

Refugee Research and Policy in the Arab World Program

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Governance between Isolation and Integration

A Study on the Interaction between
Lebanese State Institutions and
Palestinian Authorities in Shabriha
Gathering, South Lebanon

Nora Stel

IFI Affiliated Scholar

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The Refugee Research and Policy in the Arab World Program aims to collect, support and initiate research relevant to refugees – whether Syrian, Palestinian, Iraqi, or others. It seeks to harness the refugee-related, policy-oriented research in order to achieve several goals: to enhance the Arab world's input into regional and global refugee issues, to raise the quality of refugee-related debate and decision-making in the region, and to enrich the quality of interaction among scholars, officials, international organizations and civil society actors.

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Executive Summary

In this paper I explore the interactions between Lebanese and Palestinian authorities in the unofficial Palestinian camp, or ‘gathering,’ of Shabriha in South Lebanon. I do so through a qualitative analysis of five events that I studied by means of in-depth interviews, primary documents and observations generated during five months of fieldwork. I conclude that ideational notions on *al awda* and *al tawteen* have withheld Palestinians citizenship and thereby the institutional resources associated with the de jure governance frameworks of the Lebanese state. Because Shabriha is not an official camp, moreover, Palestinian governance actors are excluded from the de facto governance framework epitomized by UNRWA. This institutional marginalization manifested itself in informal, irregular, asymmetrical, politicized, nationalized and contested governance interaction. It was also apparent in wanting material resources of Palestinian governance actors such as limited access to finances, absence of arms and the inability to own land. Direct interactions between the Palestinian Popular Committee and Lebanese state institutions, moreover, were absent. Instead, interactions were mediated via Lebanese political parties and the *mukhtar*. Participants referred to institutional resources related to the political system (sectarianism and clientelism) and the political situation (intra- and inter-sectarian polarization) as well as ideational resources (the ‘Palestinian cause’) to explain why these Lebanese political parties would position themselves as mediating actors between Palestinian and Lebanese governance institutions.

1. Problem Statement and Research Questions

*"Shabriha is not a camp, it is a gathering, it is like any Lebanese village."*²

1.1 Institutional interaction between Lebanese and Palestinian authorities

In Lebanon, the state for various reasons, has never been able or willing to satisfyingly provide security, welfare and political representation to the Palestinian refugee community that constitutes roughly ten percent of Lebanon's population (Atzili 2010:768; Khalidi and Riskedahl 2010:1). Instead, various Palestinian institutions, ranging from political parties to non-governmental organisations (NGOs)³ and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), govern Palestinian camps in Lebanon. The so-called Popular Committees (PCs),ⁱ representing the Palestinian parties affiliated with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), play a coordinating role in this governance (Popular Aid for Relief and Development (PARD) 2011:7-9; United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2010:32).

The status of Palestinians in Lebanon is mostly discussed in a politicized manner that focuses on the right of return (*al awda*) of Palestinians to their Palestine to be on the one hand (Aruri 2001; Bianchi 2008; Czajka 2012:244; Erni 2012:78; Hanafi 2010a:3; Klaus 2000:12-13) and the threat the Palestinian community poses to Lebanon's precarious sectarian balance and the concurrent danger of their permanent settlement (*al tawteen*) on the other hand (El Ali 2005:85; Czajka 2012:243; Haddad 2002; Hanafi et al. 2012:42; Hanafi 2010b:53; Khalidi and Riskedahl 2010:2; El-Khazen 1999; Meier 2010; Weighill 1997:308). With the volatile role the PLO has played in the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), this focus on 'return' versus 'settlement' has resulted in an emphasis on the competitive and segregated elements of relations between Palestinian governance actors and the Lebanese state. This dichotomy mirrors the discourse of a Palestinian 'state-within-the-state' and Palestinian 'security islands' that renders the Palestinians a threat to state sovereignty (El Ali 2005, 2011; Atzili 2010:768; Brynen 1990; Chabaan et al. 2010:ix; CSI n.d.:5; Czajka 2012; Doraï and Puig 2008; Haddad 2004:474; Hanafi 2008:6; Hanafi 2010b:51; Hilal 1993:52; Khalidi 2010; Peteet 2005; Sfeir 2010:26; Teitelbaum 1988; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:37; Weighill 1997:298). As Klaus (2000:92, 78) shows, the dominant discourse in Lebanon sees the camps as "a source of instability, criminal hide-aways, militia resort and weapon depots" at best or a "threat to the Lebanese state" at worst.

Thus, the absence of relations between Lebanese and Palestinian official representatives and the fractionalization of institutional responsibility on both sides is a real and detrimental problem (Pursue 2012:26-27). Nevertheless, the 'segregation discourse' does not do justice to the complex situation in Lebanon. On a local level particularly, and with regard to unofficial camps especially, PCs do (in different ways and to different degrees) collaborate, cooperate and coordinate with representatives of the Lebanese state.

Such interaction dynamics have, however, not yet been structurally studied. Renowned research has been done on the Palestinian side of the governance spectrum. The engagement between Palestinian organisations on the one hand and civilians on the other (Hanafi and Long 2010; Long and Hanafi 2010; Zahar 2001) and the interface between the wealth of different Palestinian organizations and factions has been analysed in great depth (Hanafi 2008, 2010a, 2010c, 2011; International Crisis Group (ICG) 2009; Rougier 2007). Organisational dynamics within Palestinian governance organisations have also received increasing attention (Hilal 1993; ICG 2009; Kortam 2011). Similarly, Lebanese local governance dynamics in the post-war era have been addressed by a wide range of scholars (Antoun 1995; Arnaout 1998; Atallah 2002; Beydoun et al. 2009; Dagher 2002; Favier 2001; El Ghaziri 2007; Kisirwani 1997; El-Mikawi and Melim-McLeod 2010; Obeid 2010).

2 Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013.

3 A list of abbreviations and a glossary of Arabic words is provided in Appendix I.

The relations between Lebanese and Palestinians have also received increasing academic attention. There are studies into the socio-cultural relations between Palestinian and Lebanese communities and the economic interdependencies between Lebanese and Palestinians (Common Space Initiative (CSI) 2012:17 and 2011:11; Dorai 2006 in Hanafi 2010c:21; Dorai 2010:16; Dorai and Puig 2008; Khalili 2007; Khalidi and Riskedahl 2010; Khalidi and Tabbarah 2009; Knudsen 2011:98; Meier 2010; Perdigon 2010:98; Ramadan 2008; Schenker 2012:73; Weighill 1997:308;). There are even reports that touch upon the ties between Lebanese and Palestinian political parties (Brynen 1989; Ramadan 2008:673; Sfeir 2010:23; Shibliak 1997; Sleiman 1999; Teitelbaum 1988). Academics have also looked into the discursive brawls evolving around sovereignty and legitimacy between the Lebanese government and Palestinian representatives (Czajka 2012:238; Knudsen and Hanafi 2010). National policy initiatives to enhance Lebanese-Palestinian diplomatic relations (such as the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee – LPDC) have also recently been investigated (CSI 2011, 2012; Hanafi 2010a, 2011; Knudsen 2011).ⁱⁱ Apart from an unpublished orientation study by CSI (El Ali 2011; CSI n.d., 2011, 2012) for the Nahr el-Bared, Beddawi and Ain el-Hilweh camps and several lateral discussions by Hanafi (most notably in 2010b), what has not been explored structurally is the actual local organizational and institutional interactions between Lebanese state representatives and Palestinian governance actors in Lebanon (Knudsen and Hanafi 2011:6).

This is especially unfortunate because the institutional environment for Lebanese-Palestinian governance interaction has decisively changed since the 2007 Nahr el-Bared crisis (CSI 2011, 2012). The Lebanese Armed Forces' (LAF) destroyed the Nahr el-Bared camp in their aim to eliminate militants from Fatah al-Islam allegedly hiding in Nahr el-Bared. This resulted not only in a reconstruction of the camp but also in a controversial new model for camp governance that was implicitly launched as a blueprint for other camps as well (CSI n.d.:8; Hanafi 2010c:27; Long and Hanafi 2010). The Nahr el-Bared crisis, moreover, boosted the LPDC's relevance and mandate, provided the impetus for the installation of a Palestinian embassy in Lebanon in 2011 and generated a new institution for national Palestinian-Lebanese interaction as well as an unprecedented awareness, if not political will, for the need for Lebanese-Palestinian coordination on governance in Palestinian camps (CSI 2011:5; Knudsen 2011; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:35). Knudsen and Hanafi (2011:7) unequivocally see the Nahr el-Bared crisis as a starting point for the redefining of the "political relations between refugees, their political representatives and the state." In this sense, despite the contested position of the LPDC, the post-2007 period might be a new stage in the history of Palestinian organization in Lebanon following the 1948-1968 phase starting with the arrival of the Palestinians in Lebanon, the 1968-1982 phase instigated by the signing of the Cairo Declarationⁱⁱⁱ and the post-1982 phase initiated by the expulsion of the PLO (El Ali 2005; Czajka 2012; Hanafi and Long 2010:137; Suleiman 2006; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:32).^{iv} A Palestinian scholar said:

*"You have to put your political-institutional focus into a historical perspective. We always saw the camps as isolated and just a few years ago we started to talk about this political-institutional interaction topic. This is very closely related to the NBC precedent and the failure of the interaction model implemented there."*⁴

Despite this new phase in Lebanese-Palestinian institutional engagement, there is an acute lack of empirical data and analytical knowledge on the nature and development of the interactions between Lebanese and Palestinian governance actors, specifically on a local (municipal) level. This is problematic for several reasons. First, this limited insight results in an incomplete understanding of Lebanon's Palestinians – a political community considered crucial in Lebanese and Middle Eastern political developments (Haddad 2004:476; Meier 2010:145). Second, analyses that focus on what should or should not be rather than on what is the nature of interaction between Palestinians and the state bypasses the opportunity to improve existing governance arrangements that would benefit the people governance actors claim to represent (LPDC 2012). The capacities and legitimacy of non-state providers of public goods have to be acknowledged and built upon if the political stability Lebanon has been wanting for so long is to be developed (Danish Refugee Council (DRC) 2005:iii, 67; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:10). A starting point would be to understand how Palestinian authorities and their governance capacities are already linked to state governance institutions. This can amount to visits by ministers to the camps (El Ali 2011:42-43) or coordination between utility companies and PCs (CSI 2011:15; Kortam 2011:202-203); to cooperation between PCs and municipalities on infrastructure and the organization of social events and general services (CSI 2011:13-14); and settlement of Palestinian conflicts by Lebanese *mukhtars* (CSI 2011:11).

4 Palestinian analyst, Saida, 13 July 2012.

1.2 Palestinian ‘gatherings’

The neglected phenomenon of Lebanese-Palestinian governance interaction is particularly pertinent in the understudied unofficial Palestinian camps in Lebanon. In addition to Lebanon’s twelve official Palestinian refugee camps administered by UNRWA that have received a more than generous share of research (Sukarieh and Tannock 2012),^v there are an estimated 39 of these unofficial camps, often called settlements or gatherings (*tajamoua*). DRC (2005:4-5), building on the difference between the UNRWA and non-UNRWA administered camps recognized by Ugland (2003), defines a gathering as a ‘camp’ that:

“1. Has a population of Palestinian refugees, including Palestinian refugees who are registered by UNRWA and/or the Lebanese Government, or are not registered. 2. Has no official UNRWA camp status or any other legal authority identified with responsibility for camp management. 3. Is expected to have clearly defined humanitarian and protection needs, or have a minimum of 25 households; and 4. Has a population with a sense of being a distinct group living in a geographically identifiable area.”

The notion of ‘gatherings’ has become commonplace among practitioners working in Palestinian communities in Lebanon (e.g. AG Friedensforschung 2006; PARD 2011; Terre des Hommes (TDH) 2009). Similarly, applied research reports have investigated humanitarian and development needs in the gatherings (DRC 2005; Première Urgence (PU) and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) 2009; Ugland 2003). There are also various media reports on life in the gatherings (Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) 2009; Kaye 2010; Nasr ed-Din et al. 1990). However, no academic research has ventured upon the gatherings as an institutional environment structurally different from the ‘regular’ camps (Klaus 2000:4).^{vi}

This situation constitutes a knowledge gap in its own right: while there are no official statistics regarding Palestinian refugee populations living outside of the official camps (PU and NRC 2009:4), PARD (2011:7) estimates 38 percent of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon live in gatherings (see also Chabaan et al. 2010:x; Weighill 1997:297).^{vii} But with regard to the above-introduced theme of interaction between Lebanese and Palestinian governance authorities, it is even more unfortunate: there are at least two reasons why such interaction might be more substantial in gatherings than in camps.^{viii}

First, in contrast to the camps, UNRWA does not provide utility services such as waste collection, electricity, infrastructure and water in the gatherings. This potentially increases Palestinian authorities’ direct engagement with Lebanese state institutions to ensure such services (CSI 2011, 2012; Jacobsen and Khalidi 2003:194). Chabaan et al. (2010:ix) even claim that, in the gatherings, such public goods are “officially the responsibility of the Lebanese Government” (Hanafi (2010a:60) seems to imply the same when he talks about the Lebanese state’s “violence of occupying a ruling position without acting accordingly”; see also El Ali 2011:56; Hanafi 2008:10; LPDC 2012; PARD 2011:20; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:29). Second, the gatherings do not fall under the infamous Cairo Declaration. This means that, first, the LAF and Internal Security Forces (ISF) can and do enter the gatherings and, second, that Palestinian groups within the gatherings are not sanctioned to carry weapons. This might diminish the security limitations often offered as a partial explanation for the Lebanese state’s reluctance to deal with Palestinian organizations in the camps (El Ali 2011; Chabaan et al. 2010:3; CSI n.d.:8, 2011; Czajka 2012; Knudsen 2011; Long and Hanafi 2010:676; Suleiman 2006; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2013).

The distinction between camps and gatherings is thus both juridical and spatial (Dorai 2006:2) and is most strikingly apparent in the absence of checkpoints and import restrictions that characterize life in the camps (Dorai 2011; Haddad 2004:480; Hanafi 2008:2). Recent research nevertheless tends to stress the inter-relatedness between camps and their surroundings (Dorai 2010). More attention has been directed towards Palestinian camps as “*lieu de contact avec la société libanaise*” (places of contact with Lebanese society) and their “*relations avec les espaces environnants*” (relations with the spatial environment) (Dorai and Puig 2008; Knudsen and Hanafi 2011:7). However, this differs significantly on a case-by-case basis and such inter-relatedness is less evident in the camps in South Lebanon that are still quite rigidly segregated from their surroundings (El Ali 2011). Indeed, it is in light of the exceptional spatial

segregation of the Palestinian *camps* in Lebanon that the Palestinian *gatherings*, as demarcated but not closed-off settlements, acquire their relevance for my research project. It is in the gatherings that “*pratiques des interstices*” (practices of interstice) prosper (Dorai and Puig 2008). In fact, as will be repeatedly shown throughout this paper, both Lebanese and Palestinian participants interviewed stress that the fact that the gatherings are “under the Lebanese authorities” or “under the Lebanese state” is their main difference from the camps.⁵ The absence of UNRWA and the gatherings’ spatial distance from the camps on the one hand and the presence of Lebanese state representatives on the other, suggests that interactions between Lebanese and Palestinian authorities might be particularly prevalent in the gatherings. One interviewee put it like this: “The difference between the camps and the gatherings is that the camps are under siege and they can’t communicate with their surroundings. The gatherings are more free, so there is more communication, knowledge exchange and mutual relations.”⁶

Studying Lebanese-Palestinian governance interaction concerning the gatherings, then, catches two birds with one stone. The context of the gatherings offers a particularly insightful arena to study such interaction, because governance interaction can be expected to be particularly distinct in the gatherings. At the same time, studying Lebanese-Palestinian governance interaction in the gatherings rather than the camps allows for opening up Lebanon’s Palestinian gatherings as a new research field that has increasingly been recognized by scholars as significant but has so far escaped rigorous academic investigation.

The remainder of this paper consists of five parts: section two introduces my methodological approach and analytical framework, section three provides information on the case context and section four presents findings for five sub-cases. A synthesis analysis and conclusions are offered in section five and six respectively. As a working paper, and as the first out of three case-studies, this study should be conceived of as work in progress. Consequently, this paper has a predominantly empirical focus and further theorization and conceptualization will be the subject of subsequent journal articles.

5 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013; Fatah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 16 May 2013.

6 Hezbollah liaison Sour area, Deir Qanun, 17 July 2013.

2. Methodology and Analytical Framework

"There is the paradox of your research: governance is important, but it is useless to study. It is the linchpin of everything, the start of any positive change, but you can't change it. And it is useless to look at things you can't change. We need to be practical and get results. The frustration level is very high and people feel that thinking of change is wasting time. They want to invest in something concrete. So instead of changing the Popular Committee, we change one drainage pipe."

2.1 Research question

The phenomenon of interaction between Lebanese and Palestinian authorities in the gatherings resulted in the following research question: *How and why* do Palestinian and Lebanese governance actors interact in Palestinian gatherings in South-Lebanon? I approach this question through a dual analytical framework that takes 'governance' as the primary descriptive concept and 'resources' as the main explanatory concept.

2.2 Analytical framework

Governance as a descriptive concept

How do Palestinian and Lebanese governance actors interact in Palestinian gatherings in South Lebanon? This question allows me to map and describe patterns of interaction between Lebanese and Palestinian governance actors. I do so through the concept of governance.

While governance is sometimes principally conceived as either a descriptive-analytical instrument or a normative prescription, the majority of conceptualizations on governance combine both perspectives. I explicitly draw on analytical perspectives of governance and I follow 'governmentality' scholars in their quest for an empirical mapping of governance practices and relations rather than striving for ideal-typification (Rose et al. 2006:99; Dean 1999).

In his work on the governance of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, Hanafi (2010b:4) has consistently presented the situation as a governance crisis highlighting the bankruptcy of some modes and institutions of governance and the concomitant rise of alternative governmentalities. UN-HABITAT and UNDP (2010:24) also employ the concept of governance in their study on the adjacent areas, gatherings directly located on the boundaries of official camps "since it allows for focusing on the different strategies, roles, relationships and networks that bring together the different stakeholders." I agree that the concept of governance is the most suitable for describing the phenomenon I study for three reasons. Firstly, governance sees social and political life as inherently interactive. Most scholars define governance, one way or the other, as the "processes and interactions that constitute patterns of rule" (Bevir 2011:2; Stoker 1998:22); Kooiman (2003:321) even equates governance with interaction. Underlying this emphasis on governance as interaction (rather than as a unilateral practice) is a strong belief in the mutual dependence of societal actors.^{ix} Secondly, governance conceives of rule and authority as necessarily pluralistic, highlighting "phenomena that are *hybrid* and *multijurisdictional* with *plural stakeholders* who come together in *networks*" (Bevir 2011:2, original emphasis). Stoker (1998:18) refers to "the blurring of boundaries" and the prevalence of "networks of actors" (see also Davies 2012). This perspective is related with the analytical shift from government to governance (Stoker 1998). Governance is the best concept available to underline that governance is not – and has never been – a privilege of the state, but is a set of interactions involving multiple societal actors (Rose et al. 2006:85; Rose and Miller 1992). Thirdly, as a concept, governance "argues for a shift away from formalities and a concern with what should be, to a focus on behavior and what is," making it a suitable concept for studying interactions in an unofficial, informal institutional context such as the gatherings (Stoker 1998:19).

7 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 13 September 2012.

Definitions of governance

Based on Kooiman's (2003:321) definition of governance as the "interactions to solve societal problems or create societal opportunities, care for institutional aspects of these interactions, and setting normative principles for them" including both intended and unintended outcomes of such interactions, my working definition of governance is: the interactions through which security, welfare and representation are organized.

This definition is agnostic in most regards (i.e. modes, sites and levels of governance), but by its particular reference to the domains of security, welfare and representation, it does limit governance to socio-political governance (and thereby excludes governance of, for instance, families, firms and nature). My definition necessitates several follow-up definitions:

- To organize: to arrange things into a structure or pattern, rendering things (temporarily and relatively) knowable
- Interaction: meeting and communicating (based on Kooiman 2003:8)^x

Through this definition, I distinguish between interaction, defined as the active ties between people manifested in the events of meeting and communicating, and relations, which can be defined as latent ties between people manifested in their socio-economic or political status (i.e. people can have a family or professional relation without necessarily interacting). CSI's (2011:22) conclusion that, between Lebanese and Palestinians "there are good relations, but there is not a good interaction because of the security situation," shows that this distinction between 'interactions' and 'relations' is relevant.

- Actor: individual or organization acting relatively cohesively within an interaction

Governance actors are individuals, organizations or entities involved in governance; these actors can be formal or informal, legal or illegal, modern or traditional, stately or non-stately, public or private or civil, provided they have the means and ambition to provide a constituency with security (regulating the internal use of force and offering protection from external threats) and welfare (social and utility services) and political representation (voicing constituencies' needs and priorities).

Thus, not all societal actors involved in security, welfare or representation are actually governance actors. Although, as recognized above, the state is not the only or even necessarily most potent governance actor, it remains a relevant governance actor. I define a state as the collection of public institutions (local and national and legislative and executive) in the domains of security, welfare and political representation headed by a recognized government within a demarcated territory (Van der Molen and Stel 2010).^{xi} The state is not a homogeneous entity, but consists of different organizations representing different interests and positions (Chabal and Daloz 1999; Hoffmann and Kirk 2013:13). The state is just one among several *actors* in the *structure* constituted by a certain political order concerned with the *activity* of governance.^{xii}

There are, however, also important non-state governance actors. Governance is often associated with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), traditional and religious authorities, NGOs and private companies that are responsible for considerable governance tasks in the realms of political lobbying and welfare services. Private security companies, paramilitaries or gangs, alternatively, can take on governance roles in the realm of security. CSOs, NGOs and business and security companies, however, engage in governance with the consent of the government and tackle one domain of governance – security, welfare or representation –, often throughout a country. Non-state governance actors, as conceptualised in this paper, while interacting with the state, do not seek the state's permission to engage in governance.¹² They are also active in all three governance domains and cater to a specific territory (Arjona 2010).

In Lebanon, as will be elaborated throughout this paper, such holistic governance actors involved in security, welfare and representation within relatively demarcated territories can be identified as (i) the Lebanese state represented by the government and, locally, municipalities; (ii) the PLO, represented by the PLO's representative office in Lebanon and, locally, by the PCs (Brynen 1989; Hilal 1993; Rubenberg 1982; Shiblak 1997; Weighill 1997); and (iii) political parties in Lebanon that operate their own institutional structures through which they can provide security, welfare and representation to their constituencies in rather differentiated territories. This goes for Palestinian parties such as Fatah and Hamas (Hanafi 2010c; Knudsen and Hanafi 2011) as well as for Lebanese parties such as Hezbollah, Mustaqbal and Amal (Cammett 2011; Cammett and Issar 2010; Davis 2007; Early 2006; Harik 1994; Khouri 2009).

Aspects of Governance

To further operationalize governance, the literature suggests four aspects: domains of governance, sites of governance, levels of governance and modes of governance.

- Governance domains

Domains denote what is being governed, rather than who governs (Rose et al. 2006:85). In principal, governance can refer to all kinds of entities, subjects and objects governed – spaces, resources, identities, events, knowledge. In my research, I look at socio-political governance. Three broad domains of socio-political governance are widely used in the literature: security, welfare and representation (Boege et al. 2009:17; Milliken and Krause 2002; Stokke 2006 in Mampilly 2011:62).

While ‘security’ and ‘welfare’ have clear-cut associations with the regulation of violence and with service provision, ‘political representation’ is more opaque. Political representation, in this study, denotes who people turn to when they need something and who speaks for a specific constituency. ‘Speaking for,’ here refers to negotiating, claiming, asking or deciding in the name of someone (which can be with or without consent or a mandate). While this would, in the broadest sense, also include issues related to justice and morals (Hanafi 2010c:19; Rougier 2007) and although “Lebanon is not a country where economic, social and political spheres are functionally separated” (Klaus 2000:146), conceptually I limit representation here to its political component. This also serves to recall that governance is inherently concerned with power relations and cannot be narrowed down to ‘neutral’ service provision.⁸

- Governance sites

This concerns the practical setting where governance is being practiced. In the broad distinction, this can be transnational, national, regional (in Lebanon: the *mohafaza*, province, and *qada*, district) and local (in Lebanon: the *baladiya*, municipality) (Antoun 1995; LocalLiban website). While different governance sites influence each other, the question of interest under this aspect is from which site a particular set of interactions emerges. Davies (2012:2688) notes that cities are a major locus of governance network studies. In my research, the focal site of governance is the gatherings. Other sites of governance will become relevant insofar as they are referred to or clearly impact the interactions in the gatherings.

- Governance levels

In discussing governance interaction, I distinguish between three main levels of governance (Kooiman 2003; Swyngedouw 2005). First-order governance deals with the implementation of existing protocols and precedents. Second-order governance concerns the renegotiation of the implementative guidelines of first-order governance. Meta-governance, finally, pertains to the adaptation of the very ideas and ideologies underlying second-order governance. For each interaction, then, it is relevant to explore the level it implicates: is it (mostly) about implementing or is it (mostly) about (re)negotiating?

- Governance modes

This concerns characteristics of interactions referred to in the literature, mainly: degree of formality, degree of directness, degree of scheduling and manner of initiation (Hoffmann and Kirk 2013:11).

Directness	Directness refers to the extent to which governance actors meet directly. This concerns, first, whether they meet one-on-one or via the intervention or mediation of other actors and, second, whether they meet face-to-face or communicate via telephone, email, letter or other media.
Formality	Formality refers to the extent interactions are official or personal. It is defined as the degree to which interactions are regulated (conducted via set rules), public (i.e. not secretive) and documented (i.e. noted down). Formality will be understood as a characteristic of the interactions discussed, not as a property of the governance actors themselves, even if the two dimensions will occasionally overlap.

⁸ Lebanese analyst, Beirut, 11 March 2013; CSI analyst, Beirut, 14 March 2013.

Scheduling	Scheduling refers to the extent governance actors interact occasional, ad hoc and spontaneous or in a structural, planned and regular fashion. I assess scheduling by looking at the frequency and regularity of meetings and communication.
Initiation and dominance	Initiation refers to which governance actors took the initiative to meet or communicate and the way in which this initiative was taken – ranging from unilateral and enforced to consensual and voluntary. Dominance concerns people's perceptions on which governance actor determined the terms on which interaction took place.

Resources as an explanatory concept

The second part of my research question is explanatory: *why* do Palestinian and Lebanese governance actors interact in Palestinian gatherings in South Lebanon the way they do? This question is meant to explain the patterns of interaction between Lebanese and Palestinian governance actors that were established by means of the previous, descriptive, sub-question.

There are three bodies of (theoretical) literature relevant to the question of interaction between governance actors. The first is state-centered and focuses on the failure of the Weberian state (Balliamoune-Lutz and McGillivray 2008; Engberg-Pedersen et al. 2008; Ghani and Lockhart 2008; Jackson 1990; Mclouglin 2010; Naudé et al. 2011; Overbeek et al. 2009; Rice and Patrick 2008). The second is non-state centered and focuses on the autonomy and interests of rebel governance or para-sovereigns (Arjona 2010; Mampilly 2007, 2011; Podder 2013; Reno 2002; Weinstein 2007). The third is interaction-centered and focuses on the interdependence of state and non-state governance actors. It is this body of literature, inspired by the concept of hybrid political order, which constitutes my theoretical framework.

A political order is the sum of institutionalised power and governance relations at a given time and place (Hagmann and Hoehne 2009:44; Hofmann 2009). *Hybrid* political orders are countries that do not have a sovereign authority or one single focal point of governance. In hybrid political orders, of which Lebanon can be considered an example (Barak 2003; Khouri 2009; Stel and Frerks 2013), a state apparatus represented by a government can play a significant role in socio-political life, but is not the only or even most important actor involved in governance. Other organisations that are active in security, welfare and political representation (i.e. are armed, have a social service structure and a political representation) exist. This fosters a situation in which:

“diverse and competing authority structures, sets of rules, logics of order, and claims to power co-exist, overlap, and intertwine, combining elements of introduced Western models of governance and elements stemming from local indigenous traditions of governance” (Boege et al 2009:17).

This perspective is beholden to Migdal's (2001) state-in-society approach as well as the body of literature often named 'the anthropology of the state' (Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Sharma and Gupta 2006; Trouillot 2001) that sees the state as one among various societal actors engaged in governance. The idea of multiplicity in governance stipulated by the hybrid political order thesis emphasizes state-society interaction. It is further developed in concepts like the 'mediated state' (Menkhaus 2006), the 'negotiated statehood' (Hagmann and Péclard 2010) and the 'twilight institution' (Lund 2006, 2007) that give substance to the relatedness and simultaneity of state and non-state governance and show that states in hybrid political orders need not necessarily compete with other loci of authority, but often opt for a more pragmatic form of engagement that allows them to govern *through*, rather than *against*, non-state actors (Leonard 2010; Seay 2009). 'State' and 'non-state' should then not be seen as rigid and opposing categories, but rather as extreme ends of a continuum of sovereignty set in the political order of a specific country (Krasner 2004; Raeymakers et al. 2004).

A synthesis of the literature on hybrid political order shows that governance is the result of decisions made by governance actors. These decisions, in turn, depend on actors' motivations (agency) and abilities (structure) which are shaped by the resources these actors have at their disposal. In my analysis, I distinguish between three categories of resources: material resources (i.e. finances, real estate, land, and arms), ideational resources (i.e. norms and ideals based on ideologies and traditions) and institutional resources (i.e. socio-political connections (social capital and networks) and access to administrative bureaucracies). Explicating the extent to which governance actors can and

will utilize different material, ideational and institutional resources also makes visible how governance interactions reflect relative power positions and how these three categories of resources determine opportunity/constraint structures for governance actors.^{xiii}

2.3 Methodological approach

I engage with the research question of this study through a qualitative methodology and adopt a multiple case-study approach. This is due to the fact that the under-studied and politically sensitive nature of the phenomenon demands an inductive and context-inclusive approach.

Sampling

I focus on South Lebanon because past and current academic research on Palestinian communities in Lebanon (such as AUB-IFI's 'Policy and Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps' Program and the UN-HABITAT and UNDP study) overwhelmingly focuses on the camps in Beirut, as well as the Nahr el-Bared and Ain el-Hilweh camps and tends to overlook the camps (and gatherings) south of Saida. Considering my interest in the gatherings as a geographical unit of analysis: more than half of Lebanon's Palestinian gatherings are located in South Lebanon. A fifth of the total gathering population lives in the gatherings between Saida and Sour (or Tyre) along the Mediterranean that are known as the 'coastline camps' (Dorai 2006:8; DRC 2005:12; International Labour Organization (ILO) and Committee for Employment of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (CEP) 2010:35; Ugland 2003:20). Third, the PC structure is usually assumed to be strongest in South Lebanon, which suits my focus on governance interaction (DRC 2005:15; Hanafi 2010c:13; Klaus 2000:16; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:36).

This working paper takes on the first of an envisioned three embedded case studies and focuses on the gathering of Shabriha. These case studies were chosen based on three core criteria. First, based on the information on land and house ownership in DRC (2005:21) and the gatherings' profiles in PU and NRC (2009:75-100) and the assessment I had drawn during a six-week orientation visit in Summer 2012, I identified specific characteristics that might indicate interesting governance dynamics. Five gatherings seemed especially interesting: Burghliyah, Maashouk and Shabriha because they consist of Palestinian and Lebanese areas; Jal al-Bahar, because it is known for its sensitive geographical positioning on municipal land close to the entrance of Sour city; and Qasmiye, because it is known as the 'capital' of the gatherings and because it has good relations with its neighboring municipality. The second criterion is accessibility. During my orientation visit in Summer 2012, I made preliminary visits to most of the main gatherings in the Sour region and met with the PCs and the experts and practitioners working in or familiar with these gatherings. Based on these meetings, I assessed which of these gatherings would be most welcoming to live in for four months and decided not to select Jal al-Bahar (also because several other researchers were working on this gathering). The third criterion is representativeness. Thus, based on the demographic data in DRC (2005), the largest three gatherings were selected: Qasmiye, Maashouk and Shabriha.

The embedded units in the Shabriha case study were chosen inductively. I used the first month of fieldwork to identify five events that participants saw as particularly characterized by governance interaction between Lebanese and Palestinian authorities (or that I concluded were characterized by such interaction). Aware of the fact that governance in Shabriha is not characterized by extensive interaction between Lebanese and Palestinian governance actors, I deliberately sought out those instances in which such interaction did occur on a scale significant enough to the inhabitants of Shabriha. The five events used for the in-depth study are as follows:^{xiv}

- The building crisis of Summer 2011, when over a period of a few months the majority of households in Shabriha added at least one floor to their house, despite the ongoing ban on building and the restrictions on importing building materials (indicating at least informal coordination with local Lebanese authorities).
- The looming eviction of 'upper Shabriha' due to the construction of a highway (the fact that the highway construction is implemented by Lebanese state agencies as well as the fact that the land to be evicted is owned by the municipality indicates coordination between Palestinian leaders from Shabriha and state institutions).
- The waste crisis of Summer 2012, when waste was no longer collected from Shabriha due to problems with the dump site, throughout which Palestinian leaders coordinated with Lebanese municipalities to ensure dumping and which was eventually solved through mediation by the *mukhtar*.

- The attainment of a new electricity divider for the gathering from the national public utility provider through intervention of a Lebanese politician in late 2012.
- The mediation process set up between Lebanese and Palestinian leaders to quell an escalated fight between Lebanese and Palestinian youth in Summer 2012.

