", Tamraz controlled "al-Mashreq Bank" through buying a considerable portion of its shares. "Al-Mashreq Bank" was known to be the bank of the "Phalangist era" (or the "Amin Gemayel era").¹¹¹ Tamraz is estimated to have paid 6 million USD (from "al-Mashreq bank"), covering the expenses of Amin Gemayel's presidential trips outside Lebanon.¹¹² Before that, Tamraz had assisted the leader of the Lebanese Forces militia Bashir Gemayel in opening "Halat" airport in the eastern region of Lebanon, paying 3 million USD from his own money, and extending a loan to the

¹⁰⁹ Hariri participated in the conference as part of the Saudi delegation; see el-Husseini, "Lebanon: Building Political Dynasties", p. 250.

¹¹⁰ 70% of the bank's shares were owned by Saudis; see Traboulsi, "Social classes and political power in Lebanon", pp. 164-65.

¹¹¹ Traboulsi, *Social classes and political power in Lebanon*, p. 165.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 167.

project through “al-Mashreq bank”.¹¹³ Also among the group of businessmen who flocked to Bashir Gemayel (as leader of the Lebanese Forces) was Antoine Choueiri. After Bashir’s assassination in 1982, Choueiri allied himself with Samir Geagea who assumed leadership of the Lebanese Forces. Choueiri had migrated to France during the civil war, where he has established “La Regie generale de presse” (an advertising group with activities in Lebanon, the Arab Gulf states, Egypt, Morocco, Oman, and France). Choueiri was also one of the financiers of the Lebanese Forces party and its affiliated television, LBC.¹¹⁴

Both trans-migrant Roger Tamraz and Antoine Choueiri fit the category of “politically relative elite”, or businessmen who support political elites without seeking elite status for themselves. Both Tamraz and Choueiri played supporting roles in reinforcing the elite status of both Amin (and Bashir) Gemayel, and Samir Geagea, respectively. Although Tamraz reached unprecedented influence during the Amin Gemayel era, his speculations and bribes to militia leaders resulted in the bankruptcy of “al Mashreq bank”, leading to Tamraz fleeing from Lebanon to the US. On the other hand, Choueiri’s role in upholding the elite status of Geagea¹¹⁵ remained steady until the former’s death in 2010.

This presidential period also witnessed financial support given to AMAL movement (headed by Nabih Berri) by wealthy Shiite expatriates who were still residing outside Lebanon. In this regard, Paul Tabar cites the following names: Mahmoud Nasr al-dine, Najib Zaher, Mustafa Khalil, Fouad

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

¹¹⁵ Samir Geagea is seen here as a member of the post-1975 war elite in Lebanon. In the postwar period, Geagea became a political elite when he was appointed cabinet member in 1990.

Oumays, and Ibrahim Baroud (all of them in Abidjan, the capital of Ivory Coast). Tabar also mentions the names of Fahed al-Dayekh, Wasef Hatoum, Yusef Fawwaz, and Ahmad Fawwaz (all of them in Nigeria).¹¹⁶ All of the aforementioned names can be classified as “diasporic politically relevant elites” since they supported a civil-war elite, namely Nabih Berri.¹¹⁷ They are “diasporic” because they were engaged in activities related to the homeland (in this case Lebanon) while still residing abroad.

This chapter has shown that migrant economic capital has played varying roles in acquiring or upholding elite status by respective politicians in Lebanon between 1943 and 1990. These roles have varied between a supporting role for traditional politicians (especially in South Lebanon), or their competitors who wanted a bigger share in the sectarian system like Musa Sadr and later Nabih Berri; a complementary role in acquiring elite status by new elites such as Rashid Baydoun; and a decisive role in the emergence of new political elites who were equally accommodating to the Lebanese sectarian system, like Hussein Uwayni and Emile Boustani.

Having outlined the important historical milestones of the issue under study, I will provide in following chapter an in-depth analysis of the postwar era in Lebanon (the post-1990 era).

¹¹⁶ Tabar, “Migrant capital and political elite in Lebanon”, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ Nabih Berri is seen here as a member of the post-1975 war elite in Lebanon. In the postwar period, Berri became a political elite when he was elected speaker of the Lebanese parliament in 1992.

Chapter Four

Exposition and analysis of data

In this chapter, I discuss my findings with the aim of identifying general patterns in the data collected from interviews and from relevant secondary sources. I aim to shed light on how different forms of accrued migrant capital played varying roles in the attainment of elite status by various players in the Lebanese political field. My analysis is rooted in the assumption that acquiring elite status is enabled by possessing what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu identifies as delegated political capital. Bourdieu identifies two types of political capital: personal and delegated. The first is linked to the person. It is a personal type of “‘fame’ and ‘popularity’ based on the fact of being known and recognized in person” and of having a “good reputation”.¹¹⁸ It, in turn, can take two different forms reflecting two separate origins. It can take on a professional form of specialized knowledge or experience accumulated through public service. Or it can take a “heroic or prophetic” form that is similar to Max Weber’s concept of charisma. The latter is more likely to emerge during crises when an individual is able to promote a mobilizing discourse that fills the vacuum left by the current political institutions. The second type, delegated political capital, refers to the authority granted by political organization (or institution).

I will hereby discuss the commonalities derived from the interviews I conducted as well as from relevant secondary sources. I will firstly address the data on five political elites collected from secondary sources, before addressing the data collected from the interviews I conducted with 22

¹¹⁸ Swartz, *Symbolic Power, Politics, and Intellectuals*, p. 65.

political elites. The total number of cases studied is 27. It is worth noting here that the majority of elites studied in this chapter come from either modest, middle class, or upper middle class social backgrounds. In this sense, migration played a twofold role in the trajectories of these elites: it enabled them to achieve upward social mobility (migrant wealth) as well as political ascendancy (elite status). The migration experiences of these elites acquires greater significance precisely because all of them – except one – do not hail from political families (i.e. their father or uncle was not a political elite), and hence lacked any degree of inherited political capital to rely on in the process of acquiring elite status in Lebanon. It is also worth mentioning that 10 out of the 27 elites had a migration background (i.e. father or siblings were migrants), prior to initiating their own trajectories.

4.1 Migrant economic capital plays a decisive role in the emergence of new political elites in Lebanon

The trajectories of five political elites (Rafik Hariri, Najib Mikati, Isam Fares, Nehmeh Tomeh, and Gilbert Chaghoury), in addition to those of 13 of my interviewees (18 elites in total), revealed a decisive role for migrant economic capital in the process of acquiring elite status in Lebanon by the respective migrants. This process took three different forms:

4.1.1 An indirect conversion of migrant economic capital to political capital in the homeland

13 (out of 18) of these political elites capitalized on their *migrant* economic capital and initiated charitable, civic, or social activities within their electoral districts or local communities in Lebanon. The charitable, civic and social activities undertaken by these return migrants made them “known and recognized in person”, and earned them a “good reputation” within their

respective constituencies. The latter attributes translate into a personal type of “fame” and “popularity” for each elite, or following Bourdieu, personal political capital. With their election to the posts of Prime Minister, Member of Parliament, or head of municipality, the aforementioned elites converted their “personal political capital” into what Bourdieu identifies as “delegated political capital” (by which political power is granted by an organization or institution).¹¹⁹ To avoid sounding monotonous, I will not repeat in the discussion below a common characteristic mentioned above that unites all of the 13 elites (acquiring personal political capital and converting it into delegated political capital). I will rather focus on the elites’ migration experiences, their accrument of migrant economic capital, and the kind of activities (charitable, social, civic, cultural, etc.) they initiated in Lebanon. The latter activities enabled their acquisition of elite status in the country of origin.

The trajectories of both Rafik Hariri and Isam Fares reveal the acquisition of elite status in Lebanon by two migrants who came from quite modest social backgrounds. Born in Saida, Hariri migrated to Saudi Arabia in 1964, unable to pay for his university studies and searching for employment. After a number of failed attempts at contracting, Hariri made his first million in 1976 by working with Nasir al-Rashid, a Saudi engineer who had access to royal contracts.¹²⁰ Al-Rashid started to rely on Hariri’s resourcefulness for the completion of highly demanding contracts, including the Masara Hotel in the

¹¹⁹ Bourdieu mentions the official of a government agency or the leader of a political party as possessors of delegated political capital. It’s quite logical to assume here that a member of parliament, a member of cabinet, or head of municipality are also possessors of such capital. See Swartz, *Symbolic Power, Politics, and Intellectuals*, p. 66.

¹²⁰ Hannes Baumann, *Citizen Hariri: Lebanon’s Neoliberal Reconstruction* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2016), p. 25.

resort of Taif.¹²¹ Crown prince Fahed was reportedly very impressed by Hariri's achievement, granting him (and al-Rashid) a series of highly lucrative contracts. Hariri was also rewarded Saudi citizenship. In 1978, Hariri established his company Saudi Oger to manage projects in Saudi Arabia, and in 1979 he bought the French mother company.¹²² Between 1979 and 1992, Hariri capitalized on his migrant economic capital and initiated philanthropic activities in Lebanon. In addition to cleaning up the rubble in downtown Beirut after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 (by his company Saudi Oger), Hariri provided educational loans (scholarships) to students through the Hariri Foundation. The latter activity brought the name Rafik Hariri to wider public attention.¹²³ The foundation's student loan program aided an estimate of 32,000 university students between 1983 and 1996.¹²⁴ Hariri also relied on his migrant economic capital (and Saudi support), and through the use of checkbook diplomacy¹²⁵, he participated in civil war diplomacy aimed at ending the Lebanese conflict (his roles in the Geneva and Lausanne meetings in 1983 and 1984, the tripartite agreement in 1985, and the Taif accord in 1989). Hariri's involvement in diplomatic activities enhanced his stature as a "peacemaker". He was appointed prime minister in 1992.¹²⁶

As for Isam Fares, a Greek Orthodox, he was born in 1937 in Baynou, in the Akkar region in North Lebanon. Fares started his professional career in

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ For example, Hariri allegedly paid Elie Hobeika and the other parties large sums of money to facilitate the 1985 tripartite agreement. See Baumann, *Citizen Hariri*, p. 38.

¹²⁶ Rafik Hariri acted as prime minister from 1992 to 1998 and from 2000 to 2004; he was elected deputy for Beirut in 1996 and 2000.

Saudi Arabia where he obtained highly lucrative contracts, most particularly for the bridge linking Saudi Arabia to Bahrain. He then established and headed a variety of trading, industrial and services companies under the name Wedge Group. In 1987, Fares initiated the Fares Foundation which established health clinics in Akkar and launched a variety of educational, cultural, social, and infrastructure projects in the Akkar region. Fares was first elected MP in 1996.¹²⁷

On the other hand, the trajectories of both Najib Mikati and Muhamad Safadi reveal the acquisition of elite status in Lebanon by two migrants who came from merchant families. Born in Tripoli in 1955 to a prominent Sunni family (a family of merchants), Najib Mikati graduated from AUB, and then followed advanced management programs at INSEAD and Harvard University. Mikati's wealth originates from the migrant economic capital accrued by his brother Taha who established the Arabian Construction Company in Abu Dhabi in 1967.¹²⁸ In 1982, Najib and Taha Mikati founded (in Beirut) telecommunications company Investcom, which entered markets such as Sudan, Liberia, Yemen, and Ghana.¹²⁹ In 1988, Taha and Najib Mikati founded the Azm wa Saade Association which provides social and health services in Tripoli and North Lebanon.

Najib Mikati capitalized on the migrant economic capital accrued by his brother Taha, and in partnership with him initiated multinational business activities. This accrued economic capital enabled Najib Mikati to establish

¹²⁷ Isam Fares was elected MP in 1996 and 2000. He was also appointed deputy prime minister in 2000 and 2003.

¹²⁸ Hannes Baumann, "The 'new contractor bourgeoisie' in Lebanese politics": Hariri, Mikati and Fares", in A. Knudsen & M. Kerr (eds.), *Lebanon: After the Cedar Revolution* (London: Hurst and Company, 2012), p. 130.

¹²⁹ See <https://www.forbes.com/profile/najib-mikati/>

(with his brother) a foundation which provides health and social services in Tripoli. Mikati was first elected MP in 2000.¹³⁰

As for Muhammad Safadi, he was born in Tripoli where his family were established Sunni merchants in the wholesale and retail clothing trade; his father and uncles worked together and owned a clothing factory (Safadi brothers).¹³¹

Safadi graduated from AUB in 1968 with a bachelor's degree in business administration. Building on his family's reputation as traders, he moved to Beirut in 1969 and took clothing merchandises on debt from a business friend of the family. After selling the goods, he used the cash and embarked on different investments, hence starting his business career: he imported water pipes and electronics to Lebanon at low prices, and after that, began exporting goods to KSA.

Upon the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in 1975, Safadi migrated to Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, "where he became rich by building residential compounds".¹³² On this he says: "I looked for the market deficiencies (in KSA) and the housing sector was the problem. I was a friend to a prince¹³³ in Saudi Arabia and we are still friends. He owned many properties but had no cash. I had no cash as well. I asked him to invest in his lands and build houses on them. The Saudi Airlines needed 100 villas and I got a 5 years

¹³⁰ Najib Mikati was elected MP in 2000, 2009 and 2018. He was appointed a cabinet member in 1998, 2000, 2003, and prime minister in 2005 and 2011.

¹³¹ *The Guardian*, 7 June 2007.

¹³² Baumann, "The 'New Contractor Bourgeoisie' in Lebanese politics", p. 142.

¹³³ Safadi didn't mention the prince's name in the interview, but he was referring to the head of the Saudi air force, prince Turki bin Nasser.

contract with them... So I became a builder”.¹³⁴ After staying for 6 months in KSA, Safadi moved to London “and began to act as business manager for the head of the Saudi air force, Prince Turki bin Nasser, son-in-law of crown prince Sultan”.¹³⁵

On his move to London, Safadi says: “I operated my business from my office in London. I used to move between London and KSA, spending two weeks in London and two weeks in KSA. I worked in building and in the associated industry, like prefabricated houses, facility management, maintenance and support, and all the related lines”.¹³⁶

In 1985, the first stage of the controversial Al-Yamamah arms deal was agreed upon, and which Safadi was later implicated in. Signed in 1988 between the British government and Saudi Arabia, the agreement provided the British arms company BAE with an annual revenue worth around \$2bn (total revenue at the end of 2006 amounted to more than \$40bn). The deal however, shortly after being signed, was marred by allegations of corruption, including claims that BAE had paid massive bribes to Saudi royals in order to secure the deal.¹³⁷ The police later calculated that more than £6bn may have been distributed in corrupt commissions, through an array of agents and middlemen.¹³⁸ In 2006, Safadi was named as playing the role of “middleman for Saudis”, which prompted investigators to demand access to his offshore

¹³⁴ Safadi was also involved in building residential compounds in KSA for companies such as the British arms company BAE, “which paid commission to Saudi princes for the privilege”; See *The Guardian*, 7 June 2007.

¹³⁵ *The Guardian*, 7 June 2007.

¹³⁶ Safadi “operated through a UK company, Jones Consultants, and in Saudi Arabia through Allied Maintenance, which built compounds for BAE”. See *The Guardian*, 7 June 2007.

¹³⁷ The alleged principal method for concealing the bribes was to increase the price of the goods. See *The Guardian*, 15 December 2006.

¹³⁸ “Secrets of al Yamamah”, *The Guardian*, 2011.

Swiss bank account to see if BAE has channeled secret funds through it to Saudi government officials.¹³⁹ In 2011, *The Guardian* reported that Safadi was implicated in Al Yamama arms deal through an anonymous offshore company, Poseidon. The company was allegedly used by BAE to transfer money to Safadi, who was working for Prince Turki bin Nasser, head of the Saudi air force at that time. *The Guardian* concluded that “at least £1bn is said to have gone down the Poseidon route”.¹⁴⁰

After a brief period of investing in Lebanon starting 1993, Safadi stopped all his investments in the country. In 1996, he relocated his residency to Lebanon, and since then has focused solely on operating his business projects outside Lebanon. His current business projects and investments are in KSA, Europe (UK and Spain) and the US, and include the building sector, the aviation sector, private airport development, and property development. Safadi started capitalizing on his migrant economic capital in Lebanon in 1982 with the establishment of a foundation in Tripoli (North Lebanon) that carried out humanitarian/charitable work during the Lebanese civil war.¹⁴¹ On this he says: “In 1982 I started employing people and my major concern was education. I focused on promoting health and hygiene among public school students”. In 2000, his foundation initiated “human development” projects in the North and Akkar regions: “We believe that we need to develop the personal capabilities of human beings, and by doing so you can actually improve the general capability of the community, and hence the country. Basically we were very much into education. We have support for university students and we give scholarships”.

¹³⁹ *The Guardian*, 2006.

¹⁴⁰ *The Guardian*, 2011.

¹⁴¹ The foundation was officially registered in 2001.

Between 1982 and 2000, Safadi's humanitarian/charitable and "developmental" activities in Tripoli and North Lebanon earned him a certain degree of personal political capital. The latter capital enabled Safadi to run as a candidate (for one of the Sunni seats in the North Lebanon district) in the 2000 parliamentary elections, on the same electoral list headed by the major politicians in the district. Safadi won a parliamentary seat for the first time in 2000.¹⁴² After becoming MP in 2000, Safadi continued capitalizing on his migrant economic capital in order to uphold his "political capital". In 2001, he opened a computer learning center in Tripoli: "In 2001, I discovered that the Lebanese university students in Tripoli do not know how to use a computer, so I opened a computer center facing the university. Then I opened 16 centers from Qubayat (Akkar) to Byblos, and all were for free. I had around 80,000 information graduates. Then I reduced the centers to 3 in Tripoli and one in Byblos". He added: "We have a technical training center in Tripoli for quick education: we train people in the building industry, the service industry, the basic things, nothing advanced". Safadi also initiated other activities such as: launching the "English for All" project to teach people the Basic English language; starting special tutoring classes for students in public schools; treating the problem of humidity in the old Tripoli houses which house 240,000 residents, in order to prevent asthmatic health issues". And on the "developmental" level, he upgraded his activities in the Akkar region: "We started agricultural production in order to support agriculture in Akkar. We do washing, waxing, packaging, drying and

¹⁴² Allegations of "buying" votes on behalf of Safadi surfaced in the 2000 elections, and it remains a strong possibility that he took part in financing the expenses of the electoral list at that time. Safadi was elected MP in 2000, 2005 and 2009, and was appointed cabinet member in 2005, 2008, 2009 and 2011.

refrigerating of agricultural products. We also have laboratories and we train the farmers. We built trust and a partnership with the farmers. We are the most active center in Akkar”.

Safadi lastly spoke about the cultural activities of his foundation: “We have a cultural center in Tripoli; we offer French, Russian, German, British and Spanish language classes. We have an agreement with LAU to provide technical education like photography. We also have a library. We have activities on a daily basis in the center”.

All the aforementioned activities by Safadi’s foundation widened his clientele of supporters, leading to his election again as MP in 2005 and 2009. He also became minister of public works in 2005 and minister of economy and trade in 2008, until his appointment as finance minister in 2011 in Najib Mikati’s government. With this appointment, Safadi reached the apex of his political career so far.

Moreover, the trajectories of both Farid Makari and Anis Nassar reveal the acquisition of elite status in Lebanon by two migrants who possessed a modest degree of political capital prior to migration.

Farid Makari was born into an (upper) middle class Greek orthodox family in Anfeh (in the Koura region in North Lebanon). His father was a landowner who also worked in agriculture and in the salt business. Makari’s father was also elected head of municipality more than once. After finishing his high school studies, Makari travelled to the US where he graduated with degrees in engineering and engineering management. He returned after finishing his studies and then moved to Saudi Arabia to test the prospects of employment. He first worked with the contracting company CCC, where his brother also worked. “I first worked for the company that my brother worked in, CCC.

And there I met a person who had taken a subcontracting deal from the company. He convinced me to work with him. He was establishing a big construction company (Saudi Oger). This person is Rafik Hariri". Makari adds: "I worked with Hariri for 16 years. And together we returned to Lebanese politics (in 1992)".

Makari worked as manager of Saudi Oger. "From the beginning of the work, I built a friendship with Rafik Hariri. In the beginning there were not so many of us". On his first experience in Lebanese politics, Makari says: "I started with PM Hariri when the Israeli invasion of Lebanon happened in 1982. PM Hariri then decided to clean Beirut from the rubble caused by the invasion. As manager, he delegated me to follow up on the issue and to connect with the active political figures in Lebanon. That's how I began my connections with politicians". He adds: "Also my position as manager helped me a lot because we employed a lot of people. As manager, I was in charge of the employment process... So I employed a lot of people from the Koura region". Makari cited employing around 400 people from Koura in Saudi Oger. He also mentioned providing educational and health services to people in Koura, in addition to giving donations to certain organizations and churches in the region. On the role of migration in his election as MP, Makari said: "The role of migration helped me a lot... It helped me because I was able to take people outside Lebanon... and I was able to make money from outside of Lebanon. These distinguished me from others in terms of providing favors and helping people". He added: "My special relation with Rafik Hariri opened doors for me in terms of helping people. He also enhanced my revenues in KSA so that I was able to amass a certain capital".

Makari's trajectory is closely intertwined with that of Rafik Hariri, another migrant whose trajectory was discussed earlier. During his migration period in KSA, Makari accrued significant social capital (his special relation with Hariri), which in turn enabled him to accrue economic capital (as manager of Saudi Oger). His position as manager of Saudi Oger enabled him to deliver services to people from his region by employing them in the company (he mentioned employing around 400 people). Makari's accrued migrant economic capital also enabled him to provide educational and health services to people in Koura, in addition to giving donations to certain organizations and churches in the region (hence accruing a certain degree of personal political capital). Makari was first elected MP for the Koura district in 1992.¹⁴³ Makari also reflected on the role of money in his electoral campaigns: "Every electoral campaign is costly...The first phase of parliamentary elections for me wasn't very financially costly because the electoral districts were large ones. When the districts are large, personal favors become much less important... however, when the districts are smaller, there's more competition and hence a need to broaden your personal favors". Makari's close relationship with Hariri also enabled him to draw benefits derived from the latter's political capital (especially when Hariri was PM): "Hariri much supported me here in Lebanon. I used to go to him asking for help in politics or in issues related to favors, etc... He was a big push for me in politics".

As for Nassar, he was born into a middle class family in Souk al Gharb (Aley district). After finishing his high school studies, he entered AUB to study

¹⁴³ Farid Makari was elected MP for the Koura district in 1992, 1996, 2000, 2005 and 2009. During 1995-1996, he served as Information Minister in Rafik Hariri's government. In 2005, he was elected deputy speaker of parliament.

engineering (his older brother helped him in paying the tuition fees). He graduated from AUB in 1973 with a degree in civil engineering. During his time at AUB, Nassar was an active member of the Lebanese League, a broad coalition of right-wing students. He was also a member of the Kataeb party and assumed party responsibilities in the area of Souk el Gharb (he was never a militant). Nassar worked in Lebanon after graduation before moving to Oman in 1976 due to security reasons. He worked between 1976 and 1986 as manager of an engineering company, before establishing his own company in Oman (an engineering consulting company). He worked for 10 more years in Oman, before moving to Dubai in 1996. In Dubai, Nassar founded the first valet parking company in the Middle East, bought a construction company, and established a horticulture landscaping company. During his stay in Oman, Nassar kept in contact with the Kataeb party until the assassination of Bashir Gemayel in 1982. In 1994, he started renovating the family house in Souk al Gharb, and upon its completion in 2005, he started spending more time in Lebanon. Nassar has been active in charitable and social activities within his community since 1994, when he established a medical center in Souk el Gharb that gives assistance to more than 3000 families in the area. He has also contributed to the renovation of a number of churches in the area; assisted in paying the hospital bills of needy people; and provided university scholarships for students. But most important for him is his instrumental role in opening a branch for the University of Balamand in Souk el Gharb (he played a major role in financing the construction of the university campus). He is known in his town as “the man who brought the University of Balamand to Souk el Gharb”.

Nassar accrued a modest degree of political capital through his years of activism as member of the Kataeb party. However, it was his migrant economic capital that enabled him to pursue his charitable and social activities in Souk al Gharb, which in turn brought him personal political capital within his community. As such, he was the favorable candidate for the Greek Orthodox parliamentary seat on the electoral list formed by the alliance of Walid Junblat and the Lebanese Forces in the district of Aley in 2018. Nassar's pro-Lebanese Forces outlook, his old acquaintance of Samir Geagea (he knew him since 1970), and his friendship with Walid Junblat also facilitated this decision. Anis Nassar was elected MP in 2018.

On the local political level in Lebanon, the trajectories of the following seven migrants reveal their acquisition of elite status by becoming heads of municipalities. Two of them, namely, Isam Makarem and Waddah Nasserredine hail from migrant families. Another two of them, namely Wajdi Mourad and Ghazi Shaar, had their fathers as migrants. One of them, Marcelino al-Hirk, had relatives who were migrants. The remaining two, namely, Amal Hourani and Muhamad Mazloun, initiated their own migration experiences.

Isam Makarem was born in Nigeria (in 1936), where his grandfather and father had emigrated (his father settled in Lagos). Makarem returned to Aley (Lebanon) and finished his high school education before returning to Lagos (at the age of 20) where he started an iron factory. He became successful in the early 1960s after signing a deal with the Nigerian government to manufacture desks and chairs for public schools. He then manufactured hospital beds for the Nigerian ministry of health, hence becoming wealthy as one of the top traders in Nigeria.

In 1982, during a visit to Lebanon, Makarem was elected (as a “consensual” candidate) president of the “Druze foundation for social welfare”, and subsequently settled in Lebanon. He then used his migrant economic capital and activated the foundation: “... During the civil war, we helped families from all sects, we used to help people in need by giving them checks, as well as the martyr’s family and the disabled people. After the civil war ended, we started educating students by giving them scholarships. In 2000, we talked with the American University of Beirut, and they said they will open a scholarship fund for us. They said that whatever we put in it they will double it”. Through the foundation’s aforementioned activities (between 1982 and 2010), Makarem earned a sizable degree of personal political capital within his local community and the wider Druze community. In 2010, he was elected head of Ras al Matn municipality.