While these events diverge broadly in terms of scope (including demarcated crises and drawn-out dynamics), content (ranging from service provision and shelter issues to conflict management) and Lebanese authorities involved (with some events involving mostly politicians and others predominantly representatives of state agencies), what they have in common is their inclusion of Lebanese and Palestinian governance actors. Interestingly, these issues are similar to the main needs the DRC (2005:i) and CSI (2013) established for the gatherings, namely “rehabilitation of houses or infrastructure such as water, sanitation and garbage collection.”

Because participants stressed that each case individually might not illuminate “the whole picture,”⁹ in addition to studying governance interactions related to the five specific events mentioned above, I assess what I call ‘generic’ governance interactions. I thereby aim to contrast participants’ accounts of governance ‘in general’ with their experiences for each case and to assess the phenomena under study in-context and holistically. Juxtaposing relatively abstract general discourses with more concrete and specific experiences sheds new light on why governance interactions in the cases studied take the shape they do. It also remedies the often-heard critique that case-based studies result in a ‘snapshot’ analysis that loses relevance soon after data collection.

Data gathering

Both ‘governance’ and ‘resources’ are manifested in what people do and what people say; in their behavior and their ideas. Qualitative methods are particularly helpful in the study of ideas and behavior (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). While I draw on methods from political science and sociology, my methodology is also inspired by ethnographic techniques. The combination of interviews, observation and document analysis allows me to examine “what people *do* as well as what they *say* and enables an insightful examination of any discrepancies between thoughts and deeds” (Eyles 1988 in Herbert 2000:552).

During a five-month fieldwork period from March to August 2013, four months of which I lived in Shabriha, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted with the help of an interview guide. So as not enforce my own analytical categories on the interviewees and to ensure participants recount the events from their own experiences, initial questions revolved around what/when/where/who/how/why questions for the sub-case/event discussed in the interview. These questions were followed up by questions inspired by my main indicators (governance domains, sites, levels and modes and material, ideational and institutional resources). The interview guide differed per participant and per stage of the research. Most interviews touched on all five sub-cases as well as the general governance situation in the gathering, with some interviews being specifically geared towards one of the five sub-cases. Interviewees were sampled theoretically (governance actors); empirically (people with knowledge of a sub-case/event); and via ‘snowballing’ (based on references of each participant). In Figure 1 below, an overview of the 140 in-depth interviews conducted with 108 participants is provided.^{xv}

	State representative	Political party/faction	NGO	Communal authority	Private/individual	
Palestinian	2	9	13	11	17	52
Lebanese	19	6	11	3	13	52
International			2		2	4
	21	15	26	14	32	108

Table 1: interview participants distributed over categories.xvi

9 UNRWA Public Relations, Beirut, 28 June 2012.

While I planned to do at least one focus group for each sub-case, I only managed to do so for the eviction (five participants), electricity (three participants) and building (five participants) cases. The sub-case of the youth conflict was deemed too sensitive for a focus group by my research partner and the group interview for the waste crisis case did not emerge due to logistical problems.

I also collected documents throughout my four-month fieldwork period from articles on local news websites to reports by NGOs to private documentations and statistics of local authorities; an approximate of sixty documents. I collected some of the documents, such as the newspapers, by myself while the participants themselves offered others, such as the reports and statistics. Document sampling was thus not entirely representative, but this was unproblematic because the documents mainly fulfilled a triangulation role.

Throughout my stay in Shabriha, I also conducted direct and indirect observation. Direct observation of governance interactions between Lebanese and Palestinian authorities was largely impossible due to the (unpredictable and informal) nature of such interactions as well as my being a young, female, Western researcher. However, indirect observation of the spatial (architecture and segregation), socio-economic (work and school) and cultural-familial (visits and occasions) dynamics and characteristics of daily life in Shabriha provided me with a wealth of insights that I used to question, complement, contextualize and elicit information in my interviews. Such observations were captured in daily produced field notes. Field notes also encompassed reflective discussions on the interviews and observations with my research partner along with visualization tools (i.e. social and spatial mapping exercises).

Interviews, documents and field notes were all coded based on a dual inductive and deductive coding rationale. During my first round of coding, themes and categories were distinguished inductively – the way they emerged from participants' accounts, the documents and my own observations. During a subsequent coding phase texts were coded on the basis of the core categories derived from my analytical framework.

Limitations and reflexivity

Two further concerns deserve attention considering my methodology. First, while my research question indicates equal interest in Palestinian and Lebanese authorities and my interview sampling reflects this interest (with 59 Palestinian and 52 Lebanese participants), the fact that I have lived in the Palestinian part of Shabriha, with a Palestinian family, and was assisted by a Palestinian research partner has undoubtedly influenced both the nature of the data collected as well as my interpretation of this data towards a 'Palestinian' perspective – however inherently multifaceted. I have sought to limit such bias by (i) being extremely aware of it and constantly questioning my own interpretations; (ii) contrasting the data from the interviews with the data from Lebanese documents; and (iii) having multiple and lengthy interviews with the relevant Lebanese authorities such as *mukhtars*, mayors, *qaimaqams* and politicians, and constantly discussing findings with Lebanese analysts and friends.

Second, while my colloquial Arabic is sufficient to manage in daily life, all interviews were conducted with the help of an interpreter who, as my research partner, aided in the preliminary analysis and helped to contextualize these interviews, reflect on observations and translate collected documents from Arabic to English. While conscious or unconscious bias of my interpreter cannot be fully disclaimed, I took several measures to minimize this. I invested a significant amount of time in familiarizing my partner with the aims and envisioned methodology of the research. I made it very clear that I needed literal translations, preferably after every sentence, rather than summaries. While not all interviews allowed for such strict translation, this method proved rather successful. In addition, my Arabic skills were sufficient enough to pick up main themes and recurrent phrases, which we would elaborately discuss afterwards and on which I would ostentatiously probe my partner. After transcribing the interview, as verbatim as possible,^{xvii} I later did another review with my research partner on particular wordings and their meanings in the interview. In all, I am confident that while I have tremendously benefited from the language skills and contextual knowledge of my research partner, we distinguished between translation and interpretation to the extent that I can call the analysis presented in this paper my own.

3. Case Context: Shabriha

"In Shabriha [...] my friend says it's like Monaco or the Vatican in Europe: a small state on its own."¹⁰

3.1 Shabriha

Shabriha is located near the city of Sour and falls under the Abasiye municipality. Most of the land on which Shabriha is built is owned by the municipality of Abasiye and is occupied by the Palestinians illegally (PARD 2011:14).^{xviii} The gathering was built between 1955 and 1960. When Palestinians settled in Shabriha, many came via Qlayla where they had initially found temporal shelter after their expulsion from Palestine in 1948 (Nasr ed-Din et al. 1990; Jacobsen and Khalidi 2003:184). Since then, Shabriha has been continuously inhabited by Palestinians but suffered a short-lived evacuation during the 1982 Israeli invasion (AG Friedensforschung 2006; Nasr ed-Din et al. 1990).

Shabriha consists of four neighborhoods and has, according to a survey done by UNDP and UN-HABITAT in 2013, 1850 residents (260 families) living in 382 houses.^{xix} The people living in Shabriha are mostly of Bedouin descent and hail from the Akka and Safad regions of Northern Palestine (Perdigon 2010:93; Khawaja 2003:49; Jacobsen and Deeb 2003:221). Although it is very close to the city of Sour, Shabriha has not been integrated into the urban tissue of Sour, as has happened with the gatherings of Maashouk and Jal al-Bahar, and thus has a village-like social structure (Dorai 2006:11). People in Shabriha earn their income through agricultural work (Al-Mahdawi 2011; DRC 2005:47), but Shabriha is well off compared to other gatherings in the South, which generally host the poorest Palestinian communities (Chabaan et al. 2010:x; DRC 2005:155). This is often attributed to its relatively large share of remittances from emigrants in Europe: the DRC (2005:155) notes that 90 percent of the households in Shabriha have relatives abroad (see also Dorai 2003; Khalidi and Tabbarah 2009; Khawaja 2003).

In the Palestinian gathering of Shabriha, two core governance actors can be distinguished: the PC and the Palestinian political parties Fatah and Hamas. The DRC (2005:155) describes Shabriha's PC as "active and in charge of the water, organisation of the gathering, solving conflicts, liaison with authorities and UNRWA." While the PC officially has thirteen members, representing all the PLO's member parties, there are only four active members, three of which belong to Fatah.¹¹ Shabriha's PC is marred by a lack of democracy and a shortage of resources as all PCs in Lebanon are (Hilal 1993; Tyldum 2003; Knudsen and Hanafi 2011:9; Sayigh 2011:60), but it functions as a hub of the organizational life in the gathering and forms a core reference point for inhabitants and organizations alike. Shabriha also has a Family Committee (FC), which was initiated in 2007. FCs are installed by the alliance (*Tahaluf*) headed by Hamas that opposes the PLO and they complement and/or contest the PCs (Hanafi 2008:10; ICG 2009; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:35). While members of the FC in Shabriha contended that their relations with the PC were good and cooperative, members of the PC were more critical and stated there was little coordination or cooperation between the two committees. Partly due to the gathering's small size, personally, the members of the committees get along. As institutions, they have by and large settled onto an implicit division of tasks, where the PC focuses on utility service provision and relations with external organizations and the FC plays a key role in responding to the Syrian refugee crisis and provides social activities in its community center.

Palestinian political parties, predominantly Fatah and Hamas, have their own representatives and institutional structures in the gathering (coordinated by regional branches) that are officially separate from the PC and FC structures. However, practically, their structures overlap to the extent that, at times, it is impossible (for both researchers and inhabitants) to say if an activity is organized by Hamas or by the FC or by the PLO or the PC; when a representative is speaking with his committee hat on or when with his party hat; or whether funds or facilitative services came from the parties or committees.^{xx} PC members tend to report to the hierarchy of their party or the PLO leadership rather than to the PC structure (Pursue 2012), generating a de facto overlap between the two institutions and making the political – Fatah/PLO – structure more potent and solid than the 'administrative' PC structure.¹²

¹⁰ Vice mayor of Sour, Sour, 3 April 2013.

¹¹ Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 30 July 2013; PC public relations officer Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 July 2013.

¹² CSI analyst, Beirut, 28 May 2013.

The PC, FC, Fatah and Hamas, moreover, partly consist of what people in Shabriha call the ‘socially respected people’ or the ‘active people in society’ – the *faliyat*.¹³ These are usually somewhat older men that have proven themselves as socially capable mediators and facilitators and are called upon by people to help them deal with all kinds of familial, social, financial and even official issues. These *faliyat* can be tribal leaders (*zu’ama*), religious leaders (*sheikhs*), men leading the *diwan* (where the men of an extended family join in coffee ceremonies), or community figures with good ties to NGOs (Pursue 2012:22).¹⁴ While there is some overlap between the members of the committees, the representatives of the parties and the *faliyat*, these overlaps are not automatic. As a Palestinian scholar explained in an interview, the main difference is that *faliyat* are “mostly independent, but even if they are affiliated, they play their role in society not as political, but as social leaders.”¹⁵

3.2 ‘Salha’

The Palestinian gathering of Shabriha is located next to the Lebanese village that has the same name but different internal governance dynamics. This village houses some 850 people (Information International 2010). The majority of people living in ‘Lebanese Shabriha’ are originally from Salha. Salha is one of the so-called ‘seven villages,’ a chain of villages on the Palestinian-Lebanese border which were incorporated in British Palestine as part of the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement (Kaufmann 2006). After the Israeli ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948, the inhabitants from the seven villages became (Palestinian) refugees in Lebanon. Due to their Shia sectarian background, however, they were later granted Lebanese citizenship on the grounds that since there are no Shia Palestinians, they had, in fact, always been Lebanese and thus should not have been incorporated into Palestine during the colonial trade-off in the first place. Thus, while the people from ‘Lebanese Shabriha,’ which the people from ‘Palestinian Shabriha’ usually call ‘Salha,’ have Lebanese citizenship, they also have Palestinian ID cards and share a similar history of displacement.

The social relations between Lebanese and Palestinian Shabriha are not the subject of my study. Moreover, they are hard to characterize; while some inhabitants insist they are on good terms, others insist they share no relation. On the one hand, I observed that both communities share facilities such as nurseries, clinics and schools. There are also mixed friendships and occasional joint events. On the other hand, they live separated from each other, as evidenced by the meticulous spatial segregation, and there are recurrent conflicts between the youths of both communities and an almost entire absence of intermarriage.

Lebanese Shabriha has a distinct set of governance actors. The overwhelming governance authority in Lebanese Shabriha is the *mukhtar*, a sub-municipal mayor-like public official responsible for everything in the village from services to organizing social events to administrative affairs (Bassil 2012). Shabriha’s *mukhtar* is particularly influential due to his personal track-record, the famous legacy of his father and the concomitant support of his prominent family/clan, his extensive connections with the Amal party, the de facto absence of the municipality in the village and his position as head of the *mukhtar* council in Sour. Shabriha’s *mukhtar* is widely praised by both Palestinian and Lebanese participants and is well known for his conciliatory and constructive relations with the Palestinian gathering (YaSour 2012).¹⁶

13 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013.

14 Lebanese CSO, Beirut, 29 June 2013; INGO, Al Hoj, 23 May 2013.

15 Saida, 8 June 2013.

16 *Shakhs fael* from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 26 July 2013; Mukhtar Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 3 April 2013; Director and vice director camp improvement and infrastructure program UNRWA, Beirut, 29 March 2013; PC member Jal al-Bahar, Sour, 1 April 2013; PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013; Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013.

The *mukhtar* of Shabriha takes on a multi-faceted role in the governance arena of Shabriha. He is a Lebanese governance actor in his own right as he officially falls under the Ministry of Interior (Bassil 2012). However, he also fulfils a bridging or mediating function between Lebanese citizens, Palestinian residents and the PC on the one hand and Lebanese state institutions – most importantly the municipality and the army and police – on the other hand.¹⁷ Because participants emphasized this latter role and in general did not tend to see the *mukhtar* as a state representative himself, I discuss his crucial role as a mediating actor rather than as a direct state representative. The *mukhtar* was often characterized as ‘the person on the ground,’ ‘the man in the middle’ or ‘the consensus guy.’¹⁸ He is respected exactly because of his political, social and state connections.¹⁹ A *mukhtar* from Abasiye explained that “any relation between people and the government goes via me.”²⁰ The *mukhtar* of Shabriha sees himself in a similar way and even indicated that he sometimes stands with the Palestinians “against the state.”²¹ A Lebanese man from Shabriha said: “the *mukhtar* is the closest one for them to reach the state,”²² thereby highlighting that there is a difference between the *mukhtar* and ‘the state.’ An FC member said: “We have no relations with the Lebanese, only with the *mukhtar*. He is the closest to the camp and we don’t have any other communication. He represents the Lebanese.”²³ Various PC members indicated that they discussed most issues with the *mukhtar*.²⁴ Lebanese Shabriha is inhabited by one extended family that is politically affiliated with the Amal party. In Salha, therefore, *faliyat* and Amal representatives overlap to a large extent.

The governance context of Salha, and to some extent Palestinian Shabriha, is further influenced by two municipalities: the municipality of Abasiye, which both Lebanese and Palestinian Shabriha have poor relations with, and the municipality of Sour, where the inhabitants of Lebanese Shabriha have voted since 2004 (Kanso 2004; Al Mustaqbal 2004).^{xxi}²⁵ Lebanese Shabriha geographically, falls under Abasiye municipality to which it owes its taxes, whose permission it needs for matters such as construction and from which it should receive services. Ever since the Lebanese Civil War, however, Shabriha’s residents have neither paid their taxes nor received any services. Several participants noted Lebanese Shabriha is particularly independent from its municipality; the *mukhtar* ensures service delivery through his relations with NGOs, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and UNRWA and deals with political matters through his connections with the municipality of Sour and his relations with Amal elites.

17 Assistant Hezbollah liaison Sour, Deir Qanun, 17 July 2013.

18 UNDP analyst, Beirut, 4 June 2013.

19 UNRWA teacher from Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 April 2013; Shakhs fael from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013.

An FC member [Shabriha, 8 June 2013] said: “the mukhtar is not an ordinary person; he has relations in the state; he has direct calls with Nabih Berri [the leader of Amal].”

20 *Mukhtar* Abasiye, Abasiye, 25 April 2013.

21 *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 6 May 2013; see also PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 16 July 2013.

22 Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013.

23 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

24 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 20 May 2013; Contractor from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 8 May 2013; Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013.

25 Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 23 July 2013; Vice mayor Sour, Sour, 3 April 2013; Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013; Shakhs fael from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 26 July 2013; Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013; Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 11 April 2013; Former *qaimaqam* Sour, Sour, 22 June 2013; UNDP analyst, Beirut, 4 June 2013; LPDC representative, Beirut, 26 March 2013.

4. Findings Per Case ²⁶

4.1 The waste crisis

*"Where we throw, they throw."*²⁷

Around February 2012, the municipality of Deir Qanun in South Lebanon closed the waste dump in Ras al-Ain. People were convinced Deir Qanun closed the dump under the orders of the Union of Municipalities of Sour to convince waste collectors to dump at the Union's new recycling factory in Ain al-Baal.²⁸ The new factory, however, was ill prepared and could not process all delivered waste.²⁹ Therefore, it was reluctant to accept waste from Palestinian communities (who do not pay tax and do not fall under the service mandate of the municipalities). As a result, a lot of villages, Palestinian camps and gatherings lost their dumpsite without being provided with an alternative. For Shabriha, this initiated a 'waste crisis' of approximately six months during which waste was hardly collected because it could not be dumped. Throughout, various governance actors worked to find, on the one hand, temporary and one-off dumping sites and, on the other hand, a permanent solution that would allow them access to the new factory. Eventually, an arrangement was found; the waste from the Palestinian gathering Shabriha would be accepted as part of the waste of the Lebanese Shabriha and thus accepted at the Ain al-Baal factory.

Actors

The PC is seen as responsible for arranging waste management because it collects the fee for utility services. It has contracted waste management to the NGO PARD, but remains the end-responsible for services in the gathering (UNDP and UN-HABITAT 2013). During the crisis, the PC went to various municipalities asking them to take waste from Shabriha occasionally:

*"Each municipality dug a place for dumping waste so these gatherings would go to another one every time to plead with them and ask them to take some of their waste – this day they would get permission to take a shift here, that day they would get permission to take a shift to another place."*³⁰

The PC also tried to find private waste collectors who would be willing to (illegally) collect and dump the waste as well as landowners on whose property occasional dumping could take place. In this case, the PC was represented mainly by one member and people disagreed on whether he acted as a PC representative or on his personal title.³¹ A lot of people searched for dumping places and if they found someone willing to help, they would contact this PC member who would then coordinate with PARD.³² Still, the majority of people tried to take care of their own household waste by dumping it themselves somewhere outside the gathering.³³

There were two Lebanese governance actors that played a major role in solving the waste crisis: the *mukhtar* and the Union of Municipalities in Sour. The *mukhtar* pleaded with municipalities and private landowners to arrange for temporal dumping sites and simultaneously sought to arrange access to the factory in Ain al-Baal by talking to the

26 A stakeholder network map depicting interactions between the relevant actors is provided for each case in Appendix II. A schematic overview of the narrative analysis is offered in the matrix in Appendix III.

27 *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 23 July 2013.

28 Waste entrepreneur Sour, Sour, 6 July 2013; Owner waste dumpsite, Sour, 1 July 2013; UNRWA sanitation officer Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013; PARD garbage truck driver Shabriha, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

29 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 7 May 2013.

30 UNRWA sanitation officer Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013.

31 PC public relations officer Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 July 2013.

32 PARD garbage truck driver Shabriha, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

33 Palestinian NGO, Al Bass camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; PARD garbage truck driver Shabriha, Shabriha, 28 July 2013; Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

Union of Municipalities. It was the *mukhtar's* efforts that were seen as most instrumental in solving this crisis.³⁴ The Union of Municipalities in Sour owns the recycling factory in Ain al-Baal. UN-HABITAT and UNDP (2010:30) explain that such unions are established to pool resources for utility services for several municipalities, particularly regarding solid waste management.

In looking at the actors involved in solving the waste crisis in Shabriha, the absence of the Abasiye municipality is remarkable because municipalities, despite the lack of tax payments, are officially responsible for waste management in their cadastre (UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:30). Also, some other municipalities in the region were actively involved in solving the waste crisis for Palestinian gatherings in their cadastre.³⁵ In some gatherings, the word municipality is even used as a synonym for waste management, possibly because this is the only thing the municipality does for the gathering.³⁶

Modes

Directness

The PC on the Palestinian side and the Union of Municipalities on the Lebanese side did not meet directly throughout the waste crisis.³⁷ Instead, several other actors facilitated interaction between them. First, PARD's regional sanitation officer acted as a 'go-between' for the PC and the Union, mostly after requests of the PC (or via the *mukhtar*) and was accepted as an advocate for the gatherings.³⁸

The *mukhtar* also mediated between the PC of Shabriha and the Union. Participants confirmed there was daily coordination between the *mukhtar* and the head of the PC.³⁹ The *mukhtar's* good standing with the municipality of Sour provided PARD with the leverage it needed vis-à-vis the Union to get permission to dump 'Palestinian' waste there:

*"Beit Aoun [Lebanese Shabriha] is included in Sour municipality so their problem was solved [because Sour municipality is a member of the Union and can thus dump its waste in Ain al-Baal]. PARD collects their waste to get support from the municipality; 'we support Aoun, you have to support us in return by accepting the waste from the gatherings.' And the municipality of Sour agreed."*⁴⁰

A third actor that facilitated interaction between the PC and the Union was UNRWA. UNRWA is responsible for waste management in the camps and is thus a default interlocutor for the municipalities as well as the Union, even though UNRWA is not the official representative of the Palestinians in the gatherings in such interactions.⁴¹ A waste entrepreneur emphasized that UNRWA does not normally take on this role unless the FCs and PCs pressure it.⁴²

There are some references that indicate that the Union of PCs in the Sour region supported UNRWA in its mediation role.⁴³ The head of the PC Union confirmed this, but also stressed that deals were usually case-specific:

34 PARD garbage truck driver Shabriha, Shabriha, 27 April 2013.

35 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 7 May 2013; Director and vice director camp improvement and infrastructure program UNRWA, Beirut, 29 March 2013.

36 *Mukhtar* Maashouk, Maashouk, 3 July 2013.

37 PARD garbage truck driver Shabriha, Shabriha, 27 April 2013.

38 PARD garbage truck driver Shabriha, Shabriha, 27 April 2013; Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013; PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 2 April 2013.

39 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

40 Waste entrepreneur Sour, Sour, 6 July 2013; Mayor Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013.

41 UNRWA sanitation officer Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013.

42 Waste entrepreneur Sour, Sour, 6 July 2013.

43 Owner waste dumpsite, Sour, 1 July 2013.

"We made connections. In Maashouk, the municipality agreed to take two shifts a week. In Shabriha, PARD agreed on the same. Each one made connections with a different municipality. In Al Bas there is a public hospital and the people put their garbage next to this hospital so that the municipality of Sour was forced to collect it. In Rashidiye they put their waste in the sea so it would reach the tourist sides. After a lot of pressure and media attention the issue was solved."⁴⁴

The fifth category of mediators was the Palestinian and Lebanese political parties. They facilitated negotiations between PCs (and sometimes UNRWA) and the Union, but played a behind-the-scene role, mostly featuring as a back-up political clout. A local waste entrepreneur explained that the PC brought local Hamas and Fatah representatives to their meeting with UNRWA to pressure it to talk to the municipality of Sour to accept their waste.⁴⁵ The Lebanese Amal party played a similar role when its leader allegedly discussed matters with the national head of UNRWA and helped convince the Union.⁴⁶

Private entrepreneurs, most notably the owner of the dump in Ras al-Ain and an entrepreneur offering waste collection services, also mediated between the PC and the Union. Upon request of the PCs and/or PARD, these entrepreneurs used their connections with municipalities, who are often their clients, to arrange occasional dumping.⁴⁷

Meetings between the different actors involved were face-to-face, often preceded by a series of phone calls. There was only one reference of a letter that was supposedly sent to UNRWA, UNIFIL and the mukhtar by PARD's women's association.⁴⁸ This letter, however, was delivered in person and was not written on behalf of the PC. In the camps, there were NGOs that sought media attention in order to pressure UNRWA to start collecting waste again.⁴⁹ The head of the Union of PCs wrote news reports on Palestinians' predicaments during the crisis and partly attributes the eventual resolution of the waste crisis to the media attention generated.⁵⁰ While it is likely that the latter played a role, it was mostly generated by NGOs; governance actors emphasized the non-public, face-to-face negotiations.

Formality

The relations between the PC and the Union, mediated as they were via other organizations, were overwhelmingly unofficial, in the sense that they were undocumented and not publicized; often they were even outright secretive. The absence of the municipality of Abasiye from the waste crisis management scene can partly be explained by the absence of official relations between them and the PC.⁵¹

A second aspect of formality, or lack thereof, concerns the extent to which meeting and communicating is done within a private setting or within an institutional setting. Did the PC approach an UNRWA employee to pressure the Union in his capacity as an UNRWA employee or as the brother of the wife of one of the PC members? It is notoriously hard to distinguish between the two because both are equally essential for interaction. Had the man in the above example not worked for UNRWA, there would have been no incentive for the PC to contact him. Had he not been the brother-in-law of a PC member, there would have been less of an opportunity to contact him. One of PARD's waste truck drivers explained that while the PC members found their incentive to act in their responsibility as PC members, they established relations with owners of potential dumpsites on personal titles⁵² An UNRWA representative who wanted to remain anonymous conveyed that UNRWA's efforts to convince the Union were 'under the table:'

44 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 7 May 2013.

45 Waste entrepreneur Sour, Sour, 6 July 2013

46 UNRWA regional coordinator Sour, Sour, 15 May 2013.

47 Owner waste dumpsite, Sour, 1 July 2013.

48 Head PARD women's committee, Shabriha, 17 May 2013.

49 Palestinian NGO, Al Bass camp, Sour, 18 June 2013 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

50 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 7 May 2013.

51 Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

52 PARD garbage truck driver Shabriha, Shabriha, 27 April 2013.

“The factory is a municipal constellation. The whole situation is very sensitive and they might get worried they’re being investigated. You might make problems for us when you start asking questions there. Because some agreements aren’t exactly official, but rather depend on personal relations. The municipalities involved might be concerned this arrangement gets public. We fought really hard for this deal and I don’t want to endanger it. We talked a lot with the mayors and the municipalities. A lot of *wasta* went into this.”

Scheduling

There were no regular, pre-established meetings during the waste crisis. Meetings were frequent, but needs based. This, however, does not mean interaction was random, as scheduling did follow a relatively established pattern. This underlines that the distinction between crises and ‘normal times’ is misleading knowing that ‘normal times’ in Palestinian gatherings might very well be a series of crises. When asked how long the waste crisis approximately lasted, an FC member replied: “It lasted long, but because we’re used to crises, maybe it didn’t feel so long.”⁵³ A waste entrepreneur shared a similar sentiment: “Here, we solve one mistake by another mistake. This is clear. We established our dump to solve a temporary problem, but twenty years later we’re still here as there’s no solution yet.”⁵⁴ In general, it appears that the interactions between the PCs and individual municipalities with the aim to find one-off dumping sites were newly established, born from urgency. The governance interactions between the PC and the Union with the objective to find a permanent solution, however, seem to have followed relatively established patterns, calling upon well-known liaisons such as the *mukhtar*, UNRWA and political parties that play a similar role in other interactions.

Initiation and dominance

The governance interactions during the waste crisis in Shabriha were almost exclusively initiated by the PC who contacted several mediating actors who, in turn, addressed the municipalities and the Union. Some mediating actors, however, particularly the *mukhtar* and PARD, also addressed the relative Lebanese governance actors. Other mediating actors expected the PC to first take its responsibility as representative of Shabriha and ask them for help. A representative from UNRWA, for example, confirmed that, because the gatherings are not part of the UNRWA mandate, UNRWA indeed expects the PCs to take an active role in communicating the gatherings’ needs to UNRWA.⁵⁵ After initiation, interactions were dominated by the Union of Municipalities in the sense that it was the Union that set the terms for negotiation. Only national and political pressure could influence the Union.

Domains

While waste management is a matter of welfare, and was understood as such by participants, the governance interaction that ensued to solve the waste crisis was about representation as well. This regards the question of who should represent Shabriha in the negotiations with the Union of Municipalities. The PC, lacking formal recognition by the Lebanese state after the unilateral abrogation of the Cairo Agreement by the Lebanese government in 1987, is not able to be the direct representative of Shabriha vis-à-vis the Union. However, who then should play this role and function as a representative of the PC? PARD, the *mukhtar*, UNRWA and private waste entrepreneurs all, in different ways, at different times and for different reasons, acted as Shabriha’s representative.

Sites

In analyzing the sites of governance interactions regarding the waste crisis in Shabriha, it is evident that most of them were local (i.e. in Shabriha). This is clear from the local nature of the Palestinian actors involved as well as from structural references to the fact that all gatherings sought solutions on their own.⁵⁶ However, governance interactions worked towards a structural solution (i.e. not finding one-off dumping sites, but negotiating access to

53 Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

54 Owner waste dumpsite, Sour, 1 July 2013.

55 UNRWA sanitation officer Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013

56 Owner waste dumpsite, Sour, 1 July 2013; PARD garbage truck driver Shabriha, Shabriha, 27 April 2013.

the new factory) and thus expanded into the Sour district. Here, regional actors such as the *mukhtar*, in his capacity as head of the union of *mukhtars* in Sour, the Union of Municipalities, PARD and UNRWA interacted to arrange a better deal.⁵⁷ A participant who was closely involved in the dynamics noted, on the stipulation of anonymity, that national actors, such as the head of UNRWA in Lebanon and the leader of Amal, eventually got involved to pressure the Union of Municipalities to accept Palestinian waste.

Levels

The interactions between Lebanese and Palestinian governance actors throughout the waste crisis in Shabriha played out on two governance levels. Those interactions, aiming to find immediate and one-off dumping solutions can be considered first-order governance, concerned as they were with day-to-day solutions. The interactions concerned with negotiating access to the factory in Ain al-Baal, however, can be classified as second-order governance, governance “designing and maintaining the more comprehensive contexts for first-order governing” (Kooiman 2003:231). These interactions, in essence, were about restructuring the boundaries of the mandate of the Union of Municipalities in order to incite the Union to, first, accept waste collected by UNRWA and, second, accept waste collected from those Palestinians not serviced by UNRWA, i.e. the gatherings. This struggle over the context of first-order governance in the waste sector in South Lebanon was evident in two strategies. On one side were the efforts to convince municipalities to accept waste from the gatherings and pass it off as their own at the factory and, on the other side, simultaneous and parallel attempts to persuade the Union to directly accept waste from the gatherings.

Explanations for the nature of governance interaction during the waste crisis

Ideational resources: public opinion

A reference to ideational resources, perhaps best characterized as a ‘Lebanese-first’ sentiment among Lebanese, can help account for the informal, unpublicized nature of the negotiations. The eventual solution of allowing ‘Palestinian’ waste to be dumped in the ‘Lebanese’ public factory was deliberately kept ‘under the table’ by the Lebanese authorities involved, allegedly because the municipalities are afraid Lebanese citizens would blame them for accepting the waste of the camps considering there is a limited dumping capacity.⁵⁸

Material resources: money and land

Participants considered money a relevant concern in understanding the specific governance interactions throughout the waste crisis. Their lack of funds deters municipalities from interacting with Palestinian governance actors.⁵⁹ This helps to explain why it was the Palestinian side initiating interaction. Moreover, money matters in waste management governance interactions because “the factory is business: if you can pay, you can put.”⁶⁰ Considering that the PCs cannot provide that money and PARD and UNRWA can, this partially explains the mediated form of interaction, whereby the PCs opt to deal with the Union with the help of those that are able to pay the dumping costs.

Concerning the waste crisis, however, it was the material resource of land that seems to have been most decisive. For the PC, the very motivation to interact with Lebanese actors at all was the fact that waste dumping requires land and Palestinians in Lebanon cannot own land (DRC 2005:20, El-Natour 2012). Whereas Lebanese governance actors dug their own temporary dumping pits, the Palestinian governance actors could not and hence had to engage with the Lebanese to address this problem.⁶¹ The head of the Union of PCs said he “wrote an article noting that all Lebanese found a solution in dumping their waste on a piece of municipal land but that this was impossible for the Palestinians who have no land to spare to live and build on let alone to dump waste on!”⁶²

57 PARD garbage truck driver Shabriha, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

58 UNRWA regional coordinator Sour, Sour, 15 May 2013.

59 Hezbollah liaison Sour area, Shabriha, 16 July 2013.

60 PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 16 July 2013

61 UNRWA sanitation officer Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013; UNRWA regional coordinator, Sour, 15 May 2013.

62 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 7 May 2013.

Institutional resources: mandate, citizenship and 'campness'

Opportunities for and constraints on specific forms of governance interaction were most often phrased in terms of institutional resources. First and foremost, this concerns references to the obligations and responsibilities of the municipalities. The mayor of Sour stated: "We consider Shabriha as Sour, it belongs to us. Like Maashouk and Masaken; this is our territory. In Qasmiye I can't do anything; I don't represent it. [...] Abasiye didn't take from Shabriha-Salha; they consider them related to Sour so they didn't take from the gathering."⁶³ Regardless of whether such reference to administrative or cadastral mandate or responsibility is an excuse for lack of political will or a genuine managerial concern, Lebanese governance actors apparently consider this a reason to keep interactions minimal and informal. It might also account for why the waste crisis ventured into the domain of representation and expanded onto a regional and national setting. This also signifies an absence of policy guidelines for municipalities in dealing with waste management in non-camp Palestinian communities. The LPDC (2012) noted: "In the absence of a general policy or directive, the municipality's strategy depends on the personal initiatives of the head of the municipality."