As for Waddah Nassereddine, his grandfather and uncle had migrated to Liberia (Africa) where they worked in the textile business, before opening two supermarkets. They later called upon our interviewee’s father to come to Liberia and run the supermarkets. Waddah’s schooling in Lebanon and his university studies (civil engineering) in the US were funded by his grandfather and father who were working in Liberia at the time. After graduation, Waddah moved to KSA where he worked for 4 years with the construction company Khatib & Alami. He then moved to Liberia where he worked in the family business, until his return to Lebanon in 1998. After his return to Lebanon, Nassereddine invested his migrant economic capital in real-estate and in agricultural projects (blueberries) in his hometown, Deir Koubel: “I worked in construction alone, but later I worked with my brother... In collaboration with my brother, we started buying real-estate,

and then building and selling apartments (for families). Now I have only around 8 employees, as we downsized a lot due to the situation. We build projects and sell them in the mountain area close to Bchamoun. We also work in agriculture, all kinds of blueberries”. In 2000, Nassereddine bought a house in Deir Koubel, resided there, and started expanding his social relations within his community: “I love the social life and I love people. Even in sports, I played a role: I was president of the Safa football club. The families asked me to nominate myself and I did, that was 7 years ago”. Hence, between 2000 and 2010, Nassereddine capitalized on his migrant economic capital and got engaged in “social activities” within his community, thus earning a certain degree of personal political capital. In 2010, he was elected head of Deir Koubel municipality.

Wajdi Mourad (head of Aley municipality) was born into a middle class Druze family. His father worked in the mining/excavation business in Aley. In 1973-74 the father moved to KSA and started working in the construction business. Mourad followed his father to KSA in 1976, and studied there for 6 months in al-Zahraa university (in the petroleum and minerals department), before returning to Lebanon with his sick father who passed away after a short time. Following that, Mourad abandoned his university studies and took over his father’s work in KSA. On this he says: “My father was building two buildings, each with 6 apartments. I succeeded in my work there from the start in 1976. I stayed in KSA until 1980. After that I moved to Lebanon and transferred all my money. I had L.L. 2,700,000 at that time”. He adds: “From that time, all the people in Aley knew that I had this amount of money. So people started visiting me to ask for help and services. I bought trucks and wood for them. I helped many people in Aley. I also helped my friends

by becoming their business partner”. Between 1980 and 1985, Mourad “spent all the money that he gained (in KSA) in Lebanon”. In other words, he capitalized on his migrant economic capital and delivered assistance and services to members of his community in Aley (hence earning a certain degree of personal political capital).

Mourad returned to KSA between 1985 and 1986. During this stay, he was involved in winning a bid with the Arab Bank in Khobar, in addition to starting his work in the auction business. On this he says: “The bank needed restoration, so we profited a lot from the project...I worked in construction and by chance I started working in auctions. I started as an amateur and I left with a fortune”.

Mourad returned to Lebanon in 1986, and capitalized again on his migrant economic capital in order to uphold his “political capital”. Following the end of the civil war in 1990, he resumed his excavation business in Lebanon until 1998. Mourad was elected head of Aley municipality in 1998. On this he says: “I tried to convince Nasib el-Rayess (head of CONDRA company) to nominate himself for the presidency of Aley municipality. The rebuilding of Aley needed someone who knows in construction. After he rejected the offer, I was the only candidate left. I had a company and a fleet, and my company was recognized as first class by the (corresponding) ministry”.

Ghazi al Shaar (head of Aiyoub municipality) comes from a lower middle class Druze family. His father, who was never political, migrated briefly to Venezuela and returned in 1964 to Lebanon where he opened a chicken farm. After finishing his secondary school education in Lebanon, our interviewee – through his father’s connections – got a scholarship to continue his university education in the former Soviet Union: “The communist and

socialist parties were giving scholarships ... and my father wanted me to leave the country because of the security situation at that time. So he was the one who got me the scholarship, as he had good relations with everyone”.¹⁴⁴

Between 1987 and 2008, Shaar was based in Russia, during which he completed his university education and started his own business there. During his stay, our interviewee upgraded his cultural capital (PhD in biology in 1997), but more importantly, he started accruing economic capital: “Russia was witnessing some openness, and I wanted to start a business. As you know the Lebanese love working in the food sector, and I liked this sector. I opened my first restaurant in Moscow in 1997, and then I had a chain... I own 8 restaurants in Moscow. The largest one accommodates up to 800 people... I have a huge team. Most of the restaurant managers are Lebanese, and some are Syrians”.

During this period, Shaar was also engaged in real estate projects in Lebanon (building villas), and his business boomed after the year 2000. However, since then until now, his major economic capital is accrued in Russia: “My major income comes from abroad but I have a lot of investments here and in Beirut”.

Upon Shaar’s return to his village in Lebanon in 2008, there was a sense of change developing among members of the community, especially the youth.

¹⁴⁴ It’s plausible to assume here that the economic capital accrued by our interviewee’s father in Venezuela helped in sustaining the family’s (lower) middle class status, thus enabling the head of family to accrue a certain degree of “social capital” at the local level (evidenced by our interviewee’s saying that his father “had good relations with everyone”). The father’s “social capital” was decisive in enabling him to secure a scholarship for our interviewee to continue his university education in the former USSR (and later in Russia).

He then started his “civic activities” within his community: “4 or 4.5 years ago I started realizing that the youth are going towards the bad habits, so I rented a football ground and got trainers to train the kids from age 10 to 12 years... We trained the kids until the age of 14-15, and developed this idea into building a sports city in the future. Today we have a sports club for football and basketball. In basketball we have a ladies’ team (a second rank team) and another team for men (a fourth rank team). I and some other businessmen are sponsoring these clubs”. Shaar also mentioned the financial assistance he provides through certain NGOs: “I provide financial support only through the NGOs, for example those that provide medical support and assistance, or financially support the people who can’t afford hospital fees”.

Shaar hence capitalized on his migrant economic capital and initiated “civic activities” targeting the youth (supporting youth sports clubs), as well as other strata within his community (supporting NGOs that help in providing medical assistance for needy people). Such activities got him closer to the youth, as well as to the community in general. He concluded the interview: “... I knew all the people on the local level and was engaged with them. I had great relations with everybody”. Shaar was elected head of Aynab municipality in 2016. On this he says: “Usually, the head of municipality is from my family because we are more than half the population in the village... I didn’t think at all of nominating myself to the elections, but the people of my village and the youth insisted on me... The former head of municipality didn’t have strong competitors, and hence stayed for 18 years. But the people wanted change and requested that from me, although I never thought of entering politics. I got two thirds of the votes and he took one third”. As a result, Shaar was able to defeat the opposing branch in his

family, as well as shift the balance of power in his community in his own favor.

Marcelino al- Hirk was born in Batroun. His father was a mayor of Batroun and a supporter of Raymond Eddeh. The father's moderate stance during the civil war made the family a target of the Phalanges (Kataeb) party. Hence, with the outbreak of the civil war in 1975, al-Hirk was forced to leave Lebanon (at the age of 19) to the US where he had relatives from his mother's side. In the US, al-Hirk resided in Minneapolis (Minnesota) where his uncles were living. He worked there for a construction company for 15 years, before embarking on his own business of real-estate rental properties (building small shops, centers, and gas stations, and then leasing them up). He then established two companies: "I established two companies: one of them is tobacco, where I had my own brand, and then I established an oil company. I also supplied other things (in gas and in diesel). I had my brother and brother-in-law who helped me. Now my kids took over... I have around 80-85 employees".

During his stay in the US, al-Hirk helped many youths from his hometown (Batroun) to come and settle in the US, either by offering them jobs in one of his companies, or by assisting them in finding other jobs there: "In the US, I helped many youths from Batroun. So I was engaged in public relations without even realizing it. In 1998, I was elected a member of the municipal council, and I wasn't even here, I was in the US". Al-Hirk was elected head of Batroun municipality in 2000. After his election, al-Hirk spent his time between Lebanon and the US, before residing in Batroun in 2005: "Since 2000, I used to spend two weeks in the US and two weeks in Lebanon. It's only a few years ago, in 2005, that I resided in Lebanon". After residing in

Lebanon, al-Hirk launched business projects in the touristic sector: “I have a touristic investment in Lebanon, and now I am building another one. It is called Saint Stephano. The project was started by an MP from Batroun, but he went through a financial crisis and had to sell it to a Druze businessman. That made me really sad. When the Druze businessman had a financial crisis, I bought the project. Saint Stephano is very important for us”.

Here, al-Hirk used both his migrant economic capital and his political leverage (as possessing head of municipality) and bought back a touristic project (Saint Stephano) which was largely seen as representative of, and important for, the Batroun community. This action in itself, as well as the project’s economic benefits (and hence al-Hirk’s ability to further help members of his community by offering them jobs in his touristic project) enhanced al-Hirk’s “reputation” in the eyes of the Batroun community, which in turn translates into possessing more political capital.

Amal Hourani was born in Marjeyoun. He travelled to the US in 1959 and studied civil engineering at the University of Seattle. His university education in the US was partly supported by his two siblings who were working as teachers in Iraq at the time. After graduating, Hourani returned to Lebanon in 1963 and got employed by the contracting company CCC in a project in the Libyan Desert. He later worked for CCC in Kuwait and Abu Dhabi, before starting a contracting company in UAE with a local sheikh. While still residing in UAE, Hourani got engaged in philanthropic activities pertaining to his hometown, Marjeyoun, such as rebuilding the municipality palace and helping people in need: “Frankly, I love the country a lot, and before being the head of municipality... I was lucky to build the municipality of Marjeyoun. We had a small municipality. The person who built the first

municipality was from Haddad family, and he is my relative. But you know, with time, the municipality became unfit for the city. So I built the municipality palace. At that time, I was still residing in the Arab gulf and I contracted a contractor to build it”. He added: “We built a lot, this was all before I became head of municipality. We built Rima and Amal Hourani sports center. Rima is my wife. I used to send donations for the people in need. I used to send donations twice per year. I had a list of 100 individuals from my hometown. I didn’t know anyone of them. I used to send them twice per year around 500,000 -700,000 L.L on Christmas and Easter occasions”. Hourani also upgraded the municipality building and the worship places in Marjeyoun: “I built also in the municipality a clinic and an auditorium. Also there is a mosque called Issa Ben Mariam mosque that was too old, so we built auditoriums for the mosque... and the churches as well. I renovated all the worship places”. Hourani also employed many youths from his hometown in his company in the UAE: “I took around 30, some are engineers and others are less skilled. Some are still there. During the war I wasn’t here, but I was always in contact with the people at home, and was updated on the problems and needs of the people”.

Hourani capitalized on his migrant economic capital (while he was still residing in the UAE) and embarked on the aforementioned activities in his hometown, thus earning sizable degree of personal political capital. In 2010, Hourani was elected head of Marjeyoun municipality.

Last but not least, Muhamad Mazloun, comes from a modest social background. He migrated to Venezuela in 1990 (at the age of 19) due to the civil war in Lebanon. In Venezuela, our interviewee went into the lingerie business and by the year 2000 had established a chain of 12 stores. In 2000

he started also a lingerie factory: “In 2000 I started a lingerie factory. I built it in Colombia as the labour was cheaper and it was close to Venezuela like Syria and Lebanon. I was moving between Venezuela and Colombia but I lived in Venezuela. I had a manager and designer in the factory. I built a factory with 130 machines and 160 employees including management. In 2000 I had around 200 employees in my 12 stores”. In 2006, Mazloun had 27 stores with 354 employees, and after returning to Lebanon in 2011 he had 44 stores. After 1994, Mazloun visited Lebanon intermittently, during which he helped in meeting the needs of the people. “I used to come every year or two with my wife for 20 days or a month and then we leave. But I used to help people who needed anything: mosques, cemeteries, and churches, whatever. Whoever asked for help I helped them. In 2005 I made three water projects for free, two in Khiyara and another in Kadiriya. I built all the infrastructure for the water supply, I did that as a dedication for my mother’s soul, as we have this in Islam. This cost me around \$400,000. I felt my village needs a lot. The head of municipality didn’t do anything for the village and the people can’t do anything, so I always asked them to tell me what projects they needed and implemented them”. After relocating to Lebanon in 2011, Mazloun continued with his “charitable” activities: “In 2015 I started charity work in Bekaa, and I was known at that time in the area. We have the naturalized here, the Arabs (Bedouins). I served them a lot, and built a well for them, etc...The former head of municipality Kassem Mazloun did not have any relation with them and they amount to around 200-300 voters”. Mazloun was elected head of Khiyara municipality in 2016.

As discussed above, the economic capital accrued by the 13 elites through migration enabled them to initiate activities (charitable, social, civic, or cultural) within their communities in Lebanon. Through these activities, the

13 elites accrued political capital and hence acquired elite status in Lebanon. However, it's also worth mentioning the secondary roles played by other forms of capital in the process of acquiring elite status in Lebanon by some of the aforementioned elites: both Mikati and Safadi come from merchant families, and hence possessed a certain degree of social and economic capital prior to migration. This facilitated more their migration trajectories and their accruing of economic capital outside Lebanon; Makari, al-Hirk and Nassar possessed a certain degree of political capital prior to migration. Makari and al-Hirk inherited their fathers' political capital, while Nassar possessed political capital resulting from his activism as member of the Kataeb party. Moreover, during his migration period, Makari accrued "social capital" through his acquaintance and close friendship with Rafik Hariri, an asset which expedited his accruelement of economic capital in KSA.