Related to the issue of administrative mandate, is the issue of citizenship. The head of the Union of PCs in Sour noted that various municipalities in the region were indeed helpful throughout the crisis. He explained this by saying that they "offer some services because there are people here with Lebanese nationality that are 'heavy' in the elections."⁶⁴ As Klaus (2000:39) reminds us: "Without a national identity, a person is at no one's responsibility." In Shabriha as well, citizenship matters in governance interactions for solving the waste crisis. On the one hand, the Lebanese citizenship of people living in 'Lebanese Shabriha' generated access, via the mukhtar, towards the Union of Municipalities, explaining the mediated form of governance interaction. On the other hand, Palestinian citizenship is an institutional resource as well because PARD collects waste and negotiates with the Union on behalf of Palestinians. When I asked why PARD also collected waste in the Lebanese part of the gathering, a PARD driver noted: "They're Palestinian; their roots are Palestinian. We can't tell them they're not Palestinian; they have Palestinian cards."⁶⁵

Another institutional concern interviewees referred to was the distinction between camps and gatherings. In the context of the waste crisis, being a camp is an asset in governance interaction. A waste entrepreneur summarized:

"And in the crisis, the most difficult situation was in the gatherings because there is no place for them and they don't belong to the camp or to the municipality. [...] The gatherings were forgotten, no one asked about them. [...] At first, when the factory was still small, the camps were accepted but the gatherings weren't. No one from the municipalities or the EU talked in their name."⁶⁶

This, again, accounts for the mediated nature of governance interactions. Had the gatherings been camps, UNRWA would have represented them directly vis-à-vis the Union; had they been villages, the municipalities would have approached the Union directly. As it was, Palestinian authorities in the gatherings needed mediating institutions to be able to engage with the relevant Lebanese authorities.⁶⁷ In general, 'connections' are considered the main currency in governance interaction.⁶⁸ During the waste crisis, the PCs in the gatherings were considered weaker than those in the camps in their use of *wasta* (i.e. relations you have with people who can 'cover' you) and the ability to "make effective pressure." Instead, they needed others to speak in their name.⁶⁹ This moved governance interactions from the welfare to the representational domain and from a local to a regional setting.

63 Mayor Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013.

64 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 25 July 2013; quotation marks inserted by author.

65 PARD garbage truck driver Shabriha, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

66 Waste entrepreneur Sour, Sour, 6 July 2013.

67 Waste entrepreneur Sour, Sour, 6 July 2013.

68 PARD garbage truck driver Shabriha, Shabriha, 28 July 2013; UNRWA sanitation officer Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013; Waste entrepreneur Sour, Sour, 6 July 2013; UNRWA regional coordinator Sour, Sour, 15 May 2013.

69 Waste entrepreneur Sour, Sour, 6 July 2013.

4.2 The attainment of a new electricity divider

"We all know where to go. If we need an electricity divider and we have a problem with the manager of the company in Saida, we search for a manager from either Bahia [Hariri] or Osama [Saad, the rival Sunni clan in Saida] who can affect him and we go directly to this person and force him to give the divider. Here, we have to know if the person is from Amal or Hezbollah and then talk to the leadership directly. If we go the long ways, the official ways, you don't get anything like the shortest way. The question is: who can affect this person? Before we talk to him, we have to ask this question. This is the structure of the country."⁷⁰

Access to sufficient and reliable electricity services has long constituted a challenge for Shabriha (Nasr ed-Din et al. 1990). Since 1980, the national electricity provider *Electricité du Liban* (EDL) has provided electricity to the gatherings (DRC 2005:155; UNDP and UN-HABITAT 2013), but until two years ago electricity service was unreliable. It is important to mention that electricity shortage is a commonplace problem in Lebanon (Stel 2013a).⁷¹ Moreover, Shabriha did not have enough electricity dividers to service the entire gathering. It was still serviced through one divider – a device that distributes the electricity that is delivered by EDL to the main electricity line to the smaller wires servicing the different households – with no account to population growth and increasing electricity consumption per household. Shabriha, furthermore, did not have a private generator company to provide back-up electricity and cover EDL outages. While Lebanon's national electricity shortage is far from solved, a new divider was installed in Shabriha in 2012 and a generator company was set up in Lebanese Shabriha in 2011. The initiation of the generator company, *ishtirak*, was a business deal that had little to do with governance interaction. The installation of the new provider, however, was a bold instance of intense interaction between Lebanese and Palestinian authorities. For years, the PC in Shabriha had been requesting a new divider from EDL in vain. The PC had even asked several Lebanese parties to pressure EDL for a new divider on their behalf. Then, a man from Shabriha who was working for a Lebanese company overheard his boss discussing the donation of a divider to several Palestinian communities in Saida. His boss turned out to be the 'right hand' of one of Saida's most influential politicians, Bahia Hariri, a Member of Parliament (MP) of the Mustaqbal Party. The man then asked his boss if Shabriha would also be eligible for support from this politician and his boss promised him to arrange a meeting with Hariri. The man alerted the PC who then visited Hariri. She promised them their help and half a year later EDL installed the divider in the gathering. It is the governance interactions constituting this event that I will investigate below.

Actors

The main Palestinian governance actor in the process of acquiring the electricity divider was the PC. In their daily relations with the EDL, Shabriha's inhabitants act on their own as paying customers. In situations that surpass the household consumption level, such as major repairs or the installation of new devices, however, the PC represents them vis-à-vis EDL.⁷² The PC also pays EDL for maintenance from the service fees it collects. As with the waste crisis, one member of the PC represented Shabriha with EDL.⁷³

On the Lebanese side, EDL, as a state utility company, is the most relevant governance actor as it is directly responsible for the provision and maintenance of electricity to all paying subscribers, be they Lebanese or Palestinian. It is EDL that provides electricity on a daily basis and it is EDL that had installed the divider.⁷⁴

70 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 25 July 2013

71 Focus group, Shabriha, 2 August 2013.

72 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 25 July 2013; EDL Sour, Sour, 21 May 2013.

73 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013; Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 5 April 2013.

74 PC secretary, Shabriha, 2 April 2013; Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013.

Modes

Directness

Usually, municipalities intervene between electricity customers and EDL, as EDL demands a paper indicating house ownership and a favorable tax payment record signed by the municipality before it can install the meter.⁷⁵ In Shabriha, the municipality does not provide such papers because it considers the Palestinians in the gatherings illegal settlers on public land. Therefore, it is often the *mukhtar* who signs the papers, a convention generally accepted by EDL.⁷⁶ To apply for a new divider with EDL, municipal agreement is also required, but while the *mukhtar* tried to attain such agreement from the municipality on behalf of the PC, the necessary permission did not materialize.⁷⁷

Instead of the municipality it was a Lebanese political party that constituted the core bridge between the PC and EDL, although EDL denied any intervention on behalf of other actors and claimed that the meter was installed only after repeated requests by the PC.⁷⁸ However, all other participants agreed on the crucial role played by Bahia Hariri.⁷⁹ The PC even issued a statement on Saida's local website which read that the installation of the divider was the result of an intervention by Hariri and her 'Palestinian affairs officer' who "had a prominent role in the establishment of a liaison between EDL and the Popular Committee of Shabriha." A UNDP and UN-HABITAT survey from 2013 also listed the installation of the divider as a project executed by EDL "via Bahia Hariri."

The mediating role of Mustaqbal politicians in electricity issues is not limited to Shabriha (El Ali 2011; Knudsen 2011). The Facebook page of the head of the Union of PCs for Sour contains a similar story for Ain el-Hilweh camp. The PC Union head also explained that when the PC of Rashidiye camp applied for an electricity project via the municipality, the application was rejected. He said:

"We consulted the parties for help. It depends on who was responsible for rejecting the proposal. If this was someone from Hezbollah, we consult Hezbollah; if it was someone from Mustaqbal, we consult Mustaqbal. We ask them to reconsider and to make pressure and they will then contact and pressure their respective municipality counterpart."⁸⁰

Lebanese experts confirmed this and emphasized that the Lebanese also engage with EDL via political parties.⁸¹ The PC in Shabriha petitioned a score of other Lebanese parties before Hariri.⁸² A Palestinian NGO worker captured this practice in the following allegory:

"As an employee in an official organization I have to deal with the official ministries. But our parties, they deal with the regional heads of the Lebanese parties. They can reach them via friends, via people and these parties help them. This is the Lebanese structure; Lebanon is like a bunch of shops and you go to shop where you can afford the services."⁸³

Shabriha's electricity worker speaks from experience when he says: "If you have connections with political leaders you'll get it in a short time. And there's corruption. If you ask on your own, without the support of the higher level, they won't listen to you."⁸⁴

75 EDL Sour, Sour, 21 May 2013; Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

76 *Mukhtar* Abasiye, Abasiye, 25 April 2013.

77 *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 23 July 2013; Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

78 EDL Sour, Sour, 21 May 2013; Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013.

79 Focus group, Shabriha, 2 August 2013.

80 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 20 September 2012.

81 UNDP, Beirut, 4 April 2013; Palestinian legal analyst, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 29 June 2012.

82 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

83 Palestinian NGO, Al Bass camp, Sour, 18 June 2013.

84 Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013.

The mediated interactions were a mixture between face-to-face meetings, especially between the representative of Hariri and the PC, and coordination over telephone. Hariri's personal intervention consisted of "making phone calls" to EDL's Beirut and Saida offices.⁸⁵ The importance of physical meetings, however, is evident from the PC's insistence on thanking Hariri in person. The governance interactions also had a written component. The request of the PC from Hariri was transmitted orally in a visit, but also stated in a letter delivered during that visit.⁸⁶ As an expression of thanks to Hariri, the PC held an opening ceremony with banners and speeches and sent the above-quoted 'thanking letter' that was also published on a local website.

Formality

Governance interactions throughout the attainment of the electricity divider were mostly informal. While the installation of the divider is, according to an EDL employee, documented in the EDL administration, the mediated interactions that led to this installation were not official – they were neither documented nor recognized by state institutions.⁸⁷ The PC is not officially recognized as a governance actor to begin with and Lebanese parties are not part of the official administrative structure dictating interactions between EDL and municipality.

Two further issues complicate the formality of the governance interactions. First, the PC approached Hariri rather ambiguously. The consistent reference to her by her personal name indicates she was engaged in the relation between the PC and EDL on personal status. Yet, there was also a constant referral to the more institutional aspects of Hariri's mediation: her 'Palestinian affairs officer,' the meetings in her party office and her being explicitly addressed as MP. However, the actual name of the party Hariri is representing as an MP was not invoked at all, which ultimately suggests the personal or familial status of Hariri's involvement, despite her use of the resources of her party (as recognized by Knudsen (2011:108) for other cases).

A second issue that confounds the degree of (in)formality of the governance interactions in question was the PR involved. Informality is often associated with obscurity or secrecy, but Hariri's mediation was deliberately visible. According to the man from Shabriha who communicated with Hariri's representative, the opening ceremony for the divider was organized specifically for media coverage, "as a photo opportunity."⁸⁸ As noted above, pictures of the ceremony and the 'thanking letter' sent to Hariri were published online on the instigation of both PC members and Hariri's representative.⁸⁹ This 'thanking advertisement,' the Shabriha resident explained, was a deliberate attempt to communicate with Lebanese authorities and solidify relations with them.⁹⁰

Scheduling

The governance interactions described here are almost per definition irregular, because they are needs based. EDL and the PC or the PC and Hariri only met because there was a problem. When they do so, meetings were mostly scheduled in advance (by telephone).⁹¹ Moreover, they often followed existing patterns of interaction – between the PC and EDL and between the PC and political parties. In the choice for the specific political party, however, the mediated governance interactions in this case were unprecedented and ad hoc. It was only by coincidence that the PC interacted with Hariri as this was the result of the private and professional contacts and pro-activeness on the part of one individual from Shabriha and his willingness to hand this over to the PC.⁹²

85 Bahia Hariri office, Saida, 24 May 2013.

86 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013.

87 EDL Sour, Sour, 21 May 2013. I was unfortunately not allowed to have a look at these documents.

88 Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 22 May 2013.

89 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013.

90 Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 22 May 2013.

91 Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 22 May 2013.

92 Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 22 May 2013.

Initiation and dominance

The Palestinian side initiated governance interactions between PC, Hariri and EDL; at first one individual, later the PC. However, interactions were subsequently dominated by the Lebanese side and the PC became a reliant actor.

Domains

Putting aside default connotations of electricity services with welfare, there was a consensus among respondents that the electricity divider episode was really about politics, placing it firmly in the realm of representation. Electricity in Lebanon is a politically sensitive issue in general (Stel 2013a).⁹³ In the current political situation, moreover, the competition over who represents the Palestinians in Lebanon – and who can subsequently gain their political loyalty and demand the support of their armed forces – is also played out via service delivery. The PC of Shabriha is aware that the governance interactions they were engaged in with Hariri did not concern the humanitarian situation of the Palestinians per se, or their intrinsic service needs; they were about Hariri's "entering the South" as well as the Palestinians' chance to play out various Lebanese parties against each other, perhaps reminding the Shia parties in Sour of their presence and the fact that disregarding them might sway their allegiances towards the Sunni parties of Saida.⁹⁴

Sites

From participants' accounts, it was clear that EDL operates based on a regional hierarchy.⁹⁵ The head of the PC Union explained he applies for electricity services in Sour, but that the Sour branch subsequently transfers any application to the regional head office in Saida.⁹⁶ Hariri's representative confirmed she called EDL in Saida and Beirut in addition to the phone calls she made to Sour.⁹⁷ The tensions generated by Saida-based Hariri's involvement in Sour, what Knudsen (2011:110) calls geographical or sectarian encroachment, also indicated a regional aspect. It is, moreover, clear that taking the issue up a level – bringing in actors from Saida rather than sticking to those from Sour to address the issue – was a fallback option only chosen by the PC because the opportunity was thrown at it by one of Shabriha's inhabitants.

Levels

The electricity file is subject to several second-order governance discussions. The fact that non-Lebanese people illegally living on public land are still serviced by EDL is rather unique in terms of public utility policy.⁹⁸ This might even touch on meta-governance, thus recasting people as paying customers rather than entitled citizens and thereby glossing over institutional differences between Lebanese and Palestinians.⁹⁹ The role of Lebanese parties in interaction between Palestinian authorities and Lebanese state institutions and their competition in this regard also indicate that governance is more than merely an implementative organization of existing policies or practices (first-order governance; the installation of the divider) but rather extends to the re-evaluation of such practices (second-order governance; the process of application for electricity dividers) or even renegotiating underlying premises (meta-governance; the distinction between Lebanese and Palestinian constituencies).

Explanations for the nature of governance interaction regarding the installation of an electricity divider

Material resources: it's not all about the money

The PC's lack of funds is often invoked to explain their requests to other governance actors, but a closer look reveals that the nature of the described governance interactions is not determined by financial concerns. While Hariri is known for her financial ability and while some participants were under the impression that she had paid for the electricity

93 EDL Sour, Sour, 21 May 2013; Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013.

94 Focus group, Shabriha, 2 August 2013.

95 Focus group, Shabriha, 2 August 2013.

96 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 20 September 2013

97 Bahia Hariri office, Saida, 24 May 2013.

98 UNDP, Beirut, 4 April 2013.

99 Director and vice director camp improvement and infrastructure program UNRWA, Beirut, 29 March 2013.

divider, better informed participants were convinced Hariri had not paid for the divider, but merely pressured EDL to install it – which is in line with other accounts of Lebanese parties mediating on behalf of Palestinian authorities in electricity projects.¹⁰⁰

Institutional resources: Lebanese politics and citizenship

In explaining the mediated, publicized and unprecedented nature of the above-mentioned governance interactions, participants often referred to the sectarian fragmentation of the Lebanese political landscape as a resource for Palestinian governance actors and reasoned that the opportunity to play out various Lebanese parties against each other could benefit Palestinians.¹⁰¹ One FC member explained that “there is a division in the country, this is the political situation – there are two political forces in Lebanon and both sides are trying to attract the Palestinians to their side. And we exploited the opportunity [*fursa*].”¹⁰² A PC member agreed: “Now we Palestinians are in the middle and all Lebanese sides are trying to get us on their side. So they exploit us through offering assistance.”¹⁰³

Many participants noted that such engagement with Hariri – bypassing the Lebanese parties in charge in Sour that are supported by their neighbors in Lebanese Shabriha – was sensitive and occurred only as a last resort (after the parties in Sour had turned a deaf ear on them).¹⁰⁴ Hariri’s representative himself was aware of their intrusion and insisted this would only be acceptable when keeping a low profile.¹⁰⁵ They noted that “Hariri is trying to enter the South through the Palestinians; this is the way, they want in each region to have people for them.”¹⁰⁶ There was thus clearly a risk in compromising existing relations with the *mukhtar* and local Lebanese parties. Consequently, there was a lot of criticism on this move, especially on the decision to make ‘advertisement’ about it.¹⁰⁷ NGO workers from Sour noted that such PR activities are not common in the Sour region, because “the South is one color,” meaning there is no competition between Lebanese political parties in Sour.¹⁰⁸ Hariri, however, has her stronghold in predominantly Sunni Saida. As such, her involvement in affairs in the Sour region was highly contested within the Lebanese sectarian logic (Knudsen 2011:100). Participants were very aware of the fact that their Palestinian gatherings are Sunni “islands within a Shiite environment” (Klaus 2000:18). This awareness is further underlined by a futile attempt of some people to credit Hezbollah for the installation of the divider and the EDL’s claims that it had installed the divider without any interference.¹⁰⁹

The fact that Palestinian governance actors need Lebanese governance actors to ensure service delivery and cannot demand service on behalf of their own constituency directly relates to the absence of specific institutional resources, most importantly citizenship. When I asked why Lebanese Shabriha has four dividers for a smaller population than Shabriha, which now has just two, a Palestinian man noted: “Here we are a Palestinian camp; they’re Lebanese and have a *mukhtar* who has a hand in the state and he can talk with them so they install it directly.”¹¹⁰ Citizenship, here, is a synonym for eligibility to vote:

100 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 25 July 2013.

101 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013; PC member Jal al-Bahar, Sour, 13 June 2013; Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013; Bahia Hariri office, Saida, 24 May 2013; Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 7 May 2013; PLO leader, Beirut, 8 July 2012.

102 Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

103 Focus group, Shabriha, 2 August 2013.

104 Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 22 May 2013.

105 Bahia Hariri office, Saida, 24 May 2013.

106 Focus group, Shabriha, 2 August 2013.

107 Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 22 May 2013.

108 Palestinian NGO Sour, Al Bas camp, Sour, 2 April 2013.

109 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 30 July 2013.

110 Focus group, Shabriha, 2 August 2013; Electrician from Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013.

"When elections get closer, MPs will come to ask what we want, they will ask the mukhtar what we want. And he might say we want to build, or we want to have electricity or we want to have jobs. And then they give us permission. They go to [the municipality of] Abasiye, they call Abasiye: 'Azadine [the mayor], please give them!'"¹¹¹

The Lebanese actors, in turn, are interested in accruing Palestinian loyalty because, according to some, they seek to ensure Palestinian armed support in any future conflict, or, according to others, they can benefit from the legitimacy or popularity almost automatically associated with the Palestinian cause (*al-qadiya al-Falastiniya*).^{xxiii}

This is exemplified in the aftermath of the electricity divider instalment. In June 2013, the political situation, already tense due to the rival allegiances that Lebanon's two main political blocks have in the Syrian conflict, severely escalated. Followers of a (Sunni) firebrand sheikh clashed with the LAF, allegedly supported by Hezbollah, in the Abra neighborhood of Saida. Enmity between the March 14 bloc headed by Hariri's party, who supports the rebels/resistance in Syria, and the March 8 coalition led by Hezbollah, which backs the Syrian regime, soared. Previously, it was risky for a Palestinian PC in a Hezbollah-dominated region to deal with Hariri. Now, such interactions became null: "After Abra, all people that have relations with Hezbollah had to stop their relations with *Mustaqbal* and vice versa."¹¹² It was made clear to the PC that it had to choose sides:

"Lebanese are Lebanese, they have the authority here, we're the weakest group here and everything they try to dump on the Palestinians and the camps; they're waiting for any reason or small problem to blame us. Now if any side wants to exploit us, even by giving us gold to be with one against the other, we won't accept it. We can't be with anyone."¹¹³

This epilogue to the electricity case shows how entangled sectarian identity, geopolitical loyalty and political power are. It is very clear for all actors engaged in the governance interactions described that these *interactions* are in fact *transactions*. Lebanese mediation is not charity, but 'buys' political allegiance, which, in the volatile Lebanese context, also implies tacit armed loyalty.¹¹⁴ The thanking letter acknowledges this logic. It exemplifies the bond between Shabriha and Hariri that emerged throughout the interactions, stating: "This step [the provision of the electricity divider] comes to deepen the spirit of communication and brotherhood between the people of Shabriha and MP Bahia Hariri." But it also seems to give away some sort of debt, dramatically proclaiming "we are from you and for you" (*nahna minkom wa ileikom*). The Lebanese actors understood the interactions in the same manner. Hariri's representative allegedly contacted the PC in the aftermath of the Abra clashes and demanded Palestinian support. While the nature of this support was not specified, the PC understood it as a call for their participation in protests in Saida:

"He tried to put us in a specific political position. And I told you before if they offer us services because they want us to join their politics, this is unacceptable. They will use this meeting for other aims, they won't say we're thanking her for the divider, they will publish in the media that Palestinians came to support Bahia Hariri and this means we're with her against the other."¹¹⁵

Ultimately, in the absence of Palestinian citizenship and direct relations between Palestinian authorities and Lebanese state institutions, it is Lebanese internal competition over the political legitimacy and armed back-up associated with Palestinian support that explains why governance interactions that at first glance are about the implementation of local welfare activities are essentially recognized by participants as competition over regional political representation.

111 Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

112 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 30 July 2013.

113 Focus group, Shabriha, 2 August 2013.

114 Focus group, Shabriha, 2 August 2013; Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 30 July 2013.

115 Focus group, Shabriha, 2 August 2013.

4.3 The highway eviction threat

*"Let's wait and see..."*¹¹⁶

Residents of the upper area of Shabriha, which, like the rest of the gathering, is located on municipal land, are threatened with eviction by the construction of the Zahrani-Qana highway. The precise number of houses that would be affected is disputed, but the engineer in charge mentioned 49 houses (of both Lebanese and Palestinian families).^{xxiv} The highway project is divided into several phases and various sections and the highway is currently encroaching on Shabriha from two sides (Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) 2013). The first stages of the project started in 1996 and concerned residents of Shabriha who have been aware of the eviction threats ever since.¹¹⁷ They do not legally own either their houses or the land they built them on and so any form of compensation for their eviction is unlikely, which jeopardizes their willingness to evict (DRC 2005:20). In 2005, the residents received a message that 'their' land would be included in the highway. Shahed, a Palestinian NGO, wrote on its website that:

"A decision taken by Abasiye municipality for the eastern part of the gathering informed the people late at night three months ago through an envelope with a map of the house and the area inside. Inside it was a paper saying they should be ready to leave their houses and that they can refer to the court in Saida starting from 2 April 2005."

In 2005, a court case was opened, during which the municipality was informed on the procedure. Due to the complicated situation with the non-owner-residents, however, follow-up hearings were required to sort out compensation issues. These have, as far as I was able to establish, not (yet) taken place. Partly because of these delays, the people in Shabriha hoped or expected that the highway plan would be altered or canceled and their houses might be spared. Both the residents and the state and its constructors ignored the predicament as long as they possibly could.¹¹⁸ However, in 2007, residents reported engineers came to mark houses. In 2010, construction started with more houses added to the eviction list. In 2013, engineering teams arrived in the gathering and signalled that the construction of the highway in Shabriha was imminent.¹¹⁹ A government website stated that "section 1 from Abbasiyye to Qana" of the Southern Highway/Coastal Road project is envisioned to start on 1 April 2012 and should be completed by 30 September 2014.¹²⁰ In anticipation of the construction work, a hesitant array of governance interactions was initiated with the aim of halting or stalling the construction process and/or ensuring compensation.

Actors

A large variety of actors were involved in the highway eviction case on the side of the Lebanese state. First, the municipality of Abasiye. While many participants assumed the municipality commissioned the highway and was the main decision-maker, this was not the case. Rather, the municipality was only involved as the main landowner that needs to be compensated for the confiscation of its land by the government. Its role is complicated by the presence of 'squatters' on its land. Most of the other actors assumed the municipality would represent and inform the residents, facilitate their exit and relocation and arrange compensation on their behalf.¹²¹ The municipality, however, reasoned that those living illegally on its land are not part of its problem. The vice mayor explained: "When they built, these families didn't take permission and now they want us to bear responsibility. The relation now is between the government and the families themselves."¹²² Residents felt that the municipality was being driven by a personal feud

116 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 28 May 2013.

117 CET website: <http://cetlebanon.com/projects/sort/title/desc>.

118 Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013.

119 Head legal committee, Baabda, 17 July 2013.

120 CDR website: <http://www.cdr.gov.lb/eng/home.asp>.

121 Consultant CCE, Beirut, 20 June 2013; CDR lawyer, Beirut, 3 July 2013; Head legal committee, Baabda, 17 July 2013.

122 Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

against them.¹²³ Other actors confirmed the uncooperative stance of the municipality.¹²⁴

Rather than the municipality, the Lebanese government initiated the highway plan and was the ultimate decision-maker in this regard. The Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), an inter-ministerial council with the aim to efficiently implement construction projects, represented the government in this project. The CDR hired a consulting company, Conser Consulting Engineers (CCE), to manage the actual construction and contracted various construction companies to implement the building; the Shabriha section falls under Consolidated Engineering and Trading (CET). CCE represents CDR, and thereby the government, in the field vis-à-vis the contractors, as well as the landowners and local authorities.¹²⁵ The residents only encountered the CET teams that came to document the plot and register the property on it.¹²⁶

Next to this implementative construction track, there is a legal track in which the court represents the government. The government published a decree in which it announced the highway's final route and the affected land plots. When this decree was issued and the funding for the project reached the CDR, an expropriation file was sent to a legal committee headed by a judge. As the municipality is the landowner in question, its lawyer was the main interlocutor for this legal committee.¹²⁷ The legal committee, although aware of the situation of the people living on the municipality's land, relied on the municipality – as the legal landowner – to help them.¹²⁸ During the court session in 2005, some residents were present though, according to the presiding judge, they were merely social stakeholders, not a legal party.¹²⁹

What was more problematic was that neither the municipality nor the PC represented the residents. DRC (2005:155) noted “the Popular Committee has raised the issue with the Lebanese authorities.” This must have been a relatively one-off action, however, because while PC members claimed they had organized meetings, neither residents, nor NGOs or the CCE recounted any interaction with the PC on the issue of the highway eviction.¹³⁰ Instead, eventually, a ‘highway committee’ was established, consisting of *faliyat* from the affected neighborhood.

Modes

Directness

The main governance actors involved in this case were: on the Palestinian side, the highway committee and, on the Lebanese side, the municipality and the CDR-CCE-CET amalgamation (hereafter indicated as CDR *cum suis*). There had been several attempts at direct interactions between the highway committee and the municipality, but none materialized, predominantly because of the municipality's unwillingness to acknowledge the residents as relevant stakeholders and the absence of a unified approach by the committee. There had been no direct meetings between the committee and CDR c.s., because the residents are not an official party. Instead, three actors predominantly mediated governance interactions in the highway eviction case: the *mukhtar*, NGOs and Palestinian and Lebanese political parties.

As the mayor of Abasiye refused to represent the residents, CDR c.s. approached the *mukhtar* and asked for his help when its engineers were jumped upon by residents desperate for information.¹³¹ The highway committee also informed the *mukhtar* of these engineers, asking him to interfere to stop them.¹³² The *mukhtar* then endorsed the highway committee as a representative of the residents. He also indicated that he would take on the full responsibility

123 Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013; Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013; Field notes 23 July 2013.

124 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

125 Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 10 June 2013; Consultant CCE, Beirut, 20 June 2013.

126 CCE, Sour, 12 June 2013; Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013; Consultant CCE, Beirut, 20 June 2013.

127 CDR project manager, Beirut, 3 July 2013; CDR lawyer, Beirut, 3 July 2013; Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013.

128 CDR lawyer, Beirut, 3 July 2013.

129 Head legal committee, Baabda, 17 July 2013.

130 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013; Consultant CCE, Beirut, 20 June 2013.

131 Consultant CCE, Beirut, 20 June 2013.

132 Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013.

of representing the interests of the affected residents, Palestinian as well as Lebanese, throughout the entire process if the residents would give him this mandate.¹³³ There was some reluctance concerning this offer among some members of the highway committee because they feared that the *mukhtar's* allegiance to his party would overrule his commitment to the residents.¹³⁴ Thus, the committee continued to try and deal with CRD c.s. directly, whereas CDR c.s. preferred to deal with the committee via the *mukhtar*.

Several NGOs also tried to mediate between the committee and CDR c.s., particularly concerning the 2005 court case. Early mediation by Shahed was not initially between the people and CDR c.s., but between the people and religious authorities that were then expected to address the CDR. A spokesperson clarified: "The *mufti* helped us in this regard. He called Bahia Hariri, Amal, and Hezbollah and told them the highway needed to be deviated from this area. He raised his voice on the telephone."¹³⁵

Apart from facilitation via NGOs and religious authorities, participants indicated that the Lebanese members of the highway committee also sought to arrange meetings with Lebanese MPs themselves.¹³⁶ The Palestinian members of the committee, in turn, contacted representatives of Palestinian political parties, in the hope that these would subsequently address their Lebanese counterparts who might then take the matter up with their ministers or CDR c.s.¹³⁷ In the end, Lebanese politicians or representatives of Lebanese political parties were the best intermediary between the highway committee representing the residents and the CDR c.s. representing the state. Lebanese committee members approached them directly; Palestinian committee members approached them via Palestinian political structures; NGOs approached them via religious authorities, but all assumed that it is Lebanese political parties that could really influence CDR c.s. to find a solution. When asked whether his organization talked to the CDR or the court, an NGO representative explained:

*"No. We made a plan, but we didn't reach this step. Because when we met with Bahia Hariri and Amal and Hezbollah, all said it would stop and there was no need any more to meet the CDR and the engineers. And they get their orders from the politicians anyway. [...] There are no legal solutions; it's about political interference here and there. [...] It's about relations here and there."*¹³⁸

Lebanese political parties confirm this. An Amal spokesperson said: "Via our MPs and ministers we make communication with the CDR."¹³⁹ Another Amal member said:

*"Though our people in the state, like MPs or other people who have rights to take decisions, we can help these people to give them more money. Also, we can talk with the judge in the court. Here 'we' doesn't mean me, but the party, to give them the best price. There is no problem in this issue."*¹⁴⁰

A Hezbollah representative also told me that families from Shabriha came to him for help regarding the highway.¹⁴¹ A CDR representative confirmed that the added value of politicians is their access to state institution: "They can take a problem to the authorities. People can't go to the PM to make an appointment, a leader can."¹⁴²

133 Mukhtar Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 6 May 2013.

134 Head highway committee, Shabriha, 26 April 2013; Lebanese member highway committee, Sour, 8 May 2013; Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013.

135 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

136 Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013; AR

137 Head highway committee, Shabriha, 26 April 2013.

138 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013

139 Palestinian liaison officer Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013.

140 Amal leader Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 July 2013.

141 Hezbollah former MP and public relations officer, Beirut, 26 June 2013.

142 CDR project manager, Beirut, 3 July 2013. The vice mayor of Abasiye (Abasiye, 1 July 2013) had a similar understanding.

Communication over the phone and physical meetings are the default manner of conducting the above described mediated interactions. Also, the sending of a letter, via personal deliverance by a political representative, was a potential alternative noted by focus group members.¹⁴³

Formality

While the highway is being implemented through an administrative and official channel, arranging compensation for the residents is taking shape through a political and unofficial channel.¹⁴⁴ This contrast was repeatedly invoked. The judge in charge of the case said: “We’re looking for a practical solution, not a legal one. Because legally, they don’t have any rights. But they’re here and we have to deal with the reality.”¹⁴⁵ An Amal representative similarly noted: “When we do it according to the law, the situation will be bad for them. So we have to find a solution with the state to give them a better alternative.”¹⁴⁶

Thus, the direct interaction between CDR c.s. and the municipality was official. All communication was documented and relevant information following from site visits is reported and archived. However, the indirect interaction between CDR c.s. and the residents was overwhelmingly informal.¹⁴⁷ The highway committee, for instance, did not operate as a coherent body, but functioned as a collection of well-connected individuals that all called upon their personal networks to get their message across to politicians.¹⁴⁸ Most of the interactions the committee has with CDR c.s. were face-to-face and coincidental:

“They didn’t get any letter or anything; we see them in the field when we pass by. We asked the municipality what they were doing there and he told us that they live there illegally. There is no communication with them, not official and not unofficial. We saw them and we know there is a problem, but legally there is no relation between us and them.”¹⁴⁹

Scheduling

The interactions initiated by CDR c.s. and the court followed a tightly stipulated procedure.¹⁵⁰ Interactions between CDR c.s. and the highway committee, in contrast, were all coincidental and occasional; dependent on the (impromptu) presence of CDR engineers in Shabriha.¹⁵¹ Interactions between the highway committee and the various mediating actors was partly opportunistic: the committee members would discuss the matter with anyone they met who was potentially helpful.¹⁵² However, the committee also deliberately approached mediating actors. This often followed precedents and previously established connections and members would find ways to address actors via personal relations. Often, parties would be approached through bottom-up chains of communication: sympathizers or ‘normal’ members were urged to inform their leader, who would then inform higher echelons. A friend said: “everyone calls his boss.”¹⁵³

143 Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013.