The commonality between all of the 13 elites, however, is their achievement of upward social mobility through their migration experiences. This was accompanied by their accruelement of "symbolic capital" in Lebanon, which, according to Bourdieu, designates "the social authority to impose symbolic meanings and classifications as legitimate that individuals and groups can accumulate through public recognition of their capital holdings and positions occupied in social hierarchies".¹⁴⁵ Hence, migration enabled the acquisition of both political capital and symbolic capital in Lebanon by the aforementioned 13 elites.

4.1.2 An indirect conversion of migrant economic capital into "politically relevant" social capital in the homeland

¹⁴⁵ See Swartz, *Symbolic Power, Politics and Intellectuals*, p. 39.

The trajectory of Gilbert Chaghoury reveals the acquisition of elite status in Lebanon by a migrant who was born, and resides, outside Lebanon. Born in Lagos, Nigeria, Chaghoury is the son of parents who had emigrated from Lebanon in the 1940s. He studied at the Collège des Frères Chrétiens in Lebanon before returning to Nigeria. In 1971, he founded the Chaghoury Group, and was joined by his brother Ronald in 1974. Chaghoury group is an industrial conglomerate of more than 20 companies working in construction, real estate, property development, and hotels. The group also has interests in flour mills, glass manufacturing, furniture manufacturing, telecommunications, and information technology (among other domains). The estimated wealth of Gilbert Chaghoury (and family) was \$4.2 billion in 2013.¹⁴⁶

Chaghoury has been engaged in philanthropic activities on an international level: he funds international scholarship programs that support the education of students at undergraduate and graduate levels (especially, international affairs scholarships at Ivy League schools in the US, as well as a number of undergraduate degrees in the US); he is a key benefactor for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Tennessee, US; he serves on the board of the Lebanese American University where he has donated \$10 million to fund the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chaghoury School of Medicine, and \$3.5 million for the construction of the Alice Ramez Chaghoury School of Nursing. (He has also provided donations to the universities of Kaslik and NDU in Lebanon). Gilbert is also a benefactor to the Louvre Museum in Paris.

Chaghoury is also active in philanthropy on the Lebanese local level, in his hometown Mizyara (Zgharta district). He has donated funds to improve the

¹⁴⁶ See, <http://venturesafrica.com/how-much-are-you-paying-for-fuel>

health care and public infrastructure in his hometown, as well as establishing a foundation which funds several educational scholarships for students from Mizyara.¹⁴⁷ (all these activities undertaken by Chaghoury make him a possessor of “symbolic capital” within the Mizyara community). In an interview with Fahed Basha, a former member of Mizyara’s municipal council, he reflected on Chaghoury’s influence in the village: “Chaghoury has created a clientele of supporters either through employing people in his business in Nigeria, or through assisting people in educating their children, or through direct financial assistance... This has enabled him to exercise total control over the municipality”. Basha also emphasized Chaghoury’s influence on the regional (Zgharta) and national levels: “Chaghoury has a strong relationship with Suleiman Franjeh, and most likely he funds his electoral campaigns. He also has good relations with Nabih Berri, and has a share in NBN (the television affiliated with Berri)”. He added: “Chaghoury’s influence has transcended politics and reached the religious domain. He has a big influence in the Maronite church and has played a role in the appointment of the current Maronite patriarch”.

Gilbert Chaghoury presents a case of a diasporic ideal-type “politically relevant elite” who is active on the local and national levels in Lebanon (his influence is also international, as shown previously). Not interested in acquiring delegated political capital in Lebanon for himself, Chaghoury uses his economic capital accrued outside Lebanon to get closer to the centers of power in the country. He does so by financially supporting different members of the political elite in Lebanon. As such, Chaghoury is “buying” social capital amongst a network of homeland politicians, or what can be

¹⁴⁷ The main square was renamed the Ramez Chaghoury Square in honor of Gilbert’s father.

called here “politically relevant” social capital. This in turn enables him to navigate easily between various Lebanese politicians in order to further his business interests and influence in the country.

(Other politically relevant elites in the postwar period also include wealthy migrant Shiite businessmen who, according to Tabar, “financially supported AMAL’s electoral campaigns in return for obtaining commercial deals and economic projects that were part of AMAL’s share of the Lebanese rentier state”.¹⁴⁸ In this regard, Tabar cites the names of Ali Jammal, a Shiite businessman who accumulated his fortune in Nigeria, and the owner of Jammal Trust Bank; Jamil Saeed, a business partner of Nabih Berri; Shabib Khanafer, Jamil Ibrahim, Ahmad Ismail, Hani Safieddine, and Ali Saadeh. All of the latter accumulated their fortunes in Africa and were among the principal financiers of AMAL’s electoral campaigns).¹⁴⁹

4.1.3 A direct conversion of migrant economic capital into political capital in the homeland

The migrant wealth of the following four elites served as a stepping stone for them to be directly appointed cabinet member, head of municipality, or to book a “winning” parliamentary seat on the electoral list of a major political leader. The trajectories of these four elites, namely Nehmeh Tomeh, Yasine Jaber, Marwan Kheirredine and Ziad Haidar, revealed a direct translation of migrant economic capital into political capital in Lebanon. Tomeh relied on his migrant economic capital and booked a winning seat on the electoral list headed by Walid Junblat in the 2000 parliamentary elections; Jaber was directly appointed cabinet member in 1995, representing

¹⁴⁸ Tabar, “Migrant Capital and political elite in Lebanon”, p. 6.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Nabih Berri, while Kheirredine and Haidar were appointed state minister and head of municipality respectively, representing Druze leader Talal Arslan (in 2011 and 2016 respectively).

Born in Mukhtara (Chouf district) in 1939, Nehmeh Tomeh (current MP and former minister) graduated with a degree in civil engineering from AUB in 1959. In 1972 he founded al-Mabani contracting company in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The company executed various infrastructure and real estate projects in Saudi Arabia. In 1991, al-Mabani opened its branch in Muscat, Oman. The company played an important role in drawing the borderline between Saudi Arabia and Oman. Al- Mabani also has branches in Lebanon and Qatar.¹⁵⁰ As CEO of al-Mabani, Tohmeh has many investments in Lebanon and abroad, especially in USA, France, and Switzerland. Tohmeh was never political nor he descended from a political family, and hence lacked any degree of initial political capital to build on. A Greek Catholic in the Chouf, an electoral district dominated by Druze leader Walid Junblat, Tohmeh's attainment of elite status required the consent of the former. Hence, Tohmeh had to rely on his wealth in order to book a winning seat on Junblat's electoral list in the Chouf district (this usually takes the form of joining the electoral list in return for taking part in, or fully financing the expenses of the list's electoral campaign). Nehmeh Tomeh was first elected as deputy in 2000.¹⁵¹

Yasine Jaber (current MP and former minister) was born in Lagos (Nigeria), where his father worked in the textile business. He returned to Lebanon and finished his schooling before graduating from AUB with a degree in

¹⁵⁰ *Al-Mughtarib* 2017, p. 10.

¹⁵¹ Nehmeh Tomeh was elected MP in 2000, 2005, 2009, and 2018. He also held the post of Minister of the Displaced between 2005 and 2008.

economics. Following the outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon, Jaber moved to Saudi Arabia and worked for 4 years in the contracting business. In 1979, he moved to London where he first worked in the import business in collaboration with his brother who used to send sugar and rice from Nigeria to London. After working for 4 years in this business, he shifted his focus to the real estate sector in London. Jaber still has investments in real estate (hotels) in London and Lebanon. When we asked him about his decision to enter the political domain, he stressed that it was “Nabih Berri who prompted me to enter politics”. He added: “The personal relation with Berri dates back to before he became the head of AMAL movement... Berri was a friend of my brother in law, and the lawyer of my wife’s parents. Berri’s parents were the neighbours of my wife’s parents in Africa”. This personal relation continued throughout the 1980s when Jaber was still residing in London. “When Berri became a major player in Lebanese politics in 1984, we used to see him and became close to him. When he visited London, we used to take care of things for him”.

Jaber admitted that he was approached by Berri to run on his electoral list in the 1992 parliamentary elections. “I refused because I wanted to gradually build a name for myself”, he says in this regard. Between 1992 and 1995 (while he was still residing in London), he visited Nabatiyeh more often and embarked on “social work” there through supporting athletics clubs. “I spent three or four years working slowly on the social field, working with clubs, in athletics - you must create a relationship with your society before you say you want to run”.¹⁵²

¹⁵² Jim Quilty, “Yassin Jaber: A man and his community”, *The Daily Star*, June 18, 2005.

Through his “social work” activities, Jaber arguably accrued a modest personal political capital within his community in Nabatiyeh. However, it was his appointment as minister of economy and trade in 1995 – as part of AMAL’s share in the government – that granted him elite status. The latter was due to two main reasons: the first is diasporic relations (the friendship between Berri and the family of Jaber’s wife), and the second is Jaber’s migrant wealth.¹⁵³ Jaber was first elected to parliament on AMAL’s list in 1996 (representing the Nabatiyeh district). It’s worth noting here that Jaber’s booking a seat on AMAL’s parliamentary electoral list was crucial to his election as MP in 1996 since the electoral districts adopted then were large districts (South Lebanon and Nabatiyeh as one district). In such a law, a candidate’s activities and personal favors on the local level (district) play a much lesser role in his success, whereby winning a seat is guaranteed by joining the list of a major political leader in the district, in this case Nabih Berri.¹⁵⁴

In 1998, Jaber founded and headed the Kamel Jaber Cultural and Social Center (an NGO) in Nabatieh. The center offers for free English language and computer-training courses, in addition to vocational training courses. It also organizes summer camps and a basketball club (and used to organize excursions to Syria for old people). Since 1998, the Center’s activities can only be seen as playing a role in reinforcing Jaber’s elite status.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ It’s very well-known that Berri targets wealthy Shiite individuals and solicits their donations for the purpose of financing AMAL’s activities and electoral campaign expenses.

¹⁵⁴ This usually takes the form of joining the electoral list in return for taking part in, or fully financing the expenses of the list’s electoral campaign.

¹⁵⁵ Jaber was elected MP (Nabatieh and South district) in 1996, 2000, 2005, 2009, and 2018. He held the post of minister of economy and trade between 1995 and 1998. In 2004, he was appointed minister of transportation and public works.

Marwan Kheireddine comes from a Druze family that worked in the agricultural sector (olive and olive oil business) in the town of Hasbaya. However, his father decided to come to Beirut and study at AUB, graduating with a degree in business administration in 1959. He then opened a travel agency (in partnership with others) in Lebanon which quickly became one of the biggest agencies in the country. The agency then opened branches in Sydney, New York and London. Beginning in 1969, our interviewee's father (who was directing the London branch) started investing his agency profits in the real estate sector in London. "His real estate business in London grew considerably due to the agency profits. In 1984 he settled in London".

In 1970s, Kheireddine's father invested in the banking sector in Lebanon through buying shares in BBAC bank. "In 1979, as the Lebanese government was giving licenses to the establishment of new banks, my father sold his shares in BBAC and established al Mawarid bank. The bank began operating in 1980".

Marwan Kheireddine earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration (UK) and an MBA from the US. He has work experience both in London and in the US.

Kheireddine returned to Lebanon in 1992 and started working in al-Mawarid bank. Since then, he has served in multiple capacities, including assistant general manager and general manager. In 2013, he became chairman and general manager of the bank. A founding member of, and Politburo member

in, Talal Arslan's Lebanese Democratic Party, Kheireddine was appointed state minister in Najib Mikati's government in 2011. On this he says: "I have a very strong relation with PM Mikati from before he entered politics. He's a businessman and I'm a banker, and therefore I have a strong relation with him from many years ago. I was named by emir Talal Arslan to negotiate with Mikati because of my friendship with him. We were negotiating the kind of portfolio (or ministry) that the emir will take. We reached an agreement that the emir will take the ministry of the displaced. However, when the government was announced, emir was appointed state minister. Emir Arslan resigned shortly after that in an expression of dissatisfaction. So I replaced him as state minister because in Lebanon you don't lose your quota (as a sect) ... only the person changes".

Lastly, we asked him if migration (his father and him) has played an important role in his acquiring of elite status in Lebanon: "Definitely, definitely, because there is no fairness in Lebanon. Migration is what enabled many ambitious and qualified Lebanese to break the control of politicians over them...when you emigrate, you can see an opportunity and take it, and no one will stop you. But here they will stop you... Lebanon does not compensate talent...most Lebanese retain their affinity for Lebanon, so they either return or send money. This is a big asset for Lebanon".

Marwan Kheireddine's trajectory is clearly intertwined with the economic success of his father, which in itself is largely shaped by the latter's migration experience. The father's travel agency business and real estate investments in London enabled the establishment of al-Mawarid bank in Lebanon. Kheireddine's acquisition of economic capital (through his posts in al-Mawarid bank) brought him closer to Druze leader Talal Arslan. Hence,

when the latter refused to participate in the cabinet, Kheireddine served as his direct replacement as state minister in Mikati's government in 2011.

Ziad Haidar (head of Choueifat municipality) was born in the city of Choueifat (Aley district). He migrated to Venezuela in 1974 at the age of 17 where we worked in sales in two steel-producing companies. After 7 years, he established his own business (the wholesale selling of house furniture). "I started selling furniture to the people I worked with in sales before", he says. "I started with 6 employees, and in 1990 I had around 200. The business grew and I had retail stores selling furniture in Maracaibo, the second largest city in Venezuela. The furniture was of a very good quality. We used to manufacture them. We stayed working until the current regime came to power. I started then decreasing my work until I withdrew from the country, because I saw Venezuela heading towards collapse".

In 1997, Haidar returned to, and settled in, Choueifat. "Between 1990 and 1997, I visited Choueifat 2 or 3 times", he says. "Before that I used visit but to a lesser extent". After returning to Choueifat, Haidar established (with his brother) a center for car maintenance on the Saida road. He also works in real estate (building apartments and then selling them).

Haidar wasn't involved in any kind of political activity during his stay in Venezuela. On his decision to enter local politics (municipality) he says: "I never considered entering the realm of local politics. No one in my family had entered politics. Only my cousin was a mayor. So I never thought about it. I had a friendship with emir Talal, but he never discussed the idea of my candidacy. But then the right occasion presented itself and he nominated me to be head of municipality". Haidar was elected head of municipality in 2016.

On his achievements as head of municipality, he says: “I consider the most important achievement is that, within a short period of time, we eliminated the centers of corruption in the municipality...Sometimes we break the law when dealing with issues of a social nature...we pay a lot for the employees, we give them gratuities (tips) even if we sometimes break the law...we prefer to break the law with gratuities so that none of our employees leaves us because he (she) feels he’s not paid well”. When we asked him about his future plans for the municipality, Haidar mentioned “modernizing the municipality in terms of employees and offices... the roads here are still underdeveloped... all this has to change... I came to office during a very difficult period because the municipality was poor in employees and revenues. The municipality’s revenues are 12 billion LL, and from them 9 billion are spent on employees and services. Nothing remains for public projects, and we are trying to work on this. Gradually, we are trying to modernize the municipality for the coming period. If we succeed in changing the current situation into a new one, then that will be the biggest achievement”.

Lastly we asked Haidar: “Did your economic status facilitate your election as head of municipality?” He replied: “Sure, sure. This maybe facilitates it”.

After returning to Lebanon in 1997, Haidar relied on his migrant economic capital (Venezuela) in order to establish his business projects in the city of Choueifat. Knowing that Choueifat is the home city of Druze leader Talal Arslan, it becomes understandable why Haidar’s wealth (on the local level) got him closer to Arslan (Haidar cited Arslan as a friend in the interview). Arslan has a vested interest in a well-functioning municipality that can deliver services to his support base in Choueifat, and hence his nomination

of Haidar to head the municipality in 2016 can be seen in this regard. This is also reflected in Haidar's saying that gratuities were paid to municipality employees so that they don't leave their job (of course these were paid by Haidar himself). Moreover, Haidar's economic capital can be seen as expediting the efforts aimed at "modernizing the municipality".

4.2 Migrant economic capital plays a decisive role in the emergence of "aspiring elites" in the homeland

Two of my interviewees, namely Roger Eddeh and Muhammad Yasine, present cases of two personalities who relied on their migrant economic capital but failed to acquire delegated political capital in the homeland (hence I will call them "aspiring elites"). Eddeh supported Michel Aoun for 15 years, aiming to become MP in 2005 but failed to do so, while Yasine supported Future movement aiming to become MP in 2018 but failed to do so as well.

Roger Eddeh was born into a family engaged in political affairs: his father was an ardent supporter of Emile Eddeh. Roger entered university and became member of National Bloc party in the same year (1958-9). After graduating in law at USJ, he started his legal practice in Beirut, and in 1972, started representing American law firms in the city. In 1973, Eddeh started his design and development business, before moving to Riyadh (KSA) where he established a firm in partnership with Saudi prince Saud bin Fahed bin Abdul Aziz. After 1976, Eddeh's work became concentrated in Riyadh, but his business ventures branched out to Washington and Paris, among others cities. He also established a legal firm in Germany. During the 1980s, Eddeh capitalized on his migrant economic capital (initially accrued in KSA) and built connections with high-profile figures in the American administration:

his house in Washington and his summer villa in South France hosted the likes of George Schultz, Philip Habib, and Zbigniew Brzezinski, all of whom became his friends. He also built connections with Lebanese figures like Salim el Hoss, Hussein el Husseini and Muhamad Mahdi Shamseddine. Eddeh became an aspiring political elite in 1987, when, building on his accrued “social capital”, he returned to Lebanon and nominated himself for the presidency.¹⁵⁶ He again became an aspiring political elite¹⁵⁷ between 1990 and 2005, the period during which he supported Michel Aoun. “I supported Michel Aoun for 15 years. I financed the plane that brought him back to Lebanon in 2005. I also financed the first public event organized by the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) which took place in Paris in 1994. At the time the FPM were banned from organizing events. I financed and presided over the first national assembly for the FPM in Paris. We opened offices for the FPM for the first time in France”.

As for Muhammad Yasine, he was born to a middle class family in the village of Gaza in West Bekaa. He completed his technical training (BT degree) in Beirut and then, in 1985, got a scholarship from the Hariri Foundation to continue his studies in the US. In 1989, Yasine finished his degree in computer science at the University of South Colorado. In the same year he was followed by his parents and four brothers who left Lebanon due to the ongoing war. After graduation, Yasine and some of his brothers opened a supermarket for two years, and then stopped the business and

¹⁵⁶ Bourdieu defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition”. See Swartz, *Symbolic Power, Politics and Intellectuals*, pp. 17-8.

¹⁵⁷ Eddeh is described as an aspiring political elite because he supported Aoun in the hope of becoming MP. This category is different from the politically relevant elite who are not competing for political leadership.

started a new business in telecommunications and cellular phones. “We worked in this business from 1993 until 2015. It was a family business and we sold lines all over the country in 50 states...We reached almost 400 employees, but in 2015 we sold the business and moved back to Lebanon”.

Yasine returned to Lebanon 5 years before his parents did, at the end of 2010: “I wanted to live with my elderly parents, and also I wanted to raise my children here”. After his return to Lebanon, our interviewee (in partnership with his brothers) bought the Hariri medical center in Taanayel and Taanayel General Hospital. On this he says: “In 2010, I returned to Lebanon and some people told me that the Hariri medical center in Taanayel is for sale and I showed my interest in buying it. One day I received a call from the Hariri office in Beirut, and asked me to come over to talk. So they told me that before we do any deal I have to meet Sheikh Saad Hariri. After 7-8 months later, I received another call from sheikh Saad’s office in Verdun, telling me that they have an event for Sheikh Rafik Hariri after two weeks, on February 14th. They asked me to deliver a speech at the event about my experience in the US... This is how I went into politics”. Yasine added: “When I finished, Muhammad Kabani came and gave me his card, as well as Mustafa Allouch, and all the Zahle deputies... I became friends with Kabbani as well as Aalloush and Ashraf Rifi. I wanted to start a business and I needed the politicians. I didn’t plan for this but I needed it. They introduced me to Ahmad and Bahiya Hariri and this is how I became involved in politics”.

Yasine described himself as a “supporter of the Future Movement” and expressed his interest in entering politics through running for the upcoming parliamentary elections in 2018.

Muhamad Yasine presents a case of a businessman whose migrant economic capital was invested in projects in Lebanon that got him closer to the Future Movement. Yasine accrued a certain degree of personal political capital through his activities within his community (his running of Taanayel general hospital). However, his failure to win a parliamentary seat in the 2018 elections (and hence possess delegated political capital) keeps him within the category of an “aspiring political elite”.¹⁵⁸

4.3 Diasporic elite plays a decisive role in the emergence of new political capital in the homeland

The head of Mizyara municipality Maroun Dina presents a case where a new political capital in the homeland is directly derived from “the symbolic” capital of a diasporic elite (Gilbert Chaghoury). In an interview with Dina, he mentioned emigrating to Nigeria in 2005 where Chaghoury helped him to start his own import business. However, in another interview with Fahed Basha, a former member of Mizyara’s municipality, we hear a different story: “Maroun is employed in Chaghoury’s business in Nigeria. He spends more time in Nigeria than in Lebanon”. Chaghoury’s sizable “symbolic capital” within the Mizyara community (discussed earlier), and his control of the municipality necessitated that the current head of municipality (who is also a migrant working for Chaghoury in Nigeria) was nominated to his post by Chaghoury and is acting on his behalf. This implies that Dina’s political capital and his running of the municipality are derivatives of Chaghoury’s “symbolic capital” and influence in Mizyara.

¹⁵⁸ Muhamad Yasine did not run as a candidate in the 2018 parliamentary elections.

4.4 “Diasporic political capital” plays a significant role in acquiring elite status in the homeland

The trajectories of two of my interviewees revealed a significant role for “diasporic political capital” (political capital accrued within the Lebanese diaspora) in the process of acquiring elite status in the homeland. The two interviewees, namely Simon Abi Ramia and Gabriel Issa, returned to Lebanon after years of political activism within the Aounist movement, in France and the US, respectively. After their return to Lebanon, Abi Ramia and Issa capitalized on their diasporic political capital and became MP and advisor to the president, respectively.

Simon Abi Ramia was born into a lower-middle class family. His father was an employee in the Beirut port and his mother was a tailor in a factory. Our interviewee’s father supported Raymond Edddeh’s National Bloc party, and hence Simon was influenced at an early age by the personality and political rhetoric of Raymond Eddeh.¹⁵⁹

After the outbreak of the civil war and the prevalence of militia rule, Abi Ramia –a believer in the state and rule of law – chose to leave Lebanon and join his two brothers in France. After finishing his high school studies in Toulouse, he moved to Paris where he entered university and studied optometry and business management.

Upon his move to Paris, Abi Ramia remained a supporter of Raymond Eddeh until 1988 when chief of army Michel Aoun started his movement aiming to liberate Lebanon from the Syrian army presence on its territories:

¹⁵⁹ A major Lebanese Maronite political leader who espoused a centrist-liberal political discourse during the 1960s and 1970s. He was forced into exile in France in 1977 following the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war.

“During this period, Raymond Eddeh was in Paris and we became close. I used to visit him once or twice per week until 1988 when chief of army Michel Aoun headed the military government. I started following his movement, and my parents participated in the demonstrations and talked to me about the greatness of general Aoun. I didn’t know general Aoun at that time and I opposed military rule since I was influenced by Raymond Eddeh. But general Aoun’s rhetoric appealed to me”.

Hence, during his university years in Paris, abi Ramia started his journey of political activism within the Aounist movement in France: “There were spontaneous movements all over the expatriate world, and we formed organizations in France to support general Aoun in liberating Lebanon from Syrian presence. We had daily demonstrations for Lebanese organizations in France. My friends and I – those who were influenced by Raymond Eddeh – started an organization named “Cercle de jeunes Libanias en France”, and we organized meetings and protests. General Aoun realized the importance of these movements outside Lebanon. He wanted to unite these movements and started to contact us...So all the active organizations had a meeting and we created the “Rassemblement pour le Liban”, and we chose Samir Nassif to be the coordinator. He used to live in Venice but Paris was the most important center and I had good relations with all the organizations. I was his assistant in Paris. When Samir quit, I became the coordinator”. He adds: “When general Aoun came to France in 31 August 1991, he realized that I lead a political organization.¹⁶⁰ We had offices in 16 or 17 cities and all the Lebanese were excited and attended our conferences. We were active in organizational work which we copied from the French parties: we had a

¹⁶⁰ Michel Aoun went into exile in France between 1991 and 2005.

logistics officer, an operations officer, a political affairs officer, etc. I became responsible for the political affairs with French government and parties. I formed a web of relations by which more than a 100 French MPs became my friends”. Abi Ramia promoted the Aounist movement’s cause in the French parliament between 1988 and 1991: “I used to attend the French parliament sessions every Wednesday and Thursday. I promoted general Aoun’s cause for all that period”. After his graduation from university, Abi Ramia worked for a brief period in an optometry store, before sacrificing his job and becoming a full-time activist: “When I graduated I started working, but then politics consumed all my time and we demonstrated weekly, every Tuesday in the afternoon. So the employer asked me to choose between my job and my political activism. We were banned from demonstrating in France, and the police started looking for me at my work and asked me to sign papers. I got furious and quit my job. I stopped work for 8 years. During that period, I became very close to general Aoun and spent all my time with him... I was completely taken by the cause, spending time in the French parliament, the senate and among the French ministers. I was a full-time activist for 7-8 years”. After Michel Aoun’s exile into France in August 1991, Abi Ramia became his close assistant: “I lived with general Aoun for 14 years and we were very close. He depended on me in everything and I got used to this life with him... I spent each day for 14 years with general Aoun”.