144 Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 10 June 2013.

145 Head legal committee, Baabda, 17 July 2013.

146 Amal leader Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 July 2013.

147 CET engineer, Sour, 12 June 2013.

148 Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013.

149 Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013; CDR project manager, Beirut, 3 July 2013; Head legal committee, Baabda, 17 July 2013

150 CDR project manager, Beirut, 3 July 2013

151 Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013.

152 Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013.

153 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013.

The scheduling and intensity of interactions changed throughout the process. The needs based nature of interactions is evidenced by the peak of interactions whenever a new development occurs (such as the organization of a court case or the appearance of CDR engineers). In general, interactions seem to have become increasingly more organized, particularly with the installation of the highway committee. Currently, however, not much can be done until the court makes a decision.¹⁵⁴

Initiation and domination

All relations between the highway committee and the mediating actors were initiated by the Palestinian side, with the exception of the NGOs, who approached the residents on their own initiative, and the *mukhtar*, who only got involved when CDR c.s. asked him to. In general, residents indicated, interactions were very one-directional, in the sense that the interactions the highway committee started were hardly ever followed-up by the targeted actors (the *mukhtar*, NGOs, Palestinian parties and Lebanese parties). The same goes for the committee's attempts to interact with CDR c.s. directly. When they tried to contact him: the judge said he would call them and never did; when they asked for a meeting with Lebanese politicians, they were always told to come back another time; when they asked the engineers for information, they were ignored. As a case in point, residents told me they were never actually informed that their house was included in the highway plot. Instead, they heard this through other channels and then suddenly found engineers painting large red numbers on their houses.¹⁵⁵ In reality, the governance interactions were not really interactions and residents deduced information about the process from random encounters rather than from meetings or communications with Lebanese authorities.¹⁵⁶ Many of the relations were tacit, based on accumulated experience, or as one *shakhs fael* put it "we just know" (*nahna aarfin*).¹⁵⁷

Domains

For CDR, the highway eviction is about development and socio-economic advancement through infrastructural improvement. For the Palestinian residents, it is about their human rights to shelter and justice. However, this case is also significantly about who represents the Palestinians vis-à-vis the state and the state vis-à-vis the Palestinians. As a leading member of the highway committee stated: "this problem is not social, it is political!"¹⁵⁸

The fact that Palestinian people are not addressed as citizens or landowners by Lebanese state institutions means that direct interaction between them and the state cannot occur. It also means people are not informed, which means they have to actively seek information through gatekeepers, resulting in mediated governance interactions. All this arguably makes interaction between authorities even more pertinent as people are more dependent on them to represent their interests and arrange solutions. The absence of the PC, the default representative of the residents of Shabriha, is striking here. I have not been able to establish irrefutably why the PC did not take up its role here. The PC claimed infrastructural issues are UNRWA's responsibility and one PC member said that because there were Lebanese families involved as well, the *mukhtar* or a ministry would be more suitable to represent the people here.¹⁵⁹ However, this would not preclude the PC representing the residents by calling upon intermediaries, as it had done in other situations. CDR c.s. were particularly frustrated with the refusal of the mayor to play a role and struggled with the lack of residential representation.¹⁶⁰ Other authorities, such as the *mukhtar*, struggled to find the right format to represent the Palestinian residents. Conversely, the NGO Shahed was eager to represent the affected citizens, contacting the residents before the residents contacted them. The Lebanese and Palestinian parties, finally, did not appear enthusiastic to represent the residents towards CDR c.s., but did not ignore their requests either.

154 UNRWA regional coordinator Sour, Sour, 15 May 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013; Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

155 Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013.

156 Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 15 April 2013; Faliyat from Shabriha, Shabriha, 20 May and 11 June 2013.

157 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013.

158 Head highway committee, Shabriha, 26 April 2013.

159 PC public relations officer Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 July 2013.

160 Consultant CCE, Beirut, 20 June 2013

The second component of representation concerns the Lebanese state. The state, represented by the government, could in this case be equated with the CDR. However, because the CDR in turn was working with, and represented by, private, consulting and engineering companies, the responsibility and the mandates of these different organizations got mixed up.¹⁶¹ This issue is further complicated by the role of the Lebanese political parties; they position themselves as representatives of the people towards – or even against – the government and the allegedly unjust ‘system,’ while simultaneously taking advantage of their position in that government to get things done. Thus, political parties are seen, and present themselves, as representatives of the people against the government, ignoring the fact that their own representation in the government is the very reason they can claim their representation might have any effect.

Sites

The governance interactions in the highway eviction encompassed a local and a national level; Shabriha and Beirut. Governance interactions from the Palestinian side started in Shabriha and then moved up the ranks of various Lebanese parties, acting as mediating actors until they reached the party representatives in the capital that might address the matter with the CDR. Governance interactions from the Lebanese side started with the CDR in Beirut and then moved down institutionally towards the municipality.

Levels

From CDR c.s.’s perspective, the highway eviction case concerns the implementation of existing policies: first-order governance. That these existing policies do not include handles to deal with the Palestinian residents, who are key stakeholders, for CDR c.s. does not constitute a reason to renegotiate or reconsider these policies. Still, the discursive and practical struggle over who should or should not represent the Palestinians’ interests in this case indicates an ongoing negotiation over how policies should be implemented: second-order governance. Moreover, to the extent that these ‘negotiations’ constitute a debate on whether the representation of the Palestinians should be based on *de jure* regulations (as CDR c.s. and the municipality maintain) or on *de facto* precedents (as the highway committee and most mediating actors implicitly propose), they could even be seen as a matter of meta-governance.

Explanations for the nature of governance interaction regarding the highway eviction

Material resources: land and money

Representatives of CDR c.s. stressed that it is within the right of the Lebanese government to use public land for development projects.¹⁶² The fact that the Palestinians did not own the land they were living on meant they could not be a direct party in the governance interactions. Concerning the above-mentioned court case letter in 2005, for instance, one resident told me:

“They didn’t send it to us; they sent it to the municipality, because the municipality owns the land. The municipality then sent someone to inform us on the date and time and place. If you find a pair of pants and there is an ID in it, whom will you return it to?”¹⁶³

In that sense, landlessness partly accounts for the mediated nature of the governance interactions. However, it is not merely that the Palestinian residents in question *did* not own the land they were living on or the houses they were living in, but that they *could* not own land or property even if they had wanted to (DRC 2005:20). Thus, it is not a matter of landlessness but a matter of citizenship that determined the domain and level of governance interaction.

161 Head legal committee, Baabda, 17 July 2013; Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013.

162 Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013; Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013.

163 Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013.

Many participants believed that the implementation of the project was halted and governance interactions endured due to a window of opportunity generated by lack of financial resources of the Lebanese state.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, the lack of direct relations between the residents and the state is not only due to legal-institutional stipulations, but also to the immense national debt that would not allow the state to pay compensation to the residents.¹⁶⁵ A CCE representative, however, said money had already been set aside for compensation, but that the real challenge was how to 'sell' the payment for the houses as government institutions could not officially pay for any illegal structures.¹⁶⁶ This transports monetary resources, as was the case with land resources, into the realm of institutional resources associated with citizenship.

Ideational resources: the 'Palestinian cause' (al-qadiya al-Falastiniya)

Much of the unwillingness of CDR c.s. to evict the Palestinians of Shabriha and much of the willingness of actors to mediate on their behalf lies in the advantageous sympathy to 'the Palestinian cause' (Rafonelli 2004; Knudsen 2011). Palestine, in Arab politics, stands for everything that is right and just, not in the least because of the strong psychological connection much of the Arab electorate has with Israel's injustices. As such, being associated with defending the Palestinian cause is an important incentive for any political actor in Lebanon. Klaus (2000:63) summarizes that "because the Palestinian cause was sacred, criticizing those who represented it was a taboo." Although supporting marginal Palestinian communities in an eviction case hardly conquers Jerusalem, some of the inherent legitimacy associated with the Palestinian cause rubs off. Similarly, the vice of going against the Palestinian cause might be associated with going against some Palestinian squatters in South Lebanon. A woman lamented: "The houses that weren't destroyed by the [Israeli] warplanes are being destroyed by the [Lebanese] state now."¹⁶⁷

The Palestinians are aware of this sentiment and use it to their advantage in a way that explains the mediated and informal nature of the governance interactions. Despite residents' desperation, there was a resignation that ultimately eviction would just not be an option due to its social, cultural and political implications. A CDR representative said: "No one can kick them out, if they could've, they would've 30 years ago. [...] They're not going to kick the people out, because the political parties don't want problems with the people."¹⁶⁸ A CET representative said that the people he met in Shabriha "are not worried; all people know the families won't leave their houses until we find a solution for them; the situation in Lebanon is not suitable to make problems so surely the state will find a solution for them."¹⁶⁹ The mayor voiced a similar belief: "The state in Lebanon operates by consensus and by habit. And the habitual consensus here is that you can't just throw them out."¹⁷⁰ But no one stated it more spot-on than Shahed's spokesperson:

"This isn't just about legality; it's very complex; it's related to Palestinian refugees, the international society, the sensitivity and interconnectedness of the camps. When there were demonstrations in Nahr el-Bared camp last year and two people were killed there were also demonstrations in Bourj el-Shemali and Rashidiye and Ain el-Hilweh. Do you think Palestinians in the other camps would listen as if they're watching TV when Shabriha is evicted? No! This is all very sensitive."¹⁷¹

164 Palestinian NGO Sour, Al Bas camp, Sour, 2 April 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013; Hezbollah former MP and public relations officer, Beirut, 26 June 2013; Consultant CCE, Beirut, 20 June 2013.

165 CET engineer, Sour, 12 June 2013; Consultant CCE, Beirut, 20 June 2013

166 Consultant CCE, Beirut, 20 June 2013

167 Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013.

168 Consultant CCE, Beirut, 20 June 2013; CET engineer, Sour, 12 June 2013.

169 CET engineer, Sour, 12 June 2013.

170 Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 10 June 2013.

171 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

Palestinian organizations in Lebanon are aware of the socio-political influence they can have on popular opinion and the occasional influence that comes in its wake. One expert painted a clear picture of what he believed would happen if the people were actually evicted without compensation: “There will be big problems, the streets will be blocked and all kinds of things will happen. [...] I tell you, if they don’t find a place or pay them, they won’t be able to implement this. All Shabriha will come to sit in these houses.”¹⁷² This already has precedents in Jal al-Bahar, Qasmiye, Al Bas and Ain el-Hilweh. There, the ‘Palestinian cause’ indeed worked in the Palestinians’ favor: “They stopped because the situation was sensitive – it touched upon Palestinians, upon Shia-Sunni tensions. They remembered 1985 [the War of the Camps] all too well.”¹⁷³

Institutional resources: campness, chaos and citizenship

Institutional resources relevant to this case are related to several issues. First, ‘campness’: there were references that in the cases of the official camps international actors had on several occasions intervened to prevent evictions, but that Shabriha, as a gathering, was not ‘important enough’ to merit such international intervention.¹⁷⁴ This might be because the Palestinian cause is more strongly associated with the camps.

Second, to some extent, the absence of rule of law, or what respondents referred to as ‘chaos’ (*fawda*) was seen as a key determinant of governance. In a focus group, participants stated:

“We live in a situation of chaos. No one is ruling on the ground, each one has its own laws that he applies according to his benefits. No one cares for the people; they are living; they are suffering; this is not important for them. You are in Lebanon and you must know this – we’re in the jungle, not in a state. [...] We have no court, we have no law, we have no state, we’re discriminated, we’re animals to them; we resemble everything but people to them.”¹⁷⁵

Palestinians strongly feel that in this context they have little to expect from ‘the law’ and when authorities ‘refer to the law’ they see this as an undesirable and negative last resort, rather than a natural (or fair) procedure.¹⁷⁶ This is in stark contrast to CDR c.s.s insistence that it can only deal with the residents based on legal papers of ownership and its defence of the state’s right to expropriate land for development projects with reference to the law.¹⁷⁷ The political parties, as mediating actors, recognized and carved out their niche within this tension between residents caught in illegality and a state bound by the law. The context of *fawda* also explains the variations between moments of inertia and sudden bouts of interaction, as the absence of clear implementation schedules allowed political parties to deviate and delay to the extent that interactions seemed to sabotage the process instead of salvage it.¹⁷⁸ This *fawda* also ensured that information for governance actors remained ambiguous; information on which houses were included in the highway plan, for instance, was haphazard and contradictory and it was unclear whether a court decision had already been made on compensation.¹⁷⁹ This affected the scheduling of governance interactions. Sudden fits of interactions would follow on new snippets of information about planning or outcomes, but would be followed again by periods of inaction when actors did not have clear new information. It also relates to informality, as both residents and mediating from friends and relations, rather than through official channels.¹⁸⁰

172 PC member Jal al-Bahar, Sour, 13 June 2013.

173 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

174 Head National PC Union, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 6 June 2013.

175 Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013.

176 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 20 May 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013; Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013.

177 Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013; CDR project manager, Beirut, 3 July 2013; Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013.

178 Palestinian liaison officer Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013; Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013; Qaimaqam Sour, Sour, 29 April 2013; Director Palestinian NGO, Saidia, 8 May 2013.

179 CDR lawyer, Beirut, 3 July 2013; Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013; Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013; Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 15 April; INGO, Sour, 10 April 2013; Mukhtar Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 6 May 2013.

180 Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013

What participants described as manifestations of *fawda*, illegality and unclear information, is tied up with the matter of citizenship. Marginalization of information due to an absence of citizenship generates a rather passive position from Palestinian residents and their representatives.¹⁸¹ What genuinely frustrated both representatives from CDR c.s. and the municipality of Abasiye was that they could not fit the Palestinian residents within their legal and formal system and were therefore forced to 'leave them to the politicians.'¹⁸² Thus, the notion of citizenship explains the mediated nature of governance interaction. More particularly, it can account for why the Lebanese political parties played the main gatekeeper role among the mediating actors, with NGOs, religious authorities and Palestinian parties all ultimately referring the case to them to plead state institutions.

A member of the PC boldly stated that it was a 'blessing' that the eviction also concerned Lebanese residents and that having the Lebanese 'on board' was a key strategy, both in terms of connections to the state and to Lebanese parties.¹⁸³ Conversely, CDR c.s. representatives adamantly refused to distinguish between Lebanese and Palestinian residents: "Whether they're Palestinian or Lebanese... I don't like to interfere in this; people are people; there is no difference; it's wrong to distinguish between them because it makes no difference for the solution."¹⁸⁴ In light of the above, however, this recurrent emphasis on the need to treat Palestinians and Lebanese equally is a sign of either politically correct lip service or wishful thinking.¹⁸⁵

4.4 The building 'crisis'

*"The building crisis wasn't a crisis, it was a revolution."*¹⁸⁶

Building and renovation in Shabriha is usually subject to permissions that are hardly ever granted and the police normally nip any illegal building activity in the bud (Dorai 2006:4; PU and NRC 2009:5; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:54). However, in 2011 the large majority of households in Shabriha added rooms, or even entire floors, to their house. This development was repeatedly described as the biggest improvement in Shabriha in the last few years.¹⁸⁷ A UNDP and UN-HABITAT survey from 2013 pronounced that afterwards 95 percent of Shabriha's houses were "good and habitable."

Through rumors, media reports and their own observations, people in Shabriha knew Lebanese people in their region were building without permissions. Apparently, such illegal building started in the area close to Saida and quickly spread.¹⁸⁸ While the police initially sought to stop such building, it withdrew after an incident in Masaken where two people were killed when the police attempted to subdue construction activities. People in Shabriha took their chances and started construction work on their own houses. After a few weeks a blockade of checkpoints was installed to prevent the entering of construction materials. Still, most people found ways to continue the building until they were done (or ran out of money). There was no unanimity on how long this period, which people from Shabriha called 'the building crisis' lasted, but a group interview brought to light that "after three or four months, seventy to eighty percent of the houses were finished."¹⁸⁹

181 Head highway committee, Shabriha, 1 May 2013.

182 Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 11 April 2013.

183 Head highway committee, Shabriha, 1 May 2013; PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 9 April 2013; Focus group, Shabriha, 14 June 2013

184 Consultant CCE, Beirut, 20 June 2013; see also Head National PC Union, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 6 June 2013; CET engineer, Sour, 12 June 2013; PC member Jal al-Bahar, Sour, 13 June 2013.

185 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013; Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013; Head legal committee, Baabda, 17 July 2013.

186 UNIFIL engineer, Lebanese Shabriha, 13 May 2013; Mukhtar Maashouk, Maashouk, 3 July 2013; Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

187 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013; Youth Shabriha, Shabriha, 1 July 2013.

188 Director and vice director camp improvement and infrastructure program UNRWA, Beirut, 29 March 2013.

189 Youth Shabriha, Shabriha, 1 July 2013; Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

Actors

People in Shabriha emphasized they operated on an individual basis and that no one represented them or arranged building permissions. They said no one would want to take the collective responsibility for such an overt illegal project.¹⁹⁰ However, people were aware that their protection from police destruction lay in their collective action. There was a strong sentiment that “they can’t stop us all. [...] The state can deal with one person, but not with the whole community together”¹⁹¹ There were also participants who said that there had been implicit coordination, through, for instance, *faliyat* who would appeal to the municipality for permission on behalf of the entire gathering.¹⁹² The role of the PC here was ambiguous. A PC member clarified that the PC spoke with the authorities throughout the crisis and encouraged people to protest by making announcements via the mosque’s microphone.¹⁹³ However, this does not seem to match other people’s recollections. They noted that the PC “couldn’t interfere, they don’t have the authority. So what can they do? The PC is from the people and this was an opportunity for the people; they were busy building themselves.”¹⁹⁴

On the Lebanese counterpart, generally, the municipality allocates permission for rehabilitation or construction. As such, at the beginning of the crisis, various people visited and called the municipality to ask for such permissions.¹⁹⁵ These requests were all rejected.¹⁹⁶ Apart from individuals that met with municipality officials and the mayor who occasionally came to Shabriha to object to any building activity, the mayor allegedly also initiated a meeting with representatives of Amal, Hamas and Hezbollah in Shabriha to reinstate his rejection.¹⁹⁷ It is widely believed that it was the municipality that eventually installed the checkpoints around Shabriha.¹⁹⁸

A second category of Lebanese governance actors was the police and security branches.¹⁹⁹ In the beginning of the crisis and towards the end of it, the municipal police entered Shabriha several times to demolish nascent construction.²⁰⁰ Most references to the police in the building crisis, however, concerned the ISF that manned the checkpoints around Shabriha and dealt with protests. YaSour (2011a) noted:

“Palestinian guys from Shabriha blocked the coastal road out of protest for not being allowed to enter building materials. [...] The ISF opened the road after negotiation with the people. Three cars with building materials entered the camp while the ISF tried to stop them by shooting a gun in the air.”

Apart from the police, participants also included the LAF in the building crisis as a state representative. The army’s escalated intervention in Masaken necessitated its withdrawal, leaving the police more or less toothless in the face of the widespread building: “After that, the army left the problem to the police. And the police without the army is nothing,” noted the PC secretary in Shabriha.²⁰¹

190 Residents Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 April 2013; Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013; UNRWA teacher from Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 April 2013.

191 Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013.

192 Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013.

193 PC public relations officer Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 July 2013.

194 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013; Youth Shabriha, Shabriha, 1 July 2013.

195 *Shakhs fael* from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 26 July 2013; Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

196 Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013; Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 11 April 2013.

197 *Shakhs fael* from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 26 July 2013; Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013; Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

198 Youth Shabriha, Shabriha, 1 July 2013.

199 The references in the interviews were often quite vague, but denoted a wide variety of different branches within the municipal police, ISF and LAF that I have synthesized.

200 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 26 July 2013.

201 PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 16 July 2013.

The third Lebanese governance actor was broadly denoted as 'the state' (el dawle), but it was not always clear, even to the participants, which specific institution was meant. There were repeated references to 'the state' that made the mistake of initially allowing the building.²⁰² The 'state,' in this context, was discussed as a central authority, sometimes to the extent of being equated with the government. The concept of 'dawle' was particularly used to designate the victory of 'the people' against 'the state:' "I wouldn't say it was a building crisis, I'd say it was a war. [...] The people against the state."²⁰³ In a focus group, people also stated: "People unified to be against the state. [...] There were two stages. First, people awaited the state's reaction and, second, they continued."²⁰⁴

Modes

Directness

Throughout the building crisis, the residents of Shabriha – sometimes represented by PC members, FC members or other *faliyat* and sometimes individually – approached the municipality, the police and the army directly.²⁰⁵ Although governance interactions here were thus more direct than in the other cases, there were also instances where other actors played a mediating role.

First, the *mukhtar* is usually involved in matters of construction and is responsible for providing attestations to authorize building activities for Lebanese Shabriha. A PC member indicated that "the *mukhtar* of Shabriha has a problem with the municipality because he wants the Palestinians to build, but Abasiye refuses to give permits. He has helped them built and facilitate with the government."²⁰⁶ The *mukhtar* has also apparently talked with the police to facilitate bringing in materials.²⁰⁷ In some instances, the *mukhtar* encouraged the PC to take on a more active role and mobilize Shabriha.²⁰⁸

Mostly, however, governance interaction here did not occur via institutions or organizations, but via individuals. Palestinians from Shabriha said their interactions with Lebanese authorities occurred through *faliyat* from Lebanese Shabriha.²⁰⁹ A youth from Shabriha who 'imported' (or smuggled in) construction materials explained: "Not just anyone can talk to the police. There're specific people who can talk to them. If I wanted to enter something, I'd talk to someone higher than me and tell them 'today I want to enter this and this, talk to the police.'" When I asked him what he meant with 'someone higher,' he answered: "People from Salha [Lebanese Shabriha]."²¹⁰

The third category of mediating actors in the governance interactions was that of (representatives of) Lebanese political parties. Political leaders and their local representatives condoned the building, creating an implicit obstacle for state representatives to directly go against the building.²¹¹ It was probably for this reason that the mayor decided to call on the leaders of Hamas, Amal and Hezbollah in Shabriha, rather than on, for instance, the PC or FC, to reinstate

202 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

203 Youth Shabriha, Shabriha, 1 July 2013.

204 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

205 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

206 PC secretary Shabriha, Beirut, 13 March 2013.

207 Assistant Hezbollah liaison Sour, Deir Qanun, 17 July 2013; *Qaimaqam* Sour, Sour, 29 April 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013.

208 PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 16 July 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013, FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 20 May 2013; Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

209 Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 19 July 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 26 July 2013; Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

210 Youth *Shabriha*, Shabriha, 1 July 2013.

211 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 26 July 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

his rejection.^{xxv212} A national Amal representative indicated he had helped Palestinians throughout the building.²¹³ A local Amal leader, however, denied the party's involvement.²¹⁴ Apparently, at the early stages, Lebanese political

212 Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

213 Amal MP, Sour, 27 July 2013.

214 Amal leader Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 July 2013.

parties backed the construction, but this backing was later withdrawn:

"During this period, some two months during summer, each party supported their own followers to do whatever they wanted without repercussions in order to pressure their political adversaries. It was an internal Lebanese political problem. Their message was 'do what you want and no one will prevent this.' Under the table each party let their followers know to go ahead. And then in some instances the police would come to stop them, but someone would intervene to tell the police to look the other way. But then this period ended as all parties agreed that it was better to reign in their followers."²¹⁵

The governance interactions described were overwhelmingly face-to-face. Negotiations at the checkpoints were face-to-face; implicit support from political parties was communicated face-to-face; and meetings between the mayor and *faliyat* were face-to-face.²¹⁶ However, there was some use of the media to get the message across to decision-makers. A PC member said the idea to block the road was born from the need to let authorities know they would not accept the checkpoints.²¹⁷

Formality

Most governance interactions took place at checkpoints and revolved around bribing policemen to enter materials.²¹⁸ Such interactions worked through a double blind system wherein Palestinians from Shabriha had a contact that met with a representative of the policeman at the checkpoints:

"There were two or three people we dealt with. The bribes reached the checkpoints indirectly, through two or three people who are close to the police. We cannot go to the policemen directly to pay them. These two or three people are relatives of the policemen and they have secret relations between them. The policemen can't take from the people directly; they were afraid someone might take pictures and send them to their leadership. [...] These three or two persons they deal with us directly, but they pay for a secret person who has the relations with the policemen and we didn't talk with him. The policemen don't deal with these three or two; they deal only with the one."²¹⁹

Because of the very nature of these interactions, they are, per definition, not official. Participants constantly reiterated that since their activity was illegal, the governance interactions that enabled it were illegal as well. Interactions during the building crisis in Shabriha were thus mainly on a personal basis. The policemen and soldiers were, for instance, construed as individuals rather than state representatives: "the sons from the state are from the villages; these guys told their relatives 'you can build now'."²²⁰ The personal nature of relations was also evident in an almost unanimous reference by participants to one person as a fundamental problem of governance in Shabriha – the mayor of Abasiye.²²¹

215 Palestinian NGO, Sour, 22 March 2013; Hezbollah former MP, Beirut, 26 June 2013

216 Hezbollah former MP and public relations officer, Beirut, 26 June 2013

217 PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 16 July 2013; Head PARD women's committee, Shabriha, 17 May 2013

218 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

219 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

220 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

221 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013; Palestinian liaison officer Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013; fieldnotes 23 July.

However, in the early stage of the building crisis, when people were still trying to get some form of permission for their building endeavour, interactions were more formal.²²² Yet, 'permission' should not be automatically understood as being official, except in the case of municipal papers. A more significant kind of 'permission' lied in the implicit support political figures gave to the building activity. Such 'permission' was an oral guarantee to "look the other way" or "squeeze the eyes."²²³ The *mukhtar* said "it helped that Amal and Hezbollah recognized the difficult situation and encouraged the authorities to turn a blind eye."²²⁴ In a way, the lack of interaction constituted this window of opportunity; people knew "there was no organizing between the state and the people, that this would be the last opportunity."²²⁵ They saw this as the way the system works or even the state's will ("*dawle heek beda*").²²⁶ Tellingly, the main problem participants had with the mayor was his aspiration to do all interactions in an official way. They criticized his formal thinking as counter-productive:

*"The mayor is stupid. At a point he knew people were building anyway and he couldn't stop us. Why didn't he exploit this opportunity? He could've given people permissions and people would have paid taxes for them. [...] We would have had elegant houses; the building would have been suitable for the existing infrastructure – the building would've been legal. It would have been good for both sides."*²²⁷

Scheduling

During the building crisis, governance interaction consisted of two phases. The first of which was the flurry of interactions when people went to the municipality for permission to build at the beginning of the crisis. The second regarded the interactions at the checkpoints that were later installed. During both phases interactions were regular in the sense that they followed precedents and that people went through the same intermediaries that they would also use in other instances of contact with the police or army. Yet, while some authorities said crises like these regularly occur during election times, for most participants the building crisis was a once in a lifetime opportunity.²²⁸ Thus, governance was ad hoc, because the building was ad hoc; people were not prepared (in terms of planning and contact) for the building and authorities were not prepared to control it. The experience of a Hezbollah representative in Shabriha illustrates this. He described that when he had been pleading at the municipality with the mayor and three other *faliyat*, they all received phone calls from different people in Shabriha; the three were informed that policemen had come to destroy some of the new rooms under construction.²²⁹ In all, focus group participants concluded, the Lebanese authorities had let things spiral out of control and the absence of any regular interaction made the building crisis a crisis:

*"The building was random and it was a mistake [from the state]. When they took the decision they didn't imagine the situation would be as difficult as it would be. The state thought it would be small and controllable, but they were surprised when all people started to build together and after that they couldn't control the situation and here the problem started."*²³⁰

Initiation and domination

Generally, the building crisis was reactive. Palestinian people only built when they saw Lebanese building and they

222 Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

223 UNRWA teacher from Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 April 2013; *Qaimaqam* Sour, Sour, 29 April 2013; INGO, Sour, 10 April 2013; Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; Mukhtar Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 6 May 2013; Shakhs fael from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013.

224 Fieldnotes 10 March 2013.

225 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

226 *Qaimaqam* Sour, Sour, 29 April 2013.

227 Focus group, *Shabriha*, 28 July 2013.

228 Director and vice director camp improvement and infrastructure program UNRWA, Beirut, 29 March 2013.

229 Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013.

230 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

did not take a vanguard role in the event: “Palestinians jumped on the train the Lebanese were driving.”²³¹ Yet, with the specific governance interactions described above (the pleading for official permission from the municipality on the one hand and the negotiating with policemen at the checkpoints on the other), the Palestinian residents of Shabriha took the wheel. In some instances, the PC took a vanguard role, but these seemed to have been exceptions. A *mukhtar* from a neighboring village concluded: “The people here preceded their leadership. They said ‘we can only die once;’ we have nothing to lose. We don’t steal, we don’t make problems, we just want to live and build.”²³² Only once did a Lebanese governance actor initiate a contact, which was when the mayor invited the three *faliyat*. The ISF and LAF, on the other hand, installed checkpoints, but did not approach Palestinian authorities.

Domains

Palestinian participants tended to construe the building crisis as a matter of welfare, rights and services, whereas Lebanese governance actors defined the building crisis in terms of security threats, undermining the rule of law and state sovereignty.²³³ Nevertheless, I would argue that the building crisis mainly concerns the domain of political representation.

The building crisis was ultimately a manifestation of a political showdown between Lebanon’s two political blocks, March 8 and March 14. The window of opportunity – constructing without permits – that people took advantage of only emerged because Lebanese political parties wanted to secure the loyalty of their followers during a time of governmental vacuum in the context of the ever increasing tension from the Syrian war.²³⁴ Some observers explicitly linked these dynamics to the dominance of political parties and the weakness of the central state.²³⁵ A representative of March 14 stated: “In the south people build because Hezbollah allowed them to and Hezbollah covered [i.e. backed] their building and prevented the police to interfere.”²³⁶ A national Hezbollah spokesperson confirmed:

*“This happened between two governments, after the fall of the Hariri government two and a half years ago. There was a great political conflict between the Lebanese political forces. And in such periods, the security forces are weak, because they can’t fight one and not the other. And during election times there is an understanding between all political leaders to let people build, this is a kind of facilitation for people. The political leaders can affect the police and the army and make them squeeze their eyes.”*²³⁷

Not only that, the crisis revealed the performative nature of much of the governance interactions. All participants agreed that the ISF and LAF could have stopped any materials from entering Shabriha if they had really wanted to. And still, without any repercussion, new buildings were rising in clear view of those manning the checkpoints. Thus the checkpoints predominantly functioned to pay lip service to the notion of stopping the building while in reality there were negotiations between the police and the people via informants. The *mukhtar* recognized the symbolic function of the checkpoints when he explained “it was just an official decision of the state to say ‘we’re here, we’re present on the ground.”²³⁸

231 PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013; Residents Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 April 2013; PLO leader, Beirut, 24 April 2013.

232 *Mukhtar* Maashouk, Maashouk, 3 July 2013.

233 Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 June 2013; *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 6 May 2013; Amal MP, Sour, 27 July 2013.

234 PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013; Residents Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 April 2013; Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013; Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; PLO leader, Beirut, 24 April 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 12 March 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013; email correspondence INGO.

235 Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013; Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013.

236 Bahia Hariri office, Saida, 24 May 2013.

237 Hezbollah former MP and public relations officer, Beirut, 26 June 2013.

238 *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 23 July 2013.

Sites

The governance setting of the building crisis had three dimensions: (i) a national level, with the higher echelons of Lebanon's main parties de facto condoning the construction; (ii) a regional level, events in one village affected developments in another village, as was illustrated by the incident in Masaken that spurred the entire Sour region to build; and (iii) the specific interactions between the particular governance actors in Shabriha. In participants' accounts, these various layers overlap. Some insisted the crisis started with a woman in Shabriha who deliberately destroyed her house to enable more elaborate renovation and was later further facilitated by regional events.²³⁹ Others insisted that it was initially the national governmental vacuum and political support that spurred the crisis.²⁴⁰ When it comes to the crisis' end, accounts are similarly contrasting. Some said the crisis in Shabriha ended when everyone who could afford the construction had finished. Others said it was nationally decided upon by political leaders and then locally implemented.²⁴¹ Overall, top down and bottom up developments reinforced each other. However, national dynamics were more decisive: the main difference between the building activity in 2011 and a similar situation in 2005 was the national chaos in 2011.²⁴²

Levels

Governance interactions during the building crisis dealt with the implementation of improvised and ambiguous 'policies,' which suggests a first-order governance level. However, Palestinians in Shabriha were hardly treated differently than Lebanese throughout the crisis. This suggests that for Lebanese authorities the gatherings were closer to Lebanese villages than to Palestinian camps. In the Palestinian camps, no construction was allowed throughout the crisis and the checkpoints that were always there for the camps remained in place.²⁴³ Thus, while much of the governance interactions were of a first-order level, concerned with implementation, and sometimes of a second-order level, concerned with the development of new ways of dealing with the situation, some aspects of the governance by Lebanese authorities suggest the crisis also relates to meta-governance, particularly with regard to the distinctions between different categories of governance constituencies (camps, gatherings and villages).

Explanations for the nature of governance interaction regarding the building crisis

Material resources: land and money

There were ample references to the disputed land situation in Shabriha. The fact that Shabriha gathering was illegally built on public land was often mentioned as a reason for the municipality's rejection to grant permits and its installation of checkpoints.²⁴⁴ Once, Lebanese from Abasiye, accompanied by municipal representatives as well as policemen, came to Upper Shabriha (Aziye) to stop the people of Shabriha – Lebanese as well as Palestinian – from taking that land and extend their building (YaSour 2011b).²⁴⁵ The fact that this intervention targeted both Lebanese and Palestinians indicates that here the issue concerns the land rather than underlying citizenship issues.

Participants also saw money as a crucial material resource shaping governance interactions throughout the building crisis. First, they found that Shabriha was only involved in the building crisis because its residents could afford to build, which was sometimes related to the large remittance flow Shabriha was receiving.²⁴⁶ Money would then explain why a building crisis took place in Shabriha in the first place and why governance interactions emerged at all. Money was also a core incentive for some of the mediating actors that played a crucial role in the governance

239 Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 June 2013.

240 Palestinian NGO, Al Bass camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 19 July 2013; Youth Shabriha, Shabriha, 1 July 2013.

241 Director and vice director camp improvement and infrastructure program UNRWA, Beirut, 29 March 2013; PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 16 July 2013.

242 Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 June 2013.

243 Palestinian NGO Sour, Al Bas camp, Sour, 2 April 2013.

244 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

245 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

246 Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 5 April 2013; Residents Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 April 2013; Youth Shabriha, Shabriha, 1 July 2013.

interactions that allowed construction material through the checkpoints.²⁴⁷ There were also rumors that, for the police, the opportunity to bribe was an important reason to honor the mayor's request to install checkpoints.²⁴⁸

247 Youth Shabriha, Shabriha, 1 July 2013; PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 16 July 2013.

248 PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 16 July 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

Ideational resources: state sovereignty and the Palestinian cause

The ideal of state sovereignty, which is related to the primacy of land as a material resource, was seen as a reason for the eventual clampdown by the central state on the building activity throughout the country.²⁴⁹ Focus group participants stated:

*"They attacked sea lands, agricultural lands, military lands – what made the state very angry was that people didn't build on their lands or on top of their houses only, they started to build at the beach, in the mountains, in the forests, next to the airport. Now it was a serious situation, not just in empty lands: they affect the tourism, the environment. [...] The situation was related to the nerves of the state."*²⁵⁰

The 'Palestinian cause,' as also described in the highway eviction case, affected governance interaction as well. For participants, it was clear that Shabriha was 'allowed' to build and that the checkpoint regime was not effectively enforced because Lebanese authorities were afraid they might too openly discriminate against Palestinians in a situation where they only did what Lebanese citizens had done.²⁵¹ The leader of the Union of FCs in Sour summarized: "This began in Lebanese areas which made them embarrassed. The law was being broken outside the camp so if they then would try and stand against the Palestinians this discrimination would be too obvious and open."²⁵² An NGO representative marvelled: "They treated us like Lebanese this time."²⁵³ An Amal representative from Shabriha was very clear when he said that "we can't open a front with a camp – you know the sensitive political situation now. Any problem might take an unacceptable form we didn't think about before. They'll say we didn't implement the same thing for the Palestinians as we did for the Lebanese."²⁵⁴ The ideological and political significance of supporting Palestinians as a form of adherence to the Palestinian cause assigned a passive role for the Lebanese governance actors involved who 'looked away' when they could.

Institutional resources: unity; citizenship; and fawda

As in the other cases, institutional resources were understood in terms of *wasta* by helping you bring in materials or remove your name from police lists.²⁵⁵ One man with a lot of *wasta* was described as:

*"The mukhtar is his uncle. He knows all people in the checkpoints and has good relations with the police and the army. He is strong in the government. They gave him permission to enter materials. Until now, he's very strong in the ISF and LAF. He sits with them [Palestinians] in the coffee shop in Aziye. They have strong relations, very strong; they like him."*²⁵⁶

The above described political 'backing' functions as a form of overarching *wasta*: "You know, in this country each family must belong to a political party who covers them when they need this."²⁵⁷ Yet, people explained "officially, the political parties didn't allow people to build, it was in a secret way, for specific cases, but people started to build together in the name of one."²⁵⁸ Thus, the political backing of some families stretched to include entire communities.²⁵⁹

249 Hezbollah former MP and public relations officer, Beirut, 26 June 2013; Mukhtar Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 6 May 2013; Palestinian NGO, Sour, 22 March 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 12 March 2013.

250 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

251 Director and vice director camp improvement and infrastructure program UNRWA, Beirut, 29 March 2013.

252 Head FC Union Sour, Shabriha, 10 June 2013.

253 Palestinian NGO, Al Bass camp, Sour, 18 June 2013.

254 Amal leader Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 July 2013.

255 Mukhtar Maashouk, Maashouk, 3 July 2013; Palestinian NGO, Sour, 22 March 2013.

256 Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

257 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

258 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

259 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013; Mukhtar Maashouk, Maashouk, 3 July 2013; Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013.

A youth that smuggled materials into Shabriha explained that “some people who paid the police or had *wasta* with the police entered materials and the others waited for that and then followed quickly to pass the checkpoint. And the police thought all buses belonged to the same person.”²⁶⁰ This ‘power through unity’ was an institutional resource that allowed people to tap into existing pools of *wasta*. Those who built after the majority did were indeed targeted: “After people finished building the police removed the checkpoints but there were people who wanted to build after this – but because these were just a few cases the police could destroy them and did.”²⁶¹ This logic cemented informal and diffuse governance interactions as it urged people to present the builders as one block and avoid singling out leaders or initiators who might be targeted. When asked who organized the demonstrations against the checkpoints, a friend noted: “I don’t really remember, we all went.”²⁶² A Lebanese from Shabriha said: “They worked as one hand, they were together and they succeeded. [...] No one led them, they acted as one group.”²⁶³

This collectiveness, however, was over-ruled by issues of citizenship and there was a clear difference between Palestinians from Shabriha and those from Shabriha with Lebanese citizenship. Being Lebanese was an immense advantage to play a mediating role between residents and police. When I asked someone whether there were no people from Shabriha gathering with the relations needed to enter materials, he responded: “People from here? No!” When I asked why not, he replied: “We’re Palestinian! They’re Lebanese. They’re those who worked with the police before the building crisis.”²⁶⁴ According to one contractor, the PC did not play a significant role in the building crisis, because “the police don’t respect the PC.”²⁶⁵ So while Palestinians were often ‘treated like Lebanese’ throughout the building crisis and the pertinence of the ‘Palestinian cause’ made Lebanese authorities reluctant to discriminate Palestinians in the wake of large scale Lebanese illegal undertakings, Palestinians were still dependent on Lebanese intermediaries.

Another institutional resource, namely the governmental vacuum and political chaos, can account for the informal nature of the interactions. For many, this chaotic political situation explains how the building crisis emerged:

*“People saw that the state couldn’t control the situation in that time there was no law, all people were above the law. It was chaos. The state didn’t allow anyone, but people challenged the state and worked outside the law. No one can explain what happened. Until now no one knows how it happened.”*²⁶⁶

An NGO worker elaborated: “There was a mess at that time, *fawda*.”²⁶⁷ The wording of a news report by YaSour (2011b) suggests a similar theme of chaos and uses phrases such as ‘invasion and infringement,’ ‘theft and looting,’ ‘failure of security forces,’ ‘chaos, lawlessness and impunity.’

4.5 The Ramadan conflict

*“If something starts here it is hard to stop so you have to prevent it from starting otherwise it will be out of your control.”*²⁶⁸

In August 2012, during the month of Ramadan, what started out as a small row between Lebanese and Palestinian youth from Shabriha over the alleged hassling of a Palestinian girl by Lebanese guys escalated into a conflict that caused five people to be seriously injured and could only be resolved through the involvement of national political

260 Youth Shabriha, Shabriha, 1 July 2013.

261 Youth Shabriha, Shabriha, 1 July 2013; Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

262 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 30 July 2013.

263 Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

264 Youth Shabriha, Shabriha, 1 July 2013.

265 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 20 May 2013.

266 Focus group, Shabriha, 28 July 2013.

267 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

268 Mayor Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013.

leaders. A news item by the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC) (8 August 2012) described the event as follows:

"A personal dispute erupted on Wednesday between youth from the town of Shabriha in Tyre and residents of a camp for Palestinian refugees near the town, causing a number of injuries. The dispute escalated and extended to the town where the camp's residents attacked the town's citizens with sticks and stones. It was reported that military weapons were used. Security Forces rushed to the scene and contained the conflict."

Actors

On the Palestinian side of the governance spectrum, the youth that was involved at the beginning of the conflict cannot be considered a governance actor, but the *faliyat*, or at least the PC members among them, that had a role in the conflict's resolution, can. On the Lebanese side, the picture is similar; the youth involved in the conflict are not governance actors, but the *mukhtar*, and to a lesser extent other *faliyat* from Lebanese Shabriha, are.

In previous cases, the *mukhtar's* behavior was unanimously considered positive, but the Ramadan conflict presented a minor dissonant. Some stressed the difficult position the *mukhtar* was placed in, caught as he was between his public duty as state representative and his clan affiliations with the Lebanese from Shabriha. He nevertheless made the Lebanese youth leave the entrance of the camp where most of the fighting took place and publicly underlined the importance of having girls walk through the area without being hassled.²⁶⁹ A Lebanese from Shabriha said that:

*"They [people in Lebanese Shabriha] put around three hundred people of Lebanese Shabriha together with guns and they wanted to go to [the man whose son had been involved in a failed attempt to break up the fight in the beginning]. But who stood in their way? The mukhtar! He said they'd have to go over his body."*²⁷⁰

Others, however, only saw the *mukhtar's* partisan role and told me he joined the armed guys from Lebanese Shabriha in the early stages of the conflict.²⁷¹ But regardless of the role the *mukhtar* played in the initial escalating stages, participants agreed that his role in the later stages was constructive and facilitated de-escalation. This especially concerned the 'committee' the *mukhtar* allegedly installed for the sake of reconciliation and prevention of future conflicts. This committee, according to a Lebanese Shabrihan, consisted of regional leaders of Amal, Hezbollah, Fatah and Hamas and focused on preventing problems in Shabriha.²⁷²

Modes

Directness

Several governance actors mediated between the *mukhtar* on the one hand and the PC and FC and the communities they represented on the other. Firstly, the ISF (LBC 2012) and later, in the phase of de-escalation and resolution, other actors played a mediating role. Both Lebanese and Palestinian political parties played a crucial role in the post-conflict stage seeing as there was hardly any direct contact between the PC and FC on the one hand and the *mukhtar* on the other. A friend who was involved in the fighting remembered that "the leaders from outside went back and forth between Salha and Shabriha to translate [i.e. refer messages]. But during this time people from Shabriha didn't visit Salha or vice versa."²⁷³ Reconciliation commenced only after political parties intervened internally and 'reined in' their followers and urged – or even forced – them to make up. On the Palestinian side, leaders of Fatah and Hamas addressed their constituency and Hezbollah also weighed in with the Palestinians in Shabriha, with which it enjoys

269 PC secretary Shabriha, Beirut, 13 March 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

270 Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013.

271 Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 15 April 2013; Shakhs fael from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013.

272 Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013.

273 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013.

great support.²⁷⁴ On the Lebanese side, the Amal leadership did the same.²⁷⁵ After an 'internal calming down,' the same political leaders presided over reconciliatory meetings between the local representatives of Lebanese and

274 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013; Hezbollah former MP, Beirut, 26 June 2013.

275 PC secretary Shabriha, Beirut, 13 March 2013.

While mediators were alerted via mobile phones, communication throughout the reconciliation was face-to-face and personal which signified the seriousness of the situation and the commitment of the political leaders involved.²⁷⁷ Apparently, some alleged interventions by national political leaders happened over the phone.

Formality

The interactions in the reconciliation phase of the Ramadan conflict were remarkably formalized – not in the sense of being documented in writing, but in the sense of being openly and visibly supported by formal institutions like political parties.

As said, a committee was installed. There was some confusion as to whether this committee was established specifically to deal with Shabriha or whether it was in fact a ‘Follow-Up Committee’ that already existed (a regular communication platform for the main Lebanese and political parties in the Sour region).²⁷⁸ Either way, responsibility for reconciliation and prevention was seen to lay not only with individual political leaders, but was also institutionalized within a committee. A Lebanese from Shabriha stated that “they made this appointment with leaders from outside Shabriha – Hamas, Fatah, Amal, and Hezbollah from the South – that would all together be responsible for Shabriha. The relations are very strong now.”²⁷⁹ The head of the FC downplayed the institutionalization of the ‘committee’, but agreed that there were strengthened ties and enhanced communication between the relevant political leaders.²⁸⁰ In all, there was a clear sense that the mediation of political leaders in this case was more overt, explicit and regular than in other cases.

Indeed, interactions were relatively ‘ritualized’ in the reconciliation phase. Some participants judged this negatively and deemed the mediation efforts superficial.²⁸¹ Others stressed the importance of ‘calming visits,’ ‘courtesy meetings’ and the realization of a ‘balanced presence.’²⁸² The head of Shabriha’s FC explained:

“When there are problems we visit them and they visit us to calm the situation. We go to the ground [we will be physically present]. During the last period, I didn’t interfere because of my health problems, but [many men from Shabriha] are active and on the ground and Salha [Lebanese Shabriha] has its active people with whom we can meet and solve any problem.”²⁸³

Scheduling

While the conflict emerged unexpectedly, the mediated interactions throughout the resolution phase were fairly regular. Intense meetings on each side – Lebanese representatives from Shabriha with Lebanese parties and Palestinian representatives from Shabriha with Palestinian parties – were followed by two full days of meetings between Palestinian and Lebanese representatives under the auspices of the mediating political parties.²⁸⁴ Meetings in Shabriha took place in the house of the *mukhtar* when it concerned the Lebanese and, according to some, in the house of the FC head when it concerned the Palestinians. Subsequent meetings with both sides were also conducted in the *mukhtar*’s house. This might have been because it is the most representative and spacious venue in Shabriha;

276 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013.

277 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013

278 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 20 May 2013; Palestinian NGO, Al Bass camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.
I will discuss this Follow-Up Committee in greater depth below.

279 Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013.

280 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013.

281 PC secretary Shabriha, Beirut, 13 March 2013.

282 *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 6 May 2013; Director Palestinian NGO, Saida, 8 May 2013.

283 Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

284 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013.

however, it is also an indication that the *mukhtar* was reinstated as the neutral representative of all Shabriha, thus distancing himself from partisan representation of Lebanese Shabriha.²⁸⁵ The very fact that these meetings were conducted inside, rather than 'on the streets' or over the telephone for some participants also signified a degree of regularity, as it meant the venue was predictable and constant. All meetings were needs based and not regular; that the 'committee' would meet only if there was a specific occasion or issue to do so. Nevertheless, the accounts of the resolution phase of the Ramadan problem all suggested that the frequency of meetings and communication was higher than expected, which in itself generated a form of regularity.²⁸⁶ For an entire week, meetings were conducted on a daily basis.

Initiation and domination

Initiation of governance interactions during the Ramadan conflict was mostly bottom up: communal leaders from both sides of Shabriha called the superiors of their political parties to ask for support or intervention. From there, word spread in a snowball fashion. The leader of the PLO in Sour region, for instance, recounted that he had been with another political figure who received a call that he should come to Shabriha and was then invited along as a relevant party.²⁸⁷ Once the regional political leaders were alerted by Shabriha's leaders, they took over the initiative and organized meetings, set up communication between the regional party leaders and involved even higher up party representatives (allegedly there were phone calls from Hasan Nasrallah and Nabih Berri to further calm the situation and pressure Shabriha's leaders towards reconciliation).²⁸⁸

Domains

The Ramadan conflict was not only about the alleged harassment of a Palestinian girl by a group of Lebanese youth. All participants stressed that the *shabab*, the guys, from both sides had been waiting for an occasion to vent their bottled frustration with 'the other guys'.²⁸⁹ Lebanese as well as Palestinian participants informed me the clash was an expression of Palestinian anger at what Palestinians saw as the "arrogance of Salha [Lebanese Shabriha],"²⁹⁰ the "dominance of the Lebanese"²⁹¹ and the undue pride the Lebanese from Shabriha apparently had in their relations with the army – all of which culminated in the reaction against the perceived mistreatment of a Palestinian girl.²⁹² However, because sectarian and nationalist cleavages tie in with personal or social tensions, the event was arguably dragged into the domain of political representation. Two discourses surfaced in my interviews: some people stressed that the event was an individual or communal issue, that it was "just some guys."²⁹³ Others, conversely, emphasized sectarian and nationalist connotations – Sunni Palestinians versus Shia Lebanese – as what accelerated this conflict into more than a usual scuffle. As a Hezbollah representative told me: "Such tensions also exist within the Palestinian community itself, but if the dynamics are between Shabriha and Salha [Lebanese Shabriha] they take on more importance, because the nationality issue is brought into it."²⁹⁴ The political parties that acted as mediating actors did so predominantly to keep the peace and to avoid serious armed escalation, suggesting that the event also touched upon the security domain.²⁹⁵

285 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013; Resident Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013.

286 Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

287 PLO and Fatah leader Sour, Rashidiye camp, Sour, 14 May 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 18 May 2013.

288 Head PARD women's committee, Shabriha, 17 May 2013; Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013.

289 Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013.

290 Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013.

291 Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013.

292 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013.

293 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013; see also Director Palestinian NGO, Saida, 8 May 2013; Hezbollah former MP and public relations officer, Beirut, 26 June 2013; Palestinian liaison officer Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013.

294 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 12 March 2013.

295 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013; Hezbollah former MP and public relations officer, Beirut, 26 June 2013; Palestinian liaison officer Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013.

Sites

The setting of the Ramadan conflict varied during the different stages of the event. In the first phase, the conflict was local and played out in Shabriha. However, the resolution phase involved regional and, according to some, national actors. Some participants expressed a form of pride in the involvement of 'outside figures' as this signalled the pertinence of Shabriha, while others resented such 'interference' and saw it as a sign that Shabriha was not able to solve its own problems.²⁹⁶ The vertical connections between the local, regional and national levels were accessed through the embedded institutional hierarchies of political parties, while the horizontal interactions on site were between the different parties.²⁹⁷

Levels

The governance interactions during the resolution of the Ramadan conflict in Shabriha indicated first-level governance as they were an exercise in implementing de facto policies regarding inter-party collaboration to maintain social peace in the Sour region. Yet, underneath these fairly straightforward conflict mediation practices were dilemmas touching upon meta-governance. This, first, regards the question of how to construe or approach the conflict; i.e. whether to deal with it as a social issue, a sectarian (Sunni-Shia) issue or a nationalist (Palestinian-Lebanese) issue. The very involvement of the political parties suggests that sectarian and nationalist connotations were present and that the framing of this conflict as an incident between irresponsible youth was neither obvious nor automatic. A Lebanese from Shabriha insisted that the scale of the incident was indeed exceptional.²⁹⁸ The *mukhtar* also admitted it was almost impossible to "avoid Sunni-Shia, Palestinian-Lebanese explanations" of the conflict.²⁹⁹

Explanations for the nature of governance interaction regarding the Ramadan conflict

Material resources: arms

Several participants referred to the presence of arms to account for the governance interactions described above. The Lebanese in Shabriha are armed (with firearms) and Palestinians are (by and large) not, which was one of the aspects of 'Salha's' perceived 'arrogance'.³⁰⁰ However, all actors involved were also aware that the Palestinians in Shabriha had access to weapons through the camps (where the Palestinians do have their own armed militias) (see Kaye 2010). Hence, the relevance of arms as a material resource suggests the significance of 'campness' as an institutional resource. It also underlines the resonance of the conflict in the domain of security and the involvement of actors from national, regional and local sites.

296 Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013.

297 Hezbollah former MP and public relations officer, Beirut, 26 June 2013

298 Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013.

299 *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 3 April 2013.

300 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013. That they apparently got these weapons from Amal or 'the state' did little to improve this (Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 15 April 2013; Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013).

Ideational resources: unity

The notion of unity and community was often evoked with reference to the Ramadan conflict. Endless variations were made on the theme “that we [people from Lebanese and Palestinian Shabriha] are neighbors, friends, family, have lived together and suffered together [...]. And that we didn’t support the guys who were the reason for the problem.”³⁰¹ However, in the shadow of the dominant discourse of good relations produced by political representatives, there was an implicit, but regular, reference to wrongs from the past that had never been set right; accounts of “big problems and deep tensions;” of “historical tinder that might be lit by sectarian fuel.”³⁰² A PC member, whose father was murdered during the Lebanese Civil War, explained:

*“Some Palestinians hold the opinion that the Lebanese (also Palestinian-Lebanese) want to fight them for sectarian reasons and they can’t stop this thinking. Their ancestors paid the price during the Civil War and they still have it in their head that they’re targeted. You want to remove this, but you can’t.”*³⁰³

A representative from Shahed also confirmed that “during the civil war, Amal burned the houses in the gathering and people didn’t forget this.”³⁰⁴ While the narrative from Lebanese Shabriha differs and people there emphasized that during the War of the Camps, “Amal in Shabriha protected the Palestinians and fought against Amal – against their own party – from Abasiye,” past conflicts seem to have made the Palestinian representatives from Shabriha reluctant to be the first to make amends, instead referring to political parties as intermediaries.³⁰⁵ The issue of (dis) unity also touched upon matters of religion, with ample references to the concept of *fitna*, sectarian strife, and the increasing regional tensions between Sunni and Shia.^{xxvi}³⁰⁶ This accounts for the explicitly covert forms of mediation that were used. Finally, unity was related to ethnicity for some people, as they assumed that the Bedouin background of the Palestinians in Shabriha might have fuelled the apparent feelings of superiority by the Lebanese in Shabriha.³⁰⁷

Institutional resources: the political system and situation

Political back-up was a core institutional resource as it was shaping governance interactions during the Ramadan conflict. However, the back-up of political parties did not so much take the form of unconditional support for their constituencies vis-à-vis their adversaries. Rather, the political parties urged their respective constituencies to jump over their own shadow and make amends. This position was evident in parties’ mutual efforts to reinstate peace and calm between Lebanese and Palestinian Shabriha – or at least create an impression of peace and calm – and not in the usual partisan segregation. This accounts, again, for the formalized and ritualized resolution meetings and is directly related to the political situation at the time, which was “not suitable” for local conflicts that threatened to snowball out of control, especially seeing as there was continuous “talk about the sectarian war returning.”³⁰⁸ This, as noted before, was the main motivation for both Palestinian and Lebanese actors to mediate in the conflict and it illustrates how the framing of this event as a social neighborhood strife was a clear form of meta-governance intervention. The usual motivation of Amal and Hezbollah to keep ‘their’ area calm, gained relevance in the context of the Syrian war. A regional FC leader explained that before the Syrian war, there was no need for such close coordination as the Palestinians and the Lebanese in South Lebanon “were on the same side.”³⁰⁹ However, with the war in Syria gaining an ever more prominent sectarian character and with Hezbollah more openly involved in Syria militarily, further

301 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013; see also FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

302 Amal MP, Sour, 27 July 2013; PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 16 July 2013.

303 PC secretary Shabriha, Beirut, 13 March 2013.

304 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

305 Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013.

306 Hezbollah liaison Sour area, Shabriha, 16 July 2013; Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013.

307 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 20 September 2012; UNRWA, Sour, 12 April 2013.

308 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013; PC secretary Shabriha, Beirut, 13 March 2013.

309 *Qaimaqam* Sour, Sour, 29 April 2013.

mediation was required in events such as the Ramadan crisis in Shabriha.³¹⁰

4.6 Generic governance interaction in Shabriha

"If you don't want to be afraid of the Palestinians you have to either kill them – which is impossible – or build a bridge to them – which is possible."³¹¹

Actors

Palestinian governance actors: the PC-PLO alliance

There are many actors active in Shabriha – the PC, the FC, *faliyat* – and all play a role in issues related to security, welfare and representation. Despite the overlap between those actors, throughout the crises, none had the position the PLO-administered PC had as an overarching authority in the gathering. Participants were clear that the FC played a role in welfare and social relations, and often found it did a better job than the PC, but did not seem to regard it as a comprehensive governance actor.³¹² As the head of the PC himself stated: "The PC is like the state here."³¹³ Other participants made comparisons between the PC and the municipality or a ministry.³¹⁴ A representative of the FC conversely stressed that "we're not like the state, we can't solve all problems."³¹⁵ This illustrates the committees' self-identification as a semi-state institution (the PC) or a social team (the FC) (see also Knudsen 2011:104). Much of this stems from the PC's connection to the PLO, which, despite the current strife with Hamas, still has the biggest stake in the Palestinian Authority (PA) and comes closest to representing a Palestinian state. Even for the FC, which is affiliated with *Tahaluf*, the PLO is *the* implicit point of reference; even when participants criticize the PLO, they reproduce its hegemonic position in the governance of the Palestinians in Lebanon and reproduce its ultimate responsibility to provide security, welfare and representation.³¹⁶

Lebanese governance actors: the municipality and 'the state'

The municipality was often the key Lebanese governance actor in Shabriha for both participants and the literature (CSI 2011, 2012; DRC 2005; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010), but it was much less present in my sub-cases.³¹⁷ While participants consider the municipality (in theory) important, they also consider it (in practice) unconstructive. According to most Palestinian and Lebanese participants, the municipality is a spoiler rather than an enabler.³¹⁸ Time and again it was said that while the municipality is the key authority, there are no relations between it and the PC (UNDP and UN-HABITAT 2013), evidenced by the recurrent phrase "*maa fii baladiya*." This can either mean 'there is no municipality' or 'the municipality isn't there for us.'³¹⁹ However, the mayor of Abasiye and his deputy insisted that what Shabriha's residents consider an unconstructive position is just their unawareness of the "behind the scenes" facilitation role of the municipality.³²⁰

310 PC member Jal al-Bahar, Sour, 13 June 2013.

311 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

312 *Shakhs fael* from Bourj el-Shemali camp, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 15 June 2013; Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 25 July 2013; Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013; Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013.

313 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013.

314 Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; Director Palestinian NGO, Saida, 13 July 2012; PLO leader, Beirut, 8 July 2012.

315 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

316 Head FC Union Sour, Shabriha, 10 June 2013; PC member Bourj el-Barajneh camp, Bourj el-Barajneh camp, Beirut, 10 July 2012; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

317 INGO, Beirut, 13 September 2012; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013; Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

318 Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013; Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 10 June 2013.

319 PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013; Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013; Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013; Mukhtar Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 3 April 2013.

320 Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 10 June 2013; Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

In discussing the relevant Lebanese governance actors in Shabriha, the question ‘what is the state?’ surfaced with a vengeance. People routinely referred to ‘*el dawle*’, the state, in a very generic sense, without any indication to a specific actor, institution, department, ministry or person. Sometimes, they equated the state with the municipality, sometimes they used it to refer to the government, at other times to the army or police or to EDL and, at other times, indeed to the state as a holistic construct.³²¹ There was an ambiguity about the state, that was seen as an external, largely unknown and unspecified ‘they’ (e.g. in the highway eviction case, CDR c.s. constituted a vague, faceless and address-less, entity not only for the residents, but also for the committee and PC).³²² Often, references were negative, because people indicated that there is no state (‘*maa fi dawle*’) or that the ‘state is empty’ (‘*dawle faadiya*’), or because people said the state played a negative role (e.g. in the building crisis case, ‘the people’ made a ‘revolution’ against ‘the state’).³²³ Consequently, both Palestinian and Lebanese participants said they tried to avoid getting involved with or involving the state.

People see political parties simultaneously distinct from and part of the state.³²⁴ This might be a reflection of the parties’ deliberate positioning at a distance from the state or government, even when they are actually part of it.³²⁵ I had a particularly telling discussion about this with an Amal leader from Shabriha. I asked him why people refer to the state and political parties as two separate worlds, when those same parties head the government. His response was paradoxical. On the one hand, he answered with a full-fledged post-war state building discourse:

“The aim of Amal is the building of the state and the organizations of the state. We’re not working to remove the Lebanese state or pose an alternative to it. [...] This is the problem: that the parties are encouraging this separation between the people and the state. There is no alternative for the state and we all believe in the state, so why is each one working alone and no one for the state?”

Yet, he also acknowledged that party loyalty overrides state allegiance for state officials:

“When we say we want to solve things with the state or talk to the state we mean our people in the organizations of the state. Through our people in the state we can take decisions. In the end, we’re all [the state, the people, the political parties] intersected together.”³²⁶

An LPDC analyst noted that, in municipalities, “the hands of the mayor are often tied. They are employed by the government, but local Lebanese political factions determine much of their functioning.”³²⁷ A former Hezbollah MP told me people turn to parties because:

“The problem in Lebanon is that the structure here builds on religious and sectarian authority. And each has their leaders in parliament that chooses the government and elects the president – so they have the authority; each has their leaders in parliament. [...] And people find that the mayor or anyone takes his decisions from his political leaders anyway so they prefer to talk to these political leaders directly.”³²⁸

Modes

Directness

321 PC public relations officer Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 July 2013.

322 Contractor from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 8 May 2013.

323 Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013.

324 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013; Palestinian legal analyst, Mar Elias, Beirut, 6 June 2013.

325 *Mukhtar*, Lebanese Shabriha, 3 April 2013; Palestinian legal analyst, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 6 June 2013.

326 Amal leader Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 July 2013, author’s emphasis.

327 Lebanese analyst, Beirut, 23 July 2012.

328 Hezbollah former MP and public relations officer, Beirut, 26 June 2013.

The way participants discussed the directness of governance interactions in and around Shabriha in general did not differ much from the discussed cases. Interaction was predominantly indirect, mediated through a number of different actors. The main mediating actors from the cases were also identified as the core mediating actors in a generic sense. These were, first, the *mukhtar* and, second, Lebanese (and Palestinian) parties, particularly Hezbollah and Amal. However, there was also repeated reference to another body, a 'Follow-Up Committee,' that was said to play an important role in mediating between Lebanese and Palestinian governance actors, but did not surface in my cases. Finally, there was mention of the LPDC and the Palestinian embassy, UNRWA and some NGOs.

The mukhtar

The *mukhtar* was the hub connecting many of Shabriha's governance spokes. The *mukhtar* facilitates interactions between the PC and the police.³²⁹ As the mayor of Abasiye acknowledged, relations between the municipality and the Palestinians from Shabriha were mostly via the *mukhtar*.³³⁰ While normally there is a clear difference between the roles of the municipality and the *mukhtar* (the former being the executive entity and the latter being the social and administrative authority on the ground), in Shabriha, this distinction seems blurred whereby the *mukhtar* has become much like a mayor or a municipality of his own.³³¹ There was a seemingly disproportionate emphasis on the fact that the "the mayor isn't the boss of the *mukhtar*, he can't give him orders; the *mukhtar* is independent."³³² Some people, as noted above as well, went as far as to say there was no municipality in Shabriha at all, only the *mukhtar*.³³³ This is partly true, as the *mukhtar* has a lot of leeway in the vacuum between the municipality of Abasiye, under which Shabriha falls administratively, and the municipality of Sour, under which Shabriha falls electorally (Bassil 2012:17). In practice, the *mukhtar* can operate as if he runs his own municipality³³⁴ because as long as Shabriha votes for the dominant party, Sour municipality does not interfere. Furthermore, Abasiye municipality does not have much latitude to impose anything on Shabriha because Shabriha enjoys the political backing of the much bigger Sour municipality. The former *qaimaqam* said "in Shabriha they're like a small state by themselves."³³⁵ An NGO representative found "there is something different in Shabriha, I don't know why. But the PC [...] said we didn't need to go to the municipality, we just needed the *mukhtar*."³³⁶ However, this relative independence of the *mukhtar* notwithstanding, several participants also stressed that the position of the *mukhtar* has become particularly relevant "since the new state ['*dawle jdide*'] became strong again in the 1990s," suggesting that the importance of the *mukhtar* does depend on the importance of the state he is gate keeping.³³⁷ The unique position of the *mukhtar* in Shabriha might also explain why he represents the Palestinians, when he is not obliged to under the law. Other *mukhtars* in the region (for instance in Maashouk and Burghliyah) do the same,³³⁸ but the *mukhtar* in Shabriha has more influence and power.^{xviii 339}

The political parties (*fasa'el*)

In the cases studied, Lebanese political parties played a key mediating role between the PC and Lebanese governance actors. This dynamic was also evident in people's generic accounts of governance interaction in Shabriha. Participants stressed that the direct relations were between Lebanese (Amal and Hezbollah) and Palestinian (Fatah

329 Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013.

330 Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 11 April 2013; Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

331 Mayor Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013; Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013.

332 Former *qaimaqam* Sour, Sour, 22 June 2013.

333 Former *qaimaqam* Sour, Sour, 22 June 2013.

334 *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 3 April 2013.

335 Former *qaimaqam* Sour, Sour, 22 June 2013.

336 INGO, Al Hoj, 23 May 2013.

337 Head highway committee, Shabriha, 12 May 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 20 May 2013.

338 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 12 March 2013; UNRWA teacher Maashouk, Maashouk, 2 July 2013; *Mukhtar* Maashouk, Maashouk, 3 July 2013.