Abi Ramia’s success as a political activist and organizer within the Aounist movement in France (between 1988 and 1991), earned him recognition and a good reputation in the eyes of the movement’s supporters in France and Lebanon (since, as Abi Rami mentioned, Michel Aoun was following his activism and got in touch with him while the latter was still in Lebanon). All

this translated into the possession of a certain degree of “personal political capital” by Abi Ramia within the Aounist movement in France (and Lebanon). The latter capital undoubtedly brought him closer to Michel Aoun upon the latter’s coming into exile in France. Abi Ramia’s close relationship with Michel Aoun – the leader of the Aounist movement – during the latter’s exile period can only be seen as enhancing his possession of “personal political capital” in the eyes of the Aounist movement and its supporters. Abi Ramia remained a political activist in France until 2006: “After I got married, I started thinking about my children and my career. In 1999 I established an optometry company with French partners, but I continued my political activism as one of the leaders of the Aounist movement in France from 1990 until 2006”. After his return to Lebanon in 2006 at the request of Michel Aoun, Abi Ramia was nominated by the Free Patriotic Movement (previously the Aounist movement) as one of its candidates for one of the Maronite seats in the Jbeil district in the 2009 parliamentary elections. By winning a parliamentary seat in 2009, Abi Ramia, converted his “diasporic” political capital into delegated political capital in the homeland.

As for Gabiel Issa, he comes from a middle class family that lived in the Gemayzeh quarter in Beirut. His father was a dentist and a supporter of Raymond Eddeh (our interviewee’s family votes in the Jbeil district). Issa was a follower of Raymond Eddeh during his late school years, but had no political affiliation or interest: “All my friends at school joined the Phalanges (Kataeb) party, but I opposed the war and didn’t support any of the parties”. He finished his high school studies in Lebanon in 1975, and in the same year immigrated to the US after the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war. In the US, Issa earned a degree in civil engineering from the Detroit Institute of

Technology in 1979-80. After graduation, he took over his brother's business (in translation and foreign languages) which was new and incurring debts. Consequently, he owned and operated for decades a successful multi-lingual translation and technical writing company: "I took over the business, reduced the employees, and developed the business. I closed the foreign language courses and focused on technical translation and writing. We translated and designed books for cars. I worked for 30-35 years in this business. I also worked in real-estate development".

Throughout the 1980s, Issa remained uninterested in Lebanese politics until 1989 when he became politicized by the discourse of General Michel Aoun. He then started his political activism and financial support for the Aounist cause, becoming one of the core leaders of the Aounist movement in the US: "When general Aoun declared a 'War of Liberation' against Syrian army forces on 14 March 1989, we were all excited. People from all over the US gathered for a huge protest which amounted to around 15,000 protesters. The protest was my first political activity. I provided them with transportation and supported them financially". He added: "Some of the most enthusiastic youths from across the US formed a delegation in 1989, and we travelled to Lebanon and met with General Aoun". In 1989, Issa participated in establishing "The Council of Lebanese American Organizations" (CLAO), which was an umbrella organization for clubs of US supporters of General Michel Aoun across the country. However, after one year, Issa left CLAO and in 1990 co-founded (with Tony Haddad) the "Lebanese American Council of Detroit" (LACD), an organization which briefly lobbied Senators and congressmen in Michigan, before relocating its activities to Washington D.C. under the name of "Lebanese American Council for Democracy

(LACD). The latter organization, which lobbied on Capitol Hill on behalf of General Aoun and his objectives, had Haddad as its president, and Issa was its vice president and the funder of its activities. Although CLAO supported LACD's activities and the two shared the same political outlook, the lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill were largely undertaken by Haddad and Issa, with the participation of some of the CLAO leadership.¹⁶¹ The LACD's major achievement was the passing by Congress in 2003 of the bill known as the "Syria Accountability Act and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act" (SALSRA), a law which called on Syria to stop its support for terrorism and imposed US sanctions. On this Issa says: "Our best achievement was the Syria Accountability Law. We wrote that law. It took us 10 years of hard work to pass this law. We started in 1992 in Detroit. The senators supported us but the US administration didn't... In 2001, after the events of September 11, things changed and it was our chance to push for the law. We were already ready for this, we had prepared for it for ten years and built a huge network of relations". He also mentioned LACD's lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill culminating in granting General Aoun a visa to enter the US: "They never gave General Aoun permission to enter the US. It was political. So we lobbied for that and for the first time in 2003 they granted General Aoun a visa, and he came to the US for almost a month. He testified at the Congress and this also helped our case... President George W. Bush was against the law; we used to follow him during his electoral campaigns, lending him our help and support. We also followed him to private parties where the ticket per person was around \$25,000. So because of that he felt

¹⁶¹ Nadejda Marinova, *Ask what you can do for your (new) country: how host states use diasporas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 84.

pressured to sign the law. Eventually he signed the law but wasn't pleased at all".

When we asked him about the amount of money he has paid during in his activism and lobbying efforts in the US (including LACD's donations to the electoral campaigns of various senators and congressmen), Issa replied: "I wanted to utilize my effort and money in the right way, and not spend them on parties. I worked for 15 years for the SALSRA law; I paid millions of dollars during these years, around 3 to 4 million dollars. Every year, I had to pay \$200,000-300,000 as expenses for the law... Also, when General Aoun travelled to Australia, I paid his trip's expenses". He concluded: "We became friends with General Aoun. We talked daily with him and had good familial relations among us. He also visited us in the US".

Issa's economic capital (accrued in the US) enabled him to pursue his diasporic political activism in the US which necessitated the lobbying of senators and congressmen in Capitol Hill on issues related to Lebanon. The role of Issa's economic capital acquires particular significance in the US political context where lobbying is an institutionalized activity that requires the furnishing of large amounts of money on part of the lobbyist. This stands in contrast to the French political context where the activity of lobbying is not "institutionalized" and hence meeting and engaging with French MPs by members of the Lebanese diaspora doesn't necessitate furnishing large amounts of money (the example of MP Simon Abi Ramia). This raises the issue of how the political structure in the host country regulates and modifies the ways in which diasporic political activity towards the homeland (in this case Lebanon) is implemented.

Issa's political activism in the US (his leadership and organizational roles and his successful lobbying efforts in Washington) earned him a certain degree of personal political capital in the eyes of the Aounist movement's supporters in general. In 2005, Issa served as Aoun's personal envoy to Damascus. He returned to Lebanon in late 2016, shortly before Michel Aoun was elected president in October of the same year. With the election of Aoun as president of republic, Issa became his advisor on Lebanese-American relations, and hence a member of the aspiring political elite in Lebanon (in the interview with him, Issa mentioned that he might be interested in becoming a cabinet member). In July 2017, Issa was appointed as Lebanese ambassador to the US, hence becoming a member of the Lebanese state's bureaucratic elite.

4.5 Migrant economic capital plays a complementary role in acquiring elite status in the homeland

The trajectories of two interviewees, namely former MPs Joseph Maalouf and Antoine Zahra, revealed a complementary role for migrant economic capital in the process of acquiring elite status in the homeland. Both Maalouf and Zahra were politically active in Lebanon and the diaspora, making them possessors of a certain degree of political capital. In this sense, their accrued migrant economic capital served to complete their trajectory of acquiring elite status in the homeland.

Joseph Maalouf comes from a family engaged in local politics in the city of Zahleh. His father was a member of Zahleh's municipal council, and enjoyed a good reputation in the city as a conciliator and broker (*muftah Intikhabi*). He was also one of the founders of the "Public assembly of Zahleh", a gathering opposing the Syrian military presence in the city. (In this sense,

Maalouf's father possessed a certain degree of political capital). During his first year of university at USJ, Maalouf was active within the "Public assembly of Zahleh". After being arrested twice by the Syrian army in Zahleh, Maalouf left to the US in late 1978 to continue his university studies. He attended Northeastern University in Boston and graduated with a Master's degree in industrial engineering. In the US, Maalouf continued his activism for "Lebanese sovereignty" and was particularly active within the American Lebanese League and the "Lebanese cultural union in the world". During the Syrian siege of Zahleh in 1981, Maalouf participated in lobbying the senators of Massachusetts, as well as in organizing the demonstrations against the siege: "The demonstrations against the Syrian siege of Zahleh that took place in Boston, New York, Washington and Montreal, were organized in my house in Boston". After working for a consulting firm in Boston between 1982 and 1987, Maalouf moved to Montreal. In 1989 he established his own consulting firm in Montreal (in partnership with Canadian friends). The firm has affiliates in the US, Tasmania, Singapore, and Kuwait. In Montreal, Maalouf participated in fundraising activities related to lobbying for the "sovereignty of Lebanon". After his return to Lebanon in 1997, Maalouf co-founded two NGOs, namely Injaz Lebanon (preparing Lebanon's youth to enter the professional job market), and Nahwa Al Mouwatiniyah (an NGO that worked on reforming legislations). In 2005, Maalouf ran for elections for the Greek orthodox seat in Zahleh as an independent candidate espousing the principles of the March 14 movement (he didn't win). In 2009, he became MP for Zahleh after running for elections in alliance with the March 14 movement.

Maalouf inherited an initial political capital (his father's political capital) which he relied on in Zahleh. His activism in the diaspora (US and Canada) can only be seen as enhancing his political capital in the homeland. Maalouf's migrant economic capital enabled him to co-found two NGOs in Lebanon, an activity which brought him more recognition and hence more political capital (he mentioned an annual turnover of more than \$4,000,000 from his consultancy in Montreal). In addition to his political outlook (in line with the March 14 movement), Maalouf's economic capital favored his candidacy in 2009 on the March 14 electoral list as someone who can fund his own campaign (and possibly contribute to the financing of the list's campaign expenses). On this he says: "Politics in Lebanon cost me a lot of money... After the electoral campaign, the cost becomes higher...there is a lack of social services on part of the state and hence people expect the MP to deliver to them such services". One can infer here that Maalouf's income from abroad enabled him to deliver services to his clientele of supporters, which in turn contributed to reinforcing his political capital and elite status in the homeland.

Antoine Zahra was born into a middle class family in Kfifan (district of Batroun). He studied law for one year at the Lebanese university before the outbreak of the civil war in 1975, when he left university and became full-time military personnel, first with the Kataeb party and then with the Lebanese Forces (LF). Between 1985 and 1987, Zahra lived in Paris where he was in charge of the Lebanese Forces' bureau for diasporic affairs in Western Europe. After the end of the Lebanese civil war, and due to security reasons, Zahra move to Dubai where he worked in the holding company (restaurants, real estate, contracting, and advertising) of a family relative

(Zahra Group). He worked first as an advertising manager and then as marketing manager. During his stay in Dubai (1992-2005), Zahra was engaged in social activities within the Lebanese diaspora; he headed, for instance, the “Lebanese youth sports union” in UAE between 2000 and 2005. He also visited Lebanon regularly and was engaged in what he calls “secret activism” through supporting Lebanese Forces activists in the Batroun area: “I used to send them money, and when I came to Lebanon I worked with them secretly during elections. If anyone needed any social assistance, I delivered it to him. When they ran for municipal elections, I paid their fees. It was all in secret”. Zahra also helped in employing certain LF supporters in the company he worked for Dubai. After returning to Lebanon in 2005, Zahra continued to earn a monthly salary from the company he works for in Dubai (Zahra Group).

Antoine Zahra’s commitment to the LF’s cause during the civil war granted him a certain degree of political capital among party members and supporters. This capital was further enhanced through his “secret activism” while residing in Dubai (and his role in the employment of LF activists in Dubai). All this explains why the LF party nominated him for the 2005 parliamentary elections. However, Zahra had to rely on money from his relatives in Dubai (Zahra Group) in order to fund his electoral campaign in 2005. After becoming MP in 2005 and 2009, Zahra continued to rely on his monthly salary from Dubai and the financial support from Zahra Group in order to deliver services to his supporters (helping them in paying their hospital bills, for example), which in turn contributed to reinforcing his political capital and elite status in Lebanon.

4.6 “Diasporic social capital” plays a significant role in the acquisition of elite status in the homeland

Abdul Rahim Mourad presents a case where social capital accrued within the Lebanese diaspora played a significant role in enabling him to build service-providing institutions in Lebanon. These institutions granted him recognition and reputation among the West Bekaa voters, resulting in his possession of political capital in Lebanon.

Abdul Rahim Mourad comes from a modest social background: his 11 siblings worked as peasants for the large landowning families (landed elites) in the Bekaa region, before migrating to Brazil while Mourad stayed in Lebanon. His siblings started working as roving vendors in Brazil, then opened stores, and later became owners of several textile factories. As the economic condition of Mourad’s siblings improved in Brazil, they started supporting his education while he was still in Lebanon: “When my siblings emigrated, they used to send my family and me money in order to educate me”. This enabled Mourad to finish his high school education in Damascus in 1961, and was at the time politicized by the ideas and rhetoric of Gamal Abdul Nasser (and the ideology Arab nationalism). In the same year he emigrated to Brazil and joined his siblings, where he studied the Spanish language with an aim to enter university there. However, after one year in Brazil, Mourad decided to return to Lebanon and resume his political activism as a Nasserite. Upon his return in 1962, he established a carpeting factory in partnership with his siblings in Brazil, and after 1965, he and his siblings entered the manufacturing industry and started exporting products to KSA: “When I returned to Lebanon, we established a carpeting factory, and this was one of the positive aspects of migration... After 1965, we

opened other factories, for example for refrigerators... the manufacturing industry was booming in Lebanon and we used to export to KSA. We had 350 employees working at the factory. It was a big factory, but unfortunately it was destroyed during the events of 1978. My siblings and I were shareholders in the factory, we all worked together. There was a family union, but I was the manager of the factory here in Lebanon. I was studying and working”. Between 1962 and 1970, Mourad studied at Beirut Arab University (during which he was a politically active Nasserite), graduating with degrees in both business administration and law. He was also the manager of the carpeting factory in the town of Shwit (Mount Lebanon).