339 Fieldnotes 23 July 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 12 March 2013; INGO, Al Hoj, 23 May 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013; Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013; Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 11 April 2013; Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013.

and Hamas) political parties, who would then liaison between the municipality (or the police or utility company) and the PC.³⁴⁰ It is the organizational structure of these political parties that enables both vertical and horizontal communication among Lebanese and Palestinian governance actors (see also Hanafi 2010a:34). If the PC would require something, it contacts the local (Sour level) PLO or Fatah representative.³⁴¹ This representative would then decide to either (horizontally) contact the relevant Lebanese political representative in Sour or (vertically) pass the request on to his superiors in Beirut, who would then address their relative Lebanese counterparts.³⁴² The Lebanese political representative in question would then, as illustrated by the cases, contact his 'people within the state institutions,' whether they are ministers, mayors or employees, to get the job done.³⁴³ The head of the national Union of PCs explained:

*"If you want a service from them you have to talk with a friend who can talk with the qaimaqam; we cannot talk with state employees directly. Our direct relations are with the political leaders who can affect these employees. This is not the perfect way, but in this way we can take our services. They don't care about the pains of the refugees and for their social problems. They want this way of treating."*³⁴⁴

An NGO worker confirmed that "political parties remain more important than municipalities. Palestinian bodies will lobby with political parties that will then pressure the relevant functionary in the municipality."³⁴⁵ Even the LPDC followed this logic:

*"We always go through the political parties. If the municipality belongs to Amal, I talk to president Berri [leader of Amal and speaker of parliament]. [...] You have to see who is supporting this municipality, Amal or Hezbollah, and go to them. [...] Usually we go through Amal or Hezbollah."*³⁴⁶

I talked with a national spokesperson of Hezbollah who was originally from the South and had long served as an MP for Hezbollah. When he was still working as an MP, he divided his time between Sour and Beirut and recounts that many Palestinian representatives used to visit him with requests when he was in Sour. He described his party as "the channel between the Palestinians and the state; everything goes through us."³⁴⁷ He elaborated that Hezbollah "talks with the state" on their behalf, "because they will find it difficult to talk to the state." He further elaborated: "With whom we meet depends on the issue. Regarding political issues, Palestinian political parties and I meet directly. The channel for these relations with the Palestinian state and the Palestinian parties to Hezbollah is through me." This might for instance entail getting the police to 'drop' specific cases.

The relations between Hezbollah and Palestinian parties have been well-established since the emergence of the Party of God (Czajka 2012:239; Khalili 2007; Klaus 2000:90-91; Knudsen 2011:98). There are Palestinian members of Hezbollah who play a connecting role between Lebanese and Palestinian parties. There are also institutionalized structures through which Hezbollah stays in touch with Palestinian party representatives. From my interview with this national Hezbollah spokesperson it became clear that Hezbollah has communication structures with Palestinian parties on each level of its party hierarchy:

"We have central meetings! [I ask what about Sour region.] In Sour region – as well as in Saida region and any region – we have our leaders and they have their meetings with Palestinian leaders. [...] We have committees

340 Assistant Hezbollah liaison Sour, Deir Qanun, 17 July 2013; Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 5 April 2013.

341 PC member Jal al-Bahar, Sour, 13 June 2013.

342 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

343 Hezbollah former MP, Beirut, 26 June 2013; Mukhtar Maashouk, Maashouk, 3 July 2013.

344 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 25 July 2013; see also *Shakhs fael* from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 26 July 2013.

345 INGO, Beirut, 13 September 2012.

346 President LPDC, Beirut, 22 July 2013.

347 Hezbollah former MP and public relations officer, Beirut, 26 June 2013.

in each region and they arrange with the people and hear about their needs and suffering and then we bring them what they need. [...] They're responsible for the media, for educational and religious activities."

While Hezbollah does not have centers or representatives in the camps or gatherings, it has specific liaison officers to maintain relations with the camps.³⁴⁸ One such officer told me he saw himself as "responsible for the Palestinian file in the south in Hezbollah."³⁴⁹ Such liaison officers make sure Palestinian representatives are invited to 'occasions' (*mnasabe*) just as Palestinian parties always make sure to invite a Hezbollah representative to public events.³⁵⁰ Hezbollah also has a magazine it issues specifically for the Palestinian camps.^{xxix}

Like Hezbollah, Amal has "a responsible for the Palestinian file who meets with parties and committees."³⁵¹ A local Amal leader mentioned that there were specific 'committees' for at least two of the three camps in the South (but it was not clear to what extent these committees also dealt with the gatherings).³⁵² In Shabriha, Amal was represented via the *mukhtar* and other *faliyat*. Amal's 'Palestinian liaison' for South Lebanon explained that while Palestinian parties often first try to approach state institutions directly, they follow up via the Amal party structure. He said: "If they need the mayor and he doesn't listen, they know to which party he belongs so they go to the leaders of this party and ask them to talk to him to make him give what they need."³⁵³ For the Palestinian governance actors in Shabriha, such dynamics are particularly relevant considering the strong presence of Amal in Lebanese Shabriha.³⁵⁴

In comparison with Hezbollah, coordination between Amal and the Palestinian parties seems less intense and elaborate. Yet, even for Amal, the relevance of Palestinian parties as a bridging institution is significant. The Shia community in Lebanon has long been politically marginalized and did not have its own political parties until the mid 1970s. Palestinian political organization, however, has earlier precedents; prior to, and even during, the Lebanese Civil War, many Southern Lebanese joined the 'Palestinian Revolution' and became members of Fatah (Klaus 2000:24; Sfeir 2010:23-26). With the ascendance of Hezbollah and Amal, and the polarization during the Civil War, Lebanese membership to Palestinian parties decreased; nevertheless, a Lebanese *shakhs fael* from Shabriha who is associated with Amal nevertheless maintained that:

"We were with Fatah before and I know people here who until now get money from Fatah. [...] Fatah started the first resistance and because of this people were with them. And there were no political parties at that time. And until now, my father, my uncle and me we participate in many festivals. And if groups from the Palestinian Authority come here for meetings they stay and sleep here, in our house."³⁵⁵

Apart from the 'individual' relations between Lebanese and Palestinian parties, there was widespread, but ambiguous, reference to a committee that brought together all four relevant parties (Amal, Hezbollah, Fatah/PLO and Hamas/*Tahaluf*) on a regional level. The alleged scope and objective of this 'Follow-Up Committee' (*lejnet et-tansiq wa mutaba'a*), however, diverged, resulting in the committee not featuring as a relevant actor in any of the cases – some denied its existence altogether.³⁵⁶

348 Director Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 July 2012; PC public relations officer Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 July 2013.

349 Hezbollah liaison Sour area, Shabriha, 16 July 2013.

350 PC public relations officer Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 July 2013.

351 Palestinian liaison officer Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013.

352 Amal leader Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 July 2013.

353 Palestinian liaison officer Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013.

354 Amal leader Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 July 2013.

355 Palestinian liaison officer Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013.

356 Palestinian analyst, Saida, 8 June 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Bourj el-Shemali camp, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 15 June 2013; International analyst, Beirut, 9 May 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

Some people equated the committee with an NGO called the Lebanese-Palestinian Communication Association (*Jamajet et-Tawasol al-Lubnani al-Filistini*) initiated by Fatah chiefs.³⁵⁷ Others indicated that this Follow-Up Committee was the same as the regional or national Union of PCs.^{xxx 358} Some identified the committee as a coordination mechanism on Shabriha level:

*"There are five people from here and five from there and we discuss issues in meetings. The most important issue now is security and we prefer to discuss security in secret [...]. We have representatives of the PLO in the meetings and from the other side. In this way, the whole camp is inside the meeting. [...] Our meetings are good and cooperative and we are improving the relations on all levels."*³⁵⁹

Others placed it at the regional level:

*"The Palestinians are represented by PLO, Hamas and Jihad, in total there are eight people. And the Lebanese representatives are from Amal and Hezbollah. But you have to note this isn't formal, it isn't governmental. It is between local stakeholders and VIPs, it isn't official. They usually meet every month and Amal is the pilot of this thing. It invited Hezbollah, the parties, the PLO – all representatives, the political stakeholders."*³⁶⁰

This initiative was launched in autumn 2012 in response to the deteriorating political and security situation stemming from the Syrian war.³⁶¹ Most participants found that since its initiation the committee introduced a degree of regularity to the party meetings, making them less dependent on specific persons and more on the institutional status of party leaders.³⁶² There was a clear consensus that the committee was mostly concerned with security issues and maintaining stability.³⁶³ A friend explained that the committee convened for emergencies and to prevent escalation of tribal or sectarian clashes – like the Ramadan conflict.³⁶⁴ Despite its security focus and its 'hotline' with the army leadership, the Follow-Up Committee is different from the security committees operating in the official camps, who directly engage with the LAF to hand over (alleged) criminals taking refuge in the camps (El Ali 2005:86).³⁶⁵

The LPDC and the Palestinian Embassy

On a national level and in official discourse the LPDC is the sole coordination mechanism between Lebanese and Palestinian political representatives; remarkably many participants recognize it as such.^{xxxi 366} Yet the LPDC does not feature significantly in the accounts of people discussing governance interaction in Shabriha. The LPDC's aim to improve "the relations between the Lebanese government and all Palestinian parties," then, seems a predominantly national diplomatic endeavour (Knudsen 2011:102; Pursue 2012:15).

The Embassy fulfils a similar role as the LPDC when it comes to governance interaction in Shabriha. It is a potentially relevant connecting actor on the national level, but was only occasionally called upon in Shabriha-specific governance. Participants agreed that due to the re-opening of the Embassy "relations are more official and more organized and

357 *Shakhs fael* from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 26 July 2013.

358 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 28 May 2013; Head National PC Union, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 6 June 2013; PC member Jal al-Bahar, Sour, 13 June 2013; *Mukhtar* Maashouk, Maashouk, 3 July 2013.

359 Amal leader Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 July 2013.

360 Mayor Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013; Assistant Hezbollah liaison Sour, Deir Qanun, 17 July 2013.

361 Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; Amal leader Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 July 2013; *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 23 July 2013.

362 *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 23 July 2013; Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 25 July 2013.

363 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013; Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; Amal leader Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 July 2013; *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 23 July 2013; Mayor Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013; Head National PC Union, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 6 June 2013.

364 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013.

365 Muhafiz South Lebanon, Saida, 17 June 2013; Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 20 May 2013.

366 Palestinian analyst, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 19 June 2013.

now the ambassador plays a good role with all Lebanese sides.³⁶⁷ Yet the embassy does not seem to have a structural role in governance interactions related to Shabriha. The ambassador said he had visited the mayor of Abasiye in the company of a Fatah leader from Sour to discuss the potential to provide services to the Palestinians in Shabriha, but no other participants referred to any such meeting.³⁶⁸

UNRWA and NGOs

While UNRWA does not have the same position, and hence relevance, in the gatherings as it does in the camps, it is still a default reference for many participants who lament its general mismanagement and corruption.³⁶⁹ While UNRWA has a lot of potential as a mediator since it is one of the very few central institutions in a wild grow of organizations and groups and committees, this potential does not seem to be giving results in Shabriha. The PC member in Shabriha responsible for 'external relations,' stated his main task was coordination with UNRWA.³⁷⁰ UNRWA has appeared in some mediating form in some cases, but in the general perceptions regarding the interactions between Lebanese and Palestinian governance actors in Shabriha, UNRWA has been marginal.

In people's generic accounts of governance in Shabriha, NGOs also featured prominently as service providers and appeared as alternatives to both the PC and UNRWA (see also Chabaan et al. 2001:4; Pursue 2012:23). Sometimes, NGOs complement or assist the PC in engaging with municipalities or even the *qaimaqam* or *muhafizas* as NGOs usually take both the PC and FC as "focal points" in their work in the gatherings and also coordinate at times with regional PC Unions.³⁷¹ Also, NGOs at times take a vanguard role in connecting the gatherings with local state institutions in the process of obtaining permits.³⁷² Moreover, NGOs often function as the extended arm of political parties (although they all deny this) – Shahed, for instance, is run by the head of the FC Union in Sour; Pursue is represented by a prominent PLO figure – and function as a connecting entity in this regard (Fawaz 2000:5; Hilal 1993).³⁷³

Media

The overwhelming majority of interactions, whether direct or mediated via other actors, had a face-to-face component, even if they were often either initiated and/or followed-up over the mobile phone. Some communication among governance actors was in writing – during an interview with an Amal representative, arranged by a FC member from Bourj el Shemali camp, the FC member used the interview to leave a written message for the Amal representative – but this was an exception. Moreover, such letters are never sent by post but delivered in person. Such written communication is regarded as inefficient, with little chance of follow-up.

Although physical communication was in line with most of the cases, general discussions on governance interaction featured other media outlets. The head of the regional PC Union, for instance, manages his own facebook page with reports of meetings of the PC with NGOs, UNRWA and political parties as well as general information about projects in the camps. But while the use of social media was omnipresent during my fieldwork (every youth group had at least one facebook group, smart phones were ubiquitous, chatting via whatsapp with family members abroad went on 24/7 – see also Sayigh 2011:59), governance actors did not use social media in any significant way.

367 Assistant Hezbollah liaison Sour, Deir Qanun, 17 July 2013; Mukhtar Maashouk, Maashouk, 3 July 2013.

368 Palestinian Ambassador, Beirut, 29 July 2013.

369 Vice mayor Sour, Sour, 3 April 2013; PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 9 April 2013; Lebanese-Palestinian NGO, Sour, 13 May 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Bourj el-Shemali camp, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 15 June 2013; Palestinian NGO Sour, Al Bas camp, Sour, 2 April 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013; UNDP, Beirut, 4 April 2013.

370 PC public relations officer Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 July 2013.

371 Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; Palestinian NGO Sour, Al Bas camp, Sour, 2 April 2013; INGO, Al Hoj, 23 May 2013; INGO, Al Hoj, 23 May 2013; INGO, Saidi, 25 July 2013.

372 INGO, Al Hoj, 23 May 2013; INGO, Saidi, 25 July 2013; email correspondence INGO.

373 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Bourj el-Shemali camp, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 15 June 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013.

Staging of public events and protests for media coverage to create a fuss and pressure decision-makers was also a recurring theme among participants.³⁷⁴ While Lebanese do not usually consider local Palestinian speeches and media outlets a direct message to them, such communication is often the intent of the Palestinian governance actors that stage the occasion.³⁷⁵ Analysts, however, consider the communicative platform of media outlets a last resort with negative effects because of the polarized sectarian nature of Lebanese media “not geared towards exchange but towards venting.”³⁷⁶ An analyst agrees: “there is a lot of talking, but no dialogue or understanding; it’s just making statements.”³⁷⁷

Formality

Formal interactions can only occur between institutions that mutually recognize one another as official counterparts. A core issue, then, is that the PCs are not officially recognized by the Lebanese state as the relevant official representatives (El Ali 2005:90; Pursue 2012:21). This does not mean that there can be no interaction, but it does mean there can be no formal interaction. On a national level, the LPDC does meet with PC representatives, but PCs are not acknowledged as formal partners.^{xxxii} ³⁷⁸ Perhaps, this serves as a partial explanation for the dominance of political parties as mediating actors in governance interactions; the LPDC does recognize the PLO, the PA and Palestinian parties as official entities, but not the PC:

*“Apart from the embassy, the government also recognized the PLO and Hamas. Hamas because Hamas now has a government in Gaza. And it recognizes all Palestinian factions as entities. But the PLO is the representative, Abu Mazen. And not just the PLO now, we’re talking about Palestine, about the PA. If there’re dealings, they’re between the PLO and the government of Lebanon. The government of Lebanon doesn’t care about the PCs; it doesn’t have to recognize them, they’re not important for the government of Lebanon.”*³⁷⁹

This means that there are official counterparts to *talk* with (national political and diplomatic representatives), but none to *deal* with (local governance representatives), which is a direct consequence of the legal marginalization of the Palestinians in Lebanon.

Interactions were predominantly based on personal relations rather than on an institutional procedure.³⁸⁰ The mayor of Abasiye explained: “They don’t like institutions as institutions; they want to see them as a person.”³⁸¹ Palestinians added that relations between municipalities and PCs always depended on the personality of the mayor, on whether he has Palestinian relatives or friends – because “municipalities as institutions do not have typically have relationships with camps.”³⁸² The quality of governance relations was also often indicated in terms of personal or social proximity, with phrases such as: ‘we were invited to his house’ or ‘they are our family, our brothers.’³⁸³ Much of the governance in Shabriha was discussed when a prominent PC member meets with the *mukhtar* for business purposes.³⁸⁴ Also, interactions were often initiated via personal networks – apparent in the waste crisis case – and sometimes also followed up through these channels; the infamous *wasta* system: “you need a partner, someone you know, for instance

374 UNRWA regional coordinator Sour, Sour, 7 March 2013; Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 7 May 2013; PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 9 April 2013; Lebanese member highway committee, Sour, 8 May 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 20 May 2013.

375 Lebanese scholar, Beirut, 16 April 2013; Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 7 May 2013; PLO and Fatah leader Sour, Rashidiye camp, Sour, 14 May 2013.

376 CSI analyst, Beirut, 28 May 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013.

377 LPDC representative, Beirut, 26 March 2013.

378 LPDC legal officer, Beirut, 20 June 2013.

379 President LPDC, Beirut, 22 July 2013.

380 PLO leader, Beirut, 8 July 2012; INGO, Beirut, 13 September 2012; General Security, Sour, 23 July 2013.

381 Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 10 June 2013.

382 PARD truck driver Shabriha, Shabriha, 27 April 2013; Head PARD women’s committee, Shabriha, 17 May 2013; Director Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 July 2012; Palestinian liaison Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013.

383 *Shakhs fael* from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 26 July 2013; Hezbollah liaison Sour, Shabriha, 16 July 2013; Head FC Union Sour, Shabriha, 10 June 2013; Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 30 July 2013.

384 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

an officer in the army.”³⁸⁵ Political parties also do not “always talk to the highest leaders, but rather to the active members, those who have personal relations with people in PLO, these active members can then talk to their leaders.”³⁸⁶

Governance interaction is also often vague and secret.³⁸⁷ An analyst explained that: “There is no official Lebanese responsibility for Palestinians on any level. All Lebanese-Palestinian relations are vague. [...] And it is intended to be vague! [...] The Lebanese state doesn’t want any formal responsibility; this is the heart of the matter.”³⁸⁸ Another analyst told me “People don’t want to know, because you never know what you find out when you dig.”³⁸⁹ There were ample references to the lack of capacity and commitment of Palestinian and Lebanese governance actors that they would want to hide such incapacity from the public.³⁹⁰ But vagueness is also unintentional, when governance actors do not know who to address and how to address them – due to the mediated nature of governance interactions. This is also entrenched in the variation in type of interactions from one camp to the other (Pursue 2012:20).

Written documentation available on interactions between Lebanese and Palestinian governance actors – PC-municipality relations, or party-party relations – is scarce and almost impossible to access.³⁹¹ For the PCs there is a written statute and a Terms of Reference, but this mandate focuses on internal camp governance and does not stipulate relations with Lebanese actors. A PC member told me they make regular reports that they send to the Fatah leadership and the regional PC Union.³⁹² Other well-informed participants, however, were cynical of such reporting.³⁹³ The head of the national PC Union explained that he asked the regional PC Unions “for weekly reports, sometimes even daily reports, on simple issues and events such as funerals and social problems so that if the need arises to call the other side [Lebanese actors] we can make such calls quickly.”³⁹⁴ He openly questioned whether the PCs actually did that properly. On the other hand, the Lebanese side sticks to regular bureaucratic documentation. Still, there is no interaction in writing and no writing on interaction.³⁹⁵ This reluctance to document interactions is related to strong traditions of oral communication in much of the governance institutions, but also due to the gratuity of spoken interaction: “Written things imply commitments; not to write something down is to escape responsibility. If someone is just paying lip service it is preferable if it isn’t documented.”³⁹⁶

Scheduling

While there were meetings and communications specifically initiated to discuss governance issues, participants’ accounts on governance interaction in Shabriha suggested that it also often took place at occasions that originally served another objective (see also CSI 2011:13). What people continuously referred to as ‘occasions’ (*mnasabe*) – such as weddings and funerals, kindergarten and school activities, religious and national festivals and rallies (such as *iftar* dinners during Ramadan or *Nakba* Day and Liberation Day) and opening ceremonies for projects such as rehabilitated roads or clinics or new playgrounds – were instances to both showcase interactions to the outside world and ‘do

385 Palestinian NGO Sour, Al Bas camp, Sour, 2 April 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

386 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013.

387 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 18 May 2013; Head highway committee, Shabriha, 12 May 2013; PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 16 July 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 18 May 2013; EDL Sour, Sour, 21 May 2013; Resident Aziye, Aziye, 5 May 2013; Palestinian NGO Sour, Al Bas camp, Sour, 2 April 2013; (RA) Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

388 Palestinian legal analyst, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 6 June 2013.

389 Lebanese analyst, Beirut, 23 July 2012; see also President LPDC, Beirut, 22 July 2013.

390 PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 9 April and 14 May 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Bourj el-Shemali camp, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 15 June 2013; Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013; Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 7 May 2013.

391 CSI analyst, Beirut, 28 May 2013.

392 PC public relations officer Shabriha, Shabriha, 26 July 2013; Y; Head National PC Union, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 6 June 2013.

393 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 30 July 2013.

394 Head National PC Union, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 6 June 2013.

395 Palestinian legal analyst, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 29 June 2012.

396 Palestinian analyst, Saida, 8 June 2013; see also Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; Palestinian liaison officer Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013; Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

business' and discuss specific governance needs, issues and requests.³⁹⁷ An Amal representative explained "When it comes to occasions such as festivals, we always share in all festivities, especially in the camps. I participate in all festivals and occasions inside the camps; this gives a good impression for the Palestinian people."³⁹⁸ Many indicated that such occasions and (semi-)public events serve as platforms for actual communication and negotiation. The *mukhtar* said "if we have a public event, I can talk with the director of the union [of municipalities in South Lebanon] on such occasions."³⁹⁹ An analyst elaborated that "this is an opportunity for you to meet someone and because it might be embarrassing for him not to respond, he might give you his number, refer you to someone else..."⁴⁰⁰ When the mayor of Abasiye was instated, several MPs joined the festivities and were "given requests" by Palestinian guests.⁴⁰¹ An FC member said he often discusses projects with Lebanese representatives at occasions like project openings.⁴⁰²

The overall impression of participants on generic governance interaction indicated it was relatively frequent as a result of the personal and social occasions (*mnasabe*) that served as opportunities for addressing governance issues. However, while governance actors and their mediators sometimes said they had regular interactions, the majority of participants insisted there is no such thing.⁴⁰³ A local Palestinian leader told me: "There is no Lebanese policy, just day by day dealings, there is no strategic plan."⁴⁰⁴ An NGO affiliate explained: "There are no regular meetings, this depends on the public benefits and services we can get. All sides in the camp have their personal relations and talk via these relations."⁴⁰⁵ In addition, an Amal leader explicated: "The meetings aren't regular, but the current situation makes us meet weekly."⁴⁰⁶ Interaction, participants agreed, is needs based.⁴⁰⁷ A scholar that used to work for the LPDC told me: "People are used to sit together if there is a problem, an issue, but otherwise they don't; there are no regular meetings."⁴⁰⁸ An NGO representative expressed similar sentiment: "people here [...] believe in meetings, they don't believe in appointments"⁴⁰⁹ A PC member said: "To meet there has to be news."⁴¹⁰ The mayor of Sour stated: "We meet if they need anything."⁴¹¹ The vice mayor of Abasiye said meetings occur "when necessary" (*iza daruri*).⁴¹²

Initiative and dominance

Regarding initiative and dominance, participants confirmed the general framework that all the cases echo: Palestinian governance actors usually go to their Lebanese counterparts or Lebanese mediating actors to ask for

397 Amal leader Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 July 2013; Hezbollah former MP and public relations officer, Beirut, 26 June 2013; Amal MP, Sour, 27 July 2013; Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 19 July 2013; Head FC Shabriha, Shabriha, 19 July 2013; PC member Jal al-Bahar, Sour, 13 June 2013; PLO representative South Lebanon, Al Bas camp, Sour, 6 May 2013; PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 9 April 2013; *Mukhtar* Abasiye, Abasiye, 25 April 2013; Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 7 May 2013; Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 15 April 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 20 May 2013; Assistant Hezbollah liaison Sour, Deir Qanun, 17 July 2013.

398 Amal MP, Sour, 27 July 2013.

399 *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 23 July 2013.

400 Palestinian analyst, Saida, 8 June 2013.

401 Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 10 June 2013.

402 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

403 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 7 May 2013.

404 *Shakhs fael* from Bourj el-Shemali camp, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 15 June 2013.
The president of the LPDC (Beirut, 22 July 2013) confirms this.

405 Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013.

406 Palestinian liaison officer Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013.

407 *Muhafiz* South Lebanon, Saida, 17 June 2013; Head FC Union Sour, Shabriha, 10 June 2013; INGO, Beirut, 13 September 2012; Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013.

408 Lebanese analyst, Beirut, 23 July 2012.

409 Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013.

410 PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 9 April 2013.

411 Mayor Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013.

412 Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

help.⁴¹³ The mayor of Sour was crystal clear: "In summary: we do what they ask if we can, but they have to ask."⁴¹⁴ A Lebanese from Shabriha said the same about the *mukhtar*: "if they came to the *mukhtar* and ask him for help, he'll help them, but the *mukhtar* cannot help them without them coming and asking for help."⁴¹⁵

Palestinian governance actors are dependent on the goodwill of the Lebanese and neither Lebanese nor Palestinian participants based the interactions on an equal relationship. Rather, they both construed the Palestinian actors as petitioners or beneficiaries.⁴¹⁶ The head of the regional PC Union said: "You see, the relations are only for the benefit of the Lebanese and regard just security issues. The Lebanese authorities isolated us; they should have integrated us and we would've been one society – all topics boil down to this."⁴¹⁷ A Hezbollah liaison officer added: "Each one from the Lebanese side will treat the Palestinians in a different way, according to his benefits."⁴¹⁸ Even the humanitarian motivations of Lebanese state institutions are not free from the will to control, according to the vice mayor of Abasiye:

*"But in the end we have humanitarian feelings; we can't just leave them. Even if they're living there illegally, we have to put some control on them. And I tried to build good relations with them for our and their benefit. [...] I'm trying to convince the council here to build good relations, to cooperate with the gatherings. Because you know the gatherings are located at the entrances of Sour city and we have to cooperate with them for our benefit in the first place – and their benefit secondly."*⁴¹⁹

Domains

In many interviews, Lebanese phrased everything in terms of security whereas Palestinian actors did so under the banner of welfare and human rights.⁴²⁰ Overall, the main issues at stake in governance interaction were related to welfare; daily life issues such as housing and services. Still, the main reasons governance actors got involved in these events and sought coordination to solve them was that they directly touched upon the realms of security. This is manifested in the shared fear of an escalation of the ever tense 'political situation.' On another note, these events offered an opportunity to governance actors to claim legitimacy as representatives of the community.

The extent to which Lebanese actors consider an issue security related determines the regularity and frequency of meetings and communication.⁴²¹ The initiation of the Follow-Up Committee, for instance, was a result of Amal and Hezbollah's desire to keep 'their' area calm and avoid spill over from the war in neighboring Syria; the coordination was explicitly for their own protection, not to improve situation in camps.⁴²² Throughout my discussion with a Hezbollah official, I noticed that he termed issues 'political' when they had to do with the Palestinian leadership in Palestine, such as coordination to avoid polarization over the Syrian war. Whereas he would term them 'security concerns' when they concerned Palestinian actors in Lebanon. When I explicated this, he agreed that there was hardly anything "political about the Palestinians in Lebanon" and that it is all about security.⁴²³ This emphasis on security is also a result of the absence of an institutional framework: "A lot of things de facto fall under security, because when people don't know, or don't want to know, how responsibilities lie exactly, they refer it to the security realm. The lack of awareness

413 Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013; Head National PC Union, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 6 June 2013.

414 Mayor Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013.

415 Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013; confirmed by FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013; *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 23 July 2013.

416 Palestinian NGO Sour, Al Bas camp, Sour, 2 April 2013.

417 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013.

418 Hezbollah liaison Sour area, Shabriha, 16 July 2013.

419 Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

420 Amal MP, Sour, 27 July 2013.

421 PC member Jal al-Bahar, Sour, 13 June 2013; Mukhtar Maashouk, Maashouk, 3 July 2013; *Muhafiz* South Lebanon, Saida, 17 June 2013; President LPDC, Beirut, 22 July 2013.

422 Head FC Union Sour, Shabriha, 10 June 2013; President LPDC, Beirut, 22 July 2013.

423 Hezbollah former MP and public relations officer, Beirut, 26 June 2013.

of administrative and technical responsibilities reinforces this."⁴²⁴

Security concerns are such an obvious priority for Lebanese actors and thus Palestinian actors adopt this priority as a strategy to be heard by their Lebanese counterparts (Czajka 2012).⁴²⁵ While Palestinian participants lamented the dominance of this security paradigm to the detriment of more human security or human rights perspectives, there was also acknowledgement of the connecting quality of security concerns. There were ample references to a feeling that the fate of the Lebanese depends on the Palestinians and vice versa; that they are in it together and have the joint goal to prevent war.⁴²⁶ Palestinian leaders consciously use this discourse to get Lebanese actors to treat them better.⁴²⁷ Palestinian leaders mentioned that "we depend on the Lebanese state" and "we help the Lebanese government maintain control."⁴²⁸ An FC member explained

*"We prevent groups who want to make problems to enter the camps. To protect the Lebanese and the Palestinian side. [...] As Palestinians we're trying to avoid problems or war. We have only one problem which is our right to return and we make many efforts to prove this. We're trying to protect the camps from war and the Lebanese side as well. [...] We're not ready to have another Nahr el-Bared crisis."*⁴²⁹

For Palestinian governance actors, responding to the humanitarian needs of their constituencies was often a primary reason to engage in interaction with Lebanese governance actors.⁴³⁰ Yet Palestinian as well as Lebanese governance actors motivated their interactions in security related or political terms. The assistant of a Hezbollah liaison officer summarized:

*"When you talk about the Palestinians there are two situations: a security situation and a political situation – these are specifically important at this time. You know the political situation in Lebanon at the moment; now any two parties that discuss issues about the Lebanese and Palestinians focus on the political situation and the security situation. No one talks about the people and their problems."*⁴³¹

Even when interactions were about the realization of service delivery projects, such events were mostly about Lebanese parties winning Palestinian support in order to maintain or improve security, according to, among others, the *muhafiz* of South Lebanon (see for instance the electricity divider case).^{xxxiii 432}

In people's generic accounts of governance, most interactions are considered 'political', i.e. being about a contestation of who represents the Palestinian 'people' (and can thus claim their loyalty in terms of military support, ideological legitimacy and, for those Palestinians that acquired Lebanese citizenship, votes) (see also Klaus 2000:95). The question of who can speak for and command the Palestinians in Lebanon gains pertinence in the context of the current 'political situation' characterized by sectarian (Shia-Sunni) and geopolitical (pro- and anti-Assad) polarization in the wake of the Syrian war that is especially volatile in South Lebanon, where the Sunni Palestinians live among Shia Lebanese.⁴³³ A PLO leader told me:

"If Lebanese politicians do deal with the Palestinians on a political basis, it is as part of their power papers [i.e. as a political bargaining chip]. The Lebanese are divided, the Palestinians are divided, and the Lebanese use

424 CSI analyst, Beirut, 14 March 2013.

425 *Shakhs fael* from Bourj el-Shemali camp, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 15 June 2013; see also Head FC Union Sour, Shabriha, 10 June 2013.

426 Amal MP, Sour, 27 July 2013.

427 President LPDC, Beirut, 22 July 2013; Lebanese-Palestinian NGO, Sour, 13 May 2013; PLO and Fatah leader Sour, Rashidiye camp, Sour, 14 May 2013.

428 DFLP leader South Lebanon, Shabriha, 2 April 2013; PLO and Fatah leader Sour, Rashidiye camp, Sour, 14 May 2013; see also FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

429 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

430 Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

431 Assistant Hezbollah liaison Sour, Deir Qanun, 17 July 2013.

432 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013; *Muhafiz* South Lebanon, Saida, 17 June 2013.

433 Assistant Hezbollah liaison Sour, Deir Qanun, 17 July 2013.

*the Palestinians when they need it internally. All parties talk about the Palestinians, but not to help them, but because they can use the Palestinian issue in the 8 versus 14 March rivalry.*⁴³⁴

The head of the regional PC Union, for instance, referred to a meeting:

*"In the embassy between the PLO parties and the Tahaluf parties with the Islamic forces from Ain el-Hilweh to make an agreement that we won't interfere in Lebanese issues and stay far from any conflict and will support all Lebanon [...] that we're with both sides, not with one side against the other."*⁴³⁵

The Hezbollah magazine for the Palestinian camps previously discussed was also almost entirely dedicated to such affairs. This 'diplomacy', however, is almost exclusively regional and national and concerns the Palestinian parties rather than the PCs. Indeed, the non-recognition of the PCs by the Lebanese state is a crucial determinant here. Lebanese political parties are the hegemonic actor in the Lebanese governance realm and "politicians support factions, not the PC."⁴³⁶ Participants affiliated with NGOs, UNRWA and youth groups stressed that it was almost impossible to avoid or sideline political parties.

Sites

Paradoxically, while it was clear in my case-studies that a lot of local interaction does take place, generic discussions of Palestinian-Lebanese governance interaction, even when they had Shabriha as a point of departure, were dominated by references to the regional, national and even international setting. The following confession by the president of the LPDC is telling in this regard: "I know everything about the Palestinian cause, as I have always been a supporter of Palestine, but I know only a little about the Palestinian-Lebanese relations on the ground."⁴³⁷ There were many references to the importance of local and frequent meetings to "control the situation," but these were considered relatively self-evident and participants usually did not dwell on them but moved to a macro-analysis of Palestinian-Lebanese relations.⁴³⁸ This default reference to the national level often functioned as a disclaimer for Palestinian governance actors that explained local failure by national sabotage.⁴³⁹

Levels

Participants' generic accounts on governance interaction concerning Shabriha confirmed the centrality of meta-governance issues of discrimination between camps and gatherings and between Lebanese and Palestinians. In addition, they touched on the degree to which governance is reactive or pro-active; whether interaction occurs to solve problems or to create opportunities (Kooiman 2003:231). Participants saw general governance interaction concerning Shabriha as prodigiously reactive. The objectives of the Follow-Up Committee as well as almost all other instances of 'general' interaction are to avoid something – problems, escalation, and war – not to create something.⁴⁴⁰ Governance interaction is often approached as a direct equivalent of problem-solving and people always assumed that I was interested in hearing about problems when I asked them about governance. This contrasts with the literal and widespread reference to opportunity (*fursa*) throughout the cases. On second glance, these references hardly indicate a pro-active posture by governance actors and mostly refer to situations where Lebanese governance actors "squeeze their eyes," "look away" or "turn a blind eye."⁴⁴¹ A lack of interaction seems to be an opportunity-generating form of interaction for many Palestinians.