Migrant economic capital, accrued in Brazil by Mourad’s siblings enabled him to complete his secondary education. He then entered Beirut Arab University (between 1962 and 1970), financing his studies from the income accrued from the carpeting industry (and other industries after 1965), which were joint ventures with his siblings in Brazil. Mourad graduated with degrees in business and law. On this he says: “Without migration, I would not have had the chance to get an education; migration helped me in completing my education...During those 8 years of university, I only attended classes for about 10 or 15 times. We used to spend all our time in discussions in the cafeteria. We used to participate in demonstrations in support of Jamal Abdul Nasser, Ahmad Bin Bella and other related issues”.

In 1970, Mourad returned to Brazil and stayed for two years, replacing his brother as manager of the textile factory in Brazil (while one of his brothers returned for a stay in Lebanon and replaced him as manager of the factory). And in 1976, he returned to Brazil for two and a half years (for the same reasons). During his last two stays in Brazil, Mourad started his political

activism within the Lebanese diaspora there: “My last two stays in Brazil were mere politics. We started inviting lecturers, poets and politicians from Lebanon and other Arab countries, to lecture in the Arab clubs. And we discussed the political situation in Lebanon as well”. Following the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon in 1975, Mourad felt the need to respond with an act of goodwill: he left for Brazil and collected donations from the Lebanese diaspora in order to build a school in the Bekaa region: “The power of evil was dominating at that period. In response to those events (civil war), we had an immediate idea to spread the will of goodness. So we left to Brazil to collect donations in order to build a small school. We established a highly qualified school called “Omar al-Mukhtar Educational Center” from the donations of the diaspora and with the help of the Libyans”.

During his third stay in Brazil (between 1976 and mid-1978), Mourad’s activism within the Lebanese diaspora became more focused and pronounced: “In the third time, I voluntarily moved to Brazil, and I was happy because I started achieving, not economically, but politically. We worked for the Nasserite party and established an Arab club to organize lectures, educate the people and teach them the Arabic language. We also used to organize trips for children”. During this period, Mourad’s projects in the Bekaa region were also expanding: “With time the school started expanding, and we established a sports stadium...We established three vocational institutes and two orphanage houses (in the Bekaa region) ... We did all those civic activities in 1978, when there were no political opportunities at the time; we worked tirelessly for the community without any political interest. We also established around 20 to 30 clinics, in addition to many other services”.

Through his activism in Brazil (through the Arab clubs), Mourad made new acquaintances and formed social networks, hence accruing a certain degree of “social capital” amongst the Lebanese diaspora (or what can be called “diasporic social capital”). This is further corroborated by the fact that Mourad visited Brazil after the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in 1975, and was able to collect donations from the Lebanese diaspora for the purpose of building a school in the Bekaa region. Mourad’s success in collecting donations highlights the recognition that members of the Lebanese diaspora displayed towards him, hence his possession of “social capital” amongst the Lebanese diaspora in Brazil.

The donations collected by Mourad from the Lebanese diaspora in Brazil (in addition to the financial support he received from the Libyan regime) enabled him to build his first educational institution in West Bekaa (Omar al Mukhtar educational center), which later led to the opening of other service-providing institutions in the same region (such as medical clinics and orphanage houses). Offering affordable basic services (such as education, healthcare, and orphanage care) to the West Bekaa inhabitants conferred on Mourad a “good reputation” and made him “known and recognized in person” among his community members. The latter attributes were the basis for his “popularity” (or his clientele of supporters) within his community. All this translated into Mourad possessing “personal political capital”. With his appointment as MP in 1991, Mourad’s “personal political capital” was converted into “delegated political capital”.

Mourad’s “popularity” within his community, in addition to his pro-Syrian regime political leanings made him a favorable candidate in the eyes of the

Syrian authorities to be an appointed MP.¹⁶² As he said: “When the Syrians came, they looked for popular figures”; when our Syrian brothers came to Lebanon, they recognized my work and services”.

In 2001, Mourad established the “Lebanese International University”, on which he says: “...I established “Omar al Mukhtar educational center” which is a school that includes all the educational levels, and continued from then on until we crowned our institutions with establishing the Lebanese International University. The university became ranked as the first in the country”. Based in Khiyara (West Bekaa), LIU has nine branches in Lebanon (Akkar, Tripoli, Jdeidet al Matn, Beirut, Saida, Tyre, Nabatiyeh, and middle Bekaa). It also has branches outside Lebanon (Senegal, Mauritania, Morocco, and Yemen).

Discussing the role played by the university, Mourad adds: “We have 30,000 students compared to 8,000 in LAU...We offer scholarships, not like the other universities. Other universities always increase their fees, while our students never pay extra added fees from the time they enter university until they graduate. Pharmacy costs USD 8000 at our university whereas it costs USD 21000 at LAU”. When we asked him about his future political ambitions in Lebanon, Mourad replied: “I was a minister for 12 years, and served in four different ministries, so it doesn’t really mean anything to me if they appointed a minister again. I don’t really care. Today, with my current position, I am an emperor. The PM needs me; the ministers need me for some services, like getting someone into the pharmacy department”.

¹⁶² The Syrian regime exercised its hegemony over Lebanese politics between 1990 and 2005.

Mourad here has capitalized on his economic capital – considerably shaped by his migration and diasporic linkages – and embarked on a business enterprise that expanded his outreach throughout Lebanon.¹⁶³ Offering private university education at relatively affordable prices (compared to universities like AUB or LAU) to students in various areas – almost spanning the Lebanese sectarian and regional diversity – can be seen as an attempt by Mourad to gain a reputation on the national level, thereby enhancing his political capital and his chances of becoming prime minister. The economic capital accruing from the “cross-border” activities of his university contribute to sustaining his political capital in the homeland.

4.7 Migrant “cultural capital” as a supporting factor in acquiring “political capital” in the homeland

Walid Khouri presents a case of an MP who inherited a sizable degree of political capital through his family. His migrant cultural capital accrued in France and the US contributed to reinforcing his elite status in the homeland.

Khouri hails from a “political family”: his uncle, father, and cousin were all elected MPs for the Jbeil district. His uncle was a physician who treated people in the area for free, thus cultivating a local popular base of supporters, and becoming MP in 1947. Khouri’s father was a former chief of staff of the ISF (internal security forces), and later got elected as MP for two times after his brother’s death.

¹⁶³ It remains a possibility that Mourad used his political leverage to obtain a license for opening the university, since he was minister of Education and higher learning in 2000. He was also appointed minister of vocational education in 1994; minister of education in 2004; and minister of defense in 2005.

Khouri studied medicine at USJ and then worked for 4 years in Hotel Dieu hospital, during the last phase of the Lebanese civil war (1986-1990): “During the war, I worked for 4 years in Hotel Dieu. I was resident and then became the surgeon of the hospital because the surgeons were afraid to come under the bombing and shelling.” After that he moved to France for 3 years, specializing in general surgery: “I migrated because I had a very important opportunity. I received a full scholarship from College de Medicine”. While in Paris, Khouri met the chief of surgery in Neo Clinic (US), who invited to him to complete a one-year fellowship in surgery in Minnesota. Following that, Khouri moved to England where he worked for 6 months in Saint Mark’s hospital. He then returned and settled in Lebanon, practicing medicine in Hotel Dieu hospital, and teaching at different universities. In 2000 he enrolled in a 2-year graduate business program, earning a Master’s in business administration (MBA) from ESA in Beirut.

On his running for parliamentary elections in 2005, he says: “At that time, a surgeon visited me and told me that the General (Michel Aoun) wants to meet me. I didn’t know him at that time. He asked me to nominate myself on his electoral list”.

Khouri possessed an initial “political capital” (the inherited political capital from his uncle and father) to rely on, which granted him an advantage over other electoral candidates in the same district. Moreover, the decision taken by his cousin (who was a former MP) not to run for elections in 2005 paved the way for Khouri to become the favorable family representative in the elections. However, equally important is his ability to sustain (and upgrade) the family’s tradition of providing free health services to community members: “Me and my siblings we are three surgeons. My cousin is a

physician and pharmacist... We are different, we have a special relation with the people in our area, and we treat people for free. We serve all people for free, we are very humanitarian, and we had a synergy with our people. And that is why people always voted for us”.

Khouri’s ability to sustain and enhance his family’s tradition (treating patients for free) stems from his “cultural capital” which was upgraded throughout his study, training, and practice in France, USA, and England respectively. This upgrading enabled Khouri to provide (free) health services of a higher quality to patients, which in turn granted him recognition and a good reputation among his constituency members. All this translates into possessing a certain degree of “personal political capital”, accrued by Khouri between 1995 and 2005, in addition to his initial inherited political capital. Khouri’s popularity, partly derived from his migrant “cultural capital”, played an important role in his favoring over other candidates by Michel Aoun, who was looking for a candidate who enjoyed popular support. On this Khouri says: “General (Aoun) refused to form his list without me. He had so many choices, but he chose me because people loved me”. Khouri was first elected MP in 2005 after joining the electoral list supported by the FPM, the political movement headed by Michel Aoun.¹⁶⁴

4.8 The role of Diaspora in elite formation in Lebanon

4.8.1 Diasporic donations and “political remittances” as supporting factors in acquiring “political capital” in the homeland

4.8.1.1 Political remittances

¹⁶⁴ Khouri was also elected MP in 2009 and 2018.

Three interviews revealed a supporting role for diasporic donations and “political remittances” in the process of acquiring elite status in Lebanon. Namely Abdul Rahim Mourad, Marcelino al-Hirk and Muhamad Mazloun all benefited from diasporic assistance during their electoral campaigns, particularly through family, relatives, or supporters who came to Lebanon during elections and voted in their favor. Abdul Rahim Mourad also benefited from diasporic donations to his institutions in Lebanon.

In the interview with him, Mourad referred to the electoral support he received from his family members and relatives in the diaspora: “My family and cousins all offered their help during the elections. Those who were able to come and vote came voluntarily, but their help was very limited and minimal”. He added: “Also, some members of my extended family in Venezuela helped me during my campaigns. They not only contributed financially, but some also came to Lebanon during my campaign, and they paid for the reluctant voters who asked for USD 100-200 to cast their votes. This happened a lot”.

Mourad stated as well the financial support he received from members of the Lebanese diaspora in Venezuela during his electoral campaigns: “In Venezuela, for example, the diaspora originating from Khiyara village collected around USD 200,000 for my campaign. Khiyara is the village where my institutions are located”. He concluded: “The diaspora might not come to Lebanon to cast their votes, but they have families here, and they will tell their families to vote for me”.

Paul Tabar has coined the term “political remittances” to account for the acts of voting for, and supporting politicians in the homeland by diaspora

members. He differentiates between measurable (tangible) and immeasurable (symbolic) political remittances:

Measurable political remittances include a migrant vote and a tangible political act of being sent back to the home country. Immeasurable political remittances can be remitting political values, practices and identities or simply being active in various forms in lending support to a politician, a party or a movement (such as democratization) back home.¹⁶⁵

In this case, Mourad's family, extended family, and relatives (in the diaspora) who came to Lebanon and voted for him in parliamentary elections were all engaged in sending "measurable political remittances". Although "minimal" (as considered by Mourad), such remittances can only contribute to enhancing Mourad's chances of electoral success. Similarly, the diaspora members who prompted their families (relatives) in Lebanon to vote for Mourad, as well as the members of his extended family in Venezuela who came to Lebanon and paid money for reluctant voters to vote in his favor; all these can be seen as sending an "indirect" form of "measurable political remittances". Furthermore, the financial donations given by the Lebanese diaspora in Venezuela in favor of Mourad's electoral campaigns, both from his extended family there, as well as the Khiyara diaspora (200,000 USD), are a form of "immeasurable political remittances". All the aforementioned forms of "political remittances" were contributing factors to Mourad's electoral successes (elected MP in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2018), and to his upholding of "delegated political capital" between 1992 and 2000.

¹⁶⁵ Paul Tabar, "'Political Remittances': The Case of Lebanese Expatriates Voting in National Elections", *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 35, no. 4 (June 2014), p. 446.

In the same vein, Muhamad Mazloun (head of Khiyara municipality) also benefited from “political remittances” during his electoral campaign. In the interview with him, Mazloun mentioned inviting members of the Lebanese diaspora and paying their airline tickets as an incentive to come and vote for him in the elections. Moreover, these votes from the Lebanese diaspora secured winning the elections for him: “I went to Brazil and brought 221 men from there. I have relations with all the migrants. I am a member in the international diaspora organization. I meet them in Paris, Brazil, Colombia, etc. I paid the tickets for 100 persons from Brazil, and some of them hadn’t visited Lebanon in 50 or 40 years. I visited them in their houses and stayed for one week there... I also brought people from Dubai, Canada, Porto Rico, Paris, and the US. I brought 221 immigrants back here and they secured winning the elections”.

In the case of Marcelino al-Hirk, the head of Batroun municipality, allegations have broadly surfaced that he gives vacations to the employees (from Batroun) in his company in the US, and pays them their airline tickets as an incentive to come to Lebanon and vote for him in the municipal elections. This can also be seen as form of “measurable political remittances”.

The above cases are further validated by Paul Tabar’s study of the Lebanese expatriates in Australia who came to Lebanon and voted in the 2009 parliamentary elections¹⁶⁶, as well as the ongoing study (at LAU’s Institute for migration studies) on political remittances associated with the Lebanese diaspora in USA, Canada and Australia.

4.8.1.2 Anonymous Diasporic donations

¹⁶⁶ Tabar, “Political Remittances”, pp. 442-60.

“Every once in a while we send a teacher from the orphanage house to Brazil and Venezuela to collect donations, and in the USA there is a group called ‘Dar al-Hanan friends’ that collects donations and sends them to us. And this teacher usually visits the diaspora originating from villages between Marj and Qaraoun (in West Bekka) to collect donations; he comes back with USD 100,000 or USD 150,000 or something around that number”.

The above statement by Abdul Rahim Mourad gives an example of the donations collected by his orphanage houses from the Lebanese diaspora (in this case the Lebanese diasporas in Brazil, Venezuela, and the US). Such donations contribute to sustaining the work of these institutions, which in turn upholds Mourad’s political capital in Lebanon. The role of anonymous diasporic donations was further validated during our interview with Gabriel Yared, the head of the diaspora sector in the Lebanese Forces party. On this he said: “Some Lebanese in the diaspora also donate money but they prefer to remain anonymous. They come from America, Canada, Australia and all other countries”. Yared also added that “some Lebanese diaspora members donate money for Lebanese Forces candidates (in parliamentary elections), but they donate per person”.

4.9 The differential impact of migration on political elite formation in postwar Lebanon

The characteristics of the political elites whose trajectories was influenced by migration in postwar Lebanon reveal a differential role for the latter in this regard. These elites can be classified into the following categories:

First, the elite whose massive migrant wealth enabled him to become a major leader in his sect and on the national level (*qutub*). The ideal-type case here is Rafik Hariri who was able to form his own electoral lists in the

parliamentary elections in Beirut. Hariri also had candidates in the majority of districts in Lebanon and was able sometimes to impose his candidates on certain electoral lists that were not headed by him.

Second, the elite whose migrant wealth enabled him to become a leader in his sect on the regional level. The most prominent examples here are Isam Fares and Najib Mikati who became leaders in the North Lebanon region.

Third, the elite whose migrant wealth enabled him to become cabinet member, while at the same time aspiring to become prime minister (the examples of Muhamad Safadi and Abdul Rahim Mourad).

Fourth, the elite who used his migrant wealth to book a winning parliamentary seat on the electoral list headed by a major political leader. The ideal-type case here is Nehmeh Tohme, and to a considerable extent Yasine Jaber and Anwar el-Khalil.

Fifth, the elite whose migrant wealth directly favored him to be appointed cabinet member or head of municipality by a major leader. The examples here are Marwan Kheirredine, Yasine Jaber, Anwar al-Kahlil, and Ziad Haidar.

Sixth, the politically relevant elite who uses his migrant wealth to support major leaders in Lebanon in order to enhance his business interests, influence, and prestige in the country. This elite also plays a decisive role in the emergence of new elites on the local level. The ideal-type case here is Gilbert Chaghoury.

Seventh, the aspiring elite who, despite his migrant wealth, failed to become a member of the country's political elite (the example of Roger Eddeh).

It is also worth noting here that the majority of the postwar political elites analyzed in this study do not hail from traditional political families. Rather, these elites, through their migration experiences, accrued economic capital which enabled them to both, acquire elite status in Lebanon and achieve upward social mobility. This further validates the trend discerned by Iliya Harik and Samir Khalaf in their studies of the Lebanese parliamentary elite before 1975: the decline of descendants of traditional and notable political families and the ascendancy of deputies who enjoy elevated or upper-class social origins (these are mostly lawyers, professionals and businessmen). In postwar Lebanon, however, this study has revealed a decisive role for migration in the emergence of new political elites who are businessmen (of course, after their achievement of upward social mobility).

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Migration has been impacting political elite formation in Lebanon since the late 1930s. This role for migration reached unprecedented levels in the postwar period, as evidenced by the results of the 2000 parliamentary elections, in which 39% of the elected deputies had migration experiences.

Although a systematic phenomenon, the impact of migration on elite formation in Lebanon has been understudied mainly due to the prevalence of “methodological nationalism” in elite studies in particular. By adopting a “transnational lens” that captures “cross-border” activities, this study has depicted an important role for migration in political elite formation in the country of origin (in this case Lebanon), hence highlighting the limits of “methodological nationalism” in this regard.

The majority of the migrant trajectories studied in this thesis (18 out of 27 cases) revealed a decisive role for migrant economic capital in the process of attaining elite status in Lebanon by the respective migrants. Extending the Bourdieusian framework beyond the contours of the nation-state allows us to understand how migrant economic capital was translated to political capital in Lebanon. This process often involved capitalizing on migrant economic capital by the respective return migrants and initiating charitable/philanthropic, social, educational, civic, or cultural activities in Lebanon. These latter activities bestowed on the respective return migrants a “good reputation” and “recognition” among their constituencies. These

attributes translated into the possession of political capital by the respective return migrants. However, sometimes migrant economic capital is directly converted to political capital in Lebanon, when the respective return migrant is appointed cabinet member, or head of municipality, or when he “books” a winning parliamentary seat on the electoral list headed by a “Zaim” or a major leader. Migrant economic capital can sometimes play a “complementary” role in the attainment of elite status by return migrants who already possessed a certain degree of political capital in Lebanon before migrating. That being said, wealthy return migrants sometimes fail to convert their economic capital to political capital in Lebanon, hence remaining within the category of “aspiring elites”. Lastly, migrant cultural capital can play a supporting role in reinforcing the status of a political elite who had already possessed an inherited political capital in Lebanon.

On the diasporic level, this study has revealed a significant role for both “diasporic political capital” and “diasporic social capital” in the process of acquiring elite status in Lebanon. Diasporic political capital enabled the possession of political capital in Lebanon by the respective return migrants, while diasporic social capital contributed to the acquisition of economic capital by the respective migrant, hence enabling him to initiate educational activities in Lebanon (which translated into his possession of political capital). The Lebanese diaspora also hosts businessmen who support political elites in Lebanon, as well as playing a decisive role in the emergence of elites on the local Lebanese level. In the same context, this study revealed the existence of “political remittances” delivered by diaspora members who visited Lebanon and casted their vote during parliamentary elections. These

remittances are seen as a supporting factor in either reinforcing the status of current political elites or in the emergence of new ones.

This study has also shown a differential impact for migration on political elite formation in postwar Lebanon, resulting in a range of different types of political elites, starting from a head of municipality all the way to becoming prime minister.

The late prime minister Rafik Hariri remains a unique case of a migrant who was able to convert his migrant wealth to political capital in Lebanon, hence becoming a major leader both in his sect and on the national level (*qutub*). Hariri also played a decisive role in the emergence of new political elites in postwar Lebanon either through appointing them ministers in his governments (such as Fouad Sanyourah, Bassel Fleihan, and Bassem al-Sabeh); or through granting them winning seats on his electoral lists; or through his kinship ties with them (the cases of his sister Bahia Hariri, who became MP, and the current prime minister Saad Hariri who inherited his father's political capital). Other elites capitalized on their migrant wealth and became regional leaders; others were favored by their migrant wealth to be appointed cabinet members; and some others relied on their migrant wealth to book a winning parliamentary seat on the electoral list headed by a traditional political boss or a major political leader.

Moreover, this study has shown that migration has diversified the channels through which political elites are recruited in Lebanon. Migration can now be seen as a new recruitment channel for elites, especially one through which migrants from modest socio-economic backgrounds became members of the political elite after returning to Lebanon.

However, the overall impact of these politicians who were recruited to the elite through their migration backgrounds has been the reinforcement of the dominant political structure and practices in Lebanon. Members of the Lebanese political elite coming from these migration backgrounds never tried to challenge or reform the sectarian political system in the country; rather, they were ultimately co-opted by the sectarian structure of the Lebanese political system and its clientelistic character.

The role of migration in political elite formation in Lebanon is a systematic and persistent phenomenon which also warrants study in the years to come. This study aims to serve as a template for further writing and research into the topic in the future.

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Appendix A:

	Position at the time of interview	Reason for migration	Family background	Social status prior to migration	Political affiliation prior to migration
Abdul Rahim Mourad	Former MP and cabinet member	education/work	poor; 2 siblings were in Brazil	lower middle class	Nasserite
Ghazi Shaar	Head of municipality	education	middle class; father was a migrant before returning to Lebanon	middle class	None
Walid Khouri	MP	education	upper middle class; uncle and father were MPs	middle class	None
Muhamad Safadi	MP	work	(upper) middle class; merchant family	(upper) middle class	None
Simon Abi Ramia	MP	security (civil war)	middle class; siblings were in France	middle class	supporter of Raymond Eddeh
Wajdi Mourad	Head of municipality	work with his father	middle class; smallest family in Aley; father was working in KSA	middle class	supporter of Kamal Junblatt
Gabriel Issa	Aspiring elite	security (civil war)	middle class; father was a supporter of	middle class	None

			Raymond Eddeh		
Marselino el Hirk	Head of municipality	security (civil war)	middle class; father was a mayor and supporter of Raymond Eddeh	middle class	None
Issam Makarem	Head of municipality	work with his father	middle class	middle class	None
Waddah Nasserredine	Head of municipality	education/work	middle class	middle class	None
Amal Hourani	Head of municipality	education/work	middle class	middle class	None
Joseph Maalouf	MP	security (civil war)	middle class; father was member of municipality	middle class	None
Roger Eddeh	Aspiring elite	work	upper middle class; family supported Emile and Raymond Eddeh	upper middle class	Member of National Bloc party
Muhamad Mazloum	Head of municipality	work	modest social background	modest social background	None

Antoine Zahra	MP	security reasons	middle class	middle class	Lebanese Forces
Yasine Jaber	MP	work	upper middle class	upper middle class	None
Marwan Kheirredine	Former cabinet member	education/work	upper middle class	upper middle class	None
Ziad Haidar	Head of municipality	Work	middle class	middle class	None
Farid Makari	MP	Work	upper middle class; father was head of municipality	upper middle class	None
Anise Nassar	MP	work	middle class family	middle class	Kataeb party
Muhamad Yassine	aspiring elite	Work	middle class	middle class	None
Maroun Dina	Head of municipality	Work	middle class	middle class	None

	Political activity during migration	Type of accrued migrant capital (MC)	Degree of importance of MC in acquiring elite status in Lebanon	Other
Abdul Rahim Mourad	Active within cultural clubs in Brazil	Diasporic social capital and economic capital	Significant role for diasporic social capital	Political remittances in his favor; engaged in multinational economic activities
Ghazi Shaar	None	cultural and economic capital	migrant economic capital was decisive	

Walid Khouri	None	cultural capital	secondary	
Muhamad Safadi	None	economic capital	Decisive	multinational business activities; implicated in al-Yamamah scandal; allegations of "buying" votes and abuse of power have surfaced
Simon Abi Ramia	Prominent activist within the Aounist movement in France	cultural, economic and diasporic political capital	Diasporic political capital was decisive	
Wajdi Mourad	None	economic capital	decisive	
Gabriel Issa	One of the leaders of the Aounist movement in US	cultural, economic and diasporic political capital	Diasporic political capital was decisive; migrant economic capital enabled his activism in the US	Was appointed Lebanon's ambassador to the US
Marselino el Hirk	None	economic capital	migrant economic capital was decisive	Political remittances in his favor; allegations of "buying" votes and abuse of power have surfaced
Isam Makarem	None	economic capital	migrant economic capital was decisive	engaged in transnational business activities
Waddah Nasserredine	None	economic and cultural capital	economic capital was decisive; cultural capital a supporting factor	engaged in transnational business activities

Amal Hourani	None	cultural and economic capital	economic capital was decisive; cultural capital a supporting factor	engaged in transnational business activities
Joseph Maalouf	Active in US; lobbied in Canada for Lebanese sovereignty	cultural and economic capital	economic capital was decisive; cultural capital a supporting factor	engaged in transnational business activities
Roger Eddeh	supported Michel Aoun in France	economic and social capital	Decisive	engaged in transnational business activities
Muhamad Mazloum	None	economic capital	decisive	
Antoine Zahra	Active in social activities in Dubai	economic and cultural capital	economic capital played a complimentary role	political remittances in his favor
Yassine Jaber	None	economic capital	decisive	
Marwan Kheirredine	None	economic capital	Decisive	
Ziad Haidar	None	economic capital	Decisive	
Farid Makari	representative for Rafik Hariri with Lebanese politicians	economic and social capital	Decisive	
Anise Nassar	None	economic	Decisive	engaged in multinational business activities
Muhamad Yassine	None	economic	decisive	Political remittances in his favor; engaged in transnational economic activities
Maroun Dina	None	economic and social capital	Decisive	

Table 1: Relevant characteristics of interviewed migrant political elites

Appendix B:

	1992		1996		2000		2005		2009
Number of MPs with migration experience	35		46		50		47		35
Total number of MPs	128		128		128		128		128
percentage (%)	27.30%		35.90%		39.06%		36.70%		27.34%

Table 2: percentages of migrant MPs in five consecutive Lebanese parliaments (1992, 1996, 2000, 2005, and 2009)