Explanations for the nature of generic governance interaction in Shabriha

434 PLO leader, Beirut, 8 July 2012.

435 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 25 July 2013.

436 Director Palestinian NGO, Saida, 13 July 2012.

437 President LPDC, Beirut, 22 July 2013.

438 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 18 May 2013; PC member, Shabriha, 9 April and 14 May 2013.

439 Director and vice director camp improvement and infrastructure program UNRWA, Beirut, 29 March 2013.

440 Head FC Union Sour, Shabriha, 10 June 2013; Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013.

441 UNRWA regional coordinator Sour, Sour, 15 May 2013; Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 21 May 2013; Director Palestinian NGO, Saida, 8 May 2013; *Mukhtar Shabriha*, Lebanese Shabriha, 6 May 2013.

Material resources: money, arms and land

Material resources in people's accounts on governance interaction closely matched their case-related accounts. Participants referred to money, arms and land. People linked financial assets to the question of which actors are involved in governance interaction. The centrality of the *mukhtar* to the detriment of the municipality, for instance, was partly seen as a result of the *mukhtar's* (personal) affluence and the municipality's budget deficiencies.⁴⁴² Informality was also seen to partly stem from Lebanese governance actors' vested interest in extortion.⁴⁴³ While taxation depended on a formal bureaucracy, the lack of such a system generated bribing opportunities that might be more financially rewarding than taxation. This helps explain the dominance of political parties – who are dependent on informal ways of extortion – and the absence of state institutions, such as the municipality – which are dependent on formal taxation and budget allocation by the central state based on registered voters (e.g. the building crisis).⁴⁴⁴

The absence of an organized Palestinian armed presence in the gatherings, such as *Al-Kifah Al-Musalah*, 'the Armed Struggle', in the camps (TDH 2009:12), was seen as a disincentive for Lebanese parties to mediate during governance interactions.⁴⁴⁵ For others, the lack of arms in Shabriha and the concomitant lack of enforcement and sanctioning authority of the PC explain the need for mediating actors.⁴⁴⁶ The authority of the *mukhtar* vis-à-vis the PC, for instance, was often seen to partially stem from the Amal militia he commands.⁴⁴⁷

Land ownership (or rather its impossibility) was often an issue shaping governance interaction in Shabriha. PU and NRC (2009:17) emphasize that "in every unofficial gathering, land and shelter ownerships are important issues" since they affect relations with local authorities and the likelihood to get authorizations for development projects (see also DRC 2005:20). Shabriha's presence on public land (rather than as the majority of other gatherings on privately owned land) has evidently determined the minimal role of the municipality (Jacobsen and Khalidi 2003:190; PARD 2011:10).⁴⁴⁸

Ideational resources: *al awda* and the Palestinian cause

'*Al awda*', the Palestinians' 'right to return' to Palestine, played an important role in participants' understanding of Shabriha's governance interactions. *Al awda* was first and foremost associated with a state of limbo, with temporality and 'inbetweenness' that makes interaction informal and irregular.⁴⁴⁹ A leader from Bourj el-Shemali camp proclaimed:

*"There was this riddle: a woman told her husband he would be haram to her if he stayed inside the house and he would be haram to her if he went outside. The man went to the sheikh for advice, but the sheikh didn't know either. In the end, the man made a swing in the doorstep. Our situation is like this swing: we're never really inside and we're never really outside."*⁴⁵⁰

An LPDC representative told me the short-term and ad hoc perspective on governance resulted from the fact that "for both – and I am not accusing here, I am observing – especially for the Palestinians, there is this temporary

442 *Qaimaqam* Sour, Sour, 29 April 2013; Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 11 April 2013; Former *qaimaqam* Sour, Sour, 22 June 2013.

443 Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 2 April 2013; *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 18 May 2013; Vice mayor Sour, Sour, 3 April 2013; PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 20 May 2013; Youth Shabriha, Shabriha, 1 July 2013; Resident Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013.

444 Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 11 April 2013; Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013; Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013; Lebanese analyst, Beirut, 23 July 2012.

445 *Shakhs fael* from Bourj el-Shemali camp, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 15 June 2013; PC member Jal al-Bahar, Sour, 13 June 2013; International analyst, Beirut, 9 May 2013; Palestinian analyst, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 19 June 2013; Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; Head FC Union Sour, Shabriha, 10 June 2013; UNDP, Beirut, 4 April 2013.

446 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 20 May 2013; INGO, Al Hoj, 23 May 2013; Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013.

447 Fieldnotes 2 April.

448 Mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 11 April 2013; *Mukhtar* Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 3 April 2013; INGO, Sour, 10 April 2013; Sheikh, Qasmiye gathering, 11 April 2013; Director Palestinian NGO, Saida, 8 May 2013; Palestinian legal analyst, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 21 March 2013.

449 Vice mayor Abasiye, Abasiye, 1 July 2013.

450 *Shakhs fael* from Bourj el-Shemali camp, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 15 June 2013.

perspective, the lack of a long-term projection. And the government is all too comfortable to go along in this. They both live in denial.”⁴⁵¹ Participants linked the lack of an official framework of governance interaction in which the PCs are recognized as formal counterparts of Lebanese state institutions directly to the paradigm of ‘the return.’⁴⁵² This leaves governance actors grappling with multiplicity and hybridity and trial-and-error approaches.⁴⁵³ Waiting for *el awda* indicates lack of finality and apprehension; waiting for history to catch up (Nasr ed-Din et al. 1990).

Al awda was also mentioned as easy way for Lebanese governance actors to be considered as supporting the ‘Palestinian cause.’⁴⁵⁴ An Amal representative from Shabriha put it like this:

*“The Palestinian cause is a central cause we’re working on. And we defend and protect the legal rights of the Palestinian nation. We’re with the Palestinian state and the implementation of resolution 194 the right of return – it should be implemented and the refugees should return to their land. We are with the Palestinian cause when there is a problem, we defend them.”*⁴⁵⁵

Institutional resources: politics and laws

A wide variety of institutional resources that shaped governance interaction in and on Shabriha have surfaced in people’s generic accounts. I have divided these into two broad categories: politics and laws. While there are important overlaps between these themes and the ideational and material resources discussed above, I consider them as institutional resources because these issues were referred to by participants as organizational principles (rather than as ideational aspirations or material assets).

The political system and the political situation

Participants’ descriptions of the political context of governance interaction related to the political system and the political situation. The political system (*al-nizam al-siyasiye*) refers to the way political representation and policy-making is organized in Lebanon. Here, people particularly mentioned sectarianism and clientelism. The political situation (*al wada’a al-siyasiye*) indicates more changeable geopolitical dynamics characterized by intensified inter- and intra-sectarian polarization as a consequence of the Syrian war (Pursue 2012:24-25).⁴⁵⁶

Lebanese society is organized along the lines of eighteen recognized religious communities that each have their regional strongholds; political parties; social institutions like schools, clinics and charity organizations; and armed militias. Political organization in Lebanon institutionalized such sectarianism. The Lebanese state is organized through a consociational political system centered on an inter-sectarian power-sharing formula that stipulates that the President should be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim and the Speaker of Parliament a Shia Muslim. The system includes corresponding sectarian quota that guide the allocation of all public positions. As a result of its sectarian nature, the Lebanese state structure is controlled by a quest for inter-communitarian balance that results in endemic patronage and clientelism (Cammatt and Issar 2010; Gebara 2007; Hamzeh 2001). In Klaus’ (2000:143) words: “In Lebanon, the organization of state politics followed a segmentary principle, that was supportive of a stratified, hierarchical order which again favoured clientelist relations.” Weighill (1997:304) pins down the consequences of this system for Palestinians – who lack a representative in the Lebanese political system and are thus excluded from the distribution of state resources – very accurately:

Benefits that accrue to one community will be seen as being enjoyed at the expense of other communities.

451 Lebanese analyst, Beirut, 23 July 2012.

452 PLO leader, Beirut, 8 July 2012; LPDC legal officer, Beirut, 20 June 2013.

453 Head FC Union Sour, Shabriha, 10 June 2013; Headmaster school Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 April 2013; Lebanese analyst, Beirut, 28 May 2013.

454 Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013.

455 Amal leader Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 July 2013.

456 PC member, Shabriha, 9 April 2013; Amal MP, Sour, 27 July 2013; Head highway committee, Shabriha, 12 May 2013; Hezbollah liaison Sour area, Shabriha, 16 and 17 July 2013; President LPDC, Beirut, 22 July 2013.

Thus water piped to refugee camps is water that could and perhaps should have been kept for use by Lebanese farmers. Government education spending on Palestinian secondary schools is money that should be reserved for the use of Lebanese citizens.

People in Shabriha used the term 'chaos' to indicate the absence of rule of law in contrast to the notion of system or organization ('*nizam*'), to describe a feature of this sectarian system for governance interaction.⁴⁵⁷ "The instability of the Lebanese system launched a constant dynamic with fractions forming and splitting off in a process of fission and fusion" (Klaus 2000:12). The idea of *fawda* encompassed both the 'no-policy-policy' of the Lebanese state (Klaus 2000:140) vis-à-vis the Palestinians and the impenetrable wild growth of committees, councils, groups and boards on the Palestinian side (Pursue 2012) about which one youth leader said: "It's meant to be vague and incomprehensible. People don't know structures because they're deliberately kept unclear."⁴⁵⁸ This general Lebanese context of chaos is reflected in the informality and irregularity of the governance interaction in Shabriha as well as the automatic meta-governance connotations: "Any one can pull down the entire structure. Mutual deterrence and actors with devastatingly but relatively equal power create an uneasy perpetual truce" (Hudson 1966:34 in Klaus 2000:26).

Sectarianism is the hallmark of Lebanon's political system and it is even further cemented by the current political situation. Participants noted governance actors increasingly emphasized sectarian identity. Since 2005 and especially since the intensification of the Syrian war, sectarian associations have spun out of control (Erni 2012:59-62).⁴⁵⁹ Sunni-Shia divisions were regularly mentioned to explain the security and political representation connotations of almost all governance interaction.⁴⁶⁰ The heavy involvement of Lebanese political parties in governance interaction also stems from this competition, with Amal and Hezbollah repeatedly vying for the support of the Palestinians.⁴⁶¹ A national PLO leader surmised: "If we continue like we are now the Palestinians will be the balance of the Sunni against the Shia, which we must avoid by all means."⁴⁶² El Ali (2011:53) notes that the Palestinian presence is often portrayed as constituting a 'Sunni army' and Klaus (2000:58) adds that "Palestinians gained their entrance to the official Lebanese political platform not as civilians, but as an armed group." In the words of a Palestinian from Shabriha, interactions were initiated "to solve the problems and to build relations that benefit them in the future if there is war."⁴⁶³

*"The Lebanese parties help them in services because of their friendship relations. And the Palestinians are on the ground so they have to be politically included to one side of the Lebanese. When the Lebanese help them, they help them to attract them to their party. The Palestinians exist here, we cannot ignore them. They can play a role when there is war. If we help them in this way, we win them for us, to our side. At least if there is war, they won't interfere and at most they'll interfere and be with us. Here there is a Palestinian camp, Haraket [Amal] or Hezb [Hezbollah] offers their services for them to let them be with this party. In the future, they'll be with them, they'll say 'they helped us before, now it's the time to help them.'"*⁴⁶⁴

A representative of the Mustaqbal party working on 'Palestinian affairs' confirmed this when he said "if I help people, they will help me; they must, they owe me."⁴⁶⁵ Thus, Lebanese contend for Palestinian support not only with reference to the broad ideational resource of the 'Palestinian cause' but also for the specific institutional resource of Palestinian (military) power. The idea that 'anything could turn into a war if we do not manage it properly' looms over all interactions.⁴⁶⁶

457 *Shakhs fael*, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 15 June 2013; Waste entrepreneur Sour, Sour, 6 July 2013.

458 Youth leader Rashidiye camp, Sour, 7 May 2013.

459 Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 30 July 2013; Resident Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 19 July 2013; PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 2 April 2013; Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013.

460 Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 15 April 2013; Hezbollah liaison Sour area, Deir Qanun, 17 July 2013; Journalist from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 27 June 2013; President LPDC, Beirut, 22 July 2013.

461 PC secretary Shabriha, Shabriha, 2 April 2013; Youth leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 30 July 2013; Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; Lebanese analyst, Beirut, 11 March 2013.

462 PLO leader, Beirut, 8 July 2012.

463 *Shakhs fael* from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013.

464 *Shakhs fael* from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 26 July 2013.

465 Bahja Hariri office, Saida, 24 May 2013.

466 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 June 2013; *Shakhs fael*, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 15 June 2013; Youth leader, Shabriha, 14 May and 30 July 2013; Resident, Lebanese Shabriha, 19 July 2013; Former *qaimaqam*, Sour, 22 June 2013; *Muhafiz* South Lebanon, Saida, 17 June 2013; Hezbollah leader, Shabriha, 4 May 2013.

In addition to sectarian polarization, the notion of intra-sectarian '(dis-)unity' was often mentioned as characteristic of the political situation affecting governance interaction (see Chabaan et al. 2010:4; Rougier 2007). Palestinian governance actors were regularly depicted as a divided lot.⁴⁶⁷ This had a spatial dimension as the dispersion of Palestinians limits the manoeuvring space of their governance actors:

*"The problem is all Palestinians are in all regions, they can't be with one side [Lebanese political alliance] against the other side – some of them will be with injustice if there is a decision to be with one against the other. Imagine we said we're with Hariri, our group [Hezbollah and Amal] here what will they do to us? And the opposite, if we were with Hezb and Amal, the Palestinians in Ain el-Hilweh will be negatively affected."*⁴⁶⁸

Participants also considered the disunity of the Palestinians in Shabriha to have a political component. A participant from Lebanese Shabriha noted: "they are split; they don't have one reference that can talk for all the camp."⁴⁶⁹ This holds in a national setting as well. The LPDC president lamented that: "They never act as one. I told them at the beginning that if they wanted to be effective in the dialogue with the Lebanese they would have to shrink their number; choose six representatives and rotate. They refused."⁴⁷⁰ The fragmentation into a PC and an FC following the broader division between the PLO and *Tahaluf* was seen as a core explanation for the dependence of Palestinian governance actors.⁴⁷¹ There are even tensions between the newly installed Palestinian Embassy and the PLO leadership in South Lebanon who used to be the main Palestinian authority in Lebanon (El Ali 2005:87).⁴⁷² This lack of unity on the Palestinian side gives the Lebanese an excuse to securitize governance interaction and not recognize the PCs.⁴⁷³

In Shabriha, the division of the Palestinians is especially glaring when compared with the unity of the Lebanese. The perceived cohesiveness of Salha and the socio-political strength this generates is captured in references such as 'one family; one village; one party; one leader' and the unilateral authority of the *mukhtar*.⁴⁷⁴ While this authority is of course not absolute, it is rather uncontested. On a national level, however, it is the division of the Lebanese that determines their dealings with the Palestinians. Ultimately, intra-Lebanese and intra-Palestinian coordination is at least as demanding as inter-Lebanese-Palestinian coordination, which might help explain the ad hoc nature of governance. An LPDC representative found: "The issues are so big and so inter-related. It's not just a Lebanese-Palestinian thing; it's a Lebanese/Lebanese, a Sunni/Maronite, a resistance/Hezbollah, a pro-Syrian/anti-Syrian issue. And this is exactly the same with the Palestinians. [...] They need internal dialogue on each side more than anything else."⁴⁷⁵

The legal implications of 'campness' and citizenship

In explaining why governance interaction in Shabriha worked the way it did, participants almost without fail referred to 'the law,' which usually boiled down to the legal discrimination of Palestinians and their lack of civil rights. This particularly related to the discrimination between camps and gatherings and between Lebanese and Palestinians.⁴⁷⁶

467 INGO, Al Hoj, 23 May 2013.

468 Focus group, Shabriha, 2 August 2013; see also fieldnotes 25 June 2013.

469 Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013.

470 President LPDC, Beirut, 22 July 2013.

471 PLO leader, Beirut, 8 July 2012; PC member, Bourj el-Barajneh camp, Beirut, 10 July 2012; Resident, Lebanese Shabriha, 5 July 2013; Youth leader, Shabriha, 14 May 2013; Palestinian liaison officer Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013; Director Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 21 July 2012.

472 UNRWA regional coordinator Sour, Sour, 15 May 2013; Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 7 May 2013; Head National PC Union, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 6 June 2013; PLO leader, Beirut, 24 April 2013; Press secretary Palestinian embassy, Beirut, 6 June 2013.

473 LPDC legal officer, Beirut, 20 June 2013; PLO leader, Beirut, 8 July 2012.

474 Head PLO women's association, Shabriha, 9 April 2013; FC member, Shabriha, 8 June 2013; Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 28 May 2013; Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013; Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; *Mukhtar*, Lebanese Shabriha, 3 April, 6 May and 23 July 2013.

475 LPDC representative, Beirut, 26 March 2013.

476 Hezbollah liaison Sour area, Shabriha, 16 and 17 July 2013; President LPDC, Beirut, 22 July 2013.

A Hezbollah liaison said: "You have to know that the problem is not with the Lebanese people; the problem is in the Lebanese law; the laws [...] deprive Palestinians from their rights."⁴⁷⁷

Many newspaper articles (Daily Star 2012; Nasr ed-Din et al. 1990) used camps and gatherings interchangeably and even Lebanese officials often did not seem to be aware of the institutional status of Palestinian communities. One local politician had never even heard of the gatherings and a state official from Sour was adamant that there were no Palestinians in Shabriha.⁴⁷⁸ The LPDC also stated that for them the distinction between camps and gatherings was irrelevant, considering that they deal with the Palestinian community as a whole.⁴⁷⁹ Yet, many participants keenly explained the distinction to me and stressed their uniqueness as gatherings. Nevertheless, the camps remain their reference point, with the gatherings being the exception to the rule presented by the camps.⁴⁸⁰ Participants reasoned the camps had UNRWA and would be less dependent on the Lebanese parties for governance mediation. They also suggested that the camps were more interesting for both Palestinian parties and NGOs to invest in due to their popular and the symbolic identification as the epitome of Palestinian culture and power in Lebanon (Kayali n.d.; Klaus 2000:97; Sayigh 1977). Participants emphasized that the non-camp identity of gatherings deprived gatherings from financial and political back-up from UNRWA and from political parties – which find their main constituencies in the camps where they have much more autonomy of operation – in their relations with Lebanese institutions. An NGO representative stated:

"The factions don't invest in the gatherings. Sometimes there live just 1000 people, can you imagine then having 17 factions offices in such a location? There are just 1 or 2, maximum 3, factions active in the gatherings: Fatah, Hamas and the Popular Front (and sometimes the Democratic Front, but this is rare). They don't have the people there, however. Often the PC is just one person; or there is just one person representing multiple gatherings."⁴⁸¹

Another expert concluded: "The gatherings are not worth fighting over for the Palestinian factions."⁴⁸² NGOs are also considerably more prevalent in camps than in gatherings, often simply because they can reach more people by working in a camp (only two NGOs: PARD, TDH), but also because the institutional setting in the camps is often more clear cut and because donors tend to be more enthusiastic about funding programs in (in)famous camps.⁴⁸³ In short, people assumed that, on the one hand, the gatherings would depend on NGOs and political parties due to the absence of UNRWA, while, on the other hand, these same NGOs and political parties would be less inclined to service them. An NGO representative told me that "Many people prefer to call gatherings camps because this makes them sound more important. 'Gathering' has associations of randomness, 'a group of people gathered together', whereas the word 'camp' signifies joint relations."⁴⁸⁴ Thus the institutional setting of the camps (absence of UNRWA, disregard by factions and parties) decisively influences the relative importance of the identified governance actors.⁴⁸⁵ The crucial role of the *mukhtar*, for instance, is quite unique to the gatherings, as PCs are usually considered 'stronger' in the camps.⁴⁸⁶

Apart from 'campness', the issue of citizenship was considered a key 'legal' determinant in governance interaction. Not having Lebanese nationality places Palestinians outside the law and excludes them from any standardized or official frameworks of interaction, resulting in a protracted state of exception that manifests itself in informal and irregular governance interaction. For the Palestinians from Shabriha, this was particularly apparent in comparison

477 Hezbollah liaison Sour area, Deir Qanun, 17 July 2013.

478 *Qaimaqam* Sour, Sour, 29 April 2013; Palestinian liaison officer Amal Sour, Wadi Jilo, 29 June 2013. The distinction was also maintained in unpublished documents I obtained from a local Hezbollah liaison and the head of the PC Union for Sour region.

479 LPDC legal officer, Beirut, 20 June 2013.

480 FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

481 Palestinian NGO, Beirut, 13 September 2012.

482 INGO, Beirut, 13 September 2012.

483 INGO, Saida, 25 July 2013; Palestinian NGO Sour, Al Bas camp, Sour, 2 April 2013.

484 INGO, Saida, 25 July 2013; INGO, Al Hoj, 23 May 2013.

485 Palestinian Ambassador, Beirut, 29 July 2013.

486 Palestinian analyst, Saida, 13 July 2012; UNDP analyst, Beirut, 4 June 2013; Palestinian NGO Sour, Al Bas camp, Sour, 2 April 2013.

with the Lebanese from Shabriha. Since their naturalization, after which they gained a relevant electoral position, the people from Salha “have authority because they have two nationalities and they have relations with Lebanese and Palestinians.”⁴⁸⁷ A Hezbollah affiliate noted:

*“In most gatherings, there are Palestinians who got Lebanese citizenship. These are part of the Palestinian and the Lebanese societies at the same time. Lebanese parties offer them services and take care of them because they can vote. Palestinian parties take care of them because they have an effect on the ground and can ask for services. If the mukhtar in Shabriha is with the Movement [Amal] they will get services from Amal and this may affect the Palestinians as well.”*⁴⁸⁸

Palestinian participants sometimes called Lebanese Shabrihans ‘children of the state’ (*al awlaad ed-dawle*), suggesting it is their connection to the state that sets them apart from Palestinians without Lebanese nationality: “The only thing that distinguishes Salha is that they take government jobs and can vote.”⁴⁸⁹ It was also this connection to the state that gave the *mukhtar* so much leeway in governance.⁴⁹⁰

Lebanese nationality was considered an asset for governance because, first, political parties were more inclined to mediate due to electoral incentives.⁴⁹¹ Indeed, several Lebanese parties have either an official or unofficial department “to serve naturalized Palestinians.”⁴⁹² Lebanese state institutions, too, would be more involved in governance. UN-HABITAT and UNDP (2010:31) note that municipalities do extend services into gatherings inhabited predominantly by Lebanese registered as voters.⁴⁹³ Since the budget allocation by the central state depends on the number of registered voters, it is logical to assume the municipality would be more willing to get involved on behalf of those voters. There were widespread references to the large naturalized community in Bourj el-Shemali camp where a PC member was installed as a member of the municipal council.⁴⁹⁴

For many participants, all governance interaction in Shabriha in essence revolved around a struggle concerning political representation as a result of a lack of citizenship. One participant summarized: “We’re not part of this entity. If we would be part of the entity, relations would evolve over time.”⁴⁹⁵ A scholar added: “The Palestinians don’t have their back-up in the Lebanese system.”⁴⁹⁶ The relative deprivation of the Palestinians in Lebanon was also said to result from lack of access to state positions: “the situation here is worse than in the West Bank and Gaza, because there at least they are employees in a state.”⁴⁹⁷ In Lebanon, the police do not respect the PC nor, in the highway case, did CDR c.s. inform the PC of what was going on.⁴⁹⁸ One Lebanese man from Shabriha wondered why the *mukhtar* was more influential than the PC: “Maybe because the *mukhtar* is Lebanese and we’re the sons of the country, so they listen to us more. The Palestinians are refugees; they won’t listen to them as they listen to us. And the Palestinians here haven’t taken their civil rights.”⁴⁹⁹

487 Shakhs fael from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013.

488 Assistant Hezbollah liaison Sour, Deir Qanun, 17 July 2013.

489 Lebanese-Palestinian NGO, Sour, 13 May 2013; LPDC representative, Beirut, 26 March 2013; Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013; Resident Shabriha, Shabriha, 15 April 2013.

490 Hezbollah leader Shabriha, Shabriha, 4 May 2013; PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 14 May 2013; Shakhs fael from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013; Head highway committee, Shabriha, 12 May 2013.

491 UNDP, Beirut, 4 April 2013; Shakhs fael from Shabriha, Shabriha, 18 May 2013; Contractor from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 8 May 2013; UNRWA Sour, Sour, 9 and 12 April 2013.

492 Bahja Hariri office, Said, 24 May 2013; Palestinian analyst, Said, 15 March 2013.

493 Palestinian NGO, Al Bas camp, Sour, 18 June 2013; Head National PC Union, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 6 June 2013; Mayor Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013.

494 Head Union of PCs Sour, Bourj el-Shemali camp, Sour, 20 September 2012; FC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 8 June 2013.

495 Palestinian analyst, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 19 June 2013.

496 Analyst IPS, Beirut, 3 July 2012.

497 Shakhs fael from Shabriha, Shabriha, 11 June 2013.

498 PC member Shabriha, Shabriha, 9 April 2013; UNDP analyst, Beirut, 4 June 2013; Head highway committee, Shabriha, 26 April and 1 and 12 May 2013.

499 Electrician from Lebanese Shabriha, Lebanese Shabriha, 28 June 2013.

5. Analysis

"The situation is complicated, more than complicated, and we should use a word even stronger than complicated, but I don't know the right word."⁵⁰⁰

5.1 Actors

Comparing the above cases, on the one hand, and contrasting these with generic accounts on governance, on the other, several observations can be made. On the Palestinian side, governance actors were by and large the same across all cases. The PC was the central Palestinian governance actor and where it was absent, no other governance actor took its place and residents and individual *faliyat* acted on their own. Thus, in line with El Ali (2011:28), Hanafi (2010a:8), Jacobsen and Khalidi (2003:185) and Kortam (2011:203), and despite people's discontent with the PC, the PC's lack of resources and the presence of a host of other relevant actors involved in security, services and representation, the PC in Shabriha comes closest to an overarching governance authority – a status it reaps as much from its affiliation with the state-like PLO as from its on-the-ground activities. The relative absence of UNRWA from the governance spectrum in Shabriha is worth stressing as well, especially in light of the literature that tends to construe UNRWA as an omnipresent reference for all Palestinians in Lebanon (Bocco 2010 in El Ali 2011:25; Chabaan et al. 2010:xiv; CSI 2011; Knudsen and Hanafi 2011; Schenker 2012). The position of UNRWA is one of the most pertinent differences between camps and gatherings. UNRWA, in Shabriha, is a noteworthy reference point for identity formation (Al Hussein 2000 in Erni 2012:32-33; Khalili 2010:136; Weighill 1997:304-306) and features in participants' general discourses on governance. Concretely, however, it did not play a significant role in any of the cases.

On the Lebanese side, the main governance actor varied per case – from the Union of Municipalities in Sour during the waste crisis to EDL in the electricity case, CDR c.s. in the highway eviction, the municipality and the army and police in the building crisis and the *mukhtar* in the Ramadan conflict. The absence of a stable counterpart for the PC was striking (El Ali 2011:46, 55; CSI 2012:7, 2011:33).⁵⁰¹ To some extent, this counterpart existed in the guise of the *mukhtar*, but he was perceived, also by himself, as a gatekeeper to, rather than a representative of, the state. The municipality, that could play this role of default counterpart for the PC (El Ali 2012; CSI 2011, 2012), did not do so, which is both a result of the outlook of the municipality in question and the unofficial status of the gatherings (UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:9). Rather, it was Lebanese political parties who featured as the stable, approachable and, to some extent, reliable counterpart for Palestinian actors. The highway eviction case provided a poignant example of the coherent and accessible stance of political parties in contrast to the incomprehensible and impenetrable entity represented by CDR c.s.

In discussing the relevant governance actors in Shabriha, participants hardly ever specified people or institutions by name, even after my probing. This reflects two significant phenomena. First, the mechanisms and practices of governance interaction in Shabriha were diffuse and dynamic and, second, participants preferred to discuss governance in general and collective terms – 'we' and 'they,' 'the people,' 'the state,' 'the parties,' 'the *faliyat*.' This is partly done to dissolve the responsibility of decision-making and minimize repercussions – as in the Ramadan conflict case. This dissolution is especially clear in participants' reluctance to label various groups, committees and institutions – see the discussion on the Follow-Up Committee as a case in point. A PC member from Jal al-Bahar told me "this committee doesn't have a name, it not a committee, really, it's just a group."⁵⁰²

Ultimately, the core governance actors I identified for Shabriha are the same as those identified by El Ali (2011:14-15) and CSI (2012:3) for other cases. However, my findings highlight a paradox in defining governance actors. While there are many actors involved in governance, only a few claimed an overarching role and were involved in all three governance domains. Moreover, in contrast to the often mentioned disunity of the Palestinians and unity of the Lebanese in Shabriha,

500 Amal MP, Sour, 27 July 2013.

501 President LPDC, Beirut, 22 July 2013.

502 PC member Jal al-Bahar, Sour, 13 June 2013.

governance actors were more defined on the Palestinian side, in the form of the PLO-installed PC, than on the Lebanese side, where the state was fragmented and where state institutions that featured as direct governance actors overlapped with political parties that featured as mediating actors, but also as governance actors in their own right.

5.2 Directness

Almost all governance interactions in Shabriha were mediated, often by the same actors. Although NGOs played a role, the constant was the *mukhtar*, the epitome of institutional (political, social, military) resources in Shabriha, and Lebanese and Palestinian political parties. Bearing in mind the lack of financial and human resources of both the municipality and the PC (CSI 2011:16; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:10), both institutions lack legitimacy and capacity (CSI 2011:19; Hanafi 2010a:13; Hanafi and Long 2010:141). In this respect, a Lebanese analyst said: “Lebanese factions versus Palestinian factions might indeed be more relevant than municipality versus PC.”⁵⁰³

The crucial role of the *mukhtar* in Lebanese-Palestinian governance interaction is broadly recognized (Akram 2002, Ben-Sichou et al. 2008 and Yassine and El-Natour 2007 in Hanafi and Long 2010:146). CSI (2012:9) recommends the LPDC and the Lebanese government to “give more prerogatives to *mukhtars* of the region to play officially a mediation role between Palestinian refugees and the government to solve all issues and problems.” My study fully endorses this recommendation and disputes the idea that the institution of the *mukhtar* has been hollowed out to the extent that it has lost its linchpin function in local governance (Bassil 2012:16). The role of the *mukhtar* in Lebanese-Palestinian governance interaction in Shabriha, however, underlines an inherent tension between the responsibilities of the *mukhtar* to represent ‘the people vis-à-vis the state’ and to represent the ‘state vis-à-vis the people,’ especially when ‘the people’ are not citizens of ‘the state’ (Bassil 2012:13-14). Also, the significance of the *mukhtar*, at least in Shabriha, stems from his affiliation with Lebanese political parties as much as from his mandate towards the state.

That Palestinian (UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:9, 46) and Lebanese (Knudsen 2011:98) parties mediate in Lebanese-Palestinian governance interaction is evident (El Ali 2011; Khayat 2008; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:53). For instance, Knudsen (2011:98) argues that the (informal) relationship Palestinians have with Lebanese parties range from “consultative to clientelist” as a result of Palestinians’ lack of civil rights that deprives them of political representation. In addition, internal division among Palestinians in the post-Oslo Process period bolstered the need for alliances with Lebanese political parties (Knudsen 2011:99) – a dynamic that only gained in pertinence after the outbreak of the war in Syria. Though most studies focus on the ‘refugee file’ as a contested advantage among Sunni politicians (Knudsen and Hanafi 2011:7; UN-HABITAT and UNDP 2010:53), this study shows that the mediating role of Lebanese political parties in Palestinian-Lebanese governance interaction extends to intra-Shia and Shia-Sunni competition. Thus, the hegemony of (Lebanese) political parties in governance interaction is not only a matter of intra-sectarian loyalty, but follows from the nature of the Lebanese political system in which parties overrule the state.

5.3 Formality

Both the cases and people’s accounts of governance in Shabriha in general describe governance interaction as predominantly informal, indicating that the effort put into formalization through installing the LPDC and the Palestinian Embassy did not produce much effect locally. Interaction was undocumented and unregulated and, in most accounts, secretive. Interestingly, in generic accounts, informality was more often explained as a result of ideational concerns such as the Palestinians’ ‘right of return.’ With regard to the specific cases, however, informality was usually seen in light of institutional resources related to the political system. This was reflected in a ‘formality trap.’ When relations are not official, governance actors (especially the Lebanese) complain that their hands are tied because there is no official framework. But when relations are made official, authorities (particularly the Palestinian) complain that they are not worth much because they are ‘just on paper.’⁵⁰⁴ Apparently, the formal interactions are irrelevant and the relevant interactions are informal (El Ali 2012:44; CSI 2011:22).

503 Beirut, 23 July 2012.

504 Lebanese analyst, Beirut, 28 May 2013; Palestinian legal analyst, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 21 March 2013.

Informality directly stems from the PC's unrecognized status. To a large extent, the informality of governance interaction in Shabriha reflects what Hanafi (2010c:30) has termed a 'space of exception,' where "residents are excluded from the realm of municipal planning and service-provision, [but] included with regards to questions of security and taxes" (see also Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) 2009; Hoffmann and Kirk 2013:15; Silverman 2008:10 in Hanafi and Long 2010:146). He goes on to state that "in this situation, nothing is legally defined. Everything is suspended but upheld without written documents concerning this suspension" (Hanafi 2010c:58-59). The recurrent theme of *fawda*, or chaos, in my study was also apparent in Hanafi's argument (2010a:58-59). He proposed that "chaos, however, does not arise from the absence of law, but from the exclusion by the sovereign(s) of the population from the space where the law is supposed to operate" (Hanafi 2010a:58-59). The situation in the gatherings might be distinct, however, because the population is excluded from the law (that is: from the law's rights, not from its obligations), but the gathering's space does fall under the law.

5.4 Scheduling

For participants, the issue with governance was not that interaction did not happen (enough), but that it was needs based and thereby irregular – with the potential exception of the elusive Follow-Up Committee. Irregular here does not mean random. As the cases show, locally there is indeed a structure to governance interaction as most meetings and communication followed relatively predictable 'protocols,' particularly considering the mediating actors that were involved and the ways in which they were contacted. Targeting mediating actors by Palestinian governance actors, in this light, is not a haphazard attempt to find the right mediator, but rather a reasonable strategy to enhance chances for successful mediation in an environment where no actor is obliged to help. The plurality of governance interactions might then be a consequence of the ad hoc nature of governance relations. Because governance relations are not stable, guarantees have to be sought in diversity, i.e. in 'spreading risks.'⁵⁰⁵ Irregularity is related to what is described in the literature as the 'continuous temporarily' of dealing with the 'Palestinian issue' (El Ali 2011:18; Dorai and Puig 2008; Hanafi 2008:9). The gatherings' state of exception does not manifest itself merely in informality, but also in irregularity, because "the situation comes closer to a state of void, filled in a very ad hoc way" (Hanafi 2010a:59). The very fact that all identified cases of governance interaction constituted a crisis (*aazma*) is indicative in this regard.

5.5 Initiation and dominance

That it was nearly always Palestinian actors, or those mediating on their behalf, that initiated governance interaction and that interaction was subsequently dictated by Lebanese actors, holds for all cases as well as for participants' generic accounts. Matters of dominance are closely related to informality: participants found it self-evident that the Palestinian actors always needed to request and petition with Lebanese actors. Because they do not fall under any official mandate and because the PC is not recognized, no form of mediation or representation is automatic; everything is considered a favor. Moreover, in terms of the political situation, Lebanese interfere in Palestinian issues exactly to ensure Palestinians do not interfere in Lebanese affairs. This resonates with the observation by Long and Hanafi (2010) that "discourses of partnership and dialogue have been little more than fig leaves for all too familiar exercises of control and dominance by both the Lebanese state and the international community." The dynamics of initiation and dominance in local governance settings, moreover, bring to the fore the elaborate system of control and regulation that the Lebanese state has developed since the 1960s (Hanafi 2010a:55; Khalili 2010:128; PARD 2011:7; Sfeir 2010:21; Suleiman 2006). They also show that while the Lebanese state is fragmented and diffuse, its dominance vis-à-vis Palestinian governance actors is taken for granted by all participants and reproduced by Lebanese mediating actors. On the one hand, the Lebanese state seeks to curtail Palestinian self-governance within its territory, but, on the other hand, Lebanese officials blame the Palestinians for their failure at self-governance (El Ali 2011:18; Czajka 2012:250). It is this "state of controversial autonomy" (El Ali 2005:79), demanding governance by Palestinian actors but undermining it at the same time, which makes governance interaction in Shabriha largely indirect, informal, irregular and asymmetrical.

This dependence notwithstanding, Palestinian governance actors have carved out an opportunity for agency by 'playing out' Lebanese parties against each other in their rivalry for Palestinian legitimacy and support. This is,

⁵⁰⁵ UNRWA sanitation officer Sour, Sour, 25 June 2013.

however, a critically complicated issue due to the internal (political and tribal) divisions amongst the Palestinians (Knudsen 2011:99) – a recurrent theme in participants' accounts. Moreover, as Palestinian leaders know all too well, this strategy can ultimately backfire, reinstating the dominant frame of Palestinians as a fifth column. This might be why, for instance, 'the Palestinian cause' did not feature as expected in the Ramadan conflict case. Czajka (2012:245, 252) accounts how Palestinian parties have become "extremely wary of involvement in 'internal' Lebanese affairs" and repeatedly turn the state-within-a-state allegations into a legitimization for disengagement from Lebanon's most recent conflicts: the 2006 War and, as my case clearly shows, the Syrian spill over and the June 2013 Saida clashes.

5.6 Domains

In Shabriha, governance is more about representing, claiming a constituency vis-à-vis other governance actors, than about actually serving this constituency (by providing security and welfare). This underlines the importance of studying governance interaction (horizontal engagement between various governance actors) rather than governance implementation (vertical engagement between governance actors and their constituencies). Moreover, it demands a political rather than a humanitarian perspective on governance (Knudsen 2011:98) as, in Shabriha at least, governance is about governing people rather than territory (Dean 1999) – particularly in the gatherings' more 'open' space. Service delivery is seen as primarily political rather than humanitarian, (Erni 2012:80-81, 89); only the waste crisis was seen as a genuine welfare case. Indeed, governance actors regarded concrete grassroots interactions, which are often about service delivery, as petty and preferred grand political discourse on politics and security over pragmatic organization.⁵⁰⁶

Participants' generic governance accounts on Lebanese-Palestinian governance interaction as well as the literature on the camps (Czajka 2012; Long and Hanafi 2010; Suleiman 2006) overwhelmingly emphasize security issues. This perceived securitization of governance reflects a permanent emergency situation in a conflict-ridden country as well as an absence of a structural institutional framework for interaction that is primarily manifested in the PCs' no-status status. Yet, with regard to my sub-cases, only the Ramadan conflict was seen as being about security. This reveals a core differentiation between governance interaction with the camps and with the gatherings: while the literature on governance in the camps and Palestinians' general ideas about relations with Lebanese authorities hinge on security concerns, the concrete cases of interaction that I studied in a gathering have remarkably less security connotations. Thus, the underlying assumption of my research, that Lebanese-Palestinian governance interaction in gatherings and in camps differs because the former are not closed off from their Lebanese surroundings by a checkpoint regime like the latter, holds true.

5.7 Sites

Regarding governance sites, all cases had a regional or national component despite their playing out primarily in the obviously local setting of Shabriha. The relevant governance actors (the Lebanese state, the PC and the political parties) all had representation in the site of the local camp (Shabriha), the regional capital (Sour) and the national capital (Beirut). In generic accounts, people stressed national and regional diplomatic interaction, a reflection perhaps of the increasing voice of institutions such as the LPDC, the Palestinian Embassy and the PLO representative office. Only when one zooms in on the specific cases do local interaction dynamics become evident.

The involvement of higher sites of governance relates to the informal ad hoc governance typical of spaces of exception: that no official and stable framework of interaction is present means that local governance actors can or will not take responsibility for governance decisions and tend to refer everything to their superiors. Because all interaction constitutes a form of renegotiation and meta-governance, higher-level coordination is almost self-evident. Relegating local issues to national governance sites is also a result of the mediation of political parties, which, according to Hanafi (2010c:34), results in 'stove piping' on behalf of the PC, which in turn reflects a "vertical, rigid management style, resulting from personal or factional loyalty."

506 Press secretary Palestinian Embassy, Beirut, 6 June 2013; PLO leader, Beirut, 24 April 2013.

5.8 Levels

All cases had a second-order or meta-governance component along with their first-order aspects. Governance interaction followed precedents that can be regarded as de facto 'policies' (which was most evident in the waste crisis and Ramadan conflict and less in the electricity divider, highway eviction and building crisis cases that reflected more unique events). However, there are no official guidelines and policies for governance interaction between Lebanese and Palestinian actors and therefore almost all interactions are inherently a reinterpretation or renegotiation of existing precedents (second-order governance; such as the question of what falls within the municipal mandate in the waste crisis) rather than straightforward administrative implementation. In many cases it touches upon reworking the very foundations that produced existing precedents in the first place (meta-governance; such as whether to explain conflict from either a personal or a sectarian perspective in the Ramadan conflict). Meta-governance discussions on distinctions between different categories of constituents (Palestinian/Lebanese; camp/gathering) are tied to legal institutional resources of citizenship and 'campness.' In fact, they are part of a post-conflict reorganization process in which "the PLO started negotiations with the government through different sites; about the weapons, about the camps, about the services"⁵⁰⁷ (see also Suleiman 2006:22).

The almost inherent meta-governance connotations of all governance interactions are related to the prevalence of the political representation domain and the frequent relegation of local issues to national governance sites. These dynamics could be a reflection of the disunity of both the Palestinian and the Lebanese side of the governance spectrum that participants frequently referred to. The Lebanese state as well as the PA are paralyzed by polarization between the 8 March and 14 March blocs and the PLO and *Tahaluf* respectively which undermines their "cohesiveness and effectiveness" (Hilal 1993:52). In such a polarized political system, and considering the volatile political situation, alliances in the national setting can easily be disrupted by local dynamics that have to be controlled to protect the minimal rapprochement between the PLO and the government (Knudsen 2011:105-106).

507 Palestinian analyst, Mar Elias camp, Beirut, 19 June 2013.

6. Conclusions and Contributions

“The topic of governance in the camp is commonly misrepresented and misunderstood. This is partly due to the fact that governance practices are informal, inconsistent, changing and variable from camp to camp. It takes the form of a multi-layered tapestry with multiple actors, groups, individuals and factions, manoeuvring and competing.” (Hanafi 2011:32)

The analysis presented in section five corresponds to the findings of the only two other empirical studies concerning Lebanese-Palestinian governance interaction. In its research on the Beddawi, Nahr el-Bared and Ain el-Hilweh camps, CSI (2012:5-6, 2011:2) highlights the personal, occasional and needs-based nature of interaction and the importance of historic precedents. The various studies by Hanafi (2008, 2010a, 2010c, 2011) arrive at similar conclusions. Moreover, as testified in section five, there were not only few fundamental differences between the cases and generic accounts, but also no significant differences considering the modes, domains, sites and levels of governance between the cases concerned with utilities (the waste crisis and electricity divider cases), shelter issues (the highway eviction and building crisis cases) and the case of conflict mediation (the Ramadan conflict).^{xxxiv} This suggests that while governance interaction is case and context dependent, structural characteristics of interaction between Lebanese and Palestinian governance actors can be identified. Such commonalities are evident in recurrent material (money, arms and land), ideational (*al awda* and the Palestinian cause) and institutional (political and legal) resources explaining governance interactions. More importantly, these commonalities are related to the notion of a deliberately maintained ‘state of exception’ that instates crisis as the status quo and ensures informality, irregularity and inequality as the default form of governance interaction – reproducing a “state of instability and vulnerability” (El Ali 2005:83; Hanafi 2012:201).

This state of exception or limbo partly follows from an anticipation of the Palestinians’ return to Palestine that resulted in “a state of being that emphasized their supposedly transitional status” (Klaus 2000:141). Ideational notions on *al awda* and *al tawteen* have created a context in which the Palestinians are not granted citizenship and are thereby excluded from the institutional resources associated with the de jure governance framework of the Lebanese state. The fact that Shabriha is a gathering and not an official UN-administered camp, moreover, also excludes Palestinian governance actors from the de facto governance framework epitomized by UNRWA. This institutional marginalization manifests itself in wanting material resources of Palestinian governance actors such as limited access to finances, absence of arms and the inability to own land. It also resulted in the absence of direct interactions with Lebanese state institutions and the dominance of indirect (mediated) interactions via other Lebanese actors – instead of mediation via UNRWA. Lack of a legal status of Palestinian governance actors, in this way, ultimately resulted in informal, irregular, asymmetrical, securitized and nationalized governance interaction that inherently touched on meta-governance contestations. In this assemblage, it was the role of Lebanese political parties and the *mukhtar* that appeared as the central characteristic. Participants referred to institutional resources related to the political system (sectarianism and clientelism) and the political situation (swelling intra- and inter-sectarian polarization) as well as ideational resources (the ‘Palestinian cause’) to explain that these Lebanese political parties would position themselves as mediating actors between Palestinian and Lebanese governance institutions in order to acquire indirect legitimacy as well as direct Palestinian votes and armed support. The same resources would not provide a similarly potent incentive for Lebanese state institutions to engage with the Palestinians.^{xxxv}

I hope that answering my research question, apart from its direct utility of providing insight in governance interactions in Shabriha, has also contributed to three other objectives. First, to make visible the governance and power dynamics in the overlooked space of the gatherings. Palestinians often refer to themselves as 'the forgotten people' and it could be argued that in the gatherings this is even more pertinent than in the infamous camps (Hanafi 2010a:54). Nor is such overlooking or forgetting necessarily incidental: as Khalili (2010:140) notes, there is a politics behind invisibility that is about the dominant regime "compelling subject populations to be visible to their own police and security forces, while preventing them from being visible to audiences not chosen by the state." Second, I have aimed to construe Palestinians as agents. Many authors have recognized that "Palestinians play a minor part in the 'new' Lebanon;" that "politically, economically and socially marginalized, they constitute a minority sect without a recognized place in a sectarian system, no longer a vanguard of the revolution" (Hanafi 2010a:68). Suleiman (2006:3) observed that "lesser emphasis has been placed on rights-based and bottom-up approaches that consider Palestinian refugees as active actors, and view them as a social force that has an impact on policies affecting their rights and livelihoods." I have sought to partially address this hiatus by approaching Palestinians as governance actors in their own right that 'do,' rather than undergo governance. Third, I tried to nuance the discourse stressing segregation and isolation by emphasizing the significance of interaction and engagement. Hanafi (2010a:65) put on the agenda "the economic, social, and cultural relationships with the host countries, to which very few ethnographic studies have paid adequate attention." I emphasized the governance dimension of such interaction, which Palestinians themselves identified as a main challenge in improving their lives (CSI 2013).⁵⁰⁸

Appendix I – Abbreviations and Arabic Glossary

AA = Adjacent Area
AUB = American University of Beirut
CCE = Conser Consulting Engineers
CDR = Council for Development and Reconstruction
CEP = Committee for Employment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon
CET = Consolidated Engineering and Trading
CJPME = Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East
CSI = Common Space Initiative
CSO = Civil Society Organization
DIIS = Danish Institute for International Studies
DRC = Danish Refugee Council
EDL = *Électricité du Liban*
FC = Family Committee
ICG = International Crisis Group
IDS = Institute for Development Studies
IFI = Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs
IFPO = *Institut français du Proche-Orient*
ILO = International Labour Organization
INGO = International NGO
IPS = Institute for Palestine Studies
IRIN = Humanitarian News and Analysis
ISF = Internal Security Forces
LAF = Lebanese Armed Forces
LBC = Lebanese Broadcasting Company
LPDC = Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee
MENA = Middle East and North Africa
MP = Member of Parliament
NGO = Non-Governmental Organization
NRC = Norwegian Refugee Council
PA = Palestinian Authority
PARD = Popular Aid for Reconstruction and Development
PC = Popular Committee
PLO = Palestinian Liberation Organization
PM = Prime Minister
PU = *Première Urgence*
TDH = *Terre des Hommes*
UNDP = United Nations Development Program
UN-HABITAT = UN Human Settlements Program
UNIFIL = UN Interim Force in Lebanon
UNESCO = UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNRWA = UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Aazma = crisis
Awda = return; refers to the Palestinians right to return (UN General Assembly Resolution 194)
Awlaad ed-dawle = children [or sons] of the state
Baladiya = municipality
Dawle = state
Diwan = informal elders' council
Faliyat (s: *shakhs fael*) = active people in society
Fasael = political parties or factions
Fawda = chaos
Fitna = internal strife
Fursa = opportunity
Haram = religiously prohibited
Iftar = meal breaking the fast during Ramadan
Kifah Al-Musalah = Armed Struggle, the armed wing of the PLO
Mnasabe = occasions; social events
Mohafaza = province
Muhafiz = provincial governor
Mukhtar = sub-municipal civil authority
Nakba = catastrophe; refers to the expulsion of the Palestinians from Palestine in 1948
Nizam = system; order
Nizam al-siyasiye = political system
Qada = district
Qadiya al-Falastiniya = the Palestinian cause
Qaimaqam = district governor
Sheikh = religious authority
Tahaluf = alliance; refers to the alliance of Palestinian political parties opposing the PLO
Tajamoua = gathering (unofficial camp)
Tawteen = settlement
Wada'a al-siyasiye = the political situation
Wasta = connections; social capital
Zu'ama = traditional leaders

Appendix II – Stakeholder Network Maps

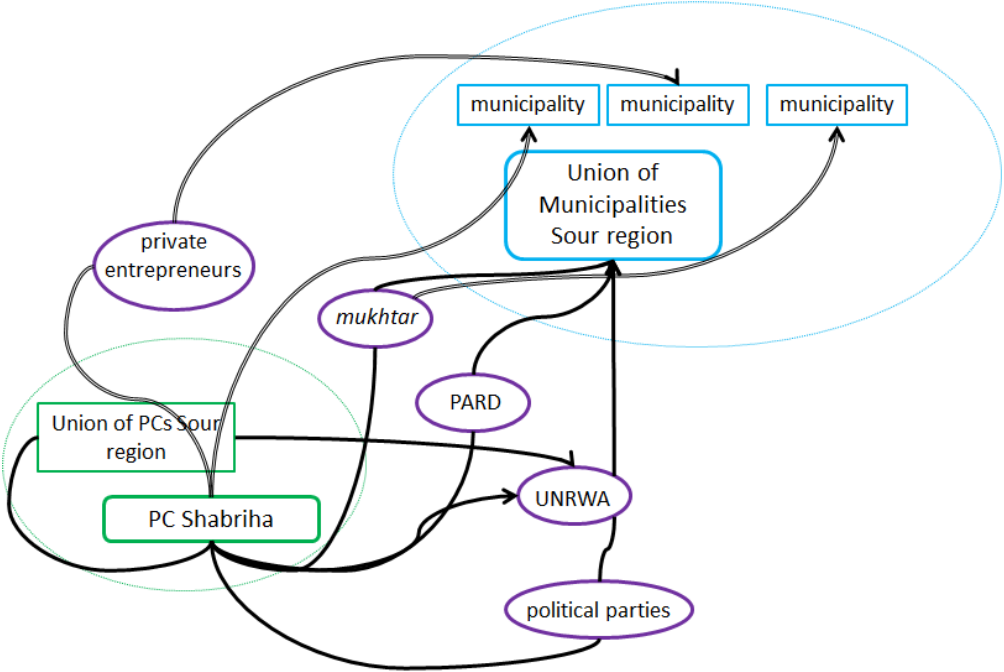


Figure II.i: waste crisis case

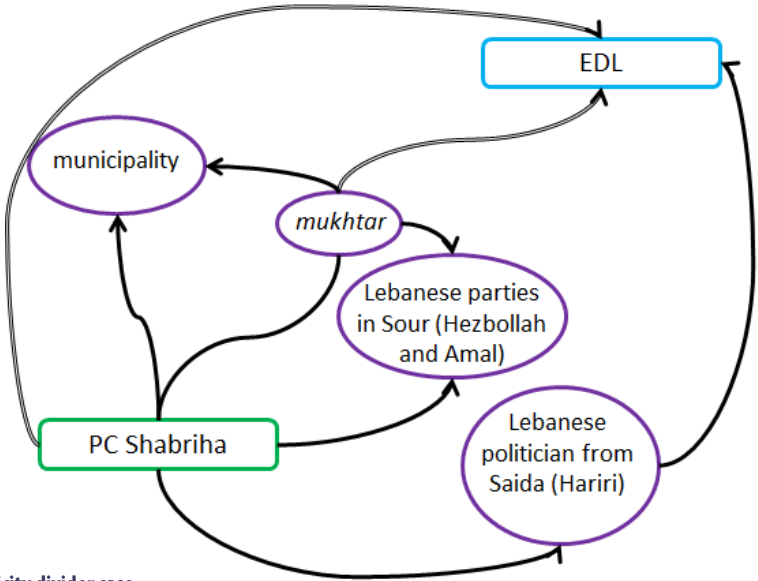


Figure II.ii: electricity divider case

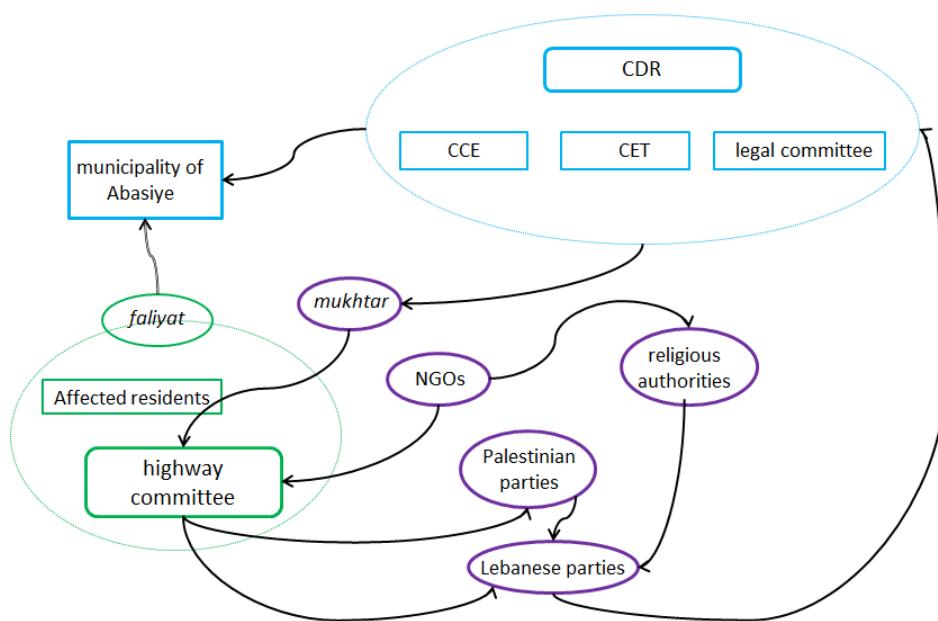


Figure II.iii: highway eviction case

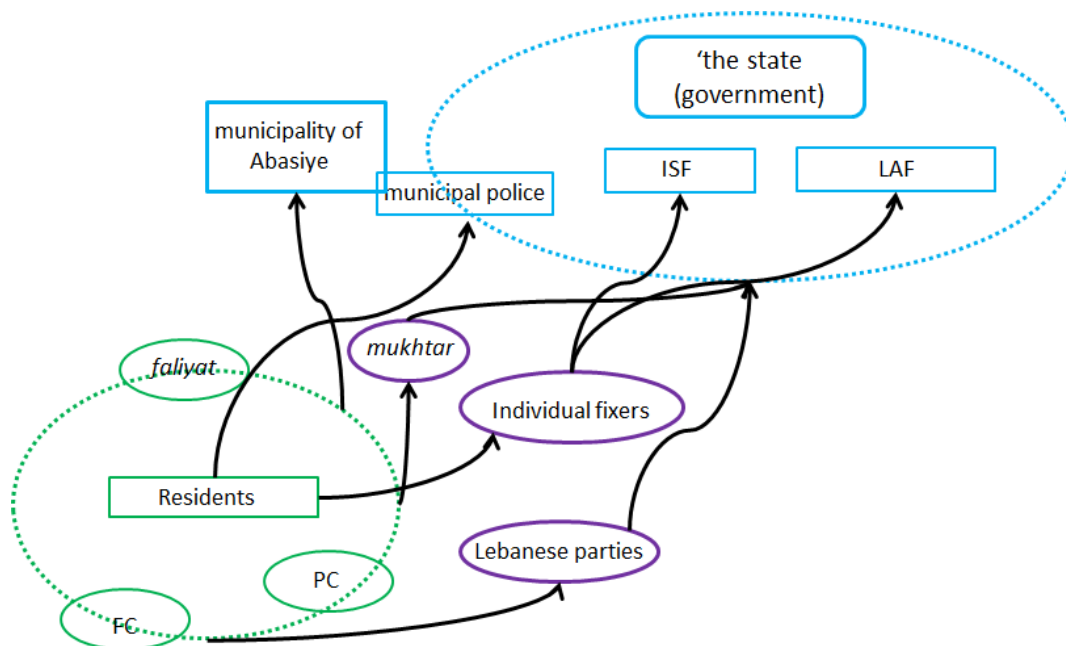


Figure II.iv: building crisis case

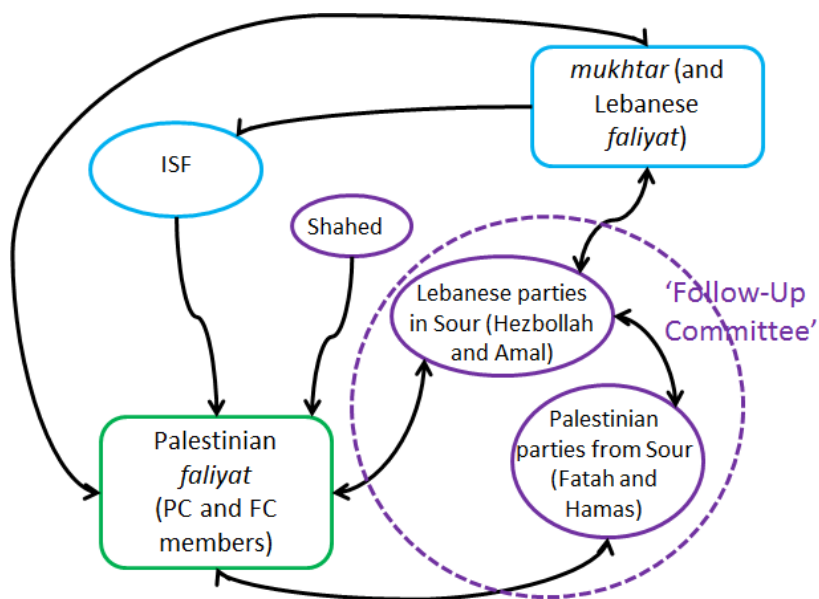


Figure II.v: Ramadan conflict case

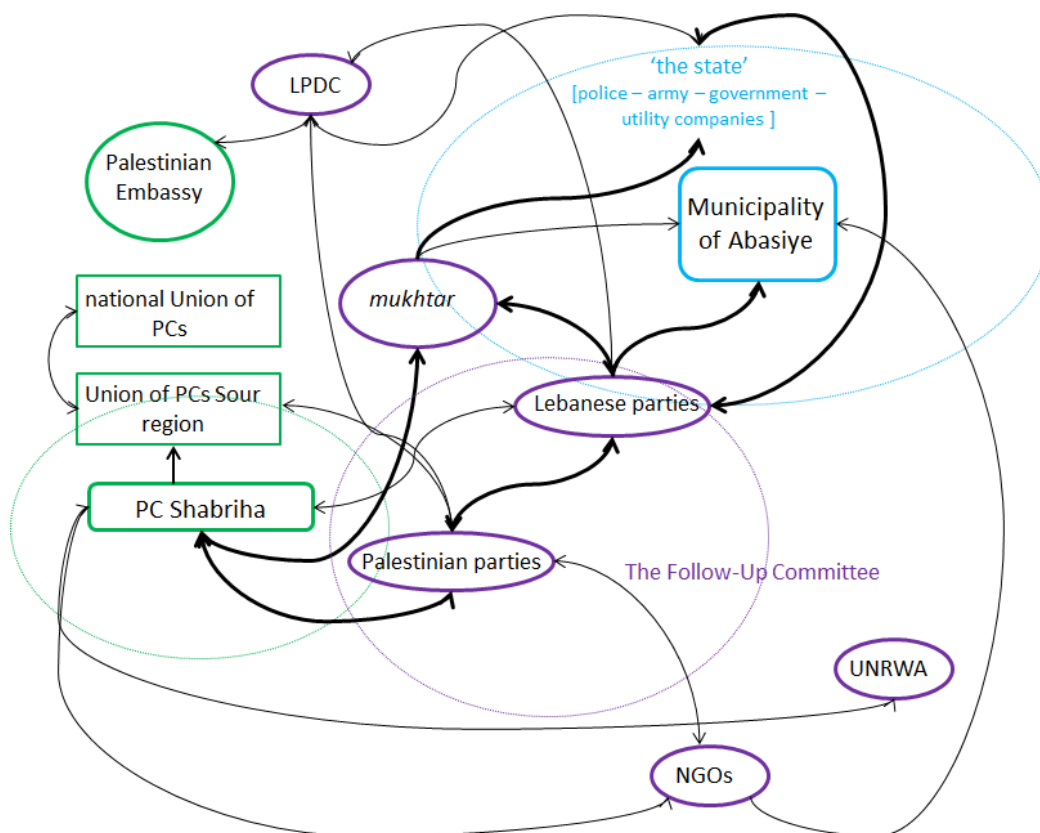


Figure II.vi: generic governance interaction

Appendix III – Case-by-Case Analytical Matrix

	Actors	Modes				Domains	Sites	Levels
		Directness	Formality	Scheduling	Initiation			
Case 1 – Waste crisis	Pal: PC Leb: Union of Municipalities	Mediated Face-to-face and phone; little media	Informal; personal	Ad hoc	PC or on behalf of PC	Welfare and representation	Local, regional and national	First-order and second-order
		MATERIAL: Money INSTITUTIONAL: Campness	IDEATIONAL: Lebanese public opinion INSTITUTIONAL: Mandate; citizenship		MATERIAL: Money	INSTITUTIONAL: Mandate; citizenship	INSTITUTIONAL: Mandate; citizenship	
Case 2 – Electricity divider	Pal: PC Leb: EDL	Mediated: Face-to-face; phone; written	Informal (not documented, on personal title)	Irregular; unprecedented	PC or on behalf of PC	Representation	Regional	Second-order and meta-governance
		INSTITUTIONAL: Lebanese fragmentation and Palestinian support		INSTITUTIONAL: Lebanese fragmentation and Palestinian support		INSTITUTIONAL: Lebanese fragmentation and Palestinian support	INSTITUTIONAL: Lebanese fragmentation and Palestinian support	INSTITUTIONAL: Lebanese fragmentation and Palestinian support
Case 3 – Highway eviction	Pal: highway committee Leb: CDR c.s. and municipality	Mediated: Phone; face-to-face	Informal; personal	Irregular; coincidental	NGO Highway committee political parties	Representation	National and local	Second-order and meta-governance
			IDEATIONAL: Palestinian cause INSTITUTIONAL: <i>Fawda</i> ; citizenship	INSTITUTIONAL: <i>Fawda</i>	INSTITUTIONAL: <i>Fawda</i> ; citizenship	INSTITUTIONAL: Citizenship		INSTITUTIONAL: Citizenship
Case 4 – Building crisis	Pal: <i>faliyat</i> /PC/FC Leb: municipality; ISF/LAF; 'the state'	Mediated: Face-to-face; phone; via media	Informal; personal [attempt at formal permission in beginning]	Mostly irregular, exceptional	Palestinian residents Middlemen	Representation	National, regional and local	Second-order and meta-governance
	MATERIAL: Land; money	MATERIAL: Money; arms INSTITUTIONAL: Citizenship	IDEATIONAL: Palestinian cause	IDEATIONAL: State sovereignty	MATERIAL: Land; arms IDEATIONAL: Palestinian cause	INSTITUTIONAL: <i>Fawda</i>	INSTITUTIONAL: <i>Wasta</i> /political backing	INSTITUTIONAL: Unity
Case 5 – Ramadan conflict	Pal: <i>faliyat</i> /PC/FC Leb: <i>mukhtar</i>	Mediated:	Relatively formal	High frequency and regularity	Bottom-up via party hierarchies	Representation and security	Local, regional and national	First-order and meta-governance
		MATERIAL: Arms IDEATIONAL: History	IDEATIONAL: Sectarian identity	MATERIAL: Arms	INSTITUTIONAL: Political context	MATERIAL: Arms	MATERIAL: Arms	INSTITUTIONAL: Political context

	Actors	Modes				Domains	Sites	Levels
		Directness	Formality	Scheduling	Initiation			
Generic	Pal: PC (PLO) Leb: municipality and 'state'	Mediated: Face-to-face and telephone (little writing or media)	Informal: not regulated (personal), not public/transparent and not documented	Nature: bilateral as well as multilateral; specific meetings as well as 'occasions' Frequent Needs-based	Palestinians initiate, Lebanese dominate	Security as motivation for Lebanese Political representation constantly contested	Emphasis on higher hierarchical sites	Second-order and meta-governance Problem solving (reactive), not opportunity generating (pro-active)
	MATERIAL: Land	MATERIAL: Money; arms IDEATIONAL: Palestinian cause INSTITUTIONAL: Political situation; lack of unity Palestinians campness; lack of citizenship	MATERIAL: Money; land IDEATIONAL: <i>Awda</i> INSTITUTIONAL: Political system; citizenship	IDEATIONAL: <i>Awda</i> INSTITUTIONAL: Political system; citizenship	MATERIAL: Money INSTITUTIONAL: Citizenship	INSTITUTIONAL: Political situation (spill over Syria); sectarianism; lack of unity Palestinians; lack of citizenship	INSTITUTIONAL: Political situation	INSTITUTIONAL: Political situation

